

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
CABINET
THE EARL BALDWIN SUITE, DUKE HOUSE, CLENSMORE STREET,
KIDDERMINSTER
20TH DECEMBER 2007 (6.00PM)

PRESENT:

Councillors: J-P Campion (Chairman), M J Hart (Vice-Chairman),
N J Desmond, Mrs A T Hingley and J Holden.

OBSERVERS:

Councillors: J Aston, G W Ballinger and Mrs F M Oborski.

CAB.124 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S J M Clee.

CAB.125 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

CAB.126 MINUTES

DECISION:

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 22nd November 2007 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB.127 CALL INS

No decisions had been called in since the last Cabinet meeting.

CAB.128 ITEMS REQUIRING URGENT ATTENTION

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

CAB.129 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public had asked to participate at this meeting of the Cabinet.

CAB.130 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Blue Tongue

Members were informed that Blue Tongue, a disease spread by mosquitos, had been discovered at a farm in Malvern. The Department for Farming and Rural Affairs was dealing with the incident.

2. Appointment of Head of Financial Services

The Council's Appointments and Appeals Committee had selected a person to replace Keith Bannister, the current Head of Financial Services, who would be retiring in the spring of 2008. Members would have an opportunity to meet the new postholder in due course.

CAB.131 BUDGET REPORTS

A number of reports were considered from the Head of Financial Services that outlined the Cabinet's proposals for the forthcoming municipal year.

The Leader went through the Cabinet's proposals and highlighted the following points:

There would be an increase of 2.5% in Council Tax over the next 3 years. The Council would consult widely on the budget proposals with the public and other stakeholders and would endeavour to ensure that any suggestions made were considered. He commented that this was the Administration's fourth budget. He felt that the Cabinet had taken a prudent approach to budgeting and were looking to improve the services that were provided within the district.

DECISION:

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

The Cabinet's proposals as contained in the report to Cabinet, attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes, be agreed.

CAB.132 BENEFITS SERVICE - DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS POLICY

A report was considered from the Head of Financial Services that proposed a Discretionary Housing Payments Policy be adopted by the Council.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

The Benefit Service – Discretionary Housing Payments Policy – December 2007, attached as Appendix 1 to the report to Cabinet, be Approved.

CAB.133 RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY UPDATE

A report was considered from the Head of Financial Services that proposed an updated Risk Management Policy and Risk Strategy for adoption by the Council. The Cabinet Member for Corporate and Customer Services commented on the excellent work that had been undertaken in relation to risk management.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

The updated Risk Management Policy–December 3007, attached as Appendix 1 of the report to Cabinet and the Risk Management Strategy-December 2007, attached as Appendix 2 of the report to Cabinet, be approved.

CAB.134 CHURCHILL CONSERVATION AREA - DRAFT CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that presented the Cabinet with a draft Conservation Area Appraisal for the Churchill Conservation Area and sought authority to undertake a public consultation on the proposals.

DECISION:

The draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report to the Cabinet, be supported and officers be authorised to undertake a public consultation on the Appraisal before reporting back with a further recommendation.

CAB.135 BRIDGNORTH CORE STRATEGY ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION RESPONSE

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that sought the Cabinet's endorsement of representations submitted on the Issues and Options Consultation Paper for the Bridgnorth Core Strategy.

The Chief Executive reported that the response was very important as there were some areas of concern. He pointed out that the Council needed to ensure that what was planned had no detrimental impact on Wyre Forest.

DECISION:

The representations submitted to the Bridgnorth District Council on the Bridgnorth Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report to Cabinet be endorsed.

CAB.136 THE LIST OF BUILDINGS OF LOCAL ARCHITECTURAL AND/OR HISTORIC INTEREST (THE LOCAL LIST) - BEWDLEY PARISH

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that presented the Cabinet with a list of buildings of architectural and/or historic interest for the parish of Bewdley and sought authority to undertake a public consultation on the proposals.

DECISION:

The draft Local List for the Parish of Bewdley, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report to the Cabinet, be supported and officers be authorised to undertake a public consultation on the Draft List before reporting back with a further recommendation.

CAB.137 SOUTH WORCESTERSHIRE JOINT CORE STRATEGY ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION RESPONSE

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that sought endorsement of representations submitted on the Issues and Options Consultation Paper for the South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy.

The Chief Executive reported that Malvern, and Wychavon Councils and Worcester City Council had pooled resources and had produced a South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy Consultation on which the Council was asked to respond. He stated that representations had been submitted on the basis that the Council would not want to see any developments that would have a detrimental effect on the district of Wyre Forest.

The Chairman of the Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee commented that she accepted that Hartlebury had a limited range of facilities however, she perceived that the village did have a regular bus service and there was a good railway service. She therefore felt it was inaccurate to state that Hartlebury had limited public transport facilities.

The Chief Executive commented that Hartlebury had been demoted from a category one village to a category two village. He agreed to speak to the Head of Planning, Health and Environment to clarify the matter.

DECISION:

The representations submitted to the South Worcestershire Authorities on the South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper, as set out at appendix 2 to the Cabinet report, be endorsed.

CAB.138 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CORPORATE SERVICE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 26th November 2007

Re : Revised Consultation Strategy 2008 - 2011

The Cabinet considered the recommendations of the Corporate Service and Performance Scrutiny Committee regarding the Revised Consultation Strategy 2008 - 2011.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

1. **The revised Consultation Strategy 2008 – 2011, as set out in Appendix A of the briefing paper to the Corporate Service and Performance Scrutiny Committee on 26th November 2007, be approved for implementation from 1st April 2008.**
2. **The three key projects, detailed in paragraph 3 of the briefing paper, to strengthen the Council's existing consultation methods be endorsed.**

CAB.139 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COMMUNITY AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 5TH DECEMBER 2007

(i) Re : Draft Wyre Forest Matters Sustainable Community Strategy 2008 - 2014

The Cabinet considered the recommendations of the Corporate Service and Performance Scrutiny Committee regarding the Draft Wyre Forest Matters Sustainable Community Strategy 2008 - 2014.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

The draft Wyre Forest Matters Sustainable Community Strategy 2008 – 2014 be approved.

CAB.140 (ii) Re : Local Strategic Partnership Review Panel

The Chairman of the Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee commented that the Committee had undertaken this piece of work due to concern about capacity within partner agencies to deliver Local Public Service Agreement 2 (LPSA2) for crime and fire targets in the Horsefair, Broadwaters and Greenhill areas of Kidderminster which, if achieved by 31st March 2009 would count towards receiving a Reward Grant of £1 million.

DECISION:

**Recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 5 as printed below be agreed.
Recommendation 4 be considered during the budget scrutiny process.**

1. **The District Council develop a clear position statement for the economic regeneration and neighbourhood renewal of the Horsefair area of Kidderminster, to ensure there is a strategic and co-ordinated approach between all partners, thus maximising potential resource investment.**
2. **The positive commitment and contribution being made to the delivery of the LPSA 2 targets from all agencies and in particular the work of the Worcestershire Primary Care Trust, West Mercia Constabulary and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service in the delivery of community focused projects be noted.**
3. **It be acknowledged that the economic regeneration and urban renewal of the Horsefair must be a prime driver in the Local Development Framework and that the provision of a Project Co-Ordinator would help to ensure that all sectors of the community are fully represented.**
4. **From the evidence provided by partners, the key risk identified was the lack of capacity from within existing resources to deliver the LPSA 2 targets for Horsefair, Broadwaters and Greenhill. A full time Project Co-Ordinator be appointed specifically to manage the Horsefair, Broadwaters and Greenhill Project and that the salary together with the on-costs do not exceed £30,000. Support for the funding of the post be sought from other partners, for example Worcestershire County Council, although the post should not be made dependent on joint funding. It is also recommended that the post be advertised on a three year contract and that funding in the first year is supplied by the District Council and County Council with years two and three being supplied from the reward grant. This post is based on the 'invest to save principle' and would compliment and work alongside the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder programme.**
5. **In view of concerns raised regarding the sustainability of some community initiatives, identified in the scrutiny exercise, and in particular Children's Centres, as Government funding will expire in 2011, sustainability be addressed at County level and that the District Council seek clarification.**

CAB.141 Re : Bewdley Development Trust Review Panel

The Cabinet considered recommendations regarding the Bewdley Development Trust Review Panel.

DECISION:

The recommendations, as set out below, be agreed:

1. The Council reaffirm its commitment to include a "community portfolio" in the proposed Asset Management Plan and pro-actively promote Community Ownership by transferring appropriate assets to the community either free hold or long leasehold on "soft" terms.
2. The Quirk Review recommendations be endorsed relating to community management and ownership of public assets, which can be used as the basis of developing a policy led approach in implementing community asset transfer including the British Red Cross Society Hall and the Guildhall in Bewdley to the Bewdley Development Trust.
3. The Cabinet be invited to confirm that it is minded to promote the disposal of community assets and open initial talks with the Bewdley Development Trust in respect of the British Red Cross Society Hall and the Guildhall, Bewdley.
4. The funds allocated to Bewdley Development Trust from the District council be increased from £5,000 to £10,000 per annum, to be considered as part of the budget process.

CAB.142 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

DECISION

"Under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of "exempt information" as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

CAB.143 SUMMARY OF MINUTES

The following proceedings were considered after the press and public had been excluded from the meeting. A summary of the minutes relating to these items has been made as "exempt information" would be disclosed if the minutes were published in full.

CAB.144 MINUTES

The Exempt Minutes of the Cabinet held on 22nd November 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

CAB.145 COUNCIL TAX - APPLICATION FOR A LOCAL DISCOUNT

A report was considered from the Head of Financial Services that requested the Cabinet to give consideration to allowing a discount to reduce Council Tax payable by an individual Council Taxpayer. The Cabinet decided not to grant a local discount.

CAB.146 COUNCIL TAX AND NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES WRITE OFF OF AMOUNTS OUTSTANDING

A report was considered from the Head of Financial Services that asked the Cabinet to give consideration to writing off a sum in respect of Council Taxes and National Non-Domestic Rates. The Cabinet decided to write off the amount outstanding.

CAB.147 HOUSING BENEFIT OVERPAYMENT DEBT - WRITE OFF OF AMOUNTS OUTSTANDING

A report was considered from the head of Financial Services that asked the Cabinet to give consideration to writing off a sum in respect of Housing Benefit Overpayment debts. The Cabinet decided to write off the amount outstanding.

CAB.148 DISTRICT CEMETERY - PROVISION OF A CREMATORIUM

A report was tabled from the Head of Property and Operational Services that outlined options for the development of a District Cemetery and crematorium on land which the District Council had acquired. The Cabinet determined further arrangements for a district cemetery and crematorium.

The meeting finished at 6.45 pm.,

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET 20TH DECEMBER, 2007

Proposed Decision: Agenda Item 7.2

FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2008/2011

The Cabinet having considered the Financial Strategy Reports set out in the separate volume, and recommendations of the Corporate Service & Performance Scrutiny Panel, **RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL** :-

1. COUNCIL TAX LEVY 2008/2011

- 1.1 **RECOMMENDS** a Council Tax for Wyre Forest District Council on a Band D Property of £188.10 for 2008/2009 (£183.51 2007/2008) an increase of 2.5% (£4.59 over 2007/2008).
- 1.2 **RECOMMENDS** a provisional Council Tax on a Band D Property in 2009/2010 of £192.80 and £197.62 in 2010/2011 an increase of 2.5% per annum over 2008/2009.

2. PRIORITIES FOR 2008/2009 (page 12)

- 2.1 Cabinet on 21st February 2008 **RECOMMENDS** Council Priorities for 2008/2009 following consultation with Members at Workshops in January, the Corporate Plan Review Panel and Corporate Service and Performance Scrutiny Committee in February 2008, as part of the new Corporate Plan process.

3. THREE YEAR BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK 2008/2011 (pages 5-42)

- 3.1 **The contents of the Reports of the Head of Financial Services on the Three Year Budget and Policy Framework 2008/2011 (pages 5-42) and Base Budget Variations (pages 63-67) be ENDORSED and in doing so approve the Revised Revenue and Capital Budget for 2007/2008.**
- 3.2 **NOTES** that the format of the 2008/2011 Base Budget has been amended to reflect the divisional changes brought about by the CMT Review.

- 3.3 **REAFFIRMS** the Council's policy relating to Working Balances, Reserves and Provisions and notes the amount of Reserves and Provisions available for use in the Budget process (pages 28-29).
- 3.4 **REAFFIRMS** the Council's updated Finance Strategy (pages 30-36).
- 3.5 **RECOMMENDS** that any Final Account saving arising from 2007/2011 over and above the target allowed for in the Council's Finance Strategy, together with surplus Earmarked Reserves, be allocated for the one-off costs of the Centralised Office Accommodation project.
- 3.6 **RECOMMENDS** the transfer of the Local Authority Business Grant Incentive (LABGI) Earmarked Reserve of £150,000 and the Employee and Pension Fund Reserve of £248,000 to General Reserves. Should the Council receive any further LABGI Grant in 2008, delegated authority be given to the Leader of the Council in consultation with the Head of Financial Services to allocate for General Economic Development purposes.
- 3.7 The following General Fund Revenue Budget be **RECOMMENDED** including Cabinet Proposals and **INCOME SERVICE OPTIONS** identified in Appendices 1 and 2 :-

	Revised 2007/2008 £	2008/2009 £	2009/2010 £	2010/2011 £
Net Expenditure on Services (per Appendix 1 on Page 14 of the Financial Strategy Book)	14,693,990	15,325,180	15,431,760	16,032,110
<u>Add</u> Cabinet Proposals identified in Appendix 1	-	471,150	32,360	(29,500)
Net Expenditure	14,693,990	15,796,330	15,464,120	16,002,610
Contribution (from) Reserves	(621,900)	(1,347,650)	(752,180)	(1,037,250)
Net Budget Requirement	14,072,090	14,448,680	14,711,940	14,965,360
<u>Less</u> Business Rate Grant, Government Grant and Collection Fund Surplus (Page 14)	7,734,570	7,930,450	8,030,750	8,117,150
Council Tax Levy	<u>£6,337,520</u>	<u>£6,518,230</u>	<u>£6,681,190</u>	<u>£6,848,210</u>
Wyre Forest District Council Tax Level assuming 2.5% increase 2008/2009 onwards	<u>£183.51</u>	<u>£188.10</u>	<u>£192.80</u>	<u>£197.62</u>

4. **CONSULTATION STRATEGY (pages 38-41)**

4.1 **AGREES** the Consultation Strategy on the Cabinet Strategy be as follows :-

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AGENDA ITEM NO.3

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- **Public Meeting** - invite members of the public to attend the Cabinet on 24th January 2008 for a presentation by the Leader of the Council and to give their views;
- **Parish Councils** – Invite representatives to Cabinet on the 24th January 2008 for their views;
- **Media Release;**
- **Web Site;**
- **Business Ratepayer Statutory Consultation;**
- **Corporate Service & Performance Scrutiny Committee/Budget Review Panel.**
- **Dial-a-Ride Members in respect of Concessionary Travel Income Service Option Proposal.**

5. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2008/2009 ONWARDS (pages 43-62)

5.1 **APPROVES** the Base Capital Programme and Vehicle, Equipment and Systems Renewal Schedule.

5.2 **NOTES** that the format of the 2008/2011 Capital Programme has been amended to reflect the divisional changes (mainly relating to the transfer of Leisure to the Community and Partnership Services) brought about by the CMT Review.

5.3 **NOTES** the availability of Capital Receipts and the ability to use Prudential Borrowing for new Capital Proposals.

5.4 **RECOMMENDS** Capital Proposals and associated funding as identified in the schedule of proposed Cabinet Proposals - see Appendix 1.

5.5 **REAFFIRMS** the Council's updated Capital Strategy.

5.6 **DELEGATED** authority continue to be given to the Head of Financial Services to fund the Vehicle, Equipment and System Renewal Schedule by means of Prudential Borrowing (repayments based on anticipated life of Vehicle, Equipment and Systems).

5.7 **DELEGATED** authority to the Head of Financial Services to determine the most financially prudent funding method for Capital Projects (Capital Receipts or Direct Revenue Funding) at the end of each Financial Year.

6. BASE BUDGET VARIATIONS (pages 63-67)

6.1 **NOTE** the Budget Variations identified between Original and Revised Budgets 2007/2008 and between the Revised Budget 2007/2008 and the Original Budget for 2008/2009.

6.2 **HEADS OF SERVICE** continue to monitor closely their Budgets and the Head of Financial Services continue to report to the Cabinet on a quarterly basis.

7. COUNCIL TAX BASE (pages 68-71)

- 7.1 **APPROVES** a Council Tax base for Wyre Forest District of 34653 as detailed in the report on Calculation of Council Tax Base 2008/2009.
8. EFFICIENCY TARGETS (pages 72-77)
- 8.1 **RECOMMEND** the identified estimated Annual Efficiency Savings contained within the Head of Financial Services report and **NOTE** these savings have been incorporated into the Budget 2007/2008.
- 8.2 **NOTE** that the Council are required to achieve target Revenue and Capital savings of £690,000 each year for 2008/2011 in accordance with CSR07 requirements.
- 8.3 **RECOMMEND** that the Chief Executive/Corporate Management Team prepare a suitable Policy/Strategy to deliver the above efficiency savings.
9. RISK MANAGEMENT AND THE BUDGET PROCESS (pages 78-84)
- 9.1 **ENDORSE** the Budget Risk Management process identified in the Risk Management and Budget Report and **NOTE AND ENDORSE** the Budgetary Response to identified risks as detailed on the Budget Risk Matrix Appendix 1 of the Report.
- 9.2 **MONITOR** ongoing Budget Risk quarterly as part of the Budget Monitoring process.
10. CABINET PROPOSALS/SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS
- 10.1 **RECOMMENDS** Proposals and associated funding as identified in Appendix 1.
- 10.2 **RESOLVES** that in view of the three months notice period for terminating the Park & Ride at Stadium Close Kidderminster, that the Head of Property & Operational Services gives immediate notice to the Operator to cease the service with effect from the 31st March 2008.
11. INCOME SERVICE OPTIONS (pages 85-92)
- 11.1 **RECOMMENDS** an increase of an additional 1% to reflect current inflation levels (RPI 4.2%) on Income Service Options over and above those detailed in the Income Service Option Report, the financial effect is identified in Appendix 1.
- 11.2 **REQUESTS** the Head of Financial Services present a schedule of associated fees and charges reflecting the 1% increase to the Corporate Service & Performance Committee on the 5th February 2008 and Cabinet on 21st February 2008.
12. CONSULTATION AND SCRUTINY
- 12.1 **AGREE** that proposals contained in paragraphs 1 to 11 be subject to Consultation as agreed in paragraph 4 above and scrutiny by the Corporate Service & Performance Scrutiny Committee.

12.2 *AGREE* that further consideration of the Budget Strategy proposals will be made at the Cabinet on 21st February 2008 following feedback from the Consultation and Scrutiny exercises.