

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

THURSDAY, 1ST DECEMBER 2011 (6.00 PM)

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**Present:**

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

**Observers**

Councillors: N J Desmond, M J Hart and J A Shaw.

**OS.76 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: A J Buckley, N Gale and D R Sheppard.

**OS.77 Appointment of Substitutes**

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

**OS.78 Declaration of Interests**

Councillor P B Harrison declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 9 – Recommendations from the Treasury Management Review Panel – Kidderminster Carpet Museum Trust Request for Cashflow Support (2011), as he is a representative on the Carpet Museum Trust Board.

Councillor J Baker declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 9 – Recommendations from the Treasury Management Review Panel – Kidderminster Carpet Museum Trust Request for Cashflow Support (2011), as he is a representative on the Carpet Museum Trust Board.

**OS.79 Minutes**

**Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd November 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**OS.80 Update on the Fire in the Retail Premises in Kidderminster Town Centre**

The Chairman advised the Committee that Councillor Campion had sent his apologies for the meeting and he would send an update to Members via email.

**Agreed: Councillor Campion to email an update to all Members.**

**OS.81 Crime and Disorder Update**

The Committee considered a report from the Community Safety and Partnerships Officer on crime and disorder issues and received an update regarding progress being made against the Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership's priorities for 2011/12.

The Community Safety and Partnerships Officer led Members through the report, and advised that under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 the Council had a statutory duty to work in partnership with other relevant local bodies to reduce crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour, behaviour adversely affecting the environment, substance misuse and reduce re-offending.

Members were advised that £109,385 funding for the Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership (WFCSP) was received through the Community Safety Fund provided by Worcestershire County Council. Members asked for a breakdown of the WFCSP funding for 2011/12 and the Community Safety and Partnerships Officer agreed to circulate the information.

The WFCSP Analyst, Andrew Deeley, led Members through the performance section of the report and highlighted the reduction in offences by crime types for 2010/11. However, Members were advised that the statistics were for reported crimes recorded through West Mercia Police and it was noted that not all crime which occurred within the District was reported. In response to a Members' question, it was confirmed that there were no figures available for crimes which had not been reported to the Police. Members were urged to encourage residents to report crime and obtain an incident number from the Police for future reference.

Members requested that comparative data from 1998 to the present time be provided for future evidence of performance. It was felt having the information presented would be beneficial for when the Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) were established. The Community Safety and Partnerships Officer agreed that the information would be included in the next update for the Committee and agreed to circulate an information booklet on the role of the PCC.

**Agreed:**

- **The update be noted.**
- **WFCSP funding information for 2011/12 to be circulated to Members by the Community and Partnerships Officer.**
- **Comparative data from 1998 to the present time be provided for future evidence of performance.**
- **An information booklet on the role of the PCC to be circulated to Members by the Community and Partnerships Officer.**

**OS.82 New HQ**

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 progress could be tracked through the designated page on COLIN, the Council's intranet. Members were advised the concrete floors had been finished and work had commenced on the roof coverings. Following a request from Members, it was noted

that the report now contained information on local procurement.

A Member raised concerns over the viability of the ground source heating. The Chairman requested a more detailed update on the issue be circulated to Members.

**Agreed:**

- **The update be noted.**
- **A detailed update on the Ground Source Heating Pump be circulated to Members by the Director of Legal and Corporate Services.**

**OS.83 Budget Review Panel**

The Committee considered a paper from the Director of Resources which sought agreement for the Terms of Reference for the Budget Review Panel.

The Director of Resources advised Members that the main role of the Panel would be to scrutinise the proposals which had been presented and put forward any alternative options for consideration. The Panel would consist of a minimum of four Members.

**Agreed:**

- **A review panel be established.**
- **The Democratic Services Officer to email Group Leaders requesting nominations for the Panel.**

Councillors P B Harrison and J Baker left the meeting at this point.

**OS.84 Recommendations from the Treasury Management Review Panel - Kidderminster Carpet Museum Trust Request for Cashflow Support (2011)**

The Committee considered a recommendation from the Treasury Management Review Panel which asked for Member's support following a request from the Kidderminster Carpet Museum Trust regarding cashflow assistance.

The Carpet Museum Trust had successfully raised £1.9 million via a Stage 2 Heritage Lottery Fund bid and was currently in the construction phase of a new Carpet Museum for Kidderminster, due for completion in October 2012.

Members were in favour of providing assistance to the Carpet Museum subject to the appropriate legal funding agreement being in place.

**Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet:**

**The Council support the request of Cashflow support up to £100,000 in line with the scheme approved by Council for the Carpet Museum Trust, contingent upon a third party being identified to resource the remaining £45,000 of cash flow support.**

Councillors P B Harrison and J Baker returned to the meeting at this point.

**OS.85 Recommendations from the Treasury Management Review Panel - Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy Mid-year Review Report 2011/12**

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

The Committee considered a recommendation from the Treasury Management Review Panel on the mid-year review of the Council's treasury management policies, practices, and activities in accordance with the revised CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice.

**Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet:**

**The Treasury Management Mid-year Review Report be approved.**

#### **OS.86 Recommendations from the Treasury Management Review Panel – Local Authority Mortgage Scheme (LAMS)**

The Committee considered a recommendation from the Treasury Management Review Panel on a new product called the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme which is being offered through the Council's treasury advisors Sector. It was noted there were already five Councils around the country taking part.

Under the scheme, the Council could make a £1m investment for an initial five year period and this would be treated as capital expenditure. The Council would be underwriting 20 percent of approved mortgages, to assist first time buyers for the first five years of the loan term.

Members were assured that mortgages would only be offered to people who met the lenders current lending criteria. The scheme purely assisted those people who did not have sufficient funds for the mortgage deposit.

**Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet:**

**The Council should formally consider the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme.**

#### **OS.87 Feedback from Cabinet**

**Agreed: The content of the Cabinet action list, following consideration of the recommendations from 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2011 be noted.**

#### **OS.88 Work Programme**

**Agreed: The Democratic Services Officer to identify an additional meeting in January 2012 for the responses to the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocation consultation.**

The meeting ended at 7.30pm.