

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

THE EARL BALDWIN SUITE, DUKE HOUSE, CLENSMORE STREET,  
KIDDERMINSTER

22ND JANUARY 2009 (6:00 PM)

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**PRESENT:**

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

**OBSERVERS:**

Councillors: M Ahmed, J Aston, J Baker, G W Ballinger, A J Buckley, P Dyke, Mrs J Fairbrother-Millis, P B Harrison, M A W Hazlewood, J Holden, M B Kelly, H J Martin, D J Millis, C D Nicholls, Mrs F M Oborski, M Partridge, J Phillips, M A Salter, J Thomas, N J Thomas, S J Williams and G C Yarranton.

**CAB.152 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

**CAB.153 Declarations Of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

**CAB.154 Minutes**

**DECISION: The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 18th December 2008 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**CAB.155 Call Ins**

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

**CAB.156 Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

**CAB.157 Public Participation**

No members of the public had registered to speak at the Cabinet meeting.

**CAB.158 Leader's Announcements**

The Leader made no announcements.

**CAB.159 Financial Strategy 2009/2012 (incorporating Revenue and Capital Budgets)**

A number of reports were considered from the Head of Financial Services regarding the Financial Strategy for 2009/2012.

The Leader outlined the issues which the Council had to deal with including the loss of interest from investments made by the Council. This had resulted in a significant reduction in expected income. He also alluded to the money that remained with the collapsed Icelandic Banks. The severe economic downturn had also impinged upon the property and retail sectors and affected other income streams of the Council. He reported that there was a projected deficit of £2 million which the Council would need to address. It was therefore imperative to take steps to balance the budget and the Corporate Management Team had taken a series of strategic steps to address this. A significant restructure would take place that would ensure that services that were delivered were changed and streamlined which would result in a more efficient and effective use of resources. It was proposed that 30 to 40 posts would be removed from the establishment.

The Leader drew Members' attention to a number of items proposed within the financial strategy including:

- Council tax would increase by 2.5%
- New waste reduction methods
- Increases in allotment charges
- Buying plants from an external source rather than the Council growing their own plants
- Removal of the weighbridge facility at Green Street
- Unmanned receptions in Council buildings
- Charging for pest control
- Restructuring of play development service
- Restructuring of the revenue section
- Freezing of grant aid to parishes
- Additional charges concerning electoral administration including longer opening hours for polls and a more detailed canvas of electors
- Restructuring of support services within the Planning, Health and Environment section.
- Review of TIC services
- Slippages in the capital programme
- Reduction in overtime

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

1. **The Council's updated Medium Term Finance Strategy as contained in Appendix 5 of the report to Cabinet.**

- 2. Cabinet Proposals – taking into account the impact of the Council’s Capital and Revenue Budgets for 2009/2012 as contained in Appendix 5 of the report to Cabinet.**
- 3. The level of net expenditure and resultant Council Tax for 2009/2012 as per paragraph 3.8 of the report to Cabinet.**
- 4. Income Service Options, including appropriate revision of fees and charges and the impact on the Council’s Revenue Budget for 2009/2012, as shown in the report to Cabinet.**
- 5. The Council’s policy relating to Working Balances, Reserves and Provisions detailed in Appendix 4 of the report to Cabinet and note the availability of Resources and Provision detailed in Appendix 4 and note the availability of Resources outlined in Paragraph 7 and Appendix 4 of the report to Cabinet.**
- 6. A consultation exercise for the budget process in accordance with Council’s Budget Consultation Strategy as contained in Appendix 6 of the report to Cabinet.**
- 7. The public and stakeholders will be invited to the February meeting of Cabinet on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2009 to share opinions on the budget proposals.**
- 8. The efficiency targets as detailed in a separate report within the Budget book presented to Cabinet.**
- 9. The efficiency targets as detailed in a separate report to Cabinet (paragraph 17 refers).**
- 10. Priorities for 2009/2012 as detailed in Appendix 7 of the report to Cabinet.**

**Capital Programme 2009/2010 Onwards**

**RECOMMEND:**

- 1. The approval of the Capital Strategy, Base Capital programme and Vehicle and Equipment and Renewal Schedule as set out in Appendices 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the report to Cabinet.**

- 2. Cabinet determine variations to the Capital Programme and Vehicle Equipment and Systems Renewal Schedule in accordance with the Council's budget process, taking into account identified delays in those schemes for which there are no existing contractual commitments and do not adversely affect front line services.**
- 3. The Head of Financial Services fund the Vehicle, Equipment and System Renewal Schedule by means of Prudential Borrowing (repayments based on anticipated life of Vehicle, Equipment or Systems).**
- 4. To note that the Council has agreed to dispose of surplus assets in order to generate new usable capital receipts for the Single Site Project where this is proven to be economically viable in accordance with the Asset Management Plan. Should the Council's disposal strategy differ from the adopted Asset Management Plan, the Head of Property and Operational Services will present a new Plan to the Council for adoption prior to consideration by the Government Office for the West Midlands.**
- 5. That funding for the application to government Office for a Capitalisation Direction of £2 million to relieve pressure on the revenue budget approved from unallocated Housing Capital Receipts or Prudential Borrowing.**
- 6. Any unallocated non Housing Capital receipts be applied at year end by Head of Financial Services in consultation with the Chief Executive in accordance with the delegated authority approved at Council on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2008.**

**Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 – Efficiency Gains 2008/2009 – 2011/2012**

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

- 1. The endorsement of the 2008/2009 estimated total net value of ongoing cash-releasing value for money gains.**
- 2. Preparation of a new strategy in order to achieve the future efficiency targets required under CSR07.**

**Risk Management and the Budget Process**

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

**The Budget Risk Management process be endorsed and consider the contents of the report to Cabinet in arriving at the Budget Strategy 2009/2011.**

**Income Service Options 2009/2010**

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

**Approval of increases in fees and charges and consequential income outlined in the Income Service Options attached to the report to Cabinet.**

**Cab.160 Worcestershire Sustainable Community Strategy 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 2008 - 2013**

A report was considered from the Head of Community and Partnership Services that recommended to Council that the revised Sustainable Community Strategy for Worcestershire be endorsed.

The Leader commented that this was an overarching strategic vision of the priorities of the Council that aimed to meet the expectations of those who lived and worked in the district.

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

**The revised Sustainable Community Strategy for Worcestershire be endorsed.**

**CAB.161 The Church Street Conservation Area – Results of Consultation on Conservation Area Character Appraisal**

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that asked the Cabinet to consider the results of the public consultation on the draft Character Appraisal for the Church Street Conservation Area in Kidderminster and to agree the final document.

**DECISION**

**The Church Street Conservation Area Character Appraisal be approved.**

**CAB.162 Recommendations from Corporate Services 8<sup>th</sup> January 2009**

**(i) Recommendations from Section 106 Review Panel**

Councillor J Holden, the Chairman of the Section 106 Review Panel presented the recommendations. He expressed concern that some catholic schools were not benefiting from Section 106 monies. The schools in question had been told that this was because of the catchment area. He had undertaken some further research since the Corporate Services meeting that supported his concerns. He wished to hold a meeting with the head teachers and put together a programme that could be submitted to Worcestershire County Council who had responsibility for education matters.

**DECISION** the recommendations listed below be noted:

1. **Ward Councillors should be consulted when there was a possibility of open space Section 106 monies being available to provide facilities in their Ward with advice from Officers on location and need.**

**As there would be a short timescale for responses due to the requirements on determination of planning applications, the consultation scheme to be provided by the Head of Planning, Health & Environment to suit those timescales and to fully comply with operational and legislative requirements and Government Circular Guidance and include provision for a final decision by the Head of Planning, Health & Environment.**

2. **The Head of Planning, Health & Environment to provide Councillors with the Annual Summary of the Operation of the Section 106 Education Contributions policy in the Wyre Forest district when it is received from Worcestershire County Council.**
3. **Amendments to be made to the Section 106 Monitoring Sheets. They would include more detailed information in respect of contributions received and spent and a checklist for officers to ensure there has been appropriate Member consultation. Business (Service) Continuity Plan**

- (ii) **Recommendations on Business (Service) Continuity Plan**

**DECISION:**

**The Business (Service) Continuity Plan for 2008 be endorsed.**

**CAB.163 DECISION:**

**The Business (Service) Continuity Plan for 2008 be endorsed.**

**CAB.164 Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**DECISION:**

**That 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 item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of “exempt information” as defined in paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.**

**CAB.165 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.166 Divisional Management Restructuring – Transformational Change**

A report was considered from the Chief Executive that outlined the proposed Divisional Management Restructure.

**CAB.167 Cost Implications of Planning (Enforcement) Committee resolution to take Direct Action**

The report was withdrawn to allow further information to be gathered.

The meeting closed at 7.18 pm.