

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

THURSDAY, 1ST FEBRUARY 2018 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: H E Dyke (Chairman), M Rayner (Vice-Chairman), S J Chambers, J R Desmond, P Dyke, K Henderson, N Knowles, D Little, H S Williams and S J Williams.

Observers

Councillors: I Hardiman and S Miah.

OS.74 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R Wilson.

OS.75 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor S J Chambers was a substitute for Councillor R Wilson.

OS.76 Declarations of Interests by Members

Councillor S J Chambers declared an Other Disclosable Interest (ODI) in agenda item 6 – Annual Crime and Disorder Review 2017/18, as her brother is the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia.

OS.77 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 7th December 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

OS.78 How Are We Doing? Performance Update

The Committee received a report from the Business Improvement Officer which updated Members on the performance of the Council for quarter 3 (from 1st October to 31st December 2017).

The Business Improvement Officer presented the report and appendices which included an exception report for all of the Council's purposes namely; People, Place, Housing, Planning, Business and Enabling, and detailed reports on performance against the 'Place' purpose.

Members considered each page of the appendices in turn. In response to a Member question regarding the consultation on the future plans for the Stourport Riverside Meadows, the Operational Services Manager advised that he did not have any response rates for the consultation at the present time, however the

consultation was part of a wider piece of work which was looking at how the area could possibly be improved in the future, which Members would be updated on as the project evolved.

Agreed: The progress in performance for quarter 3 be noted.

OS.79 Annual Crime and Disorder Review 2017/18

The Chairman welcomed the Chair of the Community Safety Partnership to the meeting.

The Committee received a report from the Community Safety and Partnerships Officer which updated Members on the progress of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP) during 2017/18.

The Community Safety and Partnerships Officer led Members through the report and advised that the NWCSP had been in existence since May 2013 and delivered the statutory community safety requirements under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, across the three district areas of Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest.

She added that the local level issues were dealt with by way of the Safer District Groups for the three areas. She reminded Members that the scrutiny arrangements for the CSP remained unchanged with local authorities having a statutory duty to scrutinise the work of its local CSP.

The Committee were advised that the NWCSP had received £139,250 of grant funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in 2017/18. She added that the NWCSP were currently working on funding bids to the PCC for its 2018/19 allocation. It was anticipated that once submitted the outcome of the bid would be known in early to mid March.

The Community Safety and Partnerships Officer outlined several of the current community safety / crime reduction projects which had been delivered from April 2017. She was pleased to report that the Community Ambassadors project which was led by the Community Safety team and the ContinU Trust had received national recognition when it won the Young Persons Safety Award at the Suzy Lamplugh National Personal Safety Awards 2017.

A discussion ensued and in response to a Member question regarding domestic abuse, the Community Safety and Partnerships Officer assured Members that supporting victims of domestic abuse remained a key priority and the Safer Wyre Forest team continued to work with District Council colleagues from the Sanctuary Scheme to support victims by providing home security advice and security products to enable them to remain in their homes.

A Member asked about the funding project relating to research into reducing rural property crime. The Community Safety and Partnerships Officer advised that she was unable to confirm if the project would continue as it was an initiative funded by the West Mercia PCC Grants to Voluntary Organisations scheme. She agreed to circulate a copy of the Harper Adams research project to Members for information. The Committee agreed it would be beneficial if the PCC could attend a future

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meeting of the Committee to discuss the work of the PCC and have the opportunity to answer any specific questions Members may have on them.

Agreed: The progress made by the North Worcestershire CSP be noted.

OS.80 Community Led Housing – A Pledge by Wyre Forest District Council

The Committee considered a report from the Community Led Housing Co-ordinator which shared the progress made on Community Led Housing (CLH).

The Head of Strategic Growth advised Members that the Council had received a grant of £191,250 from the Department of Communities and Local Government (dCLG) in December 2016 and March 2017 called the Community Housing Fund. She added that the fund was paid to 148 local authorities where there were issues of affordability and / or a high density of second homes.

The Community Led Housing Co-ordinator outlined the purpose of the policy and explained how the funding had been used. Members supported the policy and agreed it would enable interested individuals and communities to be equipped with the tools they needed to progress schemes within the District.

Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet that:

The Council supports the principles of Community Led Housing; and that the Community Led Housing Pledge and related policy are approved.

OS.81 Treasury Management Strategy 2018-19

The Committee received a report from the Chief Financial Officer which purpose was to provide Members with background information on the Chartered Institute of Public Finance (CIPFA) Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (Prudential Code), to restate the Prudential Indicators and Limits for the financial years 2018-19 to 2020-21 and set out the expected treasury operations for this period, and to seek approval for the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement for the period 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019.

The Chief Financial Officer led Members through the report and advised that this was the final of the 3 statutory reports which would be presented to the Committee in the current municipal year. She added that the report had been fully scrutinised by the Treasury Management Review Panel at its meeting on 29th January 2018, which followed a Member training session from the Council's Treasury Management Advisors.

Members were advised that in December 2017 CIPFA issued revised Prudential and Treasury Management Codes. It was noted that as from 2019-20 all local authorities would be required to prepare a Capital Strategy report which would provide a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contributed to the provision of services; an overview of how the associated risk was managed; and the implications for future financial sustainability.

Agreed: Recommend to Council to:

1. Approve the restated Prudential Indicators and Limits for the financial years 2018-19 to 2020-21 included in Appendix 3 of the report. These will be revised for the February 2018 Council meeting, as per paragraph 7.3 of the report, following any changes to the Capital Programme brought about as part of the budget process other than those proposed by Cabinet on 19th December 2017.
2. Approve the updated Treasury Management and Investment Policy and Strategy Statements for the period 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019 (the associated Prudential Indicators are included in Appendix 3 of the report and the detailed criteria is included in Section 10 and Appendix 5).
3. Approve the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement that sets out the Council's policy on MRP included in Appendix 1 of the report.
4. Approve the Authorised Limit Prudential Indicator included in Appendix 3 of the report.
5. Approve the adoption of the policy statement at section 10.2 covering non-treasury investments.

OS.82 Feedback from Cabinet

Agreed: The content of the Cabinet decision list following consideration of the recommendations from its meeting on 19th December 2017 be noted.

OS.83 Work Programme

The Chairman advised that both the PACT and Affordable Housing Review Panels were underway. She confirmed that the PACT Review Panel was scheduled to meet again on 8th February 2018, and the second meeting of the Affordable Housing Review Panel had been arranged for 28th February 2018.

Agreed: The work programme be noted.

OS.84 Press Involvement

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

OS.85 Establishing a Group Structure of Local Authority Trading Companies

The Committee considered a report from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place which set out the Final Business Case (FBC) for setting up a Group Structure of companies to enable the Council to fully realise its ambitions to invest in and develop revenue generating projects across the residential, industrial and commercial markets.

The Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place took Members through the report and outlined the background to the process which has taken place over the last 18 months. He added that the FBC followed the Treasury 'Green Book'

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approach to undertaking a business case which addressed the key elements of the business case under the headings of; Strategic Case, Economic Case, Commercial Case, Financial Case and Management & Operational Case.

Members fully supported the FBC and were assured that expert advice had been taken from both within the authority and from external sources, to ensure that due diligence had been taken throughout the process.

Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet:

- **The Final Business Case and consequential establishment of a holding company and a development company be agreed.**

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7.47pm.