

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL  
CABINET  
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER  
18TH FEBRUARY 2014 (6.00 PM)**

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**Present:**

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

**Observers:**

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

**CAB.55 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor N J Desmond.

**CAB.56 Declarations of Interests by Members**

No declarations of interest were made.

**CAB.57 Minutes**

**Decision: The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**CAB.58 Call Ins**

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

**CAB.59 Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

**CAB.60 Leader's Announcements**

Members were advised that a significant milestone had been reached in that the second phase of the Hoobrook Link Road had been given the go ahead. In response to a question, it was perceived that the link road would ease the congestion on the Stourport Road, Kidderminster.

Following the public realm consultation for Kidderminster Town Centre, the town had been identified as a key priority for investment and the town would be developed.

In relation to the flooding problems in Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley, car parks in the two towns would be free until the end of the half term holidays.

**CAB.61 Financial Strategy 2014-2017**

A report was considered from the Chief Financial Officer which provided an update on the Medium Term Financial Strategy and made recommendations to Council on the proposed budget decision and also considered the recommendations from the Strategic Review Committee at its meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2014. In addition, the report of the Chief Financial Officer was considered in respect of the statutory duties in relation to budget setting and monitoring.

The Financial Strategy 2014-2017 document was circulated to Members prior to the commencement of the meeting and their attention was drawn to the updated Cabinet proposals. These included the Government's decision not to top slice the New Homes Bonus, a review of the structure of the Council's Leadership Team, the decision to reform the service for Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services by making internal savings; and the continuation of the Community Leadership Fund for two years.

Council tax would be increased by just under 2%. At Band D, this would mean a £3.83 increase for households over 12 months.

The Leader of the Council thanked the opposition groups for their input into the budget process and added that the process had been open and transparent and the report would now be sent to Council for debate.

Members agreed that the budget process the Council had was far superior to other authorities in the County.

**Decision:**

**Recommend to Council: The Financial Strategy 2014-2017 as recommended on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2014, the results of the Council Tax consultation exercise and recommendations of the Strategic Review Committee, as follows:**

**1.1 FEES AND CHARGES**

1.1.1 **APPROVAL** of the updated fees and charges as attached in Appendix 1, in respect of Control of Dogs to replace those approved by Council on the 27<sup>th</sup> November 2013.

**1.2 THREE YEAR BUDGET, CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND POLICY FRAMEWORK 2014-17**

1.2.1 **APPROVAL** of the updates to the Medium Term Finance Strategy 2014-17 as approved by Council in November 2013, as set out in the Cabinet report of the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2014.

- 1.2.2 **APPROVAL** of the Base Capital Programme and Vehicle, Equipment and Systems Renewal Schedule as set out in Appendices to the Cabinet Report on the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2014, further amended to incorporate all approved Cabinet Proposals and final amendments detailed in this report. The revised Capital Programme for approval is contained in Appendix 2 (Parts 1 and 2); updated Prudential Indicators are also presented in the separate Treasury Management report on this agenda. In doing so, Capital Budgets for 2014-17 are approved.
- 1.2.3 **APPROVAL** that the first £338,000 of the Right to Buy (RTB) receipts in 2014/15 be allocated to Disabled Facilities Grants (to a maximum Capital budget of £800,000). Any subsequent RTB Capital Receipts be allocated to general capital reserves. That the allocation of future years' RTB receipts will be considered in future budget setting processes.
- 1.2.4 **APPROVAL** that the initial £1m funding allocated for the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme be removed from the Capital Programme given the launch of the Government's Help to Buy Scheme and withdrawal of the Lloyds Banking Group from this initiative.
- 1.2.5 **APPROVES** that any Final Account savings arising from 2013-17 over and above the target allowed for in the Council's Finance Strategy, together with surplus Earmarked Reserves, be allocated by the Chief Financial Officer in consultation with the Leader.
- 1.2.6 **The General Fund Revenue Budget be APPROVED including updated CABINET PROPOSALS (Appendix 3) and updated FEES AND CHARGES (Appendix 1) and related amendments** as set out in paragraph 5 of this report.

### **1.3 COUNCIL TAX**

- 1.3.1 **RECOMMENDS** a Council Tax for Wyre Forest District Council on a Band D Property of £201.45 for 2014-15 (£197.62 2013-14) which represents a 1.94% increase on Council Tax from 2013-14.
- 1.3.2 **RECOMMENDS** a provisional Council Tax on a Band D Property in 2015-16 of £205.36 and £209.34 in 2016-17, an increase of 1.94 % per annum over 2014-15.
- 1.3.3 **APPROVES** the discount for dwellings in Class C prescribed by the Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwelling) (England) Regulations 2003 No 3011 shall, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014, be one hundred per cent for the first calendar month and zero per cent thereafter, with any occupation for any period of less than 6 weeks being ignored. The period for which any discount under Class C applied to a dwelling immediately before 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 shall count towards the period of one calendar month in awarding any discount for the period commencing on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014.

**1.4 MEMBER ALLOWANCES**

- 1.4.1 **HAVE REGARD** to the conclusions and recommendations of the Independent Review Panel (IRP) in making any amendments to the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2014-15;
  - 1.4.2 **DECIDE** to maintain the scheme of allowances set out in Appendix 4 – Part 2, for the financial year 2014-15, with the omission of the allowances for the Strategic Review Committee as this committee operates only in the 2013-14 municipal year;
  - 1.4.3 **DECIDE** to withdraw from the joint Worcestershire Independent Remuneration panel.
  - 1.4.4 **AUTHORISE** the Solicitor to the Council to amend the Constitution as appropriate to give effect to the Council's decisions, including the constitution of a new IRP to advise on the future scheme of allowances.
- 1.5** The Chief Financial Officer's opinion on the budget proposals, as recommended by Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2014 and detailed in appendix 5 of the Cabinet report be noted.

**CAB.62 Treasury Management Strategy 2014/15**

A report was considered from the Chief Financial Officer which recommended to Council the approval of the restated Prudential Indicators and Limits for the financial years 2014/15 to 2016/17, the updated Treasury Management and Investment Policy and Strategy Statements for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015, the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement that set out the Council's policy on MRP and the Authorised Limit Prudential Indicator. Cabinet also considered the recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

**Decision:**

**Recommended to Council:**

1. **The restated Prudential Indicators and Limits for the financial years 2014/15 to 2016/17 included in Appendix 3 of the report to Cabinet be approved.**
2. **The updated Treasury Management and Investment Policy and Strategy Statements for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 (the associated Prudential Indicators are included in Appendix 3 of the report to Cabinet and the detailed criteria is included in Section 10 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.63 Budget Monitoring Third Quarter 2013/14**

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

Members were advised that an underspend of just under £150,000 was predicted and this included a saving of £69,220 in environmental maintenance. Figures had also been released confirming that 300 houses had been built in the area during the past 12 months, with approximately 150 being affordable homes. Members were pleased that the budget papers for the Council agenda had been circulated and thanked Officers in achieving this.

**Decision: The projected budget variations and comments outlined within the report to Cabinet and appendices 2 to 5 be noted.**

**CAB.64 Recommendation from Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 6<sup>th</sup> February 2014**

- **Chaddesley Corbett Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 14 Consultation Response**

Members were advised that a lot of work had been undertaken in getting to this stage and representatives from Chaddesley Corbett Parish Council had provided an excellent presentation in the foyer of Wyre Forest House to explain the details of the Plan. Congratulations were asked to be passed on to the Parish Council on their quality of work.

**Decision:**

1. **The response set out at Appendix 2 of the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to Chaddesley Corbett Parish Council as the District Council's formal response to the Regulation 14 consultation be submitted.**
2. **Delegated authority be granted to the Director of Economic Prosperity and Place to publish the Neighbourhood Plan upon its receipt and to appoint an examiner to undertake an examination of the Plan.**
3. **The Chief Executive to write to Chaddesley Corbett Parish Council congratulating them on their quality of work on their Parish Plan.**

The meeting closed at 6.29 pm.