

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**THE EARL BALDWIN SUITE, DUKE HOUSE, CLENSMORE STREET,
KIDDERMINSTER**

THURSDAY, 6TH OCTOBER 2011 (6.00 PM)

Present:

Councillors: H E Dyke (Chairman), T Ingham (Vice-Chairman), M Ahmed, J Baker, J Greener, I Hardiman, P B Harrison, J A Hart, V Higgs, J Holden, D J McCann, J W Parish, C Rogers, D R Sheppard and S J Williams.

Observers:

Councillors J-P Champion, M J Hart, F M Oborski, J Phillips and J A Shaw.

OS.46 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A J Buckley, N Gale and A M Sewell

OS.47 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor M Ahmed was appointed as a substitute for Councillor A Sewell.
Councillor P B Harrison was appointed as a substitute for Councillor A Buckley.
Councillor C Rogers was appointed as a substitute for Councillor N Gale.

OS.48 Declaration of Interests

Councillor T Ingham declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 9 – Green Street Conservation Area Designation and Draft Character Appraisal and Management Plan, because he owns property within the boundary of the proposed conservation area.

OS.49 Minutes

Decision:

- **The minutes of the meeting held on 8th September 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**
- **The minutes of the meeting held on 19th September 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendment on page 14.**
 - **Councillor D Sheppard advised that he had said ‘we may be able to accept the current tolerated sites but no more’.**

OS.50 Scoping Document for Waste Management Review Panel

The Committee considered a briefing paper from the Director of Resources in relation to a review of the future of the Council's domestic waste and recycling service and were asked to establish a review panel to consider the proposal in detail.

Members were advised that a four week consultation period with staff would commence on Monday 10th October 2011.

Agreed:

- **A review panel be established from Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the proposal.**
- **The draft scoping documents attached at Appendix A of the report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee be approved.**

OS.51 Finance Update to Incorporate Progress report on Wyre Forest Forward

The Director of Resources provided Members with a financial and 2012/13 budget update. Key issues covered were:

- Retention of Business Rates
- Localisation of Council Tax Benefit
- Council Tax Referendums
- Budget time table for 2012/13
- Update on Wyre Forest Forward
- Proposed role of Budget Review Panel

The Chairman asked Members be kept informed on changes and progress through Member Briefing Sessions.

Agreed: The update be noted.

OS.52 New Council Headquarters Update

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Legal and Corporate Services which provided an update on the progress of the New Council Headquarters.

The Principal Solicitor led Members through the report and advised that Members would be consulted on an idea of a time capsule being buried on the site. It was confirmed the local procurement section of the next update would include the value of orders placed with firms within the Wyre Forest area and not within a 30m radius.

Members were advised that there was a designated New HQ page on COLIN which was regularly updated with progress on the build.

Agreed: The progress report be noted.

OS.53 Wyre Forest District Council Empty Property Strategy 2011-2014

The Committee considered a report from the Strategic Housing Services Manager that presented the refreshed Wyre Forest District Council Empty Property Strategy 2011-2014.

Members were led through the report and a debate ensued around the anti-social issues of empty privately owned properties and how the Council deals with it.

The Committee agreed to send a letter to the MP, Mark Garnier, requesting more robust legislation to give greater powers to local authorities in tackling privately owned empty properties.

Agreed:

Recommend to Cabinet:

- **The 2011-2014 Empty Property Strategy be adopted.**

Councillor T Ingham left the meeting at this point.

OS.54 Green Street Conservation Area Designation and Draft Character Appraisal and Management Plan

The Committee considered a report from the Conservation Officer on proposals to designate Green Street as a Conservation Area and were updated on the content of the draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan.

Members were led through the report and shown photographs of the area by the Conservation Officer. In response to a Members question, it was confirmed that if the area was designated as a conservation area, planning applications would not be stifled in anyway, it would mean that the Council would have a clear framework for what may or may not be acceptable within the area.

Councillor Holden left the meeting at this point.

The Committee reacted positively to the proposal and the Chairman thanked the Conservation Officer for his presentation.

Agreed:

Recommend to Cabinet:

- a) **Consultation be undertaken on the proposal to designate a Green Street Conservation Area.**
- b) **Consultation be undertaken on the:**
 - **Proposed Conservation Area Designation: Green Street Area of Kidderminster: Volume 1: Draft Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan: October 2011.**
 - **Proposed Conservation Area Designation: Green Street Area of**

Kidderminster: Volume 2: Maps and Photographs: October 2011.

- c) **That the Director of Planning and Regulatory Services be given delegated authority to determine the final format and presentation of the papers.**

Councillor Ingham returned to the meeting at this point.

OS.55 Draft National Planning Policy Framework

The Committee considered a report from the Senior Forward Planning Officer which provided an overview of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was currently out to consultation.

Members were led through the report and concerns were expressed over the potential development within greenbelt areas. The Senior Forward Planning Officer acknowledged the concerns, however advised Members that the Council was in a stronger position as it had adopted the Core Strategy and short term housing supply was not such a significant threat as it was to other authorities.

Councillor Oborski left the meeting at this point.

**Agreed:
Recommend to Cabinet:**

- **The proposed response set out at Appendix 1 to the report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee be submitted to the Department for Communities and Local Government.**

OS.56 Feedback from Cabinet

Agreed: The content of the Cabinet action list, following consideration of the recommendations from 20th September 2011 be noted.

OS.57 Work Programme

Agreed:

The Democratic Services Officer to add two items to the November work programme:

- 1. Call In Procedure**
- 2. Waste Management Review Panel**

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7.50pm.