

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC CENTRE, STOURPORT-ON-SEVERN

27TH JULY 2011 (6.00 PM)

**PRESENT:**

Councillors: M Ahmed, J Aston, J Baker, G W Ballinger, R Bishop, A J Buckley, J-P Campion, S J M Clee, N J Desmond, H E Dyke, P Dyke, N Gale, B T Glass, D R Godwin, J Greener, I Hardiman, P B Harrison, J A Hart, M J Hart, P V Hayward, V Higgs, A T Hingley, J Holden, T Ingham, M B Kelly, H J Martin, D J McCann, C D Nicholls, F M Oborski, T L Onslow, J W Parish, J Phillips, M Price, K H Prosser, C Rogers, M A Salter, A M Sewell, J A Shaw, D R Sheppard, N J Thomas, S J Williams, G C Yarranton

**C.26**

**Prayers**

Prayers were said by Reverend Linda Catlow from Wesley Methodist, Stourport & Alveley and Callow Hill & Areley Kings Methodist Churches.

**C.27**

**Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

**C.28**

**Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

**C.29**

**Minutes**

**Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 18th May 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**C.30**

**Public Participation**

No Members of the public wished to address Council in accordance with Council's scheme for public participation at meetings of Full Council.

**C.31**

**Questions**

No questions were received.

**C.32**

**Chairman's Communications**

The Council received a list of functions attended by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman since the Council's last meeting.

**C.33**

**Leader's Announcements and Report**

The Leader of the Council made the following announcements:

**Icelandic Update**

Council were advised that the ruling of the Icelandic District Court to confirm the “priority” status in relation to the Council’s Landsbanki investment of £3m had been appealed to the Icelandic Supreme Court.

The Council had now received confirmation that as expected the appeal would be heard during September this year and would be held on the 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>. Representatives from Local Government including Stephen Jones, Director of Finance at the Local Government Group would be present during the appeal, the result of which is expected in early October. Following this appeal there is no further right to have the decision reviewed. The Leader gave assurances to Council that as soon as any information is available it would be immediately shared.

Steady progress was also being made in relation to the recovery of the investments with the Heritable and Kaupthing Singer and Friedlander with regular dividend payments still being received.

To date the Council had received just over £3.6m in dividends from these two investments with further payments expected throughout the year. This means that for the Heritable the Council has recovered just over 60% of the original investment and currently around 58% for Kaupthing Singer and Friedlander. Members were advised that should further information emerge in relation to the recovery of these investments all members would be briefed accordingly.

**Leisure Review Consultation**

Council were advised that there was an ongoing consultation in relation to the future of the Councils leisure provision. Members were reminded that it was important to get views from all perspectives and the Council would like to hear from people whether they use the leisure centres or not. Moreover, residents could fill in a questionnaire online or collect one from the Leisure Centres, Worcestershire Hub or district libraries. The deadline for responses was 11<sup>th</sup> September 2011.

**C.34 Policy And Budget Framework – Matters which require a decision by Council**

**Recommendations from Cabinet – 21<sup>st</sup> June 2011**

**Christmas Holiday Arrangements:**

The Council considered a proposal in relation to changes to the Christmas holidays arrangement for Wyre Forest District Council staff during the period between Christmas Day and New Year with effect from Christmas 2011. Members were advised that there had been consultation with Staff and Unions and this also reflected practice in the private sector. Members were reassured that there would be no change to the current out of hour’s emergency provision.

**Decision: The Christmas holiday arrangements be agreed as detailed in paragraph 3.4 of the report to Cabinet.**

**Revised Media Protocol:**

This item was withdrawn and deferred to the meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2011.

**Recommendations from Cabinet – 19<sup>th</sup> July 2011**

**St Georges Hall, Bewdley.**

The Council considered a report detailing cash flow support to Bewdley Development Trust (BDT) to enable the drawdown of grant funding from the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) for the refurbishment/extension of St George's Hall, Bewdley.

Members were advised that this enabled the Council to support the refurbishment of the Hall without giving money, in effect to act as an overdraft facility should it be needed. Further, that there was a very sound business case that had full grant funding. Members were further advised that Treasurer was content with the level of risk to the Council, and that it enabled the Council to support community activities that need some support on grant funding spending.

**Decision:**

- 1. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2011/12 and Annual Investment Strategy 2011/12 be amended to enable cash flow support of up to £50k to be made available to support the refurbishment/extension of St George's Hall, Bewdley.**
- 2. Approval is given to establish a scheme to provide cash flow support for similar local community capital projects in line with the localism agenda. The broad parameters of the scheme being;**
  - Total limit of scheme £250,000 at any one time;**
  - No more than £100,000 to support to any one community group;**
  - Viable business case required to be provided to support any proposal;**
  - Cabinet to determine any such applications following consideration by the Treasury Management Review Panel.**

**C.35**

**Constitutional Updates.**

The Council was asked to consider amendments to the Constitution that were deferred at the meeting on 18 May. Members were reminded that there had been a training session on 6<sup>th</sup> July of which 22 Members had attended. Moreover, that the constitution needed to be modernised and that this part of the constitutional review was part of the process. Council was advised that Group Leaders had been asked for further comments following the training session and none had been received.

Members queried examples of how the delegations would work, in particular whether Members would be notified about items that affected their ward, or policy matters for example sustainable community strategy.

#### **Agenda Item No. 4**

Further discussion ensued on the ability of staff to appeal to Members should they be dismissed.

In response to the questions raised, the Chief Executive addressed Council and advised Members that Council will still agree policy within the budget and policy framework. Members were reassured that the terms of reference for the appointment and appeals committee had not been changed. However, consultation would be carried out with the Unions regarding any proposed changes to the personnel handbook.

The Labour Group proposed and seconded an amendment to paragraph 1.2(d) in that items be referred to the Appointment and Appeals Committee. Further debate ensued and upon a vote the amendment was lost.

The Leader of the Council concluded the debate by advising Members that the revisions were an opportunity to modernise the decision making processes of the Council.

**Decision: Agree the revisions to the Constitution as set out in appendix 1 of the report to Council.**

#### **C.36 Motions Submitted Under Standing Orders**

No notices of motion were received.

#### **C.37 Urgent Motions Submitted Under Standing Orders**

No notices of motion were received in accordance with Standing Orders.

**There being no further business the meeting ended at 6.55p.m.**