

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL  
CABINET**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER  
14TH JUNE 2016 (6:00 PM)**

**Present:**

Councillors: M J Hart (Chairman) N J Desmond, S E Fearn, I Hardiman and T L Onslow.

**Observers:**

Councillor H E Dyke.

**CAB. 1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S J Chambers.

**CAB. 2 Declarations of Interests by Members**

No declarations of interest were made.

**CAB. 3 Minutes**

**Decision: The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 8th March 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**CAB. 4 Call Ins**

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

**CAB. 5 Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

**CAB. 6 Leader's Announcements**

The Leader made reference to the EU referendum on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2016 and encouraged those viewing the meeting on webcast to use their vote.

**CAB.7 Appointment of Honorary Alderman**

A report was considered from the Chief Executive in respect of appointment of Councillor Mike Kelly to Honorary Alderman.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that Councillor Mike Kelly had served three spells of office on the District Council, with distinction. He has previously served on Kidderminster Borough Council and was also elected as a Member of Kidderminster Town Council at its first elections in May 2016.

**Recommend to Council that:**

**The title of Honorary Alderman be conferred on Councillor Mike Kelly in accordance with Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972.**

**CAB. 8 Temporary Accommodation Placement and Procurement Policy**

A report was considered from the Strategic Housing Services Manager which asked to agree the policy that will be used for placing households who require temporary accommodation to assist with the Council's duties under the Housing Act 1996. The Cabinet also considered the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2016.

The Leader of the Council led the Cabinet through the report and referred to the recent homeless case of Nzolameso v Westminster 2015 which gave a clear guideline with regard to the policies Local Authorities are required to have to cover when and how they place households into emergency, interim or temporary accommodation and when such forms of accommodation are procured.

The Leader confirmed that the Policy is a clarification of how Council Officers currently work, and it is right and proper that the policy is formally approved by Cabinet for reasons of openness and transparency.

**Decision:**

**In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2016:**

**The Temporary Accommodation Placement and Procurement Policy be approved.**

**CAB. 9 A Strategy for Enabling Business Growth and Enterprise**

A report was considered from the Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration which considers the strategy that the Council will use to support local enterprise and business growth. The Cabinet also considered the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2016.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration led the Cabinet through the report and commented that it details the work of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) and the

Council's involvement with the two Local Enterprise Partnerships. The Cabinet Member also drew attention to the appendix of the report which details past and ongoing projects. She commented that the report details the Council's common sense approach for the future which is very positive.

The Leader of the Council concurred that the report is very comprehensive and the District Council, together with NWEDR shared service is supporting and contributing to a successful local economy, thus meeting one of the Corporate Priorities.

**Decision:**

**In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2016:**

**The Business Growth and Enterprise Strategy be adopted.**

**CAB.10 Recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2016**

- **Wyre Forest District Local Plan Review: Revised Local Plan Development Scheme (Project Plan 2016-2019)**

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee commented that the proposal for the revision of the Local Development Scheme Project Plan had encouraged a lot of debate at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and was pleased that Members had shown so much interest in what had been a very positive meeting.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration led the Cabinet through the recommendations and commented that the recommendations were regarding two key areas: Housing Need and the Employment Land Review. She confirmed that additional information would be required on areas such as flood risk and the Infrastructure Review. She confirmed that the Plan was thoroughly debated and scrutinised at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**Decision:**

- **The programme for the preparation and review of Development Plan, as set out on page 93 of appendix 1 of the report be amended in August 2017 and 2018 to reflect the fact that the Council does not hold key decision making meetings during August.**
- **The proposed Revised Local Development Scheme 2016-19 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (as amended) be adopted.**

**CAB.11 Report on Provisional Final Accounts Outturn 2015/16**

A report was considered from the Chief Financial Officer, which provided the provisional outturn position in relation to the Final Accounts for 2015/16.

The Cabinet Member for Resources led the Cabinet through the report and confirmed that a total surplus of £1,511,720 had been made, including a £230,000 Business Rates in-year surplus, which was welcome news. He added that this saving had been achieved by prudent budget management and thanked the Corporate Leadership Team and Officers across the Council for their achievement in efficiency savings.

The Cabinet Member for Resources confirmed that such savings had facilitated the creation of additional risk reserves, to protect the Authority in the future challenging times ahead.

The Leader of the Council added that a surplus of £1.5 million was welcomed as there were difficult and challenging times ahead.

**Decision:**

**The following information, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report to Cabinet, be noted:**

- 1 The most welcome news that a total surplus of £1,511,720 has been made, including a £230,000 Business Rates in-year surplus. This has been achieved by prudent budget management, particularly in relation to Pay and General Administration budgets together with a robust review and release of £271,000 earmarked reserves no longer required. This has facilitated the creation of the additional risk reserves detailed below, after which savings compared to the revised budget of £581,720 have been generated from the 2015/16 surplus.**
- 2 That £200,000 from the 2015/16 savings has been used to increase the existing earmarked reserve for the Transformation Fund to continue to meet the costs of our challenging Wyre Forest Forward Programme as detailed in paragraph 4.6.**
- 3 That £500,000 from the 2015/16 savings has been used to create a General Risks earmarked reserve.**
- 4 That £230,000 from the 2015/16 Business Rates surplus has been used to increase the Business Rates/Regeneration Risk Reserve.**

**CAB.12 Write off of Amounts Outstanding**

A report was considered from the Chief Financial Officer which enabled the Cabinet to give consideration to writing off the sum of £104,332.67 in respect of debts that cannot be collected.

The Cabinet Member for Resources advised the Cabinet that every effort had been made to pursue the debts, and every avenue had been explored, but unfortunately there was no option other than to write off the debts as detailed in the appendix to the report.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that it was unfortunate that the debts were unable to be recovered, but was satisfied that every effort had been made to pursue them.

A Member raised a query regarding the write offs for premises that were not occupied, in particular whether there was any evidence that potentially fraudulent activity had taken place. The Cabinet Member for Resources responded that the lease holders had a duty to pay their business rates, regardless of whether they occupied the premises, but this would be looked at by Council Officers and Members advised accordingly.

**Decision:**

**The total of £104,332.67, as detailed in the Appendices to the report to Cabinet, be written off.**

**CAB.13 Alternative Vehicles for the Delivery of Development Opportunities Including Establishing a Local Authority Trading Company (LATC)**

A report was considered from the Director of Economic Prosperity and Place to agree that further work continues to develop the business case(s) for development proposals that could meet need where the market is failing to address local issues and deliver a revenue stream for the Council, and to agree to the establishment of a Local Authority Trading Company (LATC) where the business case means that this is the most viable option.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration explained the advantages of considering alternative delivery models and the various methods to facilitate income generation, such as a Public Sector Plc.. She confirmed the importance of seeking various delivery methods so that if a project should come to fruition it would not be held up in feasibility work.

The Leader of the Council agreed that it was right and proper that the Council should consider business cases for the establishment of Local Authority trading companies and alternative vehicles for delivery.

**Decision:**

- 1. To delegate to the Director of Economic Prosperity & Place authority, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and Solicitor to the Council, to develop the business case(s) for development opportunities set out, but not limited to those, in Appendix 2 of the report to Cabinet; and to report to Cabinet for final agreement to proceed to implement proposals**

- 2. To delegate to the Director of Economic Prosperity & Place authority, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer, Solicitor to the Council and Cabinet Member for Planning & Economic Regeneration, to develop the business case for entering a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) with Public Sector Plc and to proceed to enter a LLP where the business case is agreed.**
  
- 3. To delegate to the Director of Economic Prosperity & Place authority, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and Solicitor to the Council, to develop the business case for the establishment of a Local Authority Trading Company (LATC) and to report to Cabinet for final agreement to establish a LATC where any business case agreed under 1 above demonstrates that this is the most viable option.**

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 6.27 pm.