

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

THURSDAY, 22ND MARCH 2018 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: J R Desmond, H E Dyke, K Henderson, N Knowles, D Little, M Rayner, S J Walker BcAv, H S Williams, S J Williams and R Wilson.

Observers

Councillors: N J Desmond and C Rogers.

OS.96 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

OS.97 Appointment of Substitutes

No substitutes were appointed.

OS.98 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

OS.99 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 1st March 2018 and the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on 14th March 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

OS.100 Capital Strategy 2018-21

The Committee considered a report from the Corporate Director: Resources and the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place which provided Members with information on the new Investment Guidance and considered a Capital Strategy for 2018-21 that had regard to the requirements of the new investment guidance with particular reference to non-financial investments.

The Corporate Director: Resources led Members in detail through the report. She explained that new Investment Guidance had been issued in early February 2018 by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). One of the key requirements of the guidance was the requirement of a Capital Strategy to be approved by Full Council. She added that the strategy highlighted the risks involved over the medium and long term.

Agenda Item No. 4

The Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place advised that the current limit for expenditure on the Capital Portfolio Fund was £25m, to be funded in full from prudential borrowing. He explained that it was proposed to spread the fund across a whole range of different investments when due diligence had been done. He added that investments would support the Council's priority for regeneration and economic growth and to develop additional income streams. He said that the Council was a member of two Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) namely Worcestershire and Greater Birmingham & Solihull, and in order to have a wider range of investments within its portfolio, the authority had decided that it would consider investments across the combined LEP geography.

Members acknowledged the risk involved in the process and welcomed the strategy which provided guidance for property investments and loans outside the treasury management function and also covered loans made by a local authority to one of its wholly-owned companies or associates, to a joint venture, or to a third party.

Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet to recommend to Council to:

- 1.1 Approve the Capital Strategy 2018-21 including the associated Quantitative Indicators in Appendix 1 and the updated Strategy for Capital Portfolio Fund set out in Appendix 2 of the report to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee:**
- 1.2 Approve the limits for gross debt of non treasury investments compared to net service expenditure and for commercial income as a percentage of net service expenditure as set out in Appendix 1 of the report to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee;**
- 1.3 Approve the limits for loan investments as set out in Section 5.1 of the report to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.**

OS.101 Work Programme

The Chairman gave a verbal progress update on the two review panels which were currently being undertaken. She advised that the outcome of the reviews into Affordable Housing and the effectiveness of PACT meetings would be included on the work programme for the new municipal year.

Agreed: The update be noted.

OS.102 Press Involvement

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

OS.103 Exempt Information

Decision: Under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of "Exempt Information" as defined in paragraphs 2, 6 and 7 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

OS.104 Lion Fields Parcel Two: Former Magistrates Court – Development Proposals

The Committee considered a confidential report which set out the next steps for the Council in bringing forward re-development proposals for 'Parcel Two' of Lion Fields, which covers the former Magistrates Court building and the land to the south, which is currently used as an 'Urban Open Space'.

Members welcomed the proposal to commence a developer procurement process as it was felt the building and surrounding area were an important part of Kidderminster and the re-development of the site would have a positive impact on the Town.

Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet that a procurement process is used to select a developer to deliver the Council's ambitions for Parcel Two of Lion Fields.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7.07pm.