

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

THURSDAY, 8TH SEPTEMBER 2016 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: H E Dyke (Chairman), M Rayner (Vice-Chairman), J Baker, J R Desmond, P Dyke, N Gale, D Little, J D Smith, S J Walker and S J Williams.

Observers

Councillors: J-P Champion, S J Chambers, I Hardiman, F M Oborski MBE and J A Shaw.

OS.23 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: K Henderson and A T Hingley.

OS.24 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor J Baker was a substitute for Councillor A T Hingley.
Councillor J D Smith was a substitute for Councillor K Henderson.

OS.25 Declarations of Interests by Members

Councillor J P Champion declared an Other Disclosable Interest in Agenda Item 12 as he is the West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner.

OS.26 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 7th July 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

OS.27 How Are We Doing? Performance Update

The Committee considered a report from the Head of Transformation and Communications which updated Members on the performance of the Council for quarter 1 (from 1st April to 30th June 2016).

The Head of Transformation and Communications led Members through the report and highlighted the excellent progress made in Income Generation and Competitive Products and Services in paragraphs 4.4 and 4.5. The websites listed in the Report showed the work that has been done on the digital services agenda so that more transactions can be carried out online without the need for customers to telephone the Council.

Agenda Item No. 4

A question was asked regarding a project not on the report at Stourport Basins/Bridge Street. The Director for Economic Prosperity and Place confirmed that we are working with H2O which is the regeneration arm of the Canal and River Trust and are looking at the viability of a wholly housing scheme as it is not financially viable for a mixed use scheme.

There was also a question regarding the Public Realm Scheme in Kidderminster Town Centre and whether we would be receiving any compensation for the delay in completing this work. The Director of Economic Prosperity and Place advised that there would not be any compensation. Members also asked about the location of bus stops in this area and concerns were expressed regarding the one outside the Express and Star office and also the double yellow lines outside Barclays Bank as this is the only bank on the flat where disabled residents can park outside.

Members asked when the new Hoobrook Link Road would be opened and the Director of Economic Prosperity and Place advised that he understands it will be by the end of this month.

A Member raised a concern under Corporate Risk 9 and 10 Capacity and Reputation. When the updated WRS contract started it was noticed that there are now only 77 FTE posts compared to 162 previously. Residents had complained to the Member who raised this issue and he had defended the Officers but stated that Members need to think of the implications of further cuts in services as the Council can no longer provide the level of service the public expects.

There was also a question regarding the ICT Strategy and paperless agendas. The Head of Transformation and Communications confirmed that all Members are provided with IT equipment and training.

Agreed: The progress in performance for quarter 1 be noted.

OS.28

Annual Report on Treasury Management Service and Actual Prudential Indicators 2015/16

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Financial Officer which provided a review of the treasury management activities for 2015/16, in line with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management (the Code) and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code). They also considered the recommendations from the Treasury Management Review Panel from its meeting on Monday 5th September 2016.

The Chief Financial Officer led Members through the report and advised them that there was lively debate at the Treasury Management Review Panel meeting. The Slides from the Training Session will be made available on the Intranet.

The Chairman of the Treasury Management Review Panel advised all Members to try and attend the next Training session as it was extremely interesting and can help when budget planning.

Agreed: The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends to Council to:

- 1. Approve the actual 2015/16 prudential and treasury indicators in this report.**
- 2. Note the annual treasury management report for 2015/16.**

OS.29 Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document – Adoption

The Committee considered a report from the Senior Planning Policy Officer which updated Members on the responses received to the Draft Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) consultation and presented the proposed final version of the SPD.

The Senior Planning Policy Officer led Members through the report and the three main areas of the Document which are Physical, Social and Green Infrastructure.

The Chairman of the Local Development Plan Review Panel commended the report to members and thanked colleagues who attended the meeting of the panel on 28th July. She was also very grateful to the officers as getting the document to this stage involved a tremendous amount of work.

Agreed: Endorse and recommend to Cabinet for Adoption the proposed Planning Obligations SPD as set out in Appendix 1.

OS.30 Wyre Forest Health and Wellbeing Plan Update

The Committee considered a report from the Strategic Housing Services Manager and the Principal Health and Sustainability Officer which updated Members on work to improve health and wellbeing in Wyre Forest and sought endorsement of the new Wyre Forest Health and Wellbeing Plan 2016-20.

The Strategic Housing Manager led Members through the report which showed that the health of residents of Wyre Forest continues to be of concern.

A discussion ensued and Members asked questions regarding teenage pregnancy rates which had improved and Dementia Awareness.

Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet that the Wyre Forest Health and Wellbeing Plan 2016-20 as attached at Appendix 1 is approved

OS.31 Climate Change Update

The Committee considered a report from the Principal Health and Sustainability Officer which provided an update on the implementation of the Wyre Forest Climate Change Action Plan 2015/16 and sought endorsement of the updated Action Plan for 2016/17.

The Principal Health and Sustainability Officer led Members through the report and highlighted activities areas that had been worked on in 2015/16. Members then discussed the Action Plan for 2016/17.

Agreed:

- **Note the progress on implementation of the Climate Change Action Plan 2015/16 (Appendix 1) and**
- **Recommend to Cabinet that the Climate Change Action Plan 2016/17 (Appendix 2) is approved.**

OS.32 Update on Work of the Home Improvement Agency

The Committee received a presentation from the Strategic Housing Services Manager on the work of the Home Improvement Agency.

Agreed: The update be noted.

OS.33 Recommendations from the S106 Monies Review Panel

The Committee received the recommendations from the S106 Monies review panel following its final meeting on Thursday 25th August 2016.

The Chairman of the S106 Monies Review Panel expressed his thanks to the Principal Committee and Member Services Officer and the Planning Officers who attended the meeting who dispelled any doubts the members had.

Agreed:

- 1. To ensure Members have the opportunity to appraise the Council's current S106 projects, an annual update from the S106 Monitoring Group and key responsible Officers be included on the Overview and Scrutiny future work programme.**
- 2. To ensure Members are fully informed about matters which affect their electoral ward, Members to be regularly updated of S106 money commitments within their wards by the key responsible Officer(s). In line with the Council's adopted No Surprises Protocol (attached at appendix 1), this will include where appropriate, the relevant Parish / Town Council via the Clerk.**

OS.34 Safer West Mercia Plan 2016 Consultation

The Committee considered the Police and Crime Commissioner's draft Safer West Mercia Plan 2016, with a view to submitting a response to the consultation which is open until 23:59 on Friday 16th September 2016.

The following was discussed and submitted to the consultation.

Response of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to the Safer West Mercia Plan 2016 (draft)

Putting Victims First

The Committee fully supported the new West Mercia Victims Board.

Building a more Secure West Mercia

The Committee would welcome a police presence in our more rural communities, especially when there are events happening in the area.

Concerns were raised regarding the treatment of vulnerable adults. They would like to see more mental health training for police officers.

Cllr P Dyke left the meeting at 7.58pm.

Reforming West Mercia

The Committee raised concerns about the 101 service. It has been reported that it can take a long time to get through to an operator. They felt that there was a gap in the service. If it is not an emergency then the only other option is to call 101. Sometimes people only need to log a crime for a reference number for an insurance claim, they may not need an officer response. They felt that the 101 service needed to improve and staff needed to be better trained.

Reassuring West Mercia's Communities

The Committee would like to see more visible policing. Also, they felt that there needed to be more awareness of hate crimes and how these should be reported to the Police. At the moment, they felt that not all hate crimes were being reported.

The Committee understood that the role of the PCSO was created to provide reassurance and high visibility for residents. As part of the West Mercia Plan they would ask that this post is kept for this purpose and not just become a drive-by service.

Agreed: The Executive Support Officer (Members) to draft a response on behalf of the Committee to be submitted.

OS.35 Feedback from Cabinet

Agreed: The content of the Cabinet decision list following consideration of the recommendations from its meeting on 12th July 2016 be noted.

OS.36 Work Programme

The Committee reviewed the work programme for the current municipal year with regard to the Sustainable Community Strategy Theme, Corporate Plan Priority, Annual Priorities and the Forward Plan. Members were asked to submit any requests for review panels.

A Member asked which Officer was attending the October meeting for the Development of the Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership Plan and whether representatives from Wyre Forest Community Housing would be attending. The Chairman advised the Committee that they had requested Ray Brookes and Yvonne Leishman attend the meeting and this would be confirmed.

Agreed: The work programme be noted.

OS.37 Press Involvement

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

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 8.05pm.