

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

THURSDAY, 7TH FEBRUARY 2019 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: H E Dyke (Chairman), M Rayner (Vice-Chairman), N Harris, K Henderson, N Knowles, D Little, S Miah, S J Walker, H S Williams and S J Williams.

Observers

Councillors: N J Desmond, F M Oborski MBE and R J Vale.

OS.70 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

OS.71 Appointment of Substitutes

No substitutes were appointed.

OS.72 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

OS.73 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 6th December 2018 and the minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 17th December 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

OS.74 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 3 (from 1st October to 31st December 2018).

The Business Improvement Officer presented the report and appendices which included detailed updates on the performance against the Council's purpose of 'Place', an overview of Bewdley Museum and progress of its Capital Projects. Members were advised that as there were no significant issues to highlight for this period, there was no exception report included on this occasion.

The Committee considered each page of the report and appendices in turn. In relation to the Capital Project (WFF 18/19 68) - Green Street Depot 2020 Improvement and Investment Plan, the Chairman requested a further Member

update on the progress of the project.

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

OS.75 Treasury Management Strategy 2019-20

The Committee considered a report from the Corporate Director: Resources which provided Members with background information on the Chartered Institute of Public Finance (CIPFA) Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (Prudential Code).

The Corporate Director: Resources led Members through the report and advised that this was the last of the three statutory reports which would be presented to the Committee during the municipal year. She stressed the importance of the report as it sought approval to restate the Prudential Indicators and Limits for the financial years 2019-20 to 2021-22, and also the Capital Strategy which aims to ensure that all Members of the Council fully understand the overall long term policy objectives and resulting capital strategy requirements, governance procedures and risk appetite.

She added that the Council's Treasury Management Advisors, Link Asset Services, had provided a comprehensive Member training session on 4th February 2019, which was followed by a detailed scrutiny of the report by the Treasury Management Review Panel. In response to a Member question relating to the £25m Capital Portfolio Fund, the Corporate Director: Resources confirmed that it was the Council's policy to support the corporate priority of regeneration and economic development. In order to achieve a mixed portfolio and spread the risk, the geographical area for investments went beyond the Wyre Forest District boundary to include the footprint of the Birmingham and Solihull and Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), which the Council is a member of.

The Chairman of the Treasury Management Review Panel, Councillor F M Oborski MBE, thanked those Members who had attended the training and suggested that it was made compulsory for all new Members of the Council following the all out elections in May 2019. She thanked the Corporate Director: Resources and her team for their hard work and assured Members that this service area was in very safe hands.

Agreed: Recommend to Council to:

- 1. Approve the restated Prudential Indicators and Limits for the financial years 2019-20 to 2021-22 included in Appendix 3 of the report. These will be revised for the February 2019 Council meeting, as per paragraph 7.2 of the report, following any changes to the Capital Programme brought about as part of the budget process.**
- 2. Approve the updated Treasury Management and Investment Policy and Strategy Statements for the period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020 (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. **Notes that the separate, but intrinsically linked, Capital Strategy 2019-22 to be approved separately by Council, sets out the policy statement covering non-treasury investments including the related suite of prudential indicators.**

OS.76

Lion Fields Parcel 4: Bromsgrove Street Car Park

The Committee considered a report which presented the next steps for the Council in bringing forward redevelopment proposals for 'Parcel 4' of Lion Fields, which covers the redevelopment of the Bromsgrove Street Car Park and the options to enhance the link between the site and Worcester Street based on the feasibility and masterplanning report.

The Head of Economic Development & Regeneration - North Worcestershire presented the report. He explained that the feasibility and masterplanning report was a high level strategic document which formed part of a wider complex framework for the whole Lion Fields site. He said that the aim of the report was to provide a vision to transform the area and to identify what could potentially be delivered in the current market.

Councillor N Desmond entered the meeting at this point, (6.36pm).

The Head of Economic Development & Regeneration - North Worcestershire presented a selection of the design options by way of a power point presentation. A discussion ensued and the design option with a supermarket was less favourable as Members agreed that it would not add to the wider regeneration aspirations for the site. Several Members expressed concern over the lack of affordable housing in the proposed developments.

The Committee welcomed the report which gave a clear overall vision for the site. Members acknowledged the financial challenges associated with the development of the area; however they were encouraged by the proposal to apply for funding from the Government's Future High Streets Fund.

Upon a show of hands the majority vote was carried.

Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet that:

- 1.1 **The Masterplan and feasibility report attached at Appendix 1 of the report is endorsed as a suitable future vision for this site, without the design option with a supermarket; and**
- 1.2 **That soft market testing of the site is carried out and that a bid is made to the Future High Streets Fund to support the plans outlined in Appendix 1 of the report.**

OS.77 Allocations Policy Review

The Committee considered a report from the Head of Strategic Growth which outlined the proposed changes to the Allocations Policy following amendments made to the legislation around Homelessness (the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) and other statutory instruments / guidance around allocations.

The Head of Strategic Growth led Members through the report and outlined the key changes to the policy. Members welcomed the proposed changes to the policy which was last updated in 2014. There was unanimous support by Committee Members for the recommendations to Cabinet.

Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet that:

- 1.1 The Council undertakes consultation on the Allocation Policy changes outlined in Appendix One of the report with Members, Stakeholders including Registered Partners and Households on the Housing Register for a period of six weeks.**
- 1.2 Delegated authority be given to Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing to amend the allocation policy in line with the proposed changes, following the consultation process.**

OS.78 Feedback from Cabinet

Agreed: The content of the Cabinet decision list following consideration of the recommendations from its meeting on 18th December 2018 be noted.

OS.79 Work Programme

Agreed: The work programme be noted.

OS.80 Press Involvement

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

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7.12pm.