

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

THE EARL BALDWIN SUITE, DUKE HOUSE, KIDDERMINSTER

2ND DECEMBER 2009 (6.00PM)

Present for all or part of the meeting:

Councillors: M Ahmed, R L Akathiotis, J Aston, J Baker, G W Ballinger, A J Buckley, J-P Campion, S J M Clee, N J Desmond, H E Dyke, P Dyke, G H Eeles, B T Glass, D R Godwin, J Greener, P B Harrison, M J Hart, P V Hayward, S M Hayward, M A W Hazlewood, A T Hingley, J Holden, M B Kelly, H J Martin, S C Meekings, D J Millis, C D Nicholls, F M Oborski, T L Onslow, J Parish, J Phillips, M Price, K Prosser, M A Salter, M J Shellie, D R Sheppard, K J Stokes, J Thomas, S J Williams and G C Yarranton.

C.81

Prayers

Prayers were read by Reverend Gerald England of the United Reform Church.

C.82

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor N J Thomas.

C.83

Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

C.84

Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd October 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

C.85

Public Participation

No one had requested to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

C.86

Questions

The Council received a report setting out a range of questions from Councillors Martin and Sheppard, directed at the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members.

Question from Councillor Martin.

Wyre Forest District Council has had an exclusive contract for many years now with an outside contractor who provides all food and alcoholic drink at Council owned properties when Council or public events are taking place.

Can the Leader please advise:

- a. When this contract was last negotiated or renewed?
- b. When is it next up for renewal or renegotiation?
- c. Are the food and alcohol elements of the contract negotiated separately?
- d. What income, if any, does the Council earn from the operation of this arrangement? (If this final element of the question is considered exempt a written reply out of the public domain would be acceptable.)

Councillor Champion referred this matter to Councillor Hingley, the portfolio holder for Legal and Corporate Services.

Reply from Councillor Hingley

Regarding the Town Hall and Civic Hall caterers, the contract was renewed in December 2006 for the period April 20 07 until 31st March 2010. When it is due for renewal it will be renewed from 1st April 2010. The food and alcohol elements of the contract are negotiated separately. The contract is for the bar only element of the alcohol and we do not have a contract for food as all hirers make their own arrangements with caterers of their own choice. With reference to income, commission is paid to Wyre Forest on a sliding scale, over £350 it is 10% of gross takings, over £550 it is 15% of gross takings. In the last financial year the income from both sites was £47,490.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Martin

Thank you for the full and complete answer, I have no hidden agenda, and it is a tied contract. The feeling on the street is that hirers are being told that they have to use this contractor and this is quite worrying. My supplementary question is that can this be clarified to all staff that take bookings that it is not exclusive and that when it comes up for renewal that it goes to competitive tender so as to give people in Kidderminster an opportunity to tender?

Reply from Councillor Hingley

Yes on both counts. Clarification will be made and with regard to the new contract, a file is now open for all sorts of business models and I welcome ideas.

Question from Councillor Sheppard

Is the Council satisfied with the recent management of the Glades Leisure Centre?

Reply from Councillor Hart

I can confirm that the Glades is managed by DC Leisure and yes I am satisfied regarding the management of the leisure centre.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Sheppard

How is it that two longstanding bookers of the arena received phone calls recently from the Glades to advise that they were double booked and that they must move their booking date? Wyre Forest Model Railway Club had no alternative venue and could not change the date as too many people were involved and therefore this was cancelled. I am aware that Kidderminster Town Hall had received several enquiries

from other organisations that had been turned away from the Glades for the same reason.

Reply from Councillor Hart

I am sorry about the exhibition however I will take this away and liaise with the Director of Community and Partnership Services and will investigate and ascertain the facts from DC Leisure.

Question from Councillor Sheppard

There appears to be “deathly silence” regarding the future of the “Sugar Beet Site” on Stourport Road. What are the latest plans for this very important employment site?

Reply from Councillor Clee

There is no deathly silence, as we promote this at every opportunity. It is in private ownership, however the District, Worcestershire County Council and Advantage West Midlands include the site within the master plan and everything is being done to promote the site.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Sheppard

Would you agree that the site should be used for quality employment and possibly attract national organisations to get quality employment in this area as it is sadly lacking?

Reply from Councillor Clee

In the Local Development Framework this is exactly what is said that we want on this site and what is being promoted. A joint bid has been submitted with Worcestershire County Council accelerated zone bid and we are hopeful that we will be successful.

C.87

Chairman’s Communications

The Council received a list of functions attended by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman since the Council’s last meeting. The Chairman reminded Members of the Carol Concert that was being held on 13th December at St Mary’s in Kidderminster.

C.88

Leader’s Announcements and Reports

The Leader of the Council announced that he was pleased to report that a further £1.2 million was to be returned from the Icelandic Banks and of the two UK linked banks a 90% return was expected. The two year moratorium on Landsbanki, the wholly owned Icelandic Bank had passed and the Council was recorded as a priority local authority creditor and this should be confirmed by 10th January 2010 and the Council would be looking to receive a significant percentage of its investments back.

To conclude Councillor Campion thanked Diane Tilley for her work with the Council during her time as Interim chief Executive and a bouquet of flowers was presented.

Recommendations from Cabinet 27th October 2009**Asset Transfer Policy.**

The Council considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) from the Director of Legal and Corporate Services which recommended delegated authority be given to the Director of Legal and Corporate Services to agree the final form of the Policy.

The Portfolio Holder for Legal and Corporate Services introduced the report and explained that this had originated from the QUIRK review of public assets.

Decision: The draft Asset Transfer Policy be adopted by Wyre Forest District Council and the delegated authority be given to the Director of Legal and Corporate Services to agree the final form of the Policy

Recommendations from Cabinet 24th November 2009.**Draft Mobile and Flexible Working Policy.**

The Council considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) from the Director of Planning and Regulatory Services, which recommended that the Draft Mobile and Flexible Working Policy be adopted for implementation from 1st January 2010.

The Leader of the Council advised Members that this brought Council policies in line with modern thinking and enabled the Council and staff to operate in a more flexible manner. Moreover positive responses had been received from the consultation and it had been through the scrutiny process.

A debate ensued and Members raised their concerns on the implementation, suggesting that this should be considered further. However, the recommendation was supported by other Members who recognised the need for a flexible home working policy.

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

Future of Waste and Recycling Services and the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy.

The Council considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) from the Director of Resources which presented options in relation to the future waste and recycling strategy for the Council, following the recent investigations of the Waste Review Panel.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources introduced the report and advised Members that the strategy would provide a saving of more than £300,000 per annum whilst providing residents with better quality services and enabling better recycling thus enabling the Council to meet its 40% recycling target. He further thanked the Review Panel for its excellent work on the Strategy.

Members then debated the Strategy at length, in particular focussing on the accessibility of green recycling, the take up of the scheme and the cost for the public who may not be able to afford the £30 fee. Further points were then raised on the scope of the recycling and the materials that could be sorted and the frequency of collection.

In response to the points raised the Portfolio Holder for Resources advised Council that the £30 fee was a flat charge and there were no concessions or subsidies, and this was very favourable compared with other providers and extremely good value. The Council would monitor how popular the scheme was and if it was successful the Council would look at taking on extra staff to cope with the demand. Members were advised that the cost of a wheelie bin was £18 and should the public wish to keep their original recycling boxes they were welcome to do so, as it would be expensive to collect them. With reference to the points raised regarding weekly collection, Members were advised that this was not an option as European Union targets encouraged the Council to put less in landfill and to recycle more and if there were weekly collections then recycling targets would go down and landfill would increase.

The Cabinet Member emphasised that while the Joint strategy realised savings of over £300,000, he recognised that it was important that the recycling strategy and its impacts were communicated effectively. The Cabinet Member concluded that the EnviroSort plant was opening in phases and that currently there was no plan to widen the range of materials collected.

Decision:

- 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.**

18:45 Councillors Aston and Godwin left the meeting.

Tree and Woodland Management Plan.

The Council considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) from the Director of Community and Partnership Services, which recommended the Tree and Woodland Management Plan be adopted and the Action Points be implemented.

Decision:

- 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.**

Wyre Forest District Local Development Framework Core Strategy – Submission.

The Council considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) from the Principal Forward Planning Officer which sought Members' views on the pre-submission publication version of the Core Strategy.

Decision:

- 1. The Core Strategy (attached at Appendix 1 to the report to Cabinet), 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.**

18:47 Councillor Clee left the meeting.

C.90

Motions Submitted Under Standing Order No. D1 (1)

Council received a Motion submitted by Councillor FM Oborski and Councillor HE Dyke regarding the important role local Authorities play in encouraging their Communities to reduce their "Carbon Footprints".

Councillor Oborski introduced the Motion and explained the rationale for the proposal. This was seconded by Councillor H Dyke.

Members were advised that it would be appropriate for the motion to go Cabinet and information was needed on the financial impact of signing up to the 10:10 Campaign.

Decision: That this item be deferred and referred to Cabinet for consideration.

C.91 Urgent Motions Submitted Under Standing Order No. D1 (7)
No notices of motion were received in accordance with Standing Order D1(1).

C.92 Corporate Governance
The Council considered a report from the Director of Legal and Corporate Services which sought approval of the revised list of Chairmen and Vice Chairmen, following the death of Councillor M Partridge.

A brief discussion ensued on the appropriateness of the appointment of the Leader of the Council as Vice Chair of the Miscellaneous Functions Committee as it was felt there could be a possible conflict of interest. Members were reassured that this would not be the case and that this was a short term measure following the untimely death of Councillor Partridge.

Decision: That approval be given to the revised list of Chairman and Vice-Chairmen as attached to Appendix 1 of the report.

C.93 Exclusion of the Press and Public

Decision: 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 they involve the likely disclosure of “exempt Information” as defined in paragraphs 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

C.94 Recommendations from Cabinet 24th November 2009
The Council received a report (copies of which had been circulated) on the Property Rationalisation Strategy which had been considered by Cabinet on 24th November 2009.

The Portfolio Holder for Legal and Corporate Services outlined the content of the report to Council.

During debate a number of Members argued their aversion to the notion of a property rationalisation strategy that was linked to the Single Site proposal; however the Leader of the Council reminded Members that this matter had previously been before them for consideration.

Decision:

- 1. That the proposed Property Rationalisation Strategy be approved to give maximum flexibility for the efficient management of the Council's property portfolio and facilitate the move to Single Site.**
- 2. Delegated authority be given to the Director of Legal and Corporate Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Legal and Corporate Services to dispose of individual properties.**

There being no further business the meeting ended at 19:15.