

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**25 FEBRUARY 2015**

**LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

My announcements to the Council in December highlighted the award of the contract to Places for People to design, build, maintain and operate our new leisure centre at the Silverwoods site.

I am pleased to confirm to Council that the contract was signed on 9 January and I was delighted that we were able to announce that it will result in annual savings of £390,000 for the Council. Since then, the first element of borrowing to pay for the capital investment has been undertaken. The interest rates secured by Tracey Southall and her team have been lower than assumed in the business case. This means that the total annual savings will be even higher.

I can confirm that two major tenants move into Wyre Forest House in the next few weeks: dhjh llp, the local accountancy firm presently based in Bewdley, arrive on 9 March and Worcestershire Regulatory Services follow on 23 March. Moves of WFDC staff to accommodate these changes have already taken place, and the signage showing team locations is being amended. I am sure you will agree that the additional income is very welcome in supporting the revenue position of the Council.

At the time of writing, we are awaiting confirmation that the gas meter will be installed on 3 March. This has been delayed from 20 February for reasons entirely outside the Council's control. We expect testing and commissioning of the gas-fired boilers, which will supplement the ground source heat pump, to commence shortly thereafter. This will resolve the issues that we have been experiencing with heating of the building in the autumn and winter months. Councillors will be fully aware of the position on the heating at Wyre Forest House following a comprehensive report from the Chief Executive which has been recently considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Tonight's meeting is the last scheduled meeting of full Council before the elections on 7 May and indeed is the last ever after 41 years with 42 members. I would like to pay tribute to members who are standing down at the election, as well as to any members who may be unsuccessful in seeking re-election, and to thank them all for their service and contribution to the residents and communities of the Wyre Forest.

Finally, my thanks to the Chief Executive, Corporate Leadership Team and **ALL** staff for their hard work over the last municipal year.

Councillor Marcus Hart  
Leader of Wyre Forest District Council