

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
CABINET**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER
18TH SEPTEMBER 2019 (6PM)**

Present:

Councillors: G W Ballinger (Chairman), F M Oborski MBE (Vice-Chairman),
H E Dyke, N Martin and J W R Thomas.

Observers:

Councillors: B S Dawes, N J Desmond, I Hardiman and M J Hart.

CAB.20 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

CAB.21 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

CAB.22 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 16th July 2019 and the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Sub-Committee held on 31st July 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB.23 Call Ins

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

CAB.24 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

CAB.25 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

CAB.26 Corporate Plan and Financial and Policy Context for the Medium Term Financial Strategy

A report was considered from the Chief Executive to recommend the Corporate Plan 2019-2023 to Council for adoption and to consider the financial and policy context that will shape the medium term financial strategy for 2020-2023.

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The Leader of the Council presented the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval. He said that the Corporate Plan was the most important overarching strategy document for the Council, setting the framework for the period to 2023 when next elections will be held.

The Leader of the Council thanked the cross-party strategic review panel for their work on developing the corporate plan. He said that there was a mass of material to consider on views of the public, staff and members, and was happy to accept the panel's recommendation in full.

He was pleased to advise that the on-line survey produced the best ever result to a public survey; there was over 1600 responses plus over 100 from staff so over 1700 in total. He said that the panel listened to what the public said about the priorities and areas that need improving, and thanked all those who had taken part in the survey.

Members were advised that the report summarised issues most often raised. In line with "be honest", the answer is often that it is not realistic for the council to do what is suggested with explanations about why this is the case. He added that there are some ideas that will be looked at further around business rate discounts for empty units. He said that Cabinet were also using the report to set out issues on which they will consult the public during the autumn before bringing forward a detailed medium term financial strategy in December.

In conclusion he said that he recognised that there are some difficult and potentially controversial choices ahead, and the Strategic Review Panel will provide a forum for members to debate those issues in more detail.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Capital Investments seconded the recommendations.

The Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Protection said that the consultation response rate was brilliant and it was important that we build on the success of this consultation for future public consultations.

The Leader of the Council thanked the Corporate Leadership Team and their officers for all their hard work.

Decision: RECOMMEND to Council that:

- a) **It adopts the Corporate Plan in appendix 1 of the report;**
- b) **It notes the suggested approach to the medium term financial strategy set out in paragraphs 4.9 to 4.27 of the report, and that this will now be the subject of consultation prior to the Cabinet considering the medium term financial strategy at its meeting in December.**

CAB.27 Budget Monitoring First Quarter 2019-20

A report was considered from the Corporate Director: Resources on the Council's financial performance for quarter 1 ending 30th June 2019. The

report also presented the current projected outturn position for the 2019-20 financial year and provided forecasts on the capital programme 2019-20 and the final capital outturn for 2018-19 against programme.

The Leader of the Council presented the report. He said this was the first formal report of the year and provided a forecast of the outturn position to year end for the revenue budget based on the first 3 months, and formally moved the recommendations for approval. He added that the early estimate shows a forecast saving of £37k for 2019-2020 and staff continued to work hard to achieve the savings. He said that the report included some new tables and additional information compared to previous versions.

The Leader of the Council said that the report set out the details of the budget pressures, savings and improved income projections which included a £70k increase in the costs of homelessness for which Cabinet were asked to approve a supplementary estimate. He said that the report also set out details of the capital programme expenditure and information on the outstanding debts which is carefully monitored.

He added that financial risk continued to be the most significant risk faced by the Council; he assured members that good budgetary control helps to mitigate this risk. He said that he was optimistic at this stage and thanked the Corporate Director: Resources and her team for their hard work.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Capital Investments seconded the recommendations.

Decision:

- 1.1 That the projected budget variations and comments outlined within the report and appendices 2 to 6 be noted.**
- 1.2 Cabinet approve the request for a supplementary estimate of £70k for additional costs of Homelessness detailed in paragraph 7.1 of the report from general reserves**

CAB.28 North Worcestershire Economic Growth Strategy 2019-2024

A report was considered from the Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration which provided a summary of the North Worcestershire Economic Growth Strategy 2019-2024 and outlined its four pillars of growth, strategic priorities and supporting projects and interventions.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Capital Investments presented the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval. She said that since 2011 the Council had relied on the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP Strategic Economic Plans (SEPs) as its key economic strategy documents; this was considered appropriate at the time as the LEPs had been set up to deliver economic growth.

She added that since that time significant political, economic, social,

technological and legislative changes had taken place. She said that perhaps the most significant development was the launch of the government's Industrial Strategy last year followed by the request that all LEPs should develop their own Local Industrial Strategies.

She advised members that in 2017 the government announced the creation of a UK Shared Prosperity Fund to replace the EU funding programme in the UK after the UK had left the European Union and its intention was to distribute the fund through LEPs on the basis of their Local Industrial Strategies.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Capital Investments further added that also in 2017 the government published its review of LEPs – 'Strengthening Local Enterprise Partnerships'. She said that one of the review's key outcomes was a request that LEPs come forward with proposals which best reflect real functional economic areas, remove overlaps and where appropriate, propose wider changes such as mergers. She added that the request had a direct impact on Wyre Forest District Council, as it and the other two North Worcestershire local authorities; Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council are members of two LEPs; namely Greater Birmingham & Solihull and Worcestershire.

She said that the proposed strategy was intended to cover a five year period and set out some of the key economic indicators across the North Worcestershire geography as well as the aspects that make the area attractive for businesses and visitors which support local economic growth. She added that the four pillars which the strategy was built on are common to all three North Worcestershire partners.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor M Hart, said that the Committee fully endorsed the proposed strategy. He said that it was important that we had a strategy for the next five years and that it would be a cornerstone for economic prosperity within the district.

Decision: In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 5th September 2019:

Cabinet agreed the Strategy and its strategic priorities and Interventions.

CAB.29 Kidderminster Business Improvement District (BID) – Forward Funding

A report was considered from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place which sought agreement to provide forward funding to the Kidderminster BID in advance of the initial collection of the additional business rates in 2020/21 to enable the continued progress to set up the BID company and to appoint a BID Manager.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Capital Investments presented the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval. She said that over the last two years the district council had

supported businesses in Kidderminster Town Centre to undertake a ballot on whether or not to establish a BID. She added that in July 2018 a ballot was held and was unsuccessful as it failed to meet the necessary majority by rateable value. The Businesses decided to amend the BID proposal by setting an upper limit to the levy amount and removing Crossley Park from the BID boundary. A further ballot was held in May 2019 which proved successful.

She added that the BID would run for a period of five years, at which point a further ballot would be held to determine whether the BID should continue for a further five year term. The Council would be the body responsible for collecting the BID levy as part of its Business Rates collection. She said that this was the first BID within Wyre Forest and was an exciting opportunity for the organisations within the town centre and wished them well for the future.

The Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Protection seconded the recommendations. She said that a lot of hard work had gone into the BID process to get this far, and along with the announcement that the bid for Government funding to help Kidderminster town centre under the Future High Streets initiative had been successful, was very exciting and positive news for the town centre.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee said that the Committee fully supported the proposal.

Decision: In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 5th September 2019:

Cabinet agreed:

- 1.1 That up to £75,000 be made available to the BID Company, once it is formally established, to enable it to continue to make set up arrangements in advance of 2020/21 when the levy will first be collected; the sum to be repaid to the District Council from the 2020/21 levy;**
- 1.2 That delegated authority be granted to the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place in consultation with the Corporate Director: Resources to decide the precise amount to be loaned;**
- 1.3 That delegated authority be granted to the Solicitor to the Council, in consultation with the Corporate Director: Resources to enter into a Loan Agreement with the BID Company;**
- 1.4 That Councillor Helen Dyke represents the Council on the BID Company Board if there is an appointment to be made for the remainder of the municipal year 2019/2020.**

A report was considered from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place which sought to agree that the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2022 is publically consulted on in advance of adoption.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing presented the report. She thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for supporting the proposal and formally moved the recommendations as set out in the report for approval. She added that a Homelessness Forum Stakeholder Event was being held at Wyre Forest House on Friday 20th September 2019, which would provide an opportunity to address any local issues.

The Leader of the Council seconded the proposal.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee said there was unanimous support from Committee members for the proposal. He acknowledged that homelessness and rough sleeping was a complex matter and endorsed the public consultation.

Decision: In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 5th September 2019;

Cabinet agreed:

- 1.1 The new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 – 2022 is publically consulted on from 23 September – 4th November 2019.**
- 1.2 To delegate to the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing to agree the Finalised strategy following any changes arising as a consequence of the consultation and that the final strategy be adopted no later than 31 December 2019.**

CAB.31 Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Enforcement Policy

A report was considered from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place which asked Cabinet to recommend to Council the formal adoption of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Enforcement Policy as recommended by the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Partnership Board.

The Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Protection presented the report. She said that the Enforcement Policy was agreed at the June 2019 Partnership Board meeting, and that it should be taken through the adoption process in each District Council.

She said that it was important that Members have knowledge of how decisions on enforcement matters are made and that they approve the processes that WRS follow when dealing with serious matters. She added that their knowledge on this subject also enables them to provide members of the public

with correct information when asked. She explained that as set out in section 3.5 of the report, virtually all the legislation the service deals with has criminal sanctions at its ultimate end point. She added that members needed to be happy with the processes that are being followed and such sanctions would be applied in the right circumstances, and in taking these important points on board, she asked Cabinet colleagues to support the recommendations as set out in the report.

The proposal was seconded by the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing.

Decision:

- 1.1 The Worcestershire Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy so far as it relates to executive functions be adopted; and**
- 1.2 RECOMMEND to Council the adoption of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy so far as it relates to non-executive functions, for use in relation to any formal action under the legislation delegated to the service by the Council.**

CAB.32 Establishing a Local Lottery for Wyre Forest

A report was considered from the Corporate Director: Community, Well Being and Environment to consider whether to progress with establishing a local lottery for Wyre Forest.

The Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Protection presented the report. She said the Council first became aware of the idea of a local lottery in 2016 but at the time the ideas was not progressed further. At that time only a few councils were involved, however the number has now risen to 80 councils operating a similar lottery.

She drew members' attention to section 3.4 of the report which explained how the lottery would operate and how the prize fund works. She said that 60p in every pound would go to local charities which compared to some other lotteries was a substantially higher amount. She added that this was not a way of fundraising for Wyre Forest District Council; it was a way to fundraise for local charities of all sizes across the district.

The Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Protection explained that out of the four options set out in the report, Cabinet felt that option two; the External Lottery Manager, was the way forward for the Council. She added that whilst the Council's role would be minimal under this option, the Council would retain full control, oversight and governance. The Council would be the body allocating the funding to good causes across the district which was very important. She said if agreed, the lottery could be live within six months and it was our aim to keep all members fully informed throughout the process.

Councillor N Desmond said that he was surprised and disappointed that such an important item had not been put forward to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration prior to it being agreed by Cabinet.

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The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee pointed out that the report said the Committee had been consulted on the proposed policy; however this was not the case.

The Leader of the Council agreed that the report should have gone to Scrutiny and proposed that the item be deferred.

Decision: The item be deferred for consideration by the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.10pm.