

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER**

**THURSDAY, 4TH JULY 2013 (6.00PM)**

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**Present:**

Councillors: H E Dyke (Chairman), T Ingham (Vice-Chairman), C Brewer, N Gale, J Greener, V Higgs, D C H McCann, T L Onslow, J Phillips, M Rayner and A M Sewell.

**Observers**

Councillors: M B Kelly, F M Oborski and M Price.

**OS.11 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

**OS.12 Appointment of Substitutes**

No substitutes were appointed.

The Chairman welcomed Marina Banner (Executive Director), Yvonne Leishman (Managing Director), Gill Smith (Resident Involvement Manager) and several tenants of The Community Housing Group (TCHG) to the meeting.

**OS.13 Declarations of Interests by Members**

Councillor H E Dyke declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) in agenda item 5 – Housing Review Panel Recommendations 31<sup>st</sup> July 2012 – Proposed Tenant Services Committee, as her husband works for The Community Housing Group.

Councillor N Gale declared a DPI in agenda item 5 – Housing Review Panel Recommendations 31<sup>st</sup> July 2012 – Proposed Tenant Services Committee, as she is a Board Member of The Community Housing Group.

Councillor J Greener declared a DPI in agenda item 5 – Housing Review Panel Recommendations 31<sup>st</sup> July 2012 – Proposed Tenant Services Committee, as she is a Board Member of The Community Housing Group.

Councillor M Rayner declared a DPI in agenda item 5 – Housing Review Panel Recommendations 31<sup>st</sup> July 2012 – Proposed Tenant Services Committee, as she is a Board Member of The Community Housing Group.

Councillor J Phillips declared a DPI in agenda item 5 – Housing Review Panel Recommendations 31<sup>st</sup> July 2012 – Proposed Tenant Services Committee, as he is a shared ownership tenant of a Community Housing Group property.

Councillor F M Oborski declared a DPI in agenda item 5 – Housing Review Panel Recommendations 31<sup>st</sup> July 2012 – Proposed Tenant Services Committee, as she is a Board Member of The Community Housing Group.

**OS.14 Minutes**

**Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 6th June 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

Councillors H E Dyke, N Gale, J Greener, M Rayner, J Phillips and F M Oborski left the meeting at this point, (6.04pm). Councillor Ingham took the chair.

**OS.15 Housing Review Panel Recommendations 31st July 2012 - Proposed Tenant Services Committee**

The Strategic Housing Services Manager introduced the agenda item and advised an update would be given by TCHG on the first set of recommendations which came from the Housing Review Panel.

Marina Banner addressed the Committee and outlined the work which had been undertaken with the interim Tenant Services Committee Members. The discussions had included agreeing the terms of reference, working on proposals for what the Tenants wanted to achieve from the new Committee and the level of support expected from Officers.

Councillor A M Sewell entered the meeting at this point, (6.07pm).

It was reported the process had taken longer than anticipated as TCHG felt it was important for the different Tenant groups to settle into their new roles and agree working relationships and protocols.

Marina Banner confirmed the election process had commenced. A special edition of the Tenants newsletter 'Streets Ahead' was due to be distributed which outlined the election, how to apply for the vacancies and indicated the support network available to Tenants. In addition, Neighbourhood Officers and Wardens had been asked to encourage Tenants within their areas to participate in the election.

Members expressed concern over the delay in the process and whether the timescale for the election and appointment of the new Tenant Services Committee Members was achievable.

Assurance was given by both Directors from TCHG that the process would be delivered on time and be open to all Tenants. It was acknowledged a vast amount of change had taken place within TCHG such as the new Governance Structure and Resident Involvement Structure as well as the Welfare Reform changes, and Tenants would be guided and supported through the changes, as a priority.

A representative from the Central Tenants Forum advised the Committee that Tenants and representatives from TCHG had worked together and was pleased with the progress made to date.

The Chairman of the Housing Review Panel, Councillor M Price, asked Marina Banner for a further progress report as it would be useful for Members to be updated on the election as the process continues.

**Agreed: The update be noted and further progress reports to be provided by TCHG as the election process continues.**

Councillors H E Dyke, N Gale, J Greener, M Rayner, J Phillips and F M Oborski re-entered the meeting at this point and Councillor Dyke resumed the chair, (6.38pm).

**OS.16 Wyre Forest District Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan and Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan – Adoption**

The Committee considered a report which presented the findings of the Inspector's Report into the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan (SALPP) and the Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan (KCAAP) following their Independent Examination during January / February 2013.

The Planning Policy Manager and Principal Planning Policy Officer led Members through the report. The Committee were reminded that the Local Development Framework Review Panel had fully considered all of the detailed policies at each stage of their development.

In relation to the Inspector's modification which relates to the additional undertaking in the SALPP to produce a separate Local Plan relating to the provision of gypsy and traveller sites following an up-to-date Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, Members were advised this related to site allocations for the post 2017 period and would not alter the policies within the SALPP. These were developed following detailed consideration by the LDF Panel and Overview and Scrutiny Committee in late 2011 and early 2012. A Member commented on the need for mediation amongst the different communities when work commenced on the plan.

**Agreed:**

- a) **The content of the Inspector's report, including the proposed main modifications as attached to the report at Appendix 1 be endorsed.**
- b) **Recommend to Cabinet that both the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan and the Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan (incorporating the modifications as recommended by the Inspector) are presented to July's Full Council meeting for adoption, to be used to determine planning applications from the 24th July 2013.**
- c) **The accompanying Policies Maps set out at Appendix 3 of the report be endorsed.**
- d) **Note that upon Adoption of the Plans, the list of remaining 2004 Adopted Local Plan Saved Policies (as set out at Appendix 4 to the report), will now be fully replaced by those incorporated within the Adopted Core Strategy, the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan and the Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan.**
- e) **Recommend to Cabinet that delegated authority be given to the Director of Economic Prosperity and Place to make the necessary presentational amendments, including the minor amendments as set out at Appendix 2 to the report, to the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan, Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan and the accompanying Policies Map.**

**OS.17 Scoping of Scrutiny Exercise**

The Committee considered the preliminary information regarding a scrutiny exercise to evaluate the parking enforcement within the Wyre Forest District.

**Agreed: The Democratic Services Officer to contact Group Leaders asking for nominations for the Parking Enforcement Review Panel.**

**OS.18 Wyre Forest House - Update on Project and Achievement of Savings**

The Committee received a report from the Chief Executive which updated Members on the project including the achievement of savings, funding, finalisation of the project including dealing with unresolved items on the “snagging list” and the future plans.

Councillors F M Oborski and M Price left the meeting at this point, (7.10pm) and Councillor M B Kelly left at 7.11pm.

Members discussed the report and were encouraged that the reported savings would go towards the protection of key services within the Council.

The Chief Executive agreed to follow up responses to several issues raised namely; hearing loop facility in meeting rooms, number / percentage of staff designated as homeworkers and the allowances the Council paid them and what borrowing was undertaken by the Council due to the project.

**Agreed:**

- **The Chief Executive to arrange for responses to the several issues raised to be circulated to Members.**
- **The progress with the project and achievement of savings be noted.**

**OS.19 Feedback from Cabinet**

**Agreed: The content of the Cabinet action list following consideration of the recommendations from the meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2013, be noted.**

**OS.20 Work Programme**

The Committee considered and noted the work programme. Members were advised the Treasury Management Review Panel would be set up again and for the municipal year, a training session and first meeting of the Panel was scheduled for Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2013.

**Agreed:**

- **The work programme be noted.**
- **The Democratic Services Officer to contact Group Leaders asking for nominations for the Treasury Management Review Panel.**

**OS.21 Press Involvement**

There were no future items for scrutiny that might require publicity.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7.41pm.