

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

THURSDAY, 7TH JULY 2016 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: H E Dyke (Chairman), M Rayner (Vice-Chairman), J R Desmond, J A Hart, K Henderson, A T Hingley, C Rogers, R J Vale, S J Walker and S J Williams.

Observers

Councillors: S J Chambers, N Knowles, F M Oborski MBE and J A Shaw.

OS.13 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors N Gale and D Little.

OS.14 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor J A Hart was appointed as a substitute for Councillor D Little.
Councillor R J Vale was appointed as a substitute for Councillor N Gale.

OS.15 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

OS.16 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd June 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

OS.17 Housing Assistance Policy

The Committee considered a report from the Strategic Housing Services Manager which set out the policy that would be used to determine how the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding from Central Government would be spent.

The Strategic Housing Services Manager led Members through the report and advised that in 2016/17 the Council received £1.02m of capital funding via the Better Care Fund (BCF) to deliver its DFG service. This was a significant increase from the £557k received in 2015/16, which was a result of the Government's support of DFG as a way of improving wider health objectives. Members were advised the funding was likely to remain at this level or increase further over the next three years.

A discussion ensued and in response to a Member question, the Strategic Housing Services Manager advised that DFGs were means tested unless the grant was for a

child. Members asked for further information on how the funding had been spent. The Strategic Housing Services Manager agreed to provide a further update at the September meeting of the Committee.

Agreed:

- 1. Recommend to Cabinet: The Housing Assistance Policy, as set out at appendix 1 of the report, for use by the Strategic Housing Services Team in determining the use of the DFG capital funding, be adopted.**
- 2. The Strategic Housing Services Manager to provide a further update on DFGs at the September meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

OS.18 Kidderminster Eastern Gateway Development Framework

The Committee received a report from the Head of Economic Development and Regeneration, North Worcestershire, which asked Members to consider the proposed Kidderminster Eastern Gateway (KEG) Development Framework.

The Head of Economic Development and Regeneration led Members through the report and advised that the KEG site comprised of a number of inter-related sites on the eastern side of Kidderminster Town Centre. He added that the KEG area was due to change significantly during the next 12 months, with the closure of the Glades Leisure Centre in early July and the re-location of the current GP practice based in the Bromsgrove Street Medical Centre to a new facility in the former Cheshire Printworks site.

The Committee considered and discussed in detail the options analysis. The Chairman drew Members attention to the Viability Assessments produced by Savills which formed part of the exempt agenda for the Cabinet meeting on 12th July 2016.

Members welcomed the mixed use scheme and the residential provision on brownfield sites within the District, and asked that the Policy agreed by Council on 25th February 2015 following a motion submitted by Councillor J Shaw, Leader of the Labour Group be noted.

Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet:

- 1. The proposed Preferred Option (option 3 – mixed use) as set out in the Development Framework be adopted.**
- 2. The Policy agreed by Council on 25th February 2015 following a motion submitted by Councillor J Shaw, Leader of the Labour Group (Council minutes C.74 2.) be noted.**

OS.19 Treasury Management Review Panel

Members were advised the Treasury Management Review Panel would be formed again for the municipal year. The first training session and meeting of the Panel was scheduled to take place on Monday 5th September 2016.

Agreed: The Principal Committee and Member Services Officer to request nominations for the Panel from Members.

OS.20 Feedback from Cabinet

Agreed: The content of the Cabinet decision list following consideration of the recommendations from its meeting on 14th June 2016 be noted.

OS.21 Work Programme

The Committee considered the work programme for the remainder of the municipal year. Members were asked to submit any suggestions for future scrutiny items to the Chairman.

A Member asked for Ray Brookes, Chief Executive of The Community Housing Group to be invited to brief Members on the difficulties of providing truly affordable housing in the future within the District. The Chairman advised that this would be an ideal item for the Members Forum agenda.

Agreed:

- **The work programme be noted.**
- **A briefing from The Community Housing Group on the delivery of affordable housing be included on the Members Forum future work programme.**

OS.22 Press Involvement

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

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7.16pm.