

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

THURSDAY, 1ST MAY 2014 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: H E Dyke (Chairman), T Ingham (Vice-Chairman), G W Ballinger, C Brewer, N Gale, J Greener, V Higgs, T L Onslow, M Rayner, C Rogers, A M Sewell and S J Williams.

Observers

Councillor A T Hingley.

OS.113 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D C H McCann.

OS.114 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor S J Williams was appointed as a substitute for Councillor D C H McCann.

OS.115 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

OS.116 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd April 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

OS.117 New Leisure Centre Update

The Committee received a report from the Cultural Services Manager which summarised the progress made on the project.

The Cultural Services Manager led Members through the report and the following points were highlighted:

- The exchange of contracts with the St Francis Group relating to the purchase of the Silverwoods site took place on 11th April 2014.
- The Planning Committee approved the outline planning permission on 8th April 2014.
- Sport England had requested to be part of the tendering process, therefore the date of determination of the final application for external funding from the Strategic Facilities Fund had been changed to 17th June 2014.

Members were also advised that contact had been made with public transport providers regarding access to the site from all areas of the District an update on the progress of this item would be included in the regular Committee update report.

Agreed:

- **The update be noted.**
- **The Cultural Services Manager to include the public transport item on all future update reports.**

OS.118 Enforced Sale Policy

The Committee considered a report from the Principal Environmental Health Officer (Housing) on a policy which set out the approach the Council would take when considering whether to recover debt through an enforced sale of property. The policy sets out the criteria to consider and the decision making process.

Councillor T L Onslow entered the meeting at this point, (6.11pm).

The Director of Economic Prosperity and Place led Members through the report and advised that the policy would be a useful tool for the Council to have in order to pursue debts. However, it was noted the Council would only consider using this option if it was a cost effective method.

The Committee discussed the policy and sought clarification on how the figure of £1,000 worth of debts was decided upon. The Director of Economic Prosperity and Place agreed to circulate an explanation to the Committee Members following the meeting.

Agreed:

- **The Director of Economic Prosperity and Place to provide an answer to the query raised on the debt figure to Members of the Committee.**
- **Recommend to Cabinet:**

That the Enforced Sale Policy, as set out at Appendix 1 in the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, be approved.

OS.119 Update on Worcestershire County Council Subsidised Bus Services Consultation

The Committee received a report from the Policy and Monitoring Officer which provided Members with an update on Worcestershire County Council's consultation on the proposed reduction of subsidised bus services which closed on 17th January 2014. A detailed response to the consultation was submitted by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2014.

Members were led through the report and advised that in total over 8,500 responses had been received to the consultation. It was noted that the County Council's Cabinet had agreed at its meeting on 6th February 2014, to review the responses in

detail before making a final decision.

The Chairman asked the County Councillors A Hingley (St. Barnabas) and M Rayner (St. Georges and St. Oswalds), to request a briefing for District Councillors on the outcome of the consultation in due course.

Agreed:

- **The update be noted.**
- **County Councillors A Hingley and M Rayner to request a briefing for District Councillors on the outcome of the consultation.**

OS.120 Update on Review Panels

The Chairman of the Blue Badge Review Panel, Councillor J Greener, tabled the recommendations from the panel at the meeting. Members were advised the panel had been convened to scrutinise the allocation, procedure and effectiveness of the scheme and to investigate possible misuse / abuse of the Disabled Parking Permits throughout the District.

The Committee received a verbal update from the Chairman of the Parking Enforcement Review Panel, Councillor V Higgs. Members were advised that the Panel had met three times and were reviewing parking enforcement 'hot spots' throughout the District which had been identified by Ward Members. It was noted the review panel would continue into the new municipal year.

Agreed:

- **The updates be noted.**
- **The Recommendations from the Blue Badge Review Panel be recommended to Cabinet:**
 1. **A publicity campaign via the Media Team be produced to promote the correct use of permits and to help prevent public misconception of the scheme.**
 2. **The Benefits Fraud Hotline telephone number be published and guarantee of anonymity.**
 3. **The continued efforts by the Kidderminster Hub and Worcestershire County Council to improve the application process and streamlining of issuing permits be endorsed.**
 4. **The Civil Enforcement Officers continue with the work they are doing to combat misuse of permits.**

OS.121 Work Programme

Agreed: Due to the number of items on the work programme for July 2014, a special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been scheduled for Thursday 10th July 2014 to consider the development of

Council's assets (exempt item).

OS.122 Press Involvement

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

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7.13pm.