

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

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

21ST FEBRUARY 2012 (6.00 PM)

Present:

Councillors: J-P Champion, N J Desmond, M J Hart, T L Onslow and J Phillips.

Observers:

Councillors: H E Dyke, F M Oborski, M A Salter and J A Shaw.

CAB.92 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

CAB.93 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

CAB.94 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 31st January 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB.95 Call Ins

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

CAB.96 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

CAB.97 Public Participation

The Council had received one statement from the Citizens Advice Bureau in response to the reduction in grant funding they would receive from the Council. Kate Bennett was in attendance and read the following statement:

Wyre Forest CAB received the lowest contribution of any District Council in Worcestershire. This contribution was then cut three years ago from £36,000 to £26,000. At that time we looked to make efficiency savings to continue to provide service at the same level albeit subsidised by the other projects that we have been successful in securing funding for.

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Through the additional funding that we have secured we have been able to open offices in Stourport and Bewdley. In part these offices enable us to offer services to clients across Wyre Forest as we do not have the space to meet demand at Kidderminster office alone. Over 30% of the appointments that we offer each week are held at these locations.

Over the last three years there has been a significant loss of other voluntary sector organisations delivering service in Wyre Forest. The demise of Oldington and Foley Park Advice Network, Asha Wyre Forest and Black Pear Credit Union as well as other national organisations such as the Immigration Advisory Service has meant that we have experienced a growth in demand of over 10% in the last year.

In addition to the loss of core grant from the District Council over the last three years we have been experiencing significant increases in cost of such things as electricity and telephone as well as a 2.5% increase in VAT.

We work closely with other bureaux in Worcestershire and collaborate on the Worcestershire telephone advice line service which operates Monday – Friday 10-4. This service received 2163 calls in January.

So far this year demand seems to show a further increase on last year; however the reduction in grant of 18% (£5,000) over three years from the County Council added to the proposed District Council reductions mean it will be very difficult to continue to deliver the current level of services we provide. Cuts in our services will mean that some of the most deprived people in the country who live in Wyre Forest will be even further disadvantaged.

Whilst we continue to seek new sources of funding it is core funding that enables us to provide the bedrock of our operations. This type of funding is virtually impossible to find in the current climate.

The Cabinet Member for Well-Being thanked Kate Bennett for the comments and replied that the Council did appreciate the position the Citizens Advice Bureau found themselves in and valued the work they did and that was why the Council continued to support the organisation. However, the Council had received 30% less in government settlement over the next few years and initial thoughts had been not to allocate any funding at all but it was felt important to continue to support those organisations albeit at a reduced grant.

CAB.98 Leader's Announcements

The Leader of the Council reported that the Council had received approximately £900,000 from Landsbanki and it was anticipated that 98% of the total amount would be recovered. An update on the Icelandic investments was tabled at the meeting.

The Director of Resources was thanked for his work as he was leaving the authority to start a new job in Stratford-upon-Avon. He was presented with a gift from the Cabinet.

CAB.99 South Kidderminster Enterprise Park, Local Development Order Consultation Document

A report was considered from the Director of Planning & Regulatory Services which sought approval for consultation on a Local Development Order for the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park area and to consider the recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 9th February 2012.

The Cabinet Member for Place-Shaping advised Members that it was unknown at this stage as to what financial implications the authority could expect by implementing the Order.

The report had been received well at the Overview & Scrutiny Committee with majority of Members on the Committee agreeing with the proposal.

Members agreed that the Order would be of benefit to the economic regeneration of the district and it was perceived it could help local businesses.

The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee pointed out that there had been overwhelming support for the Order but a couple of issues had been raised by Councillors.

Decision:

- 1. The draft Local Development Order, attached at Appendix 1 of the report to Cabinet, be used as the basis for public consultation**
- 2. Delegated authority be granted to the Director of Planning and Regulatory Services to approve the final format of the consultation papers.**
- 3. If adopted, Members be kept informed of developments carried out under the order by way of the weekly planning list.**

CAB.100 Green Street Conservation Area Designation, Character Appraisal and Management Plan

A report was considered from the Director of Planning & Regulatory Services which recommended to Council proposals to designate a new Conservation Area in Green Street, Kidderminster and to consider the recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 9th February 2012.

The Cabinet Member for Place-Shaping informed Members that the responses to the consultation linked well with the Carpet Museum project in that Kidderminster would have a history for people to look back on in the future.

The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee welcomed the additional recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee to be taken on board. The Conservation Officer was thanked for his excellent work on the project.

Decision:

Recommended to Council:

1. **The designation under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, of a new Conservation Area at Green Street in Kidderminster as shown on Appendix 1 of the report to Cabinet.**
2. **Delegated powers be granted to the Director of Planning and Regulatory Services to determine the final format and presentation of the Character Appraisal and Management Plan.**
3. **The owners/occupiers of the buildings and structures it is proposed to include on the Kidderminster Local List be notified of the Council's intention.**
4. **The Character Appraisal and Management Plan be adopted.**
5. **The background and history of the buildings and points of interest within the area collated as part of the report be made available for display in the Carpet Museum and local library.**

CAB.101 Financial Strategy 2012-2015

A report was considered from the Director of Resources and for Cabinet to formulate recommendations to Council and to consider the recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 9th February 2012. A revised copy of the proposed decision for the Financial Strategy 2012/15 was tabled at the meeting.

Members were informed that there would be no increase in Council Tax for the year 2012/13. The Council would also need to borrow over the couple of years. It was pleasing to see that all parties were in agreement that money should be put in the budget for the economic regeneration in the district and this could be, for example, for apprenticeship schemes and supporting reduced car parking charges. There would be a State of Area Debate for the public on 7th March 2012 with a Member State of Area Debate on 14th March.

The Cabinet Member for Resources informed Members that the public consultation had proved positive with a high response. The Cabinet had taken on board some of the proposals from the other parties such as the consideration of starting incubator units, A Community Leadership fund for all 42 Members and the introduction of a Local Authority Mortgage Scheme which could benefit between 30 and 40 households.

Members commented that the Budget Scrutiny had worked well this year and Members had been given ample opportunity to have an input.

A Member asked that if the idea of incubator units was pursued, the Council looked at utilising old buildings as opposed to using new ones. It was felt it was important that the Council also supported existing businesses and not just new business starting up.

Members looked forward to the forthcoming State of Area Debate and the outcomes it may achieve.

Decision:

Recommended to Council:

- 1. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2010/11 ONWARDS (pages 74-84)**
 - 1.1 APPROVES** the updated Base Capital Programme and Vehicle, Equipment and Systems Renewal Schedule as presented to the Cabinet on 20th December 2011 and further amended to incorporate the Cabinet Proposals identified in Appendix 2 along with the updated Prudential Indicators presented in the separate report on this agenda.
 - 1.2 DELEGATED** authority continues to be given to the Director of Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources, to fund appropriate elements of the Capital Programme by means of Prudential Borrowing.
 - 1.3 DELEGATES** authority to the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Chief Executive and the Cabinet, to determine the most financially prudent funding method for Capital Projects (Capital Receipts or Direct Revenue Funding) at the end of each Financial Year.
- 2. FEES AND CHARGES (pages 32-70)**
 - 2.1 RECOMMENDS** fees and charges as detailed in the Financial Strategy as presented to Cabinet on 20th December 2011, along with the amendments attached in Appendix 1.
- 3. THREE YEAR BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK 2012/15 (pages 1-73)**
 - 3.1** The contents of the Reports of the Director of Resources on the Three Year Budget and Policy Framework 2012-2015 (pages 1-73 incorporating the Base Budget Variations (pages 21-22) be **ENDORSED** and in doing so **APPROVE** the Revised Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2011/12.
 - 3.2 APPROVES** that any Final Account savings arising from 2011/2015 over and above the target allowed for in the Council's Finance Strategy, together with surplus Earmarked Reserves, be allocated for the one-off costs of the new Head Quarters project.
 - 3.3** The following General Fund Revenue Budget be **RECOMMENDED** including **CABINET PROPOSALS** (Appendix 2) and **FEES AND CHARGES** (see Financial Strategy pages 32-70) and related amendments (Appendix 1):

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	Revised 2011/12 £	2012/2013 £	2013/2014 £	2014/2015 £
Net Expenditure on Services (per Appendix 1 on Page 12 of the Financial Strategy Book) (*)	14,241,610	12,780,950	12,805,090	13,096,700
<u>Add/(Less)</u> Cabinet Proposals - (Appendix 2)	-	274,250	2,400	(87,080)
Net Expenditure	14,241,610	13,055,200	12,807,490	13,009,620
Contribution to/(from) Reserves	(716,560)	(322,400)	(329,870)	(656,840)
Net Budget Requirement	13,525,050	12,732,800	12,477,620	12,352,780
<u>Less</u> Business Rate Grant, Government Grant and Collection Fund Surplus (*)	6,294,330	5,615,730	5,294,640	4,990,370
Area Based Grant	293,270	109,270	0	0
Council Tax Income	<u>£6,937,450</u>	<u>£7,007,800</u>	<u>£7,182,980</u>	<u>£7,362,410</u>
Wyre Forest District Council Tax Level assuming no change in 2011/12 then a 2.5% increase 2012/13 onwards.	<u>£197.62</u>	<u>£197.62</u>	<u>£202.56</u>	<u>£207.62</u>

(*) Now confirmed that the Council Tax Freeze Grant is included within Formula Grant for 2012/13 and beyond

Government Grant Analysis*	2011/12		2012/13		Increase (decrease)	
	£	£	£	£		%
Revenue Support Grant	1,474,240	105,820	(1,368,42)			(92.8)
Business Rates	4,769,440	5,458,910	689,470			14.4
Collection Fund Surplus	50,650	51,000	350			0.0
Overall Totals	6,294,330	5,615,730	(678,600)			(10.8)

3.4 Reserves available as part of the Three Year Financial Strategy:

Reserves Statement	2011/12 £'000	2012/13 £'000	2013/14 £'000	2014/15 £'000
Reserves as at 1 April	2,698	1,981	1,659	1,329
Contribution to/(from) Reserves	(717)	(322)	(330)	(657)
Reserves as at 31 March	1,981	1,659	1,329	672

3.5 RECOMMENDS to Council adoption of the statement of purposes (Appendix 3 of the report to Cabinet) which has been derived from the work on systems thinking and shows the links with the Council's corporate priorities.

4 COUNCIL TAX

4.1 RECOMMENDS a Council Tax for Wyre Forest District Council on a Band D Property of £197.62 for 2012/13 (£197.62 2011/12) no increase on Council Tax for 2012/13.

4.2 RECOMMENDS a provisional Council Tax on a Band D Property in 2013/2014 of £202.56 and £207.62 in 2014/2015 an increase of 2.5% per annum over 2012/2013.

CAB.102 Budget Monitoring Third Quarter 2011/12

A report was considered from the Director of Resources that outlined the monitoring of the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003.

Members were informed that it was pleasing to note that the Council would make a saving at the end of the current year.

Decision:

- 1. The projected budget variations and comments outlined within the report and appendices 2 to 8 of the report to Cabinet be noted.**
- 2. The supplementary estimate for a potential planning appeal of £20,000 be funded from use of reserves.**

CAB.103 Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Investment Policy and Strategy Statement for the period 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013

A report was considered from the Director of Resources which recommended to Council the approval of the restated Prudential Indicators and Limits for the financial years 2012/13 to 2014/15, the updated Treasury Management and Investment Policy and Strategy Statements for the period 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013, the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement that set out the Council's policy on MRP and the Authorised Limit Prudential Indicator. Also, to consider the recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 9th February 2012.

Members were informed that the Treasury Management Review Panel had held a good debate on the subject and information from Sector had been well received.

Decision:

Recommended to Council:

1. **The restated Prudential Indicators and Limits for the financial years 2012/13 to 2014/15 be approved.**
2. **The updated Treasury Management and Investment Policy and Strategy Statements for the period 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013 (the associated Prudential Indicators are included in Appendix 3 and the detailed criteria is included in Section 11 and Appendix 5 of the report to Cabinet) be approved.**
3. **The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement that sets out the Council's policy on MRP included in Appendix 1 of the report to Cabinet be approved.**
4. **The Authorised Limit Prudential Indicator included in Appendix 3 of the report to Cabinet be approved.**

CAB.104 Recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, 8th and 9th February 2012

a. Future Arrangements for the Management of Sports and Leisure Centre

Members were informed that this item had been deferred from the last Cabinet meeting in order for Scrutiny to look at further information that had been received. During the course of the meeting, concerns had been raised but Members had the opportunity to ask pertinent and searching questions.

The Committee were thanked for their work on the topic and Members felt that it should be something that the Council should be proud of. It was pointed out that at the beginning of the exercise, it had not been the Council's intention to build a new leisure centre but it had become apparent during the scrutiny exercise, that a new build was the most viable option. Moreover, if the current facility was maintained then there would have to be a capital investment of £8.8m over the next 20 years and together with the need to have a 25m swimming pool and upgrading of a gym this could increase considerably and this was also with installing any new energy devices, e.g. solar panels and ground source heat pumps. No five-a-side football facilities would be able to be held and there was a possibility of an increase in the management fee. It was also thought a new build would increase the number of people using the facilities. It was anticipated that approximately £40,000 per annum of costs could be saved with a new build. It was also agreed that any final decision be made by Cabinet on the site to be purchased.

The Cabinet Member for Community Well-Being agreed to circulate to all Members details on the financial information which had culminated in the recommendations being made.

Decision:

- 1. In order to meet the future needs of the District as this is the most affordable and sustainable option a new leisure centre based on Option 3, including a swimming pool, should be progressed,**
- 2. That to enable the provision of at least one swimming pool in the District by the Council until such time as a new leisure centre is built, that the current contract with DC Leisure be extended for 3 years, with an option to terminate at 6 months notice.**
- 3. Wyre Forest Glades Leisure Centre closure will be the earliest of:**
 - (a) when a new leisure centre is complete; or**
 - (b) if the site needs to be vacated in order to allow its development by any purchaser of the site; or**
 - (c) the end of the 3 year extension to the current contract in March 2016;**
but not before 30th September 2013 in any case.
- 4. Stourport Sports Centre will cease to be operated by Wyre Forest District Council when the new leisure centre is complete or at the end of the 3 year extension to the current contract in March 2016 if an asset transfer has not been possible and that further consideration should be given for the continued use of the site for community sport (not to exclude use by any commercial sports providers).**
- 5. The transfer of Bewdley Leisure Centre and playing fields should be secured and a negotiated withdrawal from the dual use agreement.**
- 6. The Director of Planning and Regulatory Services and the Director of Legal and Corporate Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community Well-being be authorised to enter into negotiations for the acquisition of a suitable site for the new leisure centre, with the final decision on acquisition to be taken by Cabinet.**
- 7. Following acquisition of the site the appropriate Directors in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community Well Being, commence the procurement exercise using the restricted procedure for a Design Build Operate Maintain (DBOM) contract for the build and operation of the new leisure centre.**
- 8. That the Capital and Revenue Budgets associated with Option 3 as set out in Section 5.3 of the report and Exempt Appendix 2 be approved and included in Cabinet's final budget strategy proposals in February (exact phasing to be confirmed together with final costs following site acquisition and competitive procurement).**

b Review of the Grants to Voluntary Bodies

A review panel had been set up and had looked in depth at the grants the Council made to voluntary bodies.. As the Council found itself in a difficult position, the panel had fully understood why the reviewing of grants had been undertaken and this had been fully supported by the Scrutiny Committee. Members of the Panel were thanked for their input. It was noted that Worcestershire County Council would have money available to support infrastructure and training needs of voluntary groups in the future and the Council would refer groups to this link.

It was also pointed out that as part of the recommendation, subject to funds being available, at the end of the three year grant giving period, the Council would widely advertise any available grants and the criteria in order for organisations to apply for funding.

Members perceived that all organisations had to look at their structures and cutback on certain items as grant monies were not so widely available.

Decision:

- 1. The general grant funding allocation from 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2015 should be targeted at meeting the needs of as many individuals across the District as possible. The grant funding should reflect the Council priorities of improving Community Well Being and Securing the Economic Prosperity of the District. In order to give stability to those organisations receiving grant funding, it should be given for a 3 year period.**
- 2. The allocation of grant funding should also reflect the ageing population in the District.**
- 3. The following grant allocations cease with effect from:**
 - 1st April 2012:**
 - **£1,000 pump priming grant**
 - **£1,000 emergency grant**
 - 1st June 2012:**
 - **£1,000 Community Action Wyre Forest**
 - **£2,960 Relate Worcestershire**
- 4. The grant funding be allocated for a three year period, on a reducing basis, on an equal percentage reduction of 16.5% in 2012/13, 8.3% in 2013/14 and 9.0% in 2014/15 with effect from 1st June 2012.**

5. The following organisations will continue to receive funding in line with recommendations 1, 2 and 3 above:-
 - Citizens Advice Bureau
 - Stourport Day Centre
 - Castle Road Day Centre
6. Rent support to organisations remains unchanged.
7. The inflationary uplift to Citizens Advice Bureau should cease with effect from 2012/13.
8. At the end of the three year grant giving period and subject to the funds still being available, the Council will widely advertise the available grant and the criteria for organisations to apply for funding.
9. The Council publicise the Worcestershire County Council scheme when it is finalised which is aimed at supporting the development of community and voluntary organisations. The Council should help to promote the scheme which will make £750,000 available over the next three years.

c Public Sector Equality Duty Objectives

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee were thanked for their input into obtaining the objective which would be included in the Public Sector Equality Duty which came into force on 5th April 2011. The objective would be reviewed every four years but would be kept under review during that time.

Decision:

Recommend to Council:

The Council adopts and publishes the following equality objective to meet its duty under the Equality Act 2010:

- Reduce inequality in access to employment within the District and build links between organisations to enable this, and by promoting good parenting skills and providing support and advice to families from relevant partner agencies and schools.

d Wyre Forest District Local Development Framework (LDF): Revised Project Plan (Local Development Scheme)

Members were advised that due to various delays and additional consultation on the sites for gypsy, travellers and travelling showpeople, the timetable for meetings had been revised. Members of the Local Development Framework Review Panel were thanked for the excellent attendance and contribution to the meetings.

Decision: The proposed Revised Local Development Framework Project Plan 2012-15 (LDS) as set out in Appendix 1 of the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 9th February 2012 be endorsed.

CAB.105 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.106 National Non-Domestic Rates Write Off Of Amounts Outstanding

A report was considered from the Director of Resources which asked for sums of money totalling £46,703.49 to be written off as the companies had ceased trading and there was no prospect of recovery.

Decision: The sum in respect of outstanding National Non-Domestic Rates, as detailed in the Appendix to the report to Cabinet, be written off.

The meeting closed at 7.15 pm.