

**Open**

# **Cabinet**

# **Agenda**

**6.00pm**  
**Tuesday, 18th June 2013**  
**Council Chamber**  
**Wyre Forest House**  
**Finepoint Way**  
**Kidderminster**



## Cabinet

### **The Cabinet Members and their responsibilities:-**

<b>Councillor J-P Campion</b>	<b>Leader of the Council</b>
<b>Councillor M J Hart</b>	<b>Deputy Leader, Environmental Services</b>
<b>Councillor N J Desmond</b>	<b>Resources and Transformation</b>
<b>Councillor I Hardiman</b>	<b>Community Well-Being</b>
<b>Councillor A Hingley</b>	<b>Place-Shaping</b>

### **Scrutiny of Decisions of the Cabinet**

The Council has one Scrutiny Committee that has power to investigate policy issues and question members of the Cabinet who have special responsibility for a particular area of the Council's activities. The Cabinet also considers recommendations from this Committee.

In accordance with Section 10 of the Council's Constitution, Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, and Standing Order 2.4 of Section 7, any item on this agenda may be scrutinised by the Scrutiny Committee if it is "called in" by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and any other three non-Cabinet members.

*The deadline for "calling in" Cabinet decisions is 5pm on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2013.*

Councillors wishing to "call in" a decision on this agenda should contact Sue Saunders, Committee/Scrutiny Officer Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster. Telephone: 01562 732733 or email [susan.saunders@wyreforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:susan.saunders@wyreforestdc.gov.uk)

### **Urgent Key Decisions**

If the Cabinet needs to take an urgent key decision, the consent of the Scrutiny Committee Chairman must be obtained. If the Scrutiny Committee Chairman is unable to act the Chairman of the Council or in his/her absence the Vice-Chairman of the Council, must give consent. Such decisions will not be the subject to the call in procedure.

### **Declaration of Interests by Members – interests of members in contracts and other matters**

Declarations of Interest are a standard item on every Council and Committee agenda and each Member must provide a full record of their interests in the Public Register.

In addition, alongside the Register of Interest, the Members Code of Conduct ("the Code") requires the Declaration of Interests at meetings. Members have to decide first whether or not they have a disclosable interest in the matter under discussion.

Please see the Members' Code of Conduct as set out in Section 14 of this constitution for full details.

### **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) / Other Disclosable Interest (ODI)**

DPI's and ODI's are interests defined in the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the District.

If you have a DPI (as defined in the Code) in a matter being considered at a meeting of the Council (as defined in the Code), the Council's Standing Orders require you to leave the room where the meeting is held, for the duration of any discussion or voting on that matter.

If you have an ODI (as defined in the Code) you will need to consider whether you need to leave the room during the consideration of the matter.

### **For further information**

If you have any queries about this Agenda or require any details of background papers, further documents or information you should contact Sue Saunders, Committee/Scrutiny Officer, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster, DY11 7WF. Telephone: 01562 732733 or email [susan.saunders@wyreforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:susan.saunders@wyreforestdc.gov.uk)

Documents referred to in this agenda may be viewed on the Council's website - [www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/council/meetings/main.htm](http://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/council/meetings/main.htm)

### **WEBCASTING NOTICE**

This meeting is being filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's website site ([www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk)).

At the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed.

You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act 1998. The footage recorded will be available to view on the Council's website for 6 months and shall be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy.

**By entering the meeting room and using the public seating area, you are consenting to be filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and or training purposes.**

If members of the public do not wish to have their image captured they should sit in the Stourport and Bewdley Room where they can still view the meeting.

If any attendee is under the age of 18 the written consent of his or her parent or guardian is required before access to the meeting room is permitted. Persons under 18 are welcome to view the meeting from the Stourport and Bewdley Room.

**If you have any queries regarding this, please speak with the Council's Legal Officer at the meeting.**

Wyre Forest District Council

Cabinet

Tuesday, 18th June 2013

Council Chamber, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster

Part 1

Open to the press and public

<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Page Number</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Declarations of Interests by Members</b>  In accordance with the Code of Conduct, to invite Members to declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI's) and / or Other Disclosable Interests (ODI's) in the following agenda items and indicate the action that they will be taking when the item is considered.  Please see the Members' Code of Conduct as set out in Section 14 of the Council's Constitution for full details.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Minutes</b>  To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on the 23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2013.	6
<b>4.</b>	<b>CALL INS</b> a verbal update will be given on any decisions which have been "called in" since the last meeting of the Cabinet.	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Items Requiring Urgent Attention</b>  To consider any item which, in the opinion of the Chairman requires consideration at the meeting as a matter of urgency.	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Public Participation</b>  In accordance with the Council's Scheme for Public Speaking at Meetings of Full Council/Cabinet, to allow members of the public to present petitions, ask questions, or make statements, details of which have been received by 12 noon on Monday 10 <sup>th</sup> June 2013. (See front cover for contact details).	-
<b>7.</b>	<b>Leader of the Council</b>	
<b>7.1</b>	<b>Leader's Announcements</b>	

<b>8.</b>		<b><i>Delivering Together, With Less</i></b>
<b>8.1</b>	<b>Outturn Report for 2012-13</b>  To consider a report from the Director of Resources on the Outturn for 2012-13. (To follow)	-

<b>9.</b>		<b><i>Recommendations from Committees</i></b>
<b>9.1</b>	Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 4 <sup>th</sup> April 2013  (a) Recommendations from Housing Review Panel	10
<b>9.2</b>	Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 6 <sup>th</sup> June 2013  (a) Recommendations from Housing Review Panel  (b) Recommendations from No Surprises Protocol Review Panel	11  12

<b>10.</b>	<b>To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Director of Community Assets &amp; Localism before the commencement of the meeting, which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.</b>	
<b>11.</b>	<b>Exclusion of the Press and Public</b>  To consider passing the following resolution:  “That 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 item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of “exempt information” as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act”.	

Part 2

Not open to the Press and Public

<b>12.</b>	<b>To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Director of Community Assets &amp; Localism before the commencement of the meeting, which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.</b>	
------------	---	--

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL  
CABINET**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER  
23RD APRIL 2013 (6.00PM)**

---

**Present:**

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

**Observers:**

Councillors H E Dyke and F M Oborski.

**CAB.88 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

**CAB.89 Declarations of Interests by Members**

No declarations of interest were made.

**CAB.90 Minutes**

**Decision: The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**CAB.91 Call Ins**

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

**CAB.92 Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

**CAB.93 Leader's Announcements**

The Leader of the Council informed Members that the Government were proposing to make amendments to the Planning legislation and this was currently being progressed through the House of Lords. The Council had made representations to the Local Government Association.

**CAB.94 State of the Area Debate 2013**

A report was considered from the Director of Economic Prosperity and Place which asked for agreement of priorities for 2013/14 in support of the Council's priority for securing the Economic Prosperity of this District.

Members were taken through the report and informed that the Hoobrook Link Road would be the biggest infrastructure in the district since the building of the Bewdley by-pass. They were also advised that it was hoped that the first Business Incubator Unit would be ready for use by September 2013.

Members agreed that the apprenticeship scheme had been a success and noted that further money would be available for continuation of the scheme.

Members of the Cabinet Review Group were thanked for their continued work and for the debates that had been held. The State of the Area debate has been well received.

Members all agreed that the recommendations were robust and all supported the local economy.

**Decision:**

**In addition to the initiatives agreed at the 2012 State of the Area Debate, the following be agreed:**

- 1. Through the Member Champion of the Third Sector in conjunction with the Member Champion for Skills, to engage with Community Regeneration Organisations North Worcestershire (CROWN) to explore their contribution to skills development.**
- 2. To continue to deliver an apprenticeship programme in 2013/14 through Kidderminster College, the details of which will be agreed in consultation with the Cabinet Review Group.**
- 3. The establishment of and engagement with the North Worcestershire Employment and Skills board be supported.**
- 4. To work in partnership with Worcestershire County Council to deliver the Hoobrook Link Road in its entirety from Stourport Road to Worcester Road.**
- 5. To work with Worcestershire County Council on the development of a programme for re-dualling the A449 and A456.**
- 6. Delegated authority be granted to the Director of Economic Prosperity and Place to develop a policy and programme of support for the Business Incubator Units to be agreed in consultation with the Cabinet Review Group.**
- 7. The Director of Economic Prosperity and Place be requested to develop and implement a scheme of business rate relief support for businesses and linked to their growth and increase in job opportunities to be agreed in consultation with the Cabinet Review Group.**

**CAB.95 Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership Delegation of functions to a Joint Committee (Local Transport Board)**

A report was considered from the Director of Economic Prosperity and Place and Place which asked Cabinet to agree appropriate delegations to enable the Council to participate in decision making through the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise partnership by way of a Joint Committee or other such decision making body as may be established.

**Decision:**

- 1. The creation of a Local Transport Board for Members of the Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership hosted by Birmingham City Council, to be established from April 2013 as a Joint Committee or similar governance body be approved.**
- 2. The Leader of Wyre Forest District Council as the North Worcestershire representative on the Joint Committee or other similar governance body be agreed.**
- 3. Delegated authority be granted to the Local Transport Board functions relating to the approval of expenditure for transport schemes in the area of the Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership.**
- 4. Delegated authority be granted to the Leader of Council, in consultation with the Corporate Management Team to agree the establishment of and powers to be delegated to any future Joint Committee or similar governance body established through the Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership for the purpose of exercising its powers and/or agreeing expenditure that has been devolved to the Local Enterprise Partnership.**

**CAB.96 Green Deal**

A report was considered from the Director of Economic Prosperity and Place which provided Cabinet with information on the development of the Green Deal in Worcestershire and to agree a way forward for Wyre Forest District Council to participate. To also consider the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2013.

The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee informed Members that the report had been received well and there had been lots of questions asked. Further information had been asked to be provided at a future scrutiny meeting once details were known on the Green Deal delivery model.

**Decision: Delegated authority be granted to the Director of Economic Prosperity and Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Place-Shaping to make the final decision which Green Deal delivery model is most appropriate for the District Council to participate in and to make the necessary arrangements for the District Council to access the scheme.**



**Recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 4<sup>th</sup> April 2013**

**Decision:**

- 1. The final decision on the Green Deal delivery model be delegated to the Director of Economic Prosperity and Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Place-Shaping.**
- 2. A briefing note be provided for Members when further information on the delivery model be known.**

The meeting closed at 6.26 pm.

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**  
**18<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2013**

**Report on Final Accounts 2012/13**

<b>OPEN</b>	
<b>SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME:</b>	Stronger Communities
<b>CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITY:</b>	Delivering Together, with Less
<b>DIRECTOR:</b>	Director of Resources
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Joanne Wagstaffe Ext. 2100 joanne.wagstaffe@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
<b>APPENDIX 1</b>	Appendix 1 - Explanation of Major Variations on Revised 2012/13 Budget

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To receive the provisional outturn position in relation to the Final Accounts for 2012/13.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

The Cabinet is asked to **NOTE** that as detailed in Appendix 1:-

- 2.1 Following the creation of the additional earmarked reserves detailed below, minimal savings compared to the revised budget of £260 have been generated from the 2012/13 surplus.
- 2.2 That a contribution of £80,000 from the 2012/13 saving has been allocated to the Economic Impact earmarked reserve.
- 2.3 That £270,000 from the 2012/13 savings has been used to create an earmarked reserve to cover the potential future liability this Council could have in relation to its former insurers Municipal Mutual Insurance (MMI).
- 2.4 That £300,000 from the 2012/13 saving has been used to increase the Working Balance. This is in accordance with the February 2013 Council decision as recommended by the S151 Officer, further detail is provided in paragraph 4.9.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 have been incorporated into the Council's Financial Regulations. These regulations require that the Council's Statement of Accounts be produced and approved by the Director of Resources on or before 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2013.
- 3.2 The Audit Committee will be considering and endorsing the full Statement of Accounts on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2013, and a full copy of the Statement of Accounts will be made available on the Council's Intranet for Members' perusal.

- 3.3 The Statement is then subject to audit. The Council's external auditor; Grant Thornton has until 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013 to complete the audit, after which the Statement will be published.
- 3.4 Should it be necessary for Grant Thornton to agree technical changes with the Director of Resources while the accounts are subject to audit, these will be made under delegated powers. All Members of the Council will be provided with a published copy of the Statement.
- 3.5 Members may wish to note that the Council's Accounts will be made available for public inspection as required by the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011, between 16<sup>th</sup> July 2013 and 12<sup>th</sup> August 2013. Grant Thornton will be available on the 13<sup>th</sup> August 2013, at the Accountancy Section, Wyre Forest House, if any local government elector for the area has any questions on the Accounts that they wish to raise with them. Appointments for any meetings with the Auditors must be made in advance, in writing.
- 3.6 The provisional revenue outturn position has identified savings of £300,260 (subject to audit and after the creation of the earmarked reserves for the Economic Impact and MMI) compared to the Revised Budget allowing £300,000 to be transferred to increase the Working Balance. Appendix 1 summarises major variations from the Revised Budget for Members' information.

#### **4. KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 These remain challenging times for the Council as we come to grips with an environment where funds are reducing, exacerbated by the Local Government Resource Review, including the Localism of Council Tax Benefit and Business Rates Retention Scheme. The Financial Strategy 2013/16 approved by Council in February 2013, provides a stable financial platform to move forward. For the coming year, Council approved a freeze in Council Tax which released an additional grant from Government. However, in each of the following two years annual increases of 2% have been assumed, along with a 9.40% reduction in Government Grant in 2013/14, 16.16% reduction in 2014/15 and 5.20% in 2015/16. The 2013 Comprehensive Spending Review is likely to impose further funding reductions.
- 4.2 The Council has made further welcome progress in relation to the recovery of the Icelandic investments and as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013, just over £5.99m of the £9m had been repaid to the Council, with a further dividend received from Kaupthing Singer and Friedlander (KSF) of £150,000 on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2013 that is shown as a post balance sheet event in the Statement of Accounts 2012/13. Further dividend payments are expected during 2013/14 and beyond.
- 4.3 In addition, an update to the guidance for accounting for potential losses (impairment) from the Icelandic investments (update to LAAP Bulletin 82) was issued in May 2013. This statutory guidance results in improvements in the impairment position for two of our three investments.
- 4.4 Included within Appendix 1 is the identification of the significant variances against the Revised Budget for 2012/13. These variances include:

- i) Pay, General Administration and Miscellaneous savings of £246k  
*These relate to various accounts across the whole of the Council which are then reallocated to front line services. It is clear that reductions have been made in expenditure across the Authority as spending decisions continue to be scrutinised closely.*
- ii) Benefit Payments, positive variance of £308k  
*The Council has been successful in the recovery of more overpayments than had been expected generating an extra £114k. In addition to this, it has been possible to release the earmarked reserve of £194k as the 2010/11 Benefit Claim has now been successfully signed off, as reported in Quarter 3.*
- iii) Property-related savings - positive variance of £163k  
*The Council manages the building maintenance position extremely carefully and has achieved significant savings in the last year. this also includes £69K in respect of dilapidation payments to the Council.*
- iv) Savings in relation to the Elections function of £23k  
*The Contingency built into the budget for by-elections and ethical investigations was not required and any future expenditure can be met from reserves.*
- v) Additional costs of an increase in the Bad Debt Provision of £113k  
*Due, in the main, to greater difficulty in collecting debts to the Council the value of the bad debt provision has had to be increased. These charges relate largely to Housing Benefit debt.*
- vi) Additional External Interest income received of £26k  
*This additional interest on investments has resulted from slightly longer durations and extremely robust treasury management of funds.*
- vii) Reduced income from Car Parking and Civil Enforcement £137k  
*The reduced income from the two parking activities of £137k has been offset as far as possible by reduced costs.*
- viii) Increased Council Tax and NNDR court action income of £41k  
*This income covers costs of recovery action (most of which are internal pay costs) and we have achieved additional income over the budget this year.*
- ix) Additional Cemetery Income and lower repairs and maintenance totalling £25k  
*The extra sale of plots at the old cemetery and reduced repairs and maintenance has resulted in this saving.*
- x) Planning Fee reduced income - adverse variance of £59k  
*This reduction in income is due to the prevailing local economy and the knock-on effect on the applications for building development.*
- xi) Additional earmarked reserves new for this year of £350k  
*The variance analysis includes expenditure to create two new earmarked reserves, firstly for this Council's potential future liability in relation to MMI our former insurers, and secondly for the Economic Impact Reserve.*

4.5 It is clear that the future financial position for the Council will continue to be challenging, particularly in relation to the Comprehensive Spending Review 2013, which is likely to result in further funding reductions, and follows last year's

fundamental changes to the way Central Government provides funding for local authorities, together with the continuing national budget deficit. The reduced level of funding for the Council in the future is being mitigated by a raft of transformational reviews led by the Wyre Forest Forward programme.

- 4.6 The draft position for 2012/13 demonstrates that through prudent financial management, additional resources of £650,260 were made available to fund additional earmarked reserves as set out in paragraph 4.8 and increase the Working Balance as set out in paragraph 4.9. For information, a further net contribution of £402k has been made to earmarked reserves.
- 4.7 As part of the 2011/14 Budget a transformation fund of £700k for one-off implementation costs was established to support the Wyre Forest Forward programme. This was increased by a further £100,000 in 2011/12 and the fund has been extremely successful in delivering the change programme. £368k remains from this fund at the end of 2012/13, with £194k being uncommitted.
- 4.8 Cabinet is asked to note the creation of two new significant earmarked reserves from the surplus in 2012/13. The first is £80,000 for the Economic Impact reserve; this is to mitigate the impact of local economic volatility due to continuing austerity measures and resultant risk to the income streams forecast in the base budget. The second is in relation to the potential liability in relation to the Council's former insurers Municipal Mutual Insurance of £270,000.
- 4.9 It should also be noted that, in accordance with the Council decision on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2013, the balance of the surplus of £300,000 has been transferred to supplement the Working Balance. This increases the Working Balance from £700,000 to £1m to reflect the significant financial risks faced by this Council as a result of the fundamental changes to the Government Funding Regime in 2012/13, further austerity measures expected and also the impending Welfare Reform changes.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The positive variance of £650,260, compared to the Revised Budget, reducing to a minimal £260, following the creation of additional earmarked reserves and transfer to the Working Balance is noted. These reserves will be reconsidered in accordance with the Council's Finance Strategy, as part of the budget process for 2014 onwards. This is greater than reported at Quarter 3 budget monitoring. However, a number of events and decisions in the last quarter coupled with year end transactions has led to the increase in the savings. This saving represents around 1% of total gross revenue expenditure of £65m.
- 5.2 These remain extremely challenging times for this Council given the changed landscape of the Government's funding regime, with 2013/14 being the first full year of these changes when the forecast impacts of decisions during the last budget process can be measured. The saving on outturn is welcomed and has been utilised to earmark funds to meet potential liabilities and also to increase the Working Balance to mitigate the potential future impact of funding volatility.

## **6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 None.

**7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 The principal risk to the Council is non-achievement of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 deadline, in respect of production and approval of the Statement of Accounts before 30<sup>th</sup> June 2013, and qualification of the Accounts by the Council's External Auditors.
- 7.2 Further updates on the continued return of the Icelandic investments will be provided to Council and Cabinet as part of Quarterly Budget Monitoring and the Leader's Update Reports to Council.

**8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 This is a financial report and there is no requirement to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment.

**9. CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 This report details the outturn position as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013 and provides information on the creation of further significant earmarked reserves.

**10. CONSULTEES**

- 10.1 CMT/Cabinet.

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011.  
Financial Strategy 2013/16.

**PROVISIONAL OUTTURN**  
**MAJOR VARIATIONS BETWEEN REVISED BUDGET**  
**AND ACTUAL NET EXPENDITURE FOR 2012/13**

<b>Total Revised Budget 2012/13</b>	<b>13,076,950</b>
<b>Less Release of Star Chamber Ear marked Reserves</b>	<b>(142,720)</b>
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>12,934,230</b>
<b>Actual Net Expenditure</b>	<b>12,633,970</b>
<b>SAVINGS COMPARED TO 2012/13 REVISED BUDGET</b>	<b>(300,260)</b>
<b>Note: Year end Transfer to Working Balance as per February Council Report</b>	<b>300,000</b>

Description of Estimated Major Variances	Extra Costs/ Reduced Income £	Savings/ Additional Income £
<b>Chief Executive</b>		
1.		
<b>Community Assets and Localism</b>		
1. Admin Building & Industrial Estates - Running Costs		(13,900)
2. Community Right to Bid/Challenge Government Funding to fall into general Balances		(13,500)
3. Dilapidation receipts - RAFA £50k, £19k Comberton Place		(69,000)
4. Elections - savings including cost of by-Elections not required		(23,100)
<b>Community Well Being and Environment</b>		
1. Leisure Centres - Maintenance of Buildings, Ground and Plant Replacement		(31,000)
2. Cemetery - Reduced expenditure on repairs and additional income from forward sale of plots		(25,500)
3. Repairs and Maintenance including Grounds Maintenance		(37,400)
4. Contract Cleaning - savings on supplies and services for Car Parks and Parks and Green Spaces		(42,700)
5. Security Services for cash collection primarily for car parking		(21,000)
6. HUB - Additional contribution from Worcestershire County Council to Pay Costs		(18,400)
7. Parking Fees Income this is substantially offset by reductions in expenditure shown above	136,700	
8. Waste -pressure as a result of Agency Contracts, partly offset by budget savings on supplies and services	40,100	
<b>Economic Prosperity and Place</b>		
1. Planning Application Fees	59,200	
2. NNDR Rate Relief - Discretionary Element		(13,100)
3. Regulatory Services Refund Received for 2012/13		(27,300)
4. Homelessness Costs Saving		(18,000)
5. Building Control - Shared Service Income Shortfall for 2012/13	10,000	
<b>Resources</b>		
1. Audit Fee savings due to rebate and reduction in grant claim certification costs		(23,900)
2. Benefits release of 2011/12 earmarked reserve now 2010/11 Grant Claim confirmed		(194,000)
3. Benefits additional recovery of overpayments		(113,700)
4. Additional income from Council Tax & NNDR Court Action		(41,100)
<b>Capital Account</b>		
1. Interest on investments		(26,100)
<b>Corporate Variations</b>		
1. Corporate Pension Costs		(29,800)
2. Pay Costs (including Agency)		(33,700)
3. Admin Expenses		(99,700)
4. VAT Reserve no longer required		(20,000)
5. Increase in Bad Debt Provision (mostly in relation to Housing Benefits)	113,500	
6. Municipal Mutual Insurance - Creation of ear-marked reserve	270,000	
7. Economic Impact Reserve - Creation of ear-marked reserve	80,000	
8. Miscellaneous Savings		(73,860)
	709,500	(1,009,760)
<b>REDUCED NET EXPENDITURE ON YEAR 2012/13</b>		<b>(300,260)</b>

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET  
18<sup>th</sup> June 2013**

**Recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
4<sup>th</sup> April 2013**

**Housing Strategy: Empty Properties**

The Housing Review Panel considered a report which detailed information about empty properties within the district and the actions being undertaken by the Housing Services Team to tackle the number of empty properties.

Tackling empty properties is an important area of work for the authority both in terms of meeting its corporate priorities and also in achieving a higher level of New Homes Bonus by bringing empty properties back into use.

It was acknowledged that funding may not be available immediately, but the issue should be taken into consideration going forward and reviewed when additional funding streams are identified.

**Recommend to Cabinet:**

- **To bring some of the more difficult longer term empty properties back into use or increase the overall numbers, consideration be given to funding an Officer resource.**
- **When an additional Officer is agreed to, funding of the resource be identified (both revenue and capital may be required).**



**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Cabinet  
18<sup>th</sup> June 2013**

**Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
6<sup>th</sup> June 2013**

**Recommendations from the Housing Review Panel of 9<sup>th</sup> May 2013  
Housing Strategy: Housing and Homelessness Services**

The Panel considered a report which highlighted the national and local context for Housing Advice.

The Council currently provides a number of homeless prevention services, delivered directly or through partners, which Members felt provided excellent value for money. Estimates of cost associated with re-housing a homeless household were between £2,500 and £7,500 whereas most of the Council's homeless prevention services cost around £596 per case on average (not including those prevented through the Community Housing Group contract).

It was reported 2014 would be the last year that the Council would receive grant funding from Communities and Local Government for Homeless Prevention services.

**Recommend to Cabinet:**

- 1. To undertake an evaluation of the cost effectiveness of homeless prevention services (funded from the Department of Communities and Local Government) to then develop a business case for Cabinet to consider the continuation of funding the prevention services when the allocation goes from an area based grant into unringfenced Business Rates Retention Grant in 2014-15 (by July 2013).**
- 2. To undertake research into the different service delivery models for a debt awareness / money advice service to homeless /potentially homeless households to include, but not limited to, the Citizens Advice Bureau and an in-house service and to develop an options paper for further consideration.**
- 3. To give support to the continued focus and emphasis on homeless prevention services as it is recognised as being good practise, giving a better service to customers and value for money (with a £108k spend p.a. giving and estimated saving of £800k+) and to continue working with partners to ensure services are joined up and comprehensive.**

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Cabinet  
18<sup>th</sup> June 2013**

**Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
6<sup>th</sup> June 2013**

**Recommendations from the No Surprises Protocol Review Panel of  
9<sup>th</sup> May 2013  
Revising the No Surprises Review Protocol**

The Panel undertook a review of the effectiveness of the Council's current No Surprises Protocol. In light of feedback from the focus groups the No Surprises Protocol be amended. The updated Protocol is attached at Appendix 1.

The additions are as follows:

- a) To include examples of the type of information that Members would expect to be informed of, including regular updates from Officers who are working with community groups. It is embarrassing for Members when attending meetings of these community groups not to be aware in advance of the Officer led support the Council may be proposing to give the group. Also, it is essential that relevant Ward Members are advised when Officers are supporting community groups in submitting a bid for external funding as both District and County Councillors have an allowance for supporting community leadership initiatives and therefore may be in a position to offer some of their funding.
- b) That the protocol is not just for Members. Officers should apply the same principles by keeping other Officers informed of information which they need to be aware of, due to the potential implication on other services.
- c) That for expediency purposes, most notifications will be by Email and will now include the words 'No Surprises' as part of the subject header so Members can easily spot such notifications.
- d) That in certain circumstances (e.g. emergency planning issues – the Fire at Roxel) notifications may be by telephone or Text.
- e) That where appropriate, the contents of the email may need to be sent to the relevant Parish and Town Council via the Clerk and relevant County Councillor(s) as well as the identified District Councillors.
- f) That Members should send a very short acknowledgement for any No Surprises notification they receive e.g. 'Noted, thank you.' This will enable Officers to know that the email has been opened and read.

**IT Implications**

- g) That No Surprises Email Notifications will only be sent to the Wyre Forest District Council email address of each Councillor. A separate report on this issue will be tabled to the meeting of Group Leaders on 18 June due the security implications of information being sent via a non secure line if District Councillors are using their own email address.
- h) An email Group Set Up for each Ward, listing all the District Councillors for that Ward will be created. Officers will select the relevant email Group Set Up(s) unless the information needs to be sent to all Councillors. Any other councillors who need to be in receipt of the same information e.g. County Councillors or Parish / Town Councillors (via the Clerk) will be added to the same email. An up to date list of Parish Clerks and County Councillors and their email addresses will be found on the No Surprises page on COLIN.
- i) Regular IT Training Sessions / Workshops will be held for Members to ensure they are in a position to maximise the use of their IT equipment. Members are reminded that they should inform the IT Team if they have a problem with any IT device that the Council has provided them, so it can be sorted as soon as possible.
- j) The Council's telephone directory will be updated as soon as employees either start or leave the authority. This directory aligns itself with all council IT devices however, Members will need to delete any leavers from their frequent contact address books as IT do not have access to this facility. Members will be informed by IT of the names of Officers they have deleted from the system on a monthly basis.

**Members and Officers – Opportunities to meet up**

- k) Twice a year there will be a session for Members and Officers to meet up and have a cup of tea and chat, as it is acknowledged that many Officers do not regularly come into contact with Members. These sessions will provide an excellent opportunity for both Officers and Members to get to know each other and their respective roles.
- l) Any new Senior Manager to the Council will be introduced at a meeting of Group Leaders.

**Raising Awareness of the Protocol**

- m) The No Surprises Protocol poster will be refreshed and re-launched to help to continually raise awareness of the purpose of the Protocol.

**Home Working Arrangements**

- n) Officers who work at home should be contactable as though they are working in the office, as per the Home Working Policy. Their office phone should be diverted to their home landline or their mobile phone.

**Recommend to Cabinet: The No Surprises Protocol be amended, as attached at Appendix 1.**

### **NO SURPRISES PROTOCOL**

1. Local Members have an important role to play in representing the District Council in their Electoral Ward, responding to the concerns of their constituents, in meetings with partners and serving on external bodies and organisations.
2. In order to fulfil their roles and democratic responsibilities successfully **Members need clear, timely and relevant information to ensure they feel informed about matters on which they may be required to make decisions or affect their electoral ward.** This may include anything from planning application lists, changes to the weekly cleansing of streets, planned consultation activity, establishing a neighbourhood forum, cultural service events to planned tree surgery. In addition, it is essential that Members receive regular updates from Officers who are working with community groups. It is embarrassing for Members when attending meetings of these community groups not be aware in advance of the Officer led support the Council may be proposing to give the group. Also, it is important that relevant Ward Members are advised when Officers are supporting community groups in submitting a bid for external funding as both District and County Councillors have an allowance for supporting community leadership initiatives and therefore may be in a position to offer some of their funding.
3. When informing Members, Officers are reminded that if it is an issue which may potentially cause media interest or be controversial in nature, they should ensure the information includes the rationale for the planned course of action. This will save Members having to get back in contact with the Officer when residents ask e.g. the reason for needing to chop down the trees on the Worcester Road Island and not just they are being chopped down.
4. Wherever a public meeting is organised by the Council to consider local issues, all Members representing the electoral ward(s) affected should, as a matter of course, be invited to attend. Similarly, whenever the Council undertakes any form of consultation exercise, the local Member(s) should be notified at the outset of the exercise with every opportunity to be involved in helping to form the content of any consultation material. Members should be notified of the outcomes of the consultation.
5. For expediency purposes, most No Surprises notifications will be by Email and will include the words 'No Surprises' as part of the subject header so Members can easily spot such notifications. Email notifications **will only be sent** to the Wyre Forest District Council email address of Councillors to ensure compliance with the Government's Code of Connection policy. In certain circumstances notifications may be by telephone or Text – (e.g. emergency planning issues – the Fire at Roxel).

6. Where appropriate, the contents of the email may also need to be sent to the relevant Parish / Town Council via the Clerk and also the relevant County Councillors.
7. On receipt of any email No Surprises notification, Members should send a very short acknowledgement to say they have received it e.g. 'noted, thank you'. This will enable Officers to know that the email has been opened and read.

#### **8. Notes for Officers**

The Protocol is not just for Members. Officers should apply the same principles by keeping other Officers informed of information which they need to be aware of, due to the potential implication on other services.

An email Group Set Up for each Ward, listing all the District Councillors for that Ward will be created. Officers will select the relevant email Group Set Up(s) unless the information needs to be sent to all Councillors. Any other Councillors who need to be in receipt of the same information e.g. County Councillors or Parish / Town Councillors (via the Clerk) will be added to the same email. An up to date list of Parish Clerks and County Councillors and their email addresses will be found on the No Surprises page on COLIN.

Updated June 2013