

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
CABINET**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER
17TH JULY 2018 (6PM)**

Present:

Councillors: N J Desmond, I Hardiman, M J Hart, C Rogers, J D Smith and R J Vale.

Observers:

Councillors: H E Dyke, N Knowles and F M Oborski MBE.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and said that everyone's thoughts and best wishes are with the families of Cllr Rod Wilson and former District Cllr Mike Price who have both recently passed away.

CAB.9 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

CAB.10 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

CAB.11 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 12th June 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB.12 Call Ins

No decisions had been called in since the last Cabinet meeting.

CAB.13 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

CAB.14 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

CAB.15 Council Tax Reduction Scheme Review

A report was considered from the Corporate Director: Resources on the work undertaken by the Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services section on the redesign of the Council Tax Reduction scheme for implementation by 1st April 2019.

The Cabinet member for Resources led members through the report. He explained that the introduction of Universal Credit will bring a number of challenges but that the report was not about saving the authority money but protecting the most vulnerable people in the district. The scheme needs to be as easy as possible to administer and as easy as possible for the end users.

The Leader of the Council spoke briefly on the next stages if approved and formally seconded the proposal.

The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny commented that everything has been covered in the report and that now is the time to start the process.

A member asked who the consultation would be with.

The Cabinet Member for Resources responded that the consultation would be from Wyre Forest District Council on both the website and with hard copy forms located at the customer services centre. He reaffirmed that the proposal will help customers and make it easier for them.

Decision: In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 5th July 2018.

2.2 To undertake a formal consultation with the Major Preceptors and the public on the proposed design of a revised scheme to take place for 10 weeks from 23rd July.

The results of the consultation will be presented to Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet in November when it will consider any recommendations that will go to full Council in December.

CAB.16 Write off of Amounts Outstanding

A report was considered from Corporate Director: Resources on the write off of debts that cannot be collected.

The Cabinet Member for Resources spoke briefly on the amount that has been unrecoverable and that Wyre Forest District Council had done everything within its legal powers to recover the sums.

A member stated that central government should grant councils further powers as an earlier intervention could have been made to prevent this falling onto the rate payers within Wyre Forest.

The Cabinet Member for Resources responded that the points are taken on board but business at large is the cornerstone of our economy and that Wyre Forest alone generates £30 million in business rates. It is only a small minority of business that leave debts outstanding.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that the recommendation has been seconded.

Decision: Cabinet agreed

- 2.1 That the total of £153,483.59 as detailed in the Appendix to this report be written off.**

CAB.17 The Environmental Offences (Fixed Penalties) (England) Regulations 2017

A report was considered from the Corporate Director: Community Well-being & Environment on the changes to the Environmental Offences (Fixed Penalties) (England) Regulations 2017.

The Cabinet member for Operational Services spoke on the changes to the regulations and explained that Wyre Forest District Council needed to review its fixed penalty offences and that the fines have to be within the Government minima and maxima. With the current discounts offered this could result in the fines coming below the Government minimum.

The Leader seconded the proposals and commented that ultimately the actions are ones the council wouldn't want to take in an ideal work but that it is a step in the right direction.

The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee spoke on her Committee's support for this and how the Council takes pride in educating and that we need to get the right balance between taking action and educating people.

The Cabinet Member for Operational Services was questioned on the meaning of nuisance parking and responded that this is in relation to cars parked on pavements.

Decision: In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 5th July 2018.

- 2.1 To establish a revised set of maximum penalty charges that will apply to relevant environmental offences within the District and being set within government parameters, as set out in the "proposed new penalty" column in the Appendix.**
- 2.2 To establish a revised set of discounted penalty charges that will apply (pending early payment) to relevant environmental offences within the District and being set within government parameters, as set out in the "proposed new discounted penalty" column in the Appendix.**

CAB.18 National 'Make a Stand' Domestic Abuse Pledge

A report was considered from the Head of Strategic Growth on the national 'Make a Stand' Domestic Abuse Pledge.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Well-being Sustainability presented the report to members.

Councillor Smith seconded this report and spoke on the importance of this pledge in line with the work and strong campaigns already undertaken by the Safety Partnership, including the annual White Ribbon campaign and Wyre Forest District Council continuing this work to keep the residents of Wyre Forest safe. Every Councillor should be a champion for the Domestic Abuse pledge.

Councillor Vale echoed Councillor Smith's comments and is delighted that the pledge is being taken seriously on a national and local level. It is the second highest reason for homelessness in Wyre Forest, which shows its importance. Everyone has the right to feel safe within their own home.

Councillor Oborski, as Chair of Children and Families Scrutiny Panel at Worcestershire County Council, spoke on the seriousness of this problem. If a young person experiences 4 or more instances the likelihood of mental health issues and homelessness increases.

She supports anything that Wyre Forest District Council does on this subject and wants noted the good work undertaken by local schools, who have built up good relationships with the women's refuge and for educating children on the subject.

The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee said that the committee fully supported this pledge at the meeting as was shown by the unanimous agreement by members to support the Make a stand pledge.

The Leader of the Council agreed and reaffirmed that the Local Authority will relentlessly continue to work with the County Council, Police, Health and any other statutory agencies on this very important issue which needs highlighting.

Decision: In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 5th July 2018.

2.1 To sign up to the "Make a Stand" Domestic Abuse Pledge.

2.2 For the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing to be the champion for the Domestic Abuse pledge.

CAB.19 Affordable Housing Review Panel – Conclusions and Recommendations

The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee thanked the panel for meeting and carrying out such a comprehensive review. It is important that, even though Wyre Forest District Council doesn't provide housing after the large scale voluntary transfer, it is still a statutory body and wants the best for its residents.

Councillor Oborski, the Chair of the Affordable Housing Review Panel, endorsed the recommendations and believed it was a very useful exercise. Everyone wants to see the waiting list reduce and to help the affordable housing situation. Hopefully this focus will help speed up progress on the situation.

Decision: The decisions from the Affordable Housing Review Panel be noted.

1. **To continue to value the close working relationship with The Community Housing Group and Oakleaf Commercial Services as there are shared aims and visions and the opportunity to explore future joint ventures.**
2. **To accept the offer of help from the Government appointed Help to Buy Agent Orbit to support future activities and events to raise awareness about shared ownership as a product and its availability in the district.**
3. **That Cabinet gives serious consideration to the Council's role as a landowner and the use of Council owned sites for the delivery of Social Rent and Affordable Housing.**
4. **That the affordable housing planning policy makes provision to cover sites that deliver in excess of the Local Plan threshold for affordable housing (currently 30%).**
5. **As part of the Local Plan Review, officers in conjunction with the Viability Consultant continue to explore the potential of applying different affordable housing thresholds to different types of sites.**
6. **Officers investigate the possibility of ensuring the full details of how the shared ownership scheme operates is made clear to people from the outset.**

CAB.20 Lionfields Future Phases Development

A report was considered from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place.

Councillor Hardiman took members through the whole report.

The Leader of the Council spoke on how this shows Council's statement of intent on the place shaping and regeneration role within the district.

The Council is making progress on the eastern gateway and this decision will enable the Director to progress and achieve what is required and the best deal for the taxpayer.

It also leads nicely into the opening up of Worcester street to the highway.

Councillor Desmond echoed the exciting report and spoke on the importance of economic regeneration within Wyre Forest. Councillors across the political divide want to make a difference locally.

Councillor Oborski, the Chair of Local Plans Review Panel, is happy that some external advice will be received on the Bromsgrove Street site. It is important to get more housing back into the town centre as this will help rejuvenate the retail and evening economy of the town centre.

The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee spoke on how important this development is for the future of Kidderminster and echoed the support for independent expert advice.

Decision: In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 5th July 2018.

- 2.1 To agree to the proposed approach to developing proposals for Parcel 4 of Lion Fields as set out at paragraph 4.23 with further technical work to be commissioned by the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place;**
- 2.2 That a further report outlining a delivery strategy for Parcel 4 will be brought back to Cabinet by November 2018.**

CAB.21 Refresh of Kidderminster Local Development Order

A report was considered from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place.

Councillor Ian Hardiman took members through the report.

The Leader of the Council formally seconded the recommendations and spoke on how the LDO has stimulated areas like the one opposite Wyre Forest House which has benefited many smaller business and potentially created over 200 jobs.

The Council can only extend this for 3 years, and this is the second time of extending, and will do so under the Town and Country Planning Act and 2015 regulations.

The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee confirmed the committee was very happy to recommend the LDO be adopted for a further 3 years.

Decision: In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 5th July 2018.

- 2.1 The revised Local Development Order for South Kidderminster Enterprise Park, as attached at Appendix One, is adopted for a period of three years from 13th August 2018.**

CAB.22 Worcester Street, Kidderminster – Regeneration Proposals

A report was considered from Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place.

Councillor Ian Hardiman led members through the report.

The Leader of the Council formally seconded the report and spoke about the recommendation to Council on amending the Capital Programme. This is an area of the town we want to regenerate and by opening the area up to traffic will help the market respond in a different way. This is an important and vital

scheme for the town.

Decision: Cabinet decided to recommend to Council:

- 2.1 That the Capital Programme for the Worcester Street regeneration project be increased by £325k to £825k to be funded by either prudential borrowing and/or earmarked reserves as determined by the Corporate Director: Resources.**

CAB.23 Acquisition of Land in Blakebrook & Habberley South Ward

A report was considered from Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place.

Councillor Ian Hardiman took members through the report.

The Leader of the Council said that this is another clear demonstration of the Council on the regeneration of parcels of land within the town centre.

This site has been derelict for nearly 7 years and the community will expect the Council to use any powers that it has to take action and regenerate any redundant sites.

The land owner will have the opportunity to make but that there should be no illusions that this Council is not committed to make better use of redundant land across the district. The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee spoke on the site which attracts lots of social media comments from residents and doesn't think this is a hasty step and is something which needs to be set in motion. The members of the committee think this is something that needs to be progressed.

Decision: In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 5th July 2018.

A That if a planning application for the redevelopment of the former British Heart Foundation land is not made within six months of the date of this report or if such an application is made, it is refused (and no appeal lodged) ; or

B if such a planning application is made and approved (either by the Council or on appeal) but development is not commenced on site within 12 months of the grant of the planning permission that:

2.1 the Council makes a Compulsory Purchase Order ("CPO") under section 226(i) (a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 13 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 for the acquisition of the land and new rights within the areas shown edged on the attached Plan at Market Street, Kidderminster for the purpose of securing the redevelopment of the land

2.2 the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place in

consultation with the Solicitor to the Council be authorised to:

- 2.2.1. Take all necessary steps to secure the making, confirmation and implementation of the Compulsory Purchase Order, including the publication and service of all notices and the presentation of the Council's case at any Public Inquiry.
- 2.2.2. Acquire interests in land and new rights within the Compulsory Purchase Order either by agreement or compulsorily.
- 2.2.3. Approve agreements with land owners setting out the terms for the withdrawal of objections to the Order, including, where appropriate, seeking exclusion of land from the Order and/or making arrangements for relocation of occupiers.
- 2.3 the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning & Economic Regeneration be given delegated authority to determine the most appropriate method by which the site should be developed.

CAB.24 Exclusion of Press and Public

The Leader of the Council formally proposed the exclusion of members of the press and public.

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 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

CAB.25 Industrial Unit Investment Business Case

A report was considered from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place on the Investment to purchase an Industrial Unit.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration presented the report to the Cabinet and took them through the recommendations.

Decision: The Cabinet decided;

- 2.1 To delegate authority to the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place in consultation with the Corporate Director: Resources and Cabinet Member for Planning & Economic Regeneration to negotiate to agree to the purchase of the property mentioned in the exempt report, converted for use as an Innovation Centre, on the terms set out in the report;

- 2.2 Subject to 2.1 being agreed and the purchase concluded, to terminate the lease on another building named in the report at the date allowed for a break in the lease;**
- 2.3 That delegated authority is granted to the Director of Economic Prosperity & Place, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer, Solicitor to the Council and Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration to:**
- (i) Ensure that all appropriate legal agreements are put in place in advance of the Council purchasing the property once the property is in a condition acceptable to the Council and to complete all necessary documentation to acquire the property.**
 - (ii) To appoint a contractor to carry out all work required as part of any agreed dilapidations arising as a consequence of terminating the lease of the other building or to agree a financial settlement with the Landlord in respect of such works if this is more financially advantageous for the Council.**
- 2.4 That delegated authority is granted to the Director of Economic Prosperity & Place, in consultation with the Solicitor to the Council and Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration to enter into any necessary agreement with the party named in the report regarding the operation of the Innovation Centre.**

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7:46 PM