

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
CABINET
THE EARL BALDWIN SUITE, DUKE HOUSE, CLENSMORE STREET,
KIDDERMINSTER
24TH NOVEMBER 2009 (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, H J Martin and S J Williams.

CAB.105 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

CAB.106 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

CAB.107 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 27th October 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB.108 Call Ins

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

CAB.109 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

CAB.110 Leader's Announcements

The Leader informed the Cabinet that the next meeting of Council on Wednesday 2nd December 2009 would be held in the Earl Baldwin Suite, Duke House, Kidderminster as this room was fully Disability Discrimination Act compliant.

Thanks were also given to the Interim Chief Executive, Diane Tilley for the advice and assistance she had given whilst the Council had been awaiting the arrival of its new Chief Executive.

CAB.111 Draft Mobile and Flexible Working Policy

A report was considered from the Interim Chief Executive and the Director of Planning and Regulatory Services that set out the procedure and standards for mobile and flexible working in Wyre Forest District Council.

Members were advised that the adoption of the policy would progress how staff worked in the authority and would provide the tools to enable them to work in a more efficient manner to suit their own styles. It was noted that in general staff appeared to be keen to adopt this mode of working.

Decision: RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

The draft Mobile and Flexible Working Policy be adopted for implementation from 1st January 2010.

CAB.112 Recommendations from Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee 12th November 2009 regarding the Draft Mobile and Flexible Working Policy

The Cabinet considered a recommendation from the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee. The Chairman of the Committee informed the Cabinet that the Policy had been discussed in great detail by Members and positive comments had been made. It was noted that no one had voted against the policy.

Decision: the recommendation as set out below be AGREED:

Cabinet approve the draft policy for adoption by Council, subject to consideration having been given to the feedback received from the Committee.

CAB.113 Budget Monitoring – Second Quarter 2009/2010

A report was considered from the Director of Resources regarding the monitoring of the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003 and Comprehensive Performance Guidelines.

Cabinet was informed that there were no significant changes in the figures compared with quarter one. However there were some issues to consider, including reduced income as a result of external tree work, loss of revenue from the garage service, planning and land charges.

The Cabinet Member for Resources wished to place on record his thanks to Steve Brant and David Buckland for the excellent negotiations they had undertaken in retrieving money for recycling from the County Council that had originally ceased at the end of March 2009.

Further savings had been made through restructuring of staff and the Corporate Management Team were formally thanked for their continued efforts to drive out inefficiencies in order to make savings

DECISION:

1. That the projected budget variations and comments outlined within this report be noted. Information from this report will feed into the ensuing Financial Strategy;
2. That the Income Generation Projection Report be noted;
3. That the Service Directors continue to monitor closely the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme, particularly in relation to implementation of Cabinet Proposals and non-policy saving approvals;
4. That the updated Capital Programme and Vehicle, Equipment and Systems Renewal Schedule 2009/2010, brought about by slippage and reassessment, be noted;
5. That the Cabinet Proposal and Non Policy Saving Progress Reports be noted;
6. That the revised Budget Risk Matrix be noted;
7. That the updated Prudential Indicators be noted; and
8. That the Supplementary/Virement report be noted.

CAB.114 Housing Benefit Overpayment Debt Position as at 30th September 2009

A report was considered from the Director of Resources that informed the Cabinet of the Housing Benefit Overpayment Debt position as at 30th September 2009, together with details of performance against targets.

It was noted that the total debt was £687,004 which was a small decrease. However in the context that total housing benefits expenditure was in the region of £21.9 million the debt was not large and the department's performance was consistently good.

DECISION:

The Housing Benefit overpayment debt level, age of debt and performance against targets, as at the 30th September 2009, be noted.

CAB.115 Future of Waste and Recycling Services and The Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy

A report was considered from the Director of Resources that presented options in relation to the Future of Waste and Recycling Strategy for the Council, following the recent investigations of the Waste Review Panel.

Cabinet Members were informed that the report set out the Council's future strategy. It was noted that the strategy had not been refreshed since its inception in 2003. The changes that had been planned were significant and built on the recommendations carried out by the Domestic Waste Collection and Recycling Review Panel.

The Council planned to change its recycling service and would forgo its recycling boxes in favour of a wheelie bin and would provide a fortnightly service. It was also planned to offer a green service to 5,000 households in the District on a first come first serve basis.

The Cabinet were informed that the new strategy would be more efficient and cost effective and contained many positives. It was noted that the proposals had been scrutinised by the Corporate Resources Scrutiny Committee's Waste Review Panel.

Concern was raised about maggots being present in the wheelie bins in hot weather. The Leader confirmed that the Council would still clean and swap bins whilst fortnightly recycling was still in progress.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

- 1. That the Council should implement a revised method of collecting recyclable materials, in line with the recommendations from the Waste Review Panel;**
- 2. That the principle of a paid for Green Waste Service be introduced to coincide with the new recycling arrangements;**
- 3. That £1,942,500 be allocated within the capital programme. Delegated authority be given to the Director of Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources to identify the most prudent method of financing including identifying existing reserves or prudential borrowing;**
- 4. The Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy be agreed, subject to agreement with the County Council being reached on an adequate level of financial support being provided to all Worcestershire Districts, to ensure the continuation of, and improvement to recycling initiatives. The Director of Resources be delegated responsibility to undertake such negotiations in consultation with the Cabinet Member.**

CAB.116 Tree and Woodland Management Plan

A report was considered from the Director of Community and Partnership Services that recommended to Council that the Tree and Woodland Management Plan be adopted by Council and the Action Points be implemented.

Members were informed that there were currently 70 parcels of land containing trees within Council ownership and the report set out the responsibility of the Council for managing corporate risk. It was necessary for the Council to continue to act responsibly by updating the Council's Tree and Woodland Management Plan. It was noted that inspections would be carried out over a 2 year period and that £10,000 would be allocated towards updating the plan over the next 2 years.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

- 1. The Tree and Woodland Management Plan be adopted and the Action Points be implemented**
- 2. The allocation of £10,000 for 2010/11 and £10,000 for 2011/12 be used from savings to be identified from the Parks and Green Spaces budget for each of these years.**
- 3. The survey will take place over two financial years as part of a scheduled programme.**

CAB.117 Draft Ribbesford Conservation Area Appraisal – Consultation Proposals

A report was considered from the Director of Planning and Regulatory Services that presented the draft Conservation Area Appraisal for the Ribbesford 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 to the Cabinet Report, be supported and that officers be authorised to undertake a public consultation on the Appraisal before reporting back with a further recommendation.

CAB.118 Recommendations from the Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee 11th November 2009 regarding the Draft Ribbesford Conservation Area Appraisal – Consultation Proposals

The Cabinet considered recommendations from the Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on the Draft Ribbesford Conservation Area Appraisal – Consultation Proposals.

DECISION: the recommendation as set out below be AGREED:

To agree to undertake a public consultation to gauge the opinion of all affected persons, with a report back to Members at the end of the consultation period, to indicate the level of public support for the Appraisal, and its contents.

CAB.119 Wyre Forest District Local Development Framework Core Strategy - Submission

A report was considered from the Director of Planning and Regulatory Services that sought the endorsement of the Core Strategy and its accompanying sustainability appraisal for pre-submission publication and submission to the Secretary of State. The Cabinet was also asked to authorise officers to undertake the necessary arrangements for pre-submission publication and submission.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

1. **The Core Strategy (attached at Appendix 1 to this report), be approved for pre-submission publication and subsequent submission to the Secretary of State in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008.**
2. **That authority to make any necessary changes to the Core Strategy prior to or resulting from pre-submission publication be delegated to the Director of Planning & Regulatory Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Economic Regeneration.**
3. **That the Director of Planning & Regulatory Services be given delegated authority to determine the final format and presentation of the Core Strategy.**

DECISION:

- 4 **The arrangements for the pre-submission publication and submission of the Core Strategy be undertaken in accordance with Appendix 3 to this report.**

CAB.120 Recommendations from the Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Meeting, Wednesday 11th November 2009 regarding Wyre Forest District Local Development Framework – Submission Core Strategy

The Cabinet considered a recommendation from the Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee regarding the Wyre Forest District Local Development Framework – Submission Core Strategy.

DECISION the recommendation as set out below be AGREED:

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL :

The Draft Pre-Submission Publication Core Strategy, its accompanying Sustainability Appraisal Report and the arrangements for Pre-Submission Publication, as set out at appendices 1 to 3 of the report to the Committee be approved.

CAB.121 Wyre Forest District Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report 2008/09

A report was considered from the Director of Planning and Regulatory Services that informed Cabinet members about the production and content of the Wyre Forest District Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report for 2008/09 and sought approval for submission.

DECISION:

1. **The Wyre Forest District Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report 2008/09 be submitted to the Secretary of State.**
2. **The Director of Planning & Regulatory Services be authorised to make any minor amendments to the text in the light of further information received prior to submission.**

CAB.122 Recommendations from the Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Meeting, Wednesday 11th November 2009 regarding the Wyre Forest District Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report 2008/09

The Cabinet considered a recommendation from the Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee regarding the Wyre Forest District Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report 2008/09.

DECISION: the recommendation as set out below be AGREED:

The Wyre Forest District Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report 2008/09 be endorsed as drafted.

CAB.123 Temporary Accommodation Reduction Action Plan

A report was considered from the Director of Planning and Regulatory Services that provided Members with details of an Action Plan for reducing the use of temporary accommodation and improving the quality and cost of accommodation used. The report also outlined an Action Plan for the Mortgage Rescue Scheme to support homeless prevention.

The Cabinet were advised that temporary accommodation was not an ideal situation for people or for the Council. The Action Plan was very detailed and sought to address the problem for both parties. The Council aimed to get people out of temporary accommodation as soon as possible and was also trying to keep people in mortgage arrears in their homes via a Mortgage Rescue Scheme.

Thanks were given to the Housing Team for reducing the amount of people in temporary accommodation from 242 in 2008 to its current figure of 144. Currently staff worked to a target of limiting the amount of time people spent in temporary accommodation to 6 weeks and under. Another initiative of note that had commenced was starter tenancies.

Cabinet was advised that the performance of the Housing Team had outshone national trends.

DECISION:

1. **The Temporary Accommodation Reduction Action Plan as set out in Appendix 1 of the report to Cabinet be Approved.**
2. **The Mortgage Rescue Action Plan as set out in Appendix 2 of the report to Cabinet be approved.**

CAB.124 Recommendations from the Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Meeting, Wednesday 11th November 2009 regarding The Temporary Accommodation Reduction Action Plan

The Cabinet considered recommendations from the Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee regarding the Temporary Accommodation Reduction Action Plan.

DECISION: the recommendation as set out below be AGREED:

The Temporary Accommodation Reduction Plan (as attached to the original report as Appendix 1) and the supporting Mortgage Rescue Action Plan (as attached to the original report as Appendix 2) be approved.

CAB.125 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.126 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.127 Property Matters

A report was considered from the Director of Legal and Corporate Services that sought approval of the freehold transfer of a small parcel of land in Stourport. Approval was given to this request.

CAB.128 Property Rationalisation Strategy

A report was considered from the Director of Legal and Corporate Services that recommended to Council the Property Rationalisation Strategy be adopted.

CAB.129 Housing Benefit Overpayment Debt – 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 Housing Benefit overpayment debts. The Cabinet agreed to this request.

CAB.130 Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rates Write Off

A report was considered from the Director of Resource that asked Cabinet to write off an amount relating to outstanding Council Taxes and to note the write off of an amount in respect of National Non-Domestic Rates. The Cabinet endorsed this request.

The meeting closed at 6.51 pm