

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
CABINET
THE EARL BALDWIN SUITE, DUKE HOUSE, CLENSMORE STREET,
KIDDERMINSTER
23RD JUNE 2009 (6:00PM)**

Present:

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

Observers:

Councillors Mrs F M Oborski. and K J Stokes.

CAB.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs A T Hingley.

CAB.2 Declarations of Interest

Councillor S J M Clee declared a personal interest in agenda item number 9.2 Amended Section 136 Grant Aid Bewdley Town Council 2009/10 as he is a member of Bewdley Town Council.

CAB.3 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 23rd April 2009 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

Mr Tony Hinton had registered to speak on behalf of the Executive Committee and members of the Kidderminster Branch of the Royal British Legion. He spoke in relation to Agenda item number 7.2 in relation to Kidderminster War Memorial.

Referring to the refurbishment of the war memorial he asked the Cabinet and District Council to support the provision of 2 flag poles to be placed either side of the war memorial. Moreover he commented that the Kidderminster Branch of the Royal British Legion offered to maintain the placement of flags on appropriate days and he thanked the Leader and the Council for their support with regard to this project.

CAB.7 Leader's Announcements

The Leader informed Members that Keith Burgess, Operational Services Manager, would be leaving the authority on Friday 10th July 2009 to take up a new position with the Community Housing Group. He thanked him for stepping up when Managers had been absent and for taking on some large projects on behalf of the Council and commended him for his loyal service and commitment.

The Chief Executive echoed the Leader's comments and wished him well on behalf of the Management Team and staff.

CAB.8 Kidderminster War Memorial

A report was considered from the Director of Legal and Corporate Services that sought approval for the allocation of monies from the Council's War Memorial Fund.

The Leader informed Members that it was intended to provide two new flagpoles either side of the war memorial in Kidderminster and to provide illumination of the war memorial. He concurred with what Mr Hinton had said earlier in that not only the soldiers who had been killed in the world wars, but also those who had been killed in recent conflicts should be honoured, as they had given their lives for freedom and democracy. He told Members that he was proud of the work of the Memorial War Trust in bringing the refurbishment project to fruition. He perceived that it was a monument that was fit for those who had given the ultimate sacrifice. Funding had been obtained from District Councillors who had allocated their 'Locally Determined Funding' and also from the Kidderminster Charter Trustees. Members were informed that the sum of £2,000 would be allocated to the Kidderminster War Memorial Trust and £1,000 to both Bewdley and Stourport War Memorials.

The Deputy Leader echoed the sentiments of the Leader.

A Member queried whether it would be possible to consider the use of solar power for illuminating the war memorial as it would promote a green image and help reduce carbon reduction targets.

The Chairman of the Kidderminster Branch of the Royal British Legion thanked the Cabinet for supporting the refurbishment project and commented that they intended to include a further 73 names on the memorial and would be providing a roll of honour in St. Mary's Church of all those who had lost their lives from the Boer War until present day.

DECISION:

Authority be delegated to the Director of Legal and Corporate Services and the Director of Resources to:-

- 1. Obtain up to date quotations in accordance with the Council's standing Orders relating to Contracts for the erection of two new flag poles and installation of lighting at the Kidderminster War Memorial, St. Mary's Church, Kidderminster ("the Works").**
- 2. To apply for any planning consent which may be required for the Works to be carried out.**
- 3. To enter into any agreements which may be required with Worcestershire County Council to allow the lighting poles to be placed on the Highway and to contribute towards the cost of the electricity supply.**
- 4. To apply for any funding which may be available towards the cost of the Works.**
- 5. To authorise the Works to be carried out with a maximum cost of £7,553.7.**
- 6. To allocate from the Council's War Memorial Fund, the sum of £2,000 to the Kidderminster War Memorial Trust.**
- 7. To allocate from the Council's War Memorial Fund the sum of £1,000 to each of the Bewdley and Stourport War Memorials.**

CAB.9 Updated Corporate Plan (2008-2011)

A report was considered from the Chief Executive that outlined the updated priority action plans for 2009/2010 in the Council's Corporate Plan 2008 – 2011.

The Leader explained that Appendix A of the report outlined the changes and that the targets had been slightly higher. He gave grateful thanks to the officers and their teams for their work on the Corporate Plan.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

The updated Corporate Plan (2008-2011), as set out in Appendix A of the report to Cabinet, be adopted

CAB.10 The Place Survey

A report was considered from the Director of Community and Partnership Services that outlined the provisional results of the statutory Place Survey 2008.

The Cabinet Member for Community and Partnership Services stated that the Place Survey was aimed at capturing the views of local people. Since the publication of the 2006 Local Government White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' there had been a new focus in the way local public sector agencies worked and reported their performance. Improving outcomes for local people and places was now at the heart of local service provision with a move away from the previous emphasis on processes, institutions and inputs. He commented that the Place Survey played an important role in trying to measure these improved outcomes and replaced the Best Value User Satisfaction Survey. Moreover the Place Survey captured the views of local people, their experiences and perceptions rather than about the Council specifically so that solutions for the district could reflect local opinions and preferences.

DECISION: The provisional results of the statutory Place Survey 2008, as set out in Appendix A of the report to Cabinet be noted, and used to inform the Council's service and improvement planning for 2009/10.

CAB.11 Final Accounts 2008/09

A report was tabled from the Director of Resources that asked the Cabinet to approve a pre-audit summary copy of the Council's Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2008/2009.

The Cabinet Member for Resources commented on the excellent work of the treasury management team who had adopted smarter ways of generating savings. Members were informed that a saving of £160,000 had been made as a result of renegotiating the Council's insurances. He applauded the Treasury Team for driving through big savings which fitted in with the Council's principle of doing better for less. It was noted that the Council was working within its original set budget whilst continuing to strive to make efficiencies and work smarter.

The Leader also congratulated the Finance Team especially for what had been achieved in light of collapsed interest rates. He applauded the way that the Finance Team had brought the budgets back in line despite difficult circumstances.

DECISION:

- 1. The Pre-Audit Summary Statement of Accounts 2008/2009 be approved.**
- 2. It be noted that the additional reserves of £46,080 generated from the 2008/2009 surplus would be reconsidered in accordance with the Council's Finance Strategy as part of the 2010/2013 Budget Process.**

CAB.12 Amended Section 136 Grant Aid to Bewdley Town Council 2009/2010

A report was considered from the Director of Resources that asked the Cabinet to consider an amended request by Bewdley Town Council for payment of their £12,007 Section 136 Grant Aid for 2009/2010.

The Cabinet Member for Resources commented that he was delighted to hear that the Town Council intended to invest in the Wyre Hill Play Area.

DECISION:- the grant aid application be approved, with payment being made upon receipt that the expenditure has been incurred.

CAB.13 Housing Benefit Overpayment Debt Position as at 31st March 2009

A report was considered from the Director of Resources that informed Members of the Housing Benefit Overpayment debt position as at 31st March 2009.

The Cabinet Member for Resources commented that it was vital to appreciate that the total housing expenditure incurred by the Council was significant and had risen over the year. However it was important to appreciate that the proportion of housing benefit overpayment was small in comparison with the total expenditure. He pointed out that in terms of performance indicators that the Council currently exceeded all its relevant targets.

DECISION: The Housing Benefit overpayment debt level, age of debt and performance against targets, as at the 31st March 2009, be noted.

CAB.14 Proposal for the Development of the Worcestershire Housing Strategy

A report was considered from the Director of Planning and Regulatory Services that asked the Cabinet to agree that Wyre Forest District Council continued to take part in the discussions taking place between partner organisations regarding the future development of strategic housing within Worcestershire.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Regulatory Services commented that historically the Council's Strategy had only been based on the Wyre Forest area, however, on Government guidance it was suggested that it should cover the sub regional area. If the Cabinet gave agreement to the proposals contained within the report it would allow the Director of Planning and Regulatory Services to develop a Project Plan in conjunction with other Districts.

DECISION: It be agreed that the Director of Planning & Regulatory Services and his officers continue to further develop the proposed arrangements as outlined within the report to Cabinet and to commence with the development of a Worcestershire Housing Strategy.

CAB.15 Flooding and Land Drainage – Enforcement Protocol and Flood and Water Management Bill

A report was considered from the Director of Planning and Regulatory Services that asked the Cabinet to agree the allocation of the remaining flood related external funding, agree the adoption of a common Worcestershire Land Drainage Enforcement Protocol and advised Members on the progress and possible implications of the Draft Floods and Water Management Bill 2009.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services reminded Members that funding had been received from the Government, Red Cross and Advantage West Midlands to benefit individuals and local communities who were flooded. It was noted that most of the money had been spent but the Cabinet was being asked to make a decision on how to spend the remaining monies.

DECISION:

1. **The remaining flood related external funding be allocated as described in the Flood Related Funding Statement in Appendix 1 of the report to Cabinet and that the Director of Planning & Regulatory Services be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing & Environmental Services, to make any necessary amendments to the apportionment of the monies.**
2. **The potential implications of the Draft Floods and Water Management Bill 2009 as set out in Appendix 3 of the report to Cabinet be noted.**
3. **RECOMMENDED to Council that:**

The Worcestershire Land Drainage Enforcement Protocol as set out in Appendix 2 be adopted as normal working practice.

CAB.16 Wyre Forest District Local Development Framework: Consultation on Site Allocations and Policies Issues and Options Paper and Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan Issues and Options Paper

A report was considered from the Director of Planning and Regulatory Services that informed the Cabinet of the level and scope of the responses received in relation to the public consultation undertaken on the Site Allocations and Policies Issues and Options Paper and the Kidderminster Central Area Action plan (KCAAP) Issues and Options Paper and set out how these would be taken forward to inform the next stages of the Local Development Framework.

DECISION: The Director of Planning & Regulatory Services' recommendations in relation to the consultation responses received on the Site Allocations and Policies Issues and Options Paper and the Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan Issues and Options Paper as set out at Appendix 2 of the report to Cabinet be agreed.

CAB.17 Recommendations from the Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee 18th June 2009 re: Wyre Forest District Local Development Framework : Consultation on Site Allocations and Policies Issues and Options Paper and Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan Issues and Options Paper

DECISION: The recommendation be agreed (as set out above).

CAB.18 Access – Land Adjacent to Puxton Marsh SSSI

A report was considered from the Director of Legal and Corporate Services that asked the Cabinet to consider a request from the owners of land adjacent to Puxton marsh SSSI to vary the route of the Council's access over the land onto the SSSI.

DECISION: The Director of Legal and Corporate Services, in consultation with the Director of Community and Partnership Services receive delegated authority to enter into a Deed of Variation to revise the route of the access to Puxton marsh SSSI to enable development of the land adjoining the SSSI to take place.

CAB.19 Recommendations from Employment and Economic Prospects Review Panel

The Cabinet considered recommendations from the Employment and Economic Prospects Review Panel and these were agreed as set out below:

DECISION:

- 1. To support the British Sugar Site in forging links with local Universities by facilitating discussion with the Chamber of Commerce and Worcester and/or Wolverhampton Universities**
- 2. To support independent retailers through the Learning and Skills Council funded 'Skillsmart' project due to take place in Kidderminster Town Centre during summer 2009.**
- 3. To advise the Chamber of Commerce and Federation of Small Businesses of the 'supply2gov' website which Wyre Forest District council advertises its tenders on, with a view to them communicating the information to local businesses.**
- 4. To encourage local schools to provide the widest possible range of diploma craft skills courses.**
- 5. To encourage further education providers to look at the mix of skills provided through their courses and to ensure that it meets local demand.**

6. **For the Local Development Framework (LDF) process to encourage the provision of incubator, nursery and starter units to aid the growth of small businesses in the district.**
7. **To continue to support the development of, and the proposals within, the Kidderminster Regeneration Prospectus.**

CAB.20 Recommendations from Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee re : Review of the Hurcott Road Local Lettings Policy

DECISION: Item deferred until 21st July 2009 Cabinet meeting.

CAB.21 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 consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of “exempt information” as defined in paragraphs 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

CAB.22 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.23 Housing Benefit Overpayment Debt – Write Off of Amounts Outstanding

A report was considered from the Director of Resources that asked the Cabinet to consider writing off Housing Benefit Overpayment Debts.

The Cabinet approved the write off of these debts.

CAB.24 Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates Write Off of Amounts Outstanding

A report was considered from the Director of Resources that asked the Cabinet to give consideration to writing off a sum in respect of Council Taxes and to note write offs in respect of National Non-Domestic Rates.

The Cabinet agreed to write off a sum in respect of Council Tax and noted the write offs in respect of National Non-Domestic Rates.

CAB.25 Property Matters

A report was considered from the Director of Legal and Corporate Services that sought approval to granting a new 25 lease for a property in Kidderminster.

The Cabinet approved the granting of a new 25 year lease.

CAB.26 The Provision of a New District Cemetery, Crematorium and Associated Facilities

A report was considered from the Chief Executive that recommended to Council to go out to tender to appoint a new partner to construct the new district cemetery, crematorium, associated facilities and to operate the facilities and the whole cemetery site.

The Cabinet recommended to Council that approval be given to the proposals as set out above.

The meeting finished at 6.40 pm.