

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

THURSDAY, 6TH SEPTEMBER 2018 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: H E Dyke (Chairman), M Rayner (Vice-Chairman), J Baker, P Harrison, K Henderson, N Knowles, D Little, F M Oborski MBE, H S Williams and S J Williams.

Observers

Councillors: N J Desmond, M J Hart, J A Shaw and J D Smith.

OS.28 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: N Harris, S Miah and S J Walker.

OS.29 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor J Baker was a substitute for Councillor N Harris.
Councillor P Harrison was a substitute for Councillor S J Walker.
Councillor F M Oborski MBE was a substitute for Councillor S Miah.

OS.30 Declarations of Interests by Members

Councillor MJ Hart declared an other disclosable interest (ODI) in respect of Agenda Item number 8 – Cookley and Caunsall Neighbourhood Plan Area Designation, as he sat on Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council.

OS.31 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 5th July 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

OS.32 How Are We Doing? Performance Update

The Committee considered a report from the Business Improvement Officer which updated Members on the performance of the Council for quarter 1 (from 1st April to 30th June 2018).

The Business Improvement Officer presented the report and appendices which included detailed updates on the performance against the Council's priority of 'Enabling' and the progress of its Capital Projects. Members were advised that as to be expected for quarter 1 there were no overdue actions and as such there was no exception report included on this occasion. There was however, a comprehensive update on the risks in relation to the reported priority.

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

OS.33 Homelessness Strategy Refresh

The Committee considered a report from the Head of Strategic Growth which set out the new Homelessness Strategy “Worcestershire’s Strategic Direction for Tackling Homelessness 2018-2021” and provided an update on the responses to the strategy consultation.

The Principal Housing Strategy Officer led Members through the report. She advised that the Strategic Direction for Tackling Homelessness has been written to expand on the high level actions within the Housing Partnership Plan and in response to the new duties of the Homelessness Reduction Act which came into force on 3rd April 2018.

She added that the Homelessness Strategy had three main priorities which were to prevent homelessness at a much earlier stage by targeting groups that are more vulnerable to becoming homeless and developing complex needs in the future; to provide flexible and comprehensive responses to those in crisis and those with complex needs; and to improve the supply of and access to good quality, affordable and supported housing.

In response to Members questions, the Principal Housing Strategy Officer advised that there were approximately 3000 people on the housing waiting list in Wyre Forest and following the annual count which was undertaken last November, four people were identified as rough sleepers.

Members welcomed the strategy which set out the Council’s plans for the prevention of homelessness and for ensuring that sufficient accommodation and support is or will be available for people who become homeless or who are at risk of becoming homeless.

Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet that the draft Homelessness Strategy “Worcestershire Strategic Direction for Tackling Homelessness 2018 – 2021” be approved.

OS.34 Annual Report on Treasury Management Service and Actual Prudential Indicators 2017-18

The Committee considered a report from the Corporate Director: Resources which provided a review of the treasury management activities for 2017-18, 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).

The Corporate Director: Resources led Members through the report and advised that this was the first of three statutory reports which would be presented to the Committee during the municipal year. She added the Council’s Treasury Management Advisors, Link Asset Services, had provided a comprehensive Member training session on 3rd September 2018, which was followed by a detailed scrutiny of the report by the Treasury Management Review Panel.

The Corporate Director: Resources was pleased to report that the treasury management activities for 2017-18 had fully complied with the Council's approved strategy.

The Chairman of the Treasury Management Review Panel, Councillor F M Oborski MBE, encouraged all Members of the Council to attend the training and she thanked the Corporate Director: Resources and her team for the excellent job they do in this service area.

Councillor Knowles said that the training had been very informative and had covered local issues in addition to what was happening globally. He praised the professionalism of the advice given to Members from both the Treasury Management Advisors and the Council Officers.

Agreed: Recommend to Council to:

- 1. Approve the actual 2017-18 prudential and treasury indicators in the report.**
- 2. Note the annual treasury management report for 2017-18.**

Councillor M J Hart made his declaration at this point, (6.35pm).

OS.35

Cookley and Caunsall Neighbourhood Plan Area Designation

The Committee considered a report from the Senior Planning Policy Officer which sought approval for the designation of part of Wolverley and Cookley Parish as a Neighbourhood Area for the purposes of Neighbourhood Development Planning.

The Senior Planning Policy Officer presented the report. She explained that as Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council wished to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan for part of the Parish that included Cookley and Caunsall but not Wolverley, an application to the District Council had to be made.

The Senior Planning Policy Officer advised that on receipt of the application, the District Council undertook a six week period of public consultation. Members reviewed the responses received to the public consultation and noted that all respondents supported the proposal.

She added that if the District Council agreed to the designation of the Neighbourhood Area, the Parish Council would begin the preparation of their Neighbourhood Development Plan. Following submission to the District Council, the Plan would need to be published for a statutory six week consultation period, prior to an Examination in public. A local referendum would then be held where a minimum of 50% of those voting must be in favour of its adoption.

Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet that the Neighbourhood Plan area designation be approved for the purposes of Neighbourhood Development Planning as shown on the map at Appendix 1 of the report.

OS.36 Asset Transfer of Spennells Changing Rooms and Adjacent Parcel of Public Open Space

The Committee received a report from the Community Safety and Partnerships Officer which invited Members to discuss the options for bringing the redundant Spennells Changing Rooms back into community use.

The Community Safety and Partnerships Officer led Members through the report. She advised that the changing rooms located at Heronswood Road Play Area had been closed for over 10 years. She added that the Aggborough and Spennells Ward Members had hoped for a long time that the changing rooms would be redeveloped for community use.

She explained that the 9th Kidderminster (Spennells) Scout Group (KD9 Scouts) had expressed an interest in taking over the changing rooms in order to build a new headquarters on the site. Members were advised that since June 2017 the Leader of the Council had held quarterly meetings with Ward Members, representatives from the KD9 Scouts and the Council's Corporate Director: Community Well-being and Environment and the Community Safety and Partnerships Officer to discuss the proposal.

The Committee welcomed and were fully supportive of the proposed transfer. Members agreed that it would not only benefit the KD9 Scouts, but also the wider community as there were currently no community facilities on the Spennells Estate for residents to use.

Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet to transfer the changing rooms and adjacent parcel of open space to KD9 Scouts.

OS.37 Feedback from Cabinet

Agreed: The content of the Cabinet decision list following consideration of the recommendations from its meeting on 17th July 2018 be noted.

OS.38 Work Programme

The Committee considered the work programme for the current municipal year. The Chairman advised that the scrutiny into the service standards for highways maintenance had commenced, and the review of civil enforcement issues was scheduled for the latter part of the year. Members were asked to submit a scoping form for any items they would like to be considered for further scrutiny.

Agreed: The work programme be noted.

OS.39 Press Involvement

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

OS.40 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.41 Depot 2020 Masterplan – Improve and Invest

The Committee considered the financial envelope for the Depot 2020 – improve and invest project.

The Corporate Director: Community Well-being and Environment led Members in detail through the exempt report. She advised that as with all major capital projects, you cannot be specific about timescales as there may be unforeseen issues which come to light as the project evolves. Members were reminded of the update on the project by way of the Council’s ‘No Surprises Policy’.

Members discussed the current revisions to the business plan following the tender process for the project which would enable thorough due diligence of the submitted tenders prior to an award of contract.

The majority of the Committee agreed that in order for the project to progress, the proposed amendment to the capital programme should be agreed.

Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet that the proposed amendment to the capital programme as detailed in the exempt report, to accommodate the gross capital costs associated with the overall project in light of the tenders received, which includes an additional amount for risk contingency, be agreed.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7.27pm.