

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
CABINET
THE EARL BALDWIN SUITE, DUKE HOUSE, CLENSMORE STREET,
KIDDERMINSTER
26TH JUNE 2008 (6:00PM)**

Present:

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

Observers:

Councillors: G W Ballinger, Mrs H E Dyke, Mrs J Fairbrother-Millis, D J Millis, Mrs F M Oborski and J Thomas.

CAB.1 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

CAB.2 Declarations Of Interest

The Head of Property and Operational Services declared a personal interest in agenda item number 7.7. relating to Stourport Sports Club as he is a director of the Board of the Club.

CAB.3 Minutes

DECISION:

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 24th April 2008 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB.4 Call Ins

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

CAB.5 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

CAB.6 Public Participation

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

CAB.7 Leader's Announcements

The Leader had no announcements to make.

CAB.8 Honorary Alderman

A report was considered from the Chief Executive that asked the Cabinet to consider a nomination from Councillor J Campion for former Councillor John Clive Simmonds to be conferred with the title Honorary Alderman at the next meeting of Council.

The nomination had been made in recognition of John Simmonds' eminent services to Wyre Forest District Council and Rock Parish Council.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

The title of Honorary Alderman be conferred on John Clive Simmonds in accordance with Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972.

CAB.9 Report on Final Accounts 2007/2008

A report was considered from the Head of Financial Services that requested the Cabinet's approval of the pre-audit copy of the Council's Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2007/2008 and Annual Efficiency Statement (Backward Look).

DECISION:

- 1. The Pre-Audit Statement of Accounts, 2007/2008, be approved.**
- 2. The Annual Efficiency Statement 2007/2008 (Backward Look) be approved for submission to Communities and Local Government Office.**
- 3. It be noted that the additional reserves of £320,370 generated from the 2007/2008 surplus will be reconsidered in accordance with the Council's Finance Strategy, as part of the 2009/2012 Budget Process.**

CAB.10 Housing Benefit Overpayment Debt Position as at 31st March 2008

A report was considered from the Head of Financial Services that informed Members of the Housing Benefit Overpayment debt position as at 31st March 2008 and gave details of performance against the targets.

The Leader wished to commend the Head of Financial Services and his section for the hard work they had undertaken with regard to housing benefit overpayment. It was noted that if it was identified that a claimant had received an over payment but that they were still entitled to receive housing benefit, it was often a long process to recover the overpayment as the person's ability to pay was often limited.

DECISION:

The Housing Benefit overpayment debt level, age of debt and performance against targets, as at the 31st March 2008, be noted.

Cab.11 Section 136 Grant Aid to Bewdley Town Council

A report was considered from the head of Financial Services that asked the Cabinet to give consideration to a request by Bewdley Town Council for payment of Section 136 Grant Aid monies for 2008/2009

The Leader stated that the appendix to the report detailed the schemes on which Bewdley Town Council wished to spend the grant aid monies. He commented that the Council allowed approximately 15% of the town precept to be spent on services that benefitted the local community.

DECISION:

The Section 136 Grant Aid application from Bewdley Town Council be approved.

CAB.12 Policy for Sundry/Property Debtor Management

A report was considered from the Head of Financial Services that proposed that the Council adopted the Sundry/Property Debtor Management Policy.

The Leader commented that it was important to ensure that officers had a clear idea as to how public money was organised and administered. He stated that the policy took into account all relevant factors and changes in policy.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

The Sundry/Property Debtor Management Policy – June 2008, attached as Appendix 1 of the report to Cabinet be adopted.

CAB.13 Amendment to Capital Programme – Stourport Sports Club

A report was considered from the Head of Property and Operational Services that recommended to Council an amendment to the Capital Programme in order to provide grant aid to Stourport Sports Club Limited for the rebuilding of the Clubhouse and storage facilities.

The Leader reminded Members of the history of Stourport Sports Club. He said that it was an excellent facility that had been built with lottery funding. However a fire had occurred last year and the building was destroyed.

The Head of Property and Operational Services told Members that the rebuild costs exceeded the sum insured by £61,000. It was explained that twenty five thousand of the under insured sum could be reduced from the tender receipt for the building as this had been agreed with insurers due to the number of 'betterments' included in the specification. However, a sum of £36,000 had been allowed in the tender document to relocate the storage facilities and garages that were previously designed into the main clubhouse as these were the main cause of the rapid spread of the fire. It was noted that the Sports Club was current seeking grant aid to cover this additional expenditure.

Other Members noted the excellent facilities that the Club provided and how much pupils from Stourport High School had missed the facilities since the fire, moreover it was felt that the new clubhouse would provide bigger and better facilities.

It was queried when the new Clubhouse would be operational and it was anticipated that it was likely to be fully operational in February 2009.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

- 1. The Capital Programme be amended to provide £36,000 of Grant Aid to Stourport Sports Club by using unallocated Capital receipts.**
- 2. The Head of Property & Operational Services, in consultation with the Leader and the Head of Financial Services, be authorised to release the funds on confirmation that the reconstruction of contracts have been let following approval of the Club's insurers.**

CAB.14 Grants to Voluntary Bodies

A report was considered from the Head of Financial Services that asked the Cabinet to consider a request from Ferndale Youth Football Club for a grant to assist in the funding of new kit.

The Leader commented that the request was in accordance with the criteria agreed by Council that grants should be used to pump prime suitable projects. He wished the Club success in finding the rest of the money required to fund their new kit.

DECISION:

A grant of £250 be made to Ferndale Youth Football Club for the purchase of replacement football kit.

CAB.15 Performance of the Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership 2007/2008

A report was considered from the Head of Community and Partnership Services that reported on the performance of the Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership in reducing crime, disorder and anti social behaviour in the Wyre Forest District against its three year crime reduction targets that were concluded on 31st March 2008.

The Cabinet Member for Community and Corporate Services stated that three years ago, the local safety partnership had been set a target of reducing crime by 18% but had actually achieved 26.4%. Therefore he would be formally writing to the current Chair of the Safety Partnership congratulating them on this achievement. He also wished to thank Strategy, Community and Partnerships Manager for her tremendous commitment to the local safety partnership.

The Leader commented that the staff involved in this project had been unsung heroes. He reiterated his support for this work.

DECISION:

The performance of the Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership in reducing crime, disorder and anti social behaviour in the Wyre Forest District against its 3 year crime reduction targets be noted.

CAB.16 Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership Plan 2008/11

A report was considered from the Head of Community and Partnership Services that asked that the Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership Plan 2008/2011 be adopted.

The Cabinet Member for Community and Corporate Services commented that the report gave details of the work to be covered over the next three years. The four key areas were criminal damage, vehicle crime, violent crime and public perception and the Plan outlined which key partner was responsible for which area.

The Leader told Members that there had been a significant improvement in community safety including small schemes that did not make the headlines or larger ones like the CCTV initiative which were successful.

Members commented that they were disappointed that the public perception of crime was that it had not reduced very significantly.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

- 1. The Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership Plan 2008/11, which focuses on strategic priorities for criminal damage, vehicle crime, violent crime and public perception, be adopted.**
- 2. The Council, in it's role as a 'Responsible Authority', as defined by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, fully support the Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership Plan 2008/11**

CAB.17 Best Value Performance Plan 2008

A report was considered from the Head of the Chief Executive's Office that requested that the Best Value Performance Plan for 2008 be approved by Council.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

The Best Value Performance Plan for 2008 be approved.

CAB.18 Community Leadership Fund Review and 2008/09 Process

A report was considered from the Head of Community and Partnership Services that provided a review of the expenditure and range of projects supported by the Community Leadership Fund 2007/8.

The Cabinet Member for Community and Corporate Services told the Cabinet that the purpose of the Review was threefold:

- A tidying up exercise to link up all good community work and engagement into key priorities
- Tidying up of criteria so that it became more transparent.
- Note all the projects that have gone through the system.

A member queried whether there were any Members who had not used their entitlement and whether this could be carried forward into the next financial year. It was confirmed that whilst some Members had not accessed that allocation. the majority who fell into this category had good reasons for not accessing the money.

Members asked that the process be as transparent as possible. The Leader suggested that the Head of Community and Partnership services could produce a form which asked members what they intended to spend the money on.

DECISION:

- 1. The 2008/09 Community Leadership fund be used to contribute to the priorities contained within the Corporate Plan, the Sustainable Community Strategy and local Ward Priorities, including PACT priorities.**
- 2. The revised application procedure be endorsed for 2008/09 in order to clearly identify the contribution of projects to priorities.**
- 3. The revised Conditions of Grant Aid be endorsed for 2008/09 in order to strengthen compliance with relevant legislation.**
- 4. The use of Community Leadership Funding on 26 projects in 2007/08 be noted.**

CAB.19 Wyre Forest District Council Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy 2008

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that set out the package of changes that have been introduced by the Department for Community and Local Government (DCLG) to modernise the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) programme and improve delivery of adaptations to the homes of disabled persons nationally.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Rural Affairs commented that the changes in commenced on 22nd May 2008. There was now an ability to include a 'claw back' clause for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) for over £5,000 as the new arrangements allowed Local Authorities the discretion to impose a limited charge on an adapted property so that if it was sold or transferred within ten years the grant could be reclaimed up to a maximum of £10,000. It was explained that a 'Kickstart' scheme had also been introduced. This scheme was an innovative regional partnership of local authorities that supported them to deliver successful loan based housing assistance services. Members noted that some of the DFG's would increase to £30,000 but the budget would continue to be managed at the level set out in the current housing capital programme.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

- 1. That the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy be amended to include mandatory legislative changes to the Disabled Facility Grants (DFG) scheme as set out in paragraph 3.2.of the report to Cabinet.**
- 2. That the Head of Planning, Health and Environment in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Head of Financial Services develops a policy proposal for the introduction of discretionary charges on properties which have received DFG funding and meet the criteria as set out by the Department for Communities and Local Government.**
- 3. That the Head of Planning, Health and Environment progresses the development of the Kickstart scheme in Wyre Forest.**

CAB.20 Play Builder Funding

A report was considered from the Head of Community and Partnership Services that explained the Playbuilder Government Funding and outlined potential applications for year one funding from the Worcestershire Play Partnership for Wyre Forest.

The Cabinet Member for Leisure Services stated that he welcomed the money that the scheme would bring to the district.

DECISION:

- 1. The receipt of the £1.1 million Playbuilder funding to the Worcestershire Play Partnership be welcomed.**
- 2. That approval is given to submit applications to the Worcestershire Play Partnership commissioning group as detailed in this report.**

CAB.21 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 asked the Cabinet to consider responses arising from the public consultation and sought approval of the proposed List of Buildings of Local Interest (the Local List) for Bewdley.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise stated that whilst Local Lists had been produced for Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn, this was the first produced for Bewdley. The list included buildings which the conservation officer, local Members and the public considered should be included. The Cabinet noted that the Regeneration and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee had also considered the List.

DECISION:

- 1. The buildings as set out in Appendix 4 in the report to Cabinet be included on the Local List of Buildings of Local Architectural and/or Historic Interest for Bewdley Parish.**

(The Cabinet agreed the recommendations of the Regeneration and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee as detailed above).

CAB.22 Prosperous Places : Taking forward the Review of Sub National Economic Development and Regeneration – CLG Consultation

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that asked the Cabinet to agree the Council's response to the latest Department for Communities and Local Government consultation on the Sub National Review implementation.

DECISION:

The consultation response which has already been sent to the Department for Communities and Local Government (as set out in Appendix 1 of the report to Cabinet) be confirmed.

CAB.23 Black County Joint Core Strategy Preferred 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 Local Development Framework documents for the black County and Dudley.

DECISION:

- 1. The representations submitted to the Black Country Local Authorities (Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall, and Wolverhampton) on the Joint Black Country Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper, as set out at Appendix 1 to the Cabinet report and the representations submitted to Dudley MBC on the Brierley Hill Area Action Plan Preferred Options Paper, as set out at Appendix 2 to the Cabinet Report be noted.**

CAB.24 Recommendations from Community Services Scrutiny Committee 19th June 2008

Recommendations from the Fixed Notices for Litter Review

The Chairman of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee commented that all members of the Review Panel had contributed towards a detailed review. A lot of interest was shown in the review and Cabinet were advised that the subject of litter was dear to the hearts of the residents of Wyre Forest. Parish Councils were keen to be included in the programme and a letter would be sent to them.

The Leader complimented the scrutiny committee on the work that they had carried out.

DECISION:

The recommendations as outlined below be agreed:

- 1. A litter programme be run during August and early September 2008, as this period sees the highest number of visitors to the District, to raise the profile of the Council's Enforcement powers.**
- 2. A second litter programme be run during term time in September 2008, in order that schools and the areas surrounding them can be targeted.**
- 3. The Operational Services Manager to ensure that refuse vehicles are emptied at regular intervals to ensure that litter does not overflow.**
- 4. A letter be distributed to all District, Town and Parish Councillors advising them of the procedure for reporting incidences of litter dropping.**
- 5. There should be a regular slot in Newswyre to promote the Council's enforcement policy and the number of fixed penalty notices issued, subject to the approval of the Newswyre Editorial Panel.**

CAB.25 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 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

CAB.26 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.27 Exempt Minutes

The Exempt Minutes of the Cabinet held on 24th April 2008 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

CAB.28 Centralised Office Accommodation

The Cabinet discussed plans relating to centralised office accommodation. A full report would be submitted to the next Council meeting.

The meeting ended at 7.12 pm.

This page has been left intentionally blank.