

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
CABINET**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER
18TH JUNE 2013 (6.00PM)**

Present:

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

Observers:

Councillors G W Ballinger, H E Dyke and M Price.

CAB.01 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

CAB.02 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

CAB.03 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 23rd April 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB.04 Call Ins

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

CAB.05 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

CAB.06 Leader's Announcements

The Leader advised Members that the Council were doing all they could to keep residents informed of the fire that had happened at Lawrence's Recycling Centre on Sunday 15th June 2013. Advice from the Environment Agency would continue to be updated on the Council's website.

CAB.07 Report on Final Accounts 2012/13

A report was considered from the Director of Resources on the Outturn for 2012-13.

The Cabinet Member for Resources outlined the content of the report and advised Members that the provisional outturn position had identified savings of over £300k. The Cabinet Member thanked Members of the Corporate Management Team and the relevant Corporate Management Teams for their contribution in generating efficiency savings.

In response to a question, the Cabinet Member for Resources confirmed that the increase in special reserves had been allocated on the advice from the Council's auditors.

A Member queried the surplus of £23K in the Elections budget and asked if this could be put towards an adequate size room for the forthcoming by-election. The Leader of the Council responded that the Council had to make efficient use of its own facilities and this would be the first time that an election would be webcast at Wyre Forest House. In addition, there had always been a limit on the number of people who could attend the verification and count.

The amount earmarked for a potential liability in relation to the Council's former insurers Municipal Mutual Insurance had nothing to do with the Icelandic investments. It was a scheme which allowed Municipal Mutual Insurance claw back claims required on behalf of its creditors since 1992.

Decision:

The following be noted as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report to Cabinet:

- 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. A contribution of £80,000 from the 2012/13 saving has been allocated to the Economic Impact earmarked reserve.**
- 3. £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).**
- 4. £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 of the report to Cabinet.**

CAB.08 Recommendations from Committees

Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 4th April 2013

- a. Recommendations from Housing Review Panel
Housing Strategies: Empty Properties

Members were advised that both the Housing Review Panel and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had discussed this item at length and the recommendation of an Empty Homes Officer had been unanimously agreed.

The Leader of the Council expressed that the recommendation would be noted by Cabinet as the budget had been completed for this financial year. However, a temporary post had been created and this would be filled soon. He stated that the Council would do all they could to get people into empty properties.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny responded that this item had been brought forward by Members through their work programme and although it had not fitted in with the budget timetable, it was the right timing for the review panel.

Noted:

- 1. 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.**
- 2. When an additional Officer is agreed to, funding of the resource be identified (both revenue and capital may be required).**

CAB.09 Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 6th June 2013

- a. Recommendations from Housing Review Panel
Housing Strategy: Housing and Homelessness Services

Members were informed that this item had been unanimously agreed at the Housing Review Panel and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Leader of the Council informed Members that the items would feed into the work of the Strategic Review Committee when the budget for the next financial year commenced.

Noted:

- 1. 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) be undertaken.**

2. **Research be undertaken 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. **Support be given 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.**
- b. Recommendations from No Surprises Protocol Review Panel

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee informed Members that the review panel had consisted of a cross party membership and focus groups had been held with officers. The focus groups had proved useful with officers and Members agreeing that there was a lack of communication but with the new protocol this should be alleviated. Members had explained to officers that by receiving regular updates, this helped with their ward work.

Decision: The No Surprises Protocol be amended, as attached at Appendix 1 of the report to Cabinet.

The meeting closed at 6.33 pm.