

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

THURSDAY, 6TH APRIL 2017 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: H E Dyke (Chairman), M Rayner (Vice-Chairman), J R Desmond, P Dyke, N Gale, K Henderson, A T Hingley, D Little, S J Walker and R Wilson.

Observers

Councillors: N Knowles, F M Oborski MBE, C Rogers, J A Shaw and J D Smith.

OS.83 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S J Williams.

OS.84 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor R Wilson was appointed as a substitute for Councillor S J Williams.

OS.85 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

OS.86 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

OS.87 Draft Response to Housing White Paper – Fixing Our Broken Housing Market

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Economic, Prosperity & Place which set out a draft response to the Government's Housing White Paper – Fixing Our Broken Housing Market, which was published in February 2017 and invited responses to the 38 consultation questions by 2nd May 2017.

The Director of Economic , Prosperity & Place advised Members that the White Paper set out a list of proposals under a four step approach; Step 1 – Planning for the right homes in the right places; Step 2 – Building homes faster; Step 3 – Diversifying the market and Step 4 – Helping people now.

He added that as there was no Cabinet meeting scheduled before the consultation deadline date, significant changes to the proposed draft responses would be dealt with under the strong leader model.

The Committee considered each question and proposed response in turn. A

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lengthy discussion ensued and a number of slight amendments were suggested to widen the responses. An example of this was the inclusion of care leavers in the response to question 3a regarding local planning authorities having clear policies for addressing the housing requirements of groups with particular needs such as older and disabled people.

As there were no significant changes to the responses, the Director of Economic, Prosperity & Place accepted the comments from the Committee and agreed to incorporate them into the final consultation response.

Agreed: The draft consultation responses, as amended, be endorsed.

Councillors P Dyke and C Rogers left the meeting at this point, 7.05pm.

OS.88 Industrial Strategy Green Paper

The Committee received a report from the Head of Economic Development & Regeneration – North Worcestershire, on the Government's Industrial Strategy Green Paper and the consultation process.

The Head of Economic Development & Regeneration led Members in depth through the report and advised that the recently published Green Paper set out the Government's vision and proposals for 'building a modern industrial strategy' to deliver a high skilled, competitive economy as part of its overall 'Plan for Britain'. He outlined the ten 'pillars' that the Government set out in the paper as being important in driving forward the industrial strategy.

The Committee considered each of the pillars and the draft responses from the North Worcestershire Economic Development & Regeneration (NWEDR) shared service in turn. A discussion ensued and Members welcomed the proposal for the creation of higher quality careers education, and the new approaches to addressing local skills gaps.

Agreed: The proposed NWEDR response as set out at Appendix 1 of the report be endorsed.

OS.89 Feedback from Cabinet

Agreed: The content of the Cabinet decision list following consideration of the recommendations from its meeting on 14th March 2017 be noted.

OS.90 Work Programme

The Chairman announced that the work programme for 2016-2017 had come to an end. Members were urged to submit any suggestions for future scrutiny items for the new municipal year.

OS.91 Press Involvement

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

OS.92 Industrial Units Investment Outline Business Case

The Committee considered a report from the Head of Economic Development & Regeneration – North Worcestershire, which set out a proposal for the Council to develop a new small industrial units scheme on a Council owned site.

The Head of Economic Development & Regeneration led Members through the report and advised that the proposed scheme would meet an identified gap in the market and would provide an opportunity to extend the existing industrial estate and increase the supply of small units in the Kidderminster area.

Members welcomed the proposal which would support the Council's economic development priorities and generate new revenue streams.

Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet:

The proposal for the Council to develop a small industrial units scheme at Land off Silverwoods Way in Kidderminster be approved subject to the production of a satisfactory detailed business case.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7.49pm.