

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL  
CABINET  
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER  
17TH FEBRUARY 2015 (6.00PM)**

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**Present:**

Councillors: M J Hart (Chairman), J-P Campion, N J Desmond, H E Dyke and A T Hingley..

**Observers:**

Councillors: J Holden, F M Oborski, M J Stooke, P Wooldridge and M J Wrench.

**CAB.41 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

**CAB.42 Declarations of Interests by Members**

No declarations of interest were made.

**CAB.43 Minutes**

**Decision: The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**CAB.44 Call Ins**

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

**CAB.45 Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

**CAB.46 Leader's Announcements**

There were no leader's announcements.

**CAB.47 Recommendations from the Cabinet Financial Strategy Advisory Panel on Results of Budget Consultation and Alternative Budgets**

A report was considered from the Chief Financial Officer on the results of the budget consultation exercise launched following the presentation of the Financial Strategy 2015-18 to Cabinet on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2014, alternative budget proposals and recommendations from the Cabinet Financial Strategy Advisory Panel from their meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

The Cabinet Member for Resources and Transformation took Members through the report and thanked Members of the Cabinet Financial Strategy Advisory Panel for the contributions over the four meetings that were held. It had been important to get the contributions from all Members and he believed the process had been beneficial, open and transparent. Alternative budget proposals had been presented by the Labour Group and UKIP and these proposals had been accommodated where possible.

He referred Members to the results of the budget consultation and stated that with regard to elections moving to a four yearly cycle, the public had strongly agreed that this was the way forward, however, the administration would not be taking it any further because no political consensus could be reached with the other political groups. It was perceived that this could save the Council approximately £150K over a three year period.

There had been a total of 183 responses and although it was acknowledged this had not been high, the responses received had to be respected.

A Member believed that the Community Leadership Fund was important as a large number of organisations had benefited from the fund.

**Decision: The results of the budget consultation exercise and the alternative budget proposals as detailed within the report and appendices to Cabinet be noted.**

**CAB.48 Financial Strategy 2015-18**

A report was considered from the Chief Financial Officer which updated Members on the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015-18 and made recommendations to Council on the proposed budget decision. Cabinet also considered the report of the Chief Financial Officer in respect of statutory duties placed on Local Authority Chief Financial Officers in relation to budget setting and monitoring.

The Cabinet Member for Resources and Transformation led Members through the report and informed them that the report was an updated version of that which had been presented to Cabinet in December 2014. The settlement from Central Government had been slightly better than anticipated to the sum of £36K but the RSG has been reduced.

Council tax would increase by 1.94% which was under the 2% threshold that had been set by the Government for a referendum. The district would benefit from a further 800 new properties being built which would generate approximately £182K in council tax income.

The Government had also announced that additional funding would be given to county councils for welfare and social care and Worcestershire County Council had confirmed that the money would be distributed to district authorities.

With regard to economic regeneration, Members were informed that significant monies had been invested in the area and this would include Amtek moving into the old Lawrences site, the Hoobrook link road being built and the Silverwoods site progressing.

It was felt that the proposals represented a balanced budget and helped with the challenges the Council faced going forward and this would leave £1m in reserves.

Members agreed that the budget process had worked well and all parties had had the opportunity to get involved.

The proposals would now be considered by Council on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2015 for debate and approval.

**Decision:**

**Recommend To Council: The Financial Strategy 2015-18, the results of the Council Tax consultation exercise and recommendations of the Cabinet Financial Strategy Advisory Panel:**

**1.1 THREE YEAR BUDGET, CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND POLICY FRAMEWORK 2015-18**

- 1.1.1 **APPROVAL** of the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015-18;
- 1.1.2 **APPROVAL** of the updated Cabinet Proposals – taking into account the impact on the Council’s Capital and Revenue Budgets for 2015-18 as shown in Appendix 3 of the report to Cabinet;
- 1.1.3 **APPROVAL** of the fees and charges in line with this Strategy and the impact on the Council’s Revenue Budget for 2015-18, as shown in Appendix 4 of the report to Cabinet;
- 1.1.4 **APPROVAL** of the updated Capital Programme and Vehicle, Equipment and Systems Renewal Schedule as set out in Appendix 2, Parts 1 and 2 of the report to Cabinet;
- 1.1.5 **APPROVAL** that the first £244,000 of Right to Buy (RTB) receipts in 2015-16 and subsequent years be allocated to Disabled Facilities Grants (to a maximum Capital budget of £800,000 pa) and any extra RTB Capital Receipts be allocated to general capital reserves;
- 1.1.6 **APPROVAL** that any Final Accounts savings arising from 2014-18 over and above the target allowed for in the Council’s Financial Strategy, together with surplus Earmarked Reserves, be allocated by the Chief Financial Officer in consultation with the Leader

- 1.1.7 The General Fund Revenue Budget be **APPROVED** including all updates from the position in December 2014 as set out in the Cabinet report.

**1.2 COUNCIL TAX**

- 1.2.1 **SET** the Council Tax for Wyre Forest District Council on a Band D Property at £205.36. for 2015-16 (£201.45 2014-15) which represents a 1.94% increase on Council Tax from 2014-15.
- 1.2.2 **ENDORSE** the provisional Council Tax on a Band D Property in 2016-17 of £209.34 and £213.40 in 2017-18, an increase of 1.94 % per annum over 2015-16.
- 1.2.3 **NOTE** the Chief Financial Officer's opinion on the budget proposals, recommended by Cabinet, as detailed in Appendix 5 of the report.

**CAB.49 Budget Monitoring Third Quarter 2014-15**

A report was considered from the Chief Financial Officer which asked Cabinet to note the projected variances.

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

The meeting closed at 18.54 pm.