

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

Wednesday 25th February 2009

Nominations for Outside Body
Wyre Forest Highways Partnership Forum

Background

At the meeting of the County Council Cabinet on 26th September 2008 it was agreed that following consultation with partners, the highways partnerships be reorganised so as to retain a Forum for each district area. It was also recommended that each District Council be invited to nominate two non voting representatives to attend Forum meetings for that District Area.

A copy of the report and recommendations from Worcestershire County Council meeting are attached as appendix A.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: That two non voting District Council Members be nominated to join the Wyre Forest Highways Partnership Forum.



Cabinet
26 September 2008

12. REVIEW OF HIGHWAYS PARTNERSHIP FORUMS

Recommendation

1. The Director of Environmental Services recommends that:
 - (a) having regard to the recent consultation with community partners, the Highways Partnership Forums be reorganised so as to retain a Forum for each District area and membership of each Forum to comprise all County Councillors for Divisions within that area;
 - (b) each District Council be invited to nominate up to two non-voting representatives to attend Forum meetings for that District area; and (A514)
 - (c) he be authorised to finalise the detailed arrangements for the operation of the Forums, including terms of reference and operating procedures, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Environment.

Background Information

2. Currently, each Forum comprises three County Council members and three District Council members, with other members able to attend, but not participate in any voting that may take place. The Forum meetings have operated differently in each District area.

3. At its meeting on 8 February 2008, the Cabinet approved a consultation with community partners regarding the future operation of the Highways Partnership Forums, for the reasons set out in the report to that meeting.

Purpose of Forums

4. The Highways Forums will provide members with an opportunity to receive reports from officers regarding all relevant highway issues in each District. This will typically include a maintenance programme and a progress report on outstanding traffic management schemes and Orders. Officers will also report on significant development control matters and major improvement schemes for the area. Members will have the opportunity to raise matters with officers and advise of priorities and key concerns.

Consultation

5. All 57 County Councillors were consulted over this proposal. 23 individual replies were received, together with a response from the Labour Group Leader on behalf of his

Analysis of Consultation

Group.

6. All six District Councils were consulted.

7. Formal replies were received from Worcester City Council and Wychavon District Council, and a response from the members of Redditch Highways Partnership Forum. Individual responses were also received from three Wychavon District Councillors, one Wyre Forest District Councillor and two Bromsgrove District Councillors.

8. The overwhelming view from County Councillors was that they wanted to see a local member panel comprising all of the County Councillors from each Division in the District. Many expressed concern that District Councillors were raising issues within their Division of which they were unaware. Most members did say, however, that the views of District Councillors were important and that there should be a means of these being raised at meetings. Most County Councillors did not, however, want District Councillors to have voting rights.

9. Redditch HPU Forum wanted the Forum to remain in its current format, fully including District Councillors, and this view was shared by three County Councillors. Other Councillors wanted to see the meetings held in the evenings with a slot for public participation.

10. The District Councillors responding individually wished either to retain the current involvement of District Councillors, expand this, and/or include Parish Councils. They pointed out that members of the public do not generally distinguish between tiers of authority and tend to raise highway issues directly with elected members irrespective of them being County or District.

11. Wychavon District Council welcomed the consultation and responded that the existing Forum in Wychavon works well. They wished to see clarity over the objectives of the review and future purpose of the Forums as a pre-cursor to the review. Essentially they felt that the composition of the Forum would be dependent on first resolving its principal roles and responsibilities. They also wanted Parish Councils to be consulted, expressed concern that there would be opportunities to raise District issues, and raised the question of an opportunity to create a more meaningful and structured platform for highway issues for the public and the PACT process.

12. Worcester City Council wanted the review to take an opportunity to create a local Forum addressing wider issues such as producing a seamless street scene service, land drainage and community safety. They also understood the desire for the Forum being composed of all County

Agenda and Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 8 February 2008

Consultation documents and responses