

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER**

**THURSDAY, 5TH MARCH 2020 (6PM)**

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**Present:**

Councillors: M J Hart (Chairman), S J Chambers (Vice-Chairman), N J Desmond, C Edginton-White, S Griffiths, S Miah, M Rayner, C Rogers, S E N Rook and D R Sheppard.

**Observers**

Councillors: G W Ballinger, H E Dyke, N Martin, F M Oborski MBE, J W R Thomas and P W M Young.

**OS.71 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor T L Onslow.

**OS.72 Appointment of Substitutes**

Councillor C Rogers was a substitute for Councillor T L Onslow.

**OS.73 Declarations of Interests by Members**

No declarations of interest were made.

**OS.74 Minutes**

**Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 6th February 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**OS.75 Annual Review of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership 2019/20**

The Chairman welcomed Superintendent Mark Colquhoun and Chief Inspector Helen Kinrade to the meeting and thanked them for attending.

The Community Safety and Partnerships Officer delivered a report providing an update on the properties, performance, successes and challenges in relation to the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP) during 2019/20 explaining that it was a statutory duty for local authorities to scrutinise the work of its Local Community Safety Partnership, under Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006. She led Members through each section of the report explaining in detail the way the Partnership was organised and the partners involved. The 3 year rolling Partnership Plan was detailed and each type of crime was reported to the Committee.

## Agenda Item No. 4

Councillor P W M Young entered the meeting at this point (6:15pm).

Superintendent Mark Colquhoun and Chief Inspector Helen Kinrade explained they were new to their roles in North Worcestershire and gave the Committee an overview of their work.

Councillor Miah commented that he had attended the Young Citizenship Celebration Evening in his role as Chairman of Wyre Forest District Council and passed on his congratulations to everyone involved as it was a great success. He asked how the results of the Partnership Plan compared to previous years. The Community Safety and Partnerships Officer informed Members that they would be able to feed back that information following a meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> March. The Community Safety and Partnerships Officer gave great detail on the Community Safety Officers role.

Councillor N J Desmond entered the meeting at this point (6:20pm).

The Committee discussed the Smart Water initiative at length and the importance of encouraging the public to engage with the scheme and how Councillors could support this. There was in depth discussion around anti-social behaviour, harassment, and criminal damage and the progress that was being made, as well as what could be done to target early intervention. The White Ribbon Campaign was discussed and the number of domestic violence incidents as well as theft from stores. The Community Safety and Partnerships Officer discussed options as to funding for the Community Safety Project Officers.

**Agreed: That progress by the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership and the Safer Wyre Forest Operational Group be noted.**

Councillor S Griffiths left the meeting at 6:57pm and returned at 6:59pm.

### **OS.76 Housing Assistance Policy**

The Committee considered a report from the Head of Strategic Growth to agree the policy that would be used to determine how the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding from Central government would be spent. She informed Members that from April 2020 the contract provider would be changing to Millbrook Healthcare and that the Housing Assistance Policy was similar to those adopted across each of the Districts in Worcestershire.

Councillors P W M Young and J W R Thomas left the meeting at 7pm.

Members discussed the customer satisfaction rates of the service and were pleased to learn that they were normally in excess of 95% satisfaction.

Councillor P W M Young returned at 7:03pm.

The Head of Strategic Growth explained the process for people accessing the service from application to completion of works and the support available to make the process accessible to those who needed it. The Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Well-being and Democratic Services thanked the Head of Strategic Growth

for the comprehensive report.

**Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet:**

**1.1 That the Housing Assistance Policy 2020 be approved.**

Councillor H E Dyke left the meeting at this point (7:06pm)

**OS.77 Feedback from Cabinet**

**Agreed: The content of the Cabinet decision list, following consideration of the recommendations from it's meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020 be noted.**

Councillor N Martin left the meeting at this point (7:08pm)

**OS.78 Work Programme**

The Committee reviewed the work programme for the current municipal year. The Chairman advised that the April meeting would go ahead to discuss the Council motion about flooding.

**Agreed: The work programme be noted.**

**OS.79 Press Involvement**

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

**OS.80 Kidderminster Town Centre Acquisition Strategy**

The Committee considered a report from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place which set out a proposed strategy for the acquisition of properties in Kidderminster town centre in support of the Council's bid for funding under the Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) and an approach to master planning the future of the remainder of the town centre not otherwise covered by the FHSF. He explained the background to the FHSF and the progression of the Wyre Forest Bid and explained that a full business case was being prepared to include the former Crown House site, the Bromsgrove Street car park and the former Magistrates Court site.

The Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place discussed the importance of rebalancing the town and re-connecting different areas to ensure a flow to the town centre. He explained the need to be prepared to act on acquisitions and make provision in the Capital programme should the FHSF bid be successful.

The different acquisition options were covered under exempt information.

**OS.81 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.82 Agenda Item 10 - Kidderminster Town Centre Acquisition Strategy**

The Committee considered the Exempt appendices for the Kidderminster Town Centre Acquisition Strategy report. The Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place took Members through each of purchase options in detail explaining the advantages of each option.

Councillor N J Desmond left the meeting at this point (7:40pm).

In depth discussion took place by Members with the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place answering questions on different aspects of the proposals.

Councillor S E N Rook left the meeting at this point (7:49pm) and returned at 7:52pm.

The Committee agreed to rescind the decision to exclude the press and public. The remainder of the meeting was held in the open session.

**Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet:**

**1.1 That the Acquisition Strategy should be adopted and provision made in the Capital Programme for potential acquisitions to be made.**

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 8:06pm.