

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

18TH DECEMBER 2012 (6.00PM)

Present:

Councillors: J-P Champion, N J Desmond, I Hardiman, M J Hart and A T Hingley.

Observers:

Councillors: C Brewer, H E Dyke, M B Kelly, F M Oborski and J A Shaw.

CAB.44 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

CAB.45 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

CAB.46 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 12th November 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB.47 Call Ins

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

CAB.48 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

CAB.49 Leader's Announcements

There were no leader's announcements.

CAB.50 Financial Strategy 2013-2016

A report was considered from the Director of Resources on the Financial Strategy 2013-2016.

The Leader of the Council informed Members that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had announced the Autumn statement later than in previous years and the Council expected to receive the local government settlement on 19th December 2012.

The Administration were content that council tax would be frozen for 2013/14, however future freezes in council tax may not happen.

Members were advised that an additional investment of £500,000 would be made to provide further investment in economic regeneration initiatives for the Wyre Forest area. Following the State of the Area Debate, a Cabinet Review Group had been established and had agreed a few initiatives.

Expansion of the Wyre Forest Forward programme was proposed to provide efficiency savings.

The Leader of the Council welcomed the opportunity for scrutiny to look at the budget proposals and the submission of alternative budget proposals by the other political groups.

The Corporate Management Team were thanked for the work that had been done on the budget.

In response to a Member's question, it was confirmed that the savings highlighted for elections in 2013/14 referred to County Council elections and these would be paid for by Worcestershire County Council.

It was confirmed that unfortunately it would be likely that redundancies may have to be made as part of the package put forward on Staff Terms and Conditions. Unions and staff would continue to be consulted through the consultation process.

With regard to the proposals on Members' ICT, Members were advised that they would be given an opportunity to take the option of an allowance to purchase a pc, laptop or tablet and/or a printer.

Decision:

Cabinet endorses and recommends for scrutiny:

- 1. The Council's updated Medium Term Finance Strategy.**
- 2. Cabinet Proposals – taking into account the impact on the Council's Capital and Revenue Budgets for 2013/16 (Appendix 3 of the report to Cabinet).**
- 3. The level of net expenditure and resultant Council Tax for 2013/16 as per paragraph 8.1 of the report to Cabinet.**
- 4. A general increase in fees and charges in line with this strategy and the impact on the Council's Revenue Budget for 2013/16, as shown in Part 1 of Appendix 4 of the report to Cabinet.**

Capital Programme 2012/13 Onwards

Cabinet endorses and recommends for scrutiny:

- 1. The Base Capital Programme and Vehicle, Equipment and Systems Renewal Schedule as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report to Cabinet.**
- 2. The updated Schedule of Properties for Disposal, in Appendix 3 of the report to Cabinet that aims to deliver the Council's decision to dispose of surplus assets in order to generate new usable capital receipts for the balance of funding of the New Headquarters where this is proven to be economically viable.**
- 3. The variations to the Capital Programme and Vehicle, Equipment and Systems Renewal Schedule in accordance with the Council's Budget Process.**
- 4. The Director of Resources funds the Capital Programme including Vehicle, Equipment and Systems Renewal by means of Capital Receipts, Grants or Prudential borrowing using delegated authority as appropriate.**
- 5. The Director of Resources funds short-term temporary borrowing pending the sale of assets, for New Headquarters funding, from Prudential Borrowing using delegated authority to determine the exact timing and source of such borrowing.**

CAB.51 Business Rates Retention

A report was considered from the Director of Resources which set out the process for finalising the agreement to enter into the Worcestershire Business Rates Pool.

In response to a Member's question, it was confirmed that the Council representative for the Worcestershire Business Rates Pool was normally the Leader of the Council but this appointment would be considered at Annual Council in May 2013 as part of the Council's representatives on Outside Bodies.

Decision:

- 1. Delegation be granted to the Director of Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources and Transformation on the final decision to enter into the Worcestershire Business Rates Pool (WBRP).**
- 2. The Leader of the Council be the Council representative on the WBRP governing body and be empowered to take decisions on behalf of WFDC.**

3. **Continued participation in the pool be considered on an annual basis.**

CAB.52 Wyre Forest Infrastructure Plan

A report was considered from the Director of Economic Prosperity and Place that sought Cabinet endorsement for the draft District Infrastructure Plan and to consider the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meetings on 6th December 2012.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee informed Members that the report had been well scrutinised and a full debate had been held but there appeared to be a lack of information from the emergency services and this was why the recommendation to Cabinet asked for further information to be sought.

In response to a Member's question, the Director of Economic Prosperity and Place informed Members that whilst the concerns about the emergency services were understood, he would prefer this not to delay the process and suggested that Members endorse the plan with the proviso that officers provided information on the emergency services. There were concerns that the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were to be noted but Members were reassured that the issues raised would be followed through.

Decision:

1. **The Infrastructure Plan be endorsed and used as an evidence based document for the progression of the Council's Development Plan Documents.**
2. **The Infrastructure Plan be endorsed and used to inform the preparation of the Community Infrastructure Levy.**
3. **Delegated powers be granted to the Director of Economic Prosperity and Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Place Making to update the Plan with new information, when appropriate.**

Recommendation from Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 6th December 2012

Noted: The contents of the briefing paper to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 6th December 2012 be noted and the Infrastructure Plan as a suitable evidence base document be endorsed to support the delivery of the Development Plans and to provide the background information required for implementing Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) with the exception on the section on emergency services where the comments are only noted pending further

information and request that clarity be sought regarding police and ambulance services as soon as possible. Members also expressed concerns about library services and requested that clarity be sought on these proposals as soon as possible.

CAB.53 Recommendation from Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 6th December 2012

a. Health and Wellbeing in Wyre Forest

Decision: The Wyre Forest District Council Health Action Plan 2012/13 be endorsed.

CAB.54 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 paragraphs 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

CAB.55 Kidderminster Town Centre Regeneration

A report was considered from the Director of Economic Prosperity and Place regarding Kidderminster Town Centre Regeneration.

Members were reminded of the commercial sensitivity of the report and the report was considered in great detail.

Members agreed that the site mentioned in the exempt report was worthy of redevelopment and welcomed the recommendations.

Decision:

- 1. The principle be agreed of working in partnership with the company named in the report ("the company") to secure the demolition of the building named in the report ("the building"), the relocation of its current occupant and the redevelopment of the site.**
- 2. Noted that external legal advice will be procured, funded by the company.**
- 3. Subject to the Director of Community Assets and Localism being satisfied that the preliminary advice received confirms the vires of the proposals, delegated authority be granted to the Directors of Economic Prosperity & Place, Resources and Community Assets & Localism, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to:**

- i. agree a co-operation agreement with the company;**
 - ii. finalise an initial indemnity agreement with the company to indemnify the Council's costs in completing the project, to be supplemented by a full indemnity agreement in advance of the use of compulsory purchase powers if required;**
 - iii. agree to grant the company an overriding lease of the building;**
 - iv. agree the future use and redevelopment of the cleared site.**
- 4. The principle be agreed of using compulsory purchase powers, to support the assembly of land and properties in the area identified in the report, subject to the company fully indemnifying the Council against any costs associated with the use of such powers. A more detailed report be provided to Cabinet, if it is necessary to use compulsory purchase powers.**

The meeting closed at 7.06 pm.