

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

HELD REMOTELY

TUESDAY, 8TH SEPTEMBER 2020 (6PM)

Present:

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

Observers

Councillors: G W Ballinger, J F Byng, R H Coleman, I Hardiman, F M Oborski MBE and A Totty.

OS.37 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence

OS.38 Appointment of Substitutes

No substitutes were appointed

OS.39 Declarations of Interests by Members

Councillor M Hart declared for the public record in relation to agenda item 8 – Planning s106 Obligations, that he is the Cabinet Member for Education on Worcestershire County Council. He said that the report detailed an order of priority as to how section106 obligations were given and education was referenced. He said he was not declaring a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI), however flagged it for open and transparency purposes.

Councillors S Rook and A Totty joined the meeting at 6.01pm.

OS.40 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the special meeting held on the 25th June 2020, the minutes of the meeting held on the 2nd July 2020 and the minutes of the special meeting held on the 23rd July 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

OS.41 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 2020.

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The Principal HR Advisor presented the report and appendices which included detailed reports on performance against the Council's purposes of 'Enabling', a report on capital projects and a measures report on all of the Council's purposes; namely People, Place, Housing, Planning, Business and Enabling. Members were advised that as there were no overdue actions or significant issues to highlight, an exception report had not been included on this occasion.

The Committee considered each page of the report and appendices in turn. In response to member questions, the Principal HR Advisor advised that the suggestion that there had not been any noticeable impact on performance of or productivity arising from home working being implemented in March was from an internal perspective. In relation to WFF20/21 55 *We support our people and enable them to work well* – members were advised that the HR continually work with Managers to give them the support and advice they need to effectively manage their teams, and continually provide support for the Council's employees.

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

OS.42 Annual Report on Treasury Management Service and Actual Prudential Indicators 2019-20

The Committee considered a report from the Corporate Director: Resources which provided a review of the treasury management activities for 2019-20, 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 Committee also considered the recommendations from the Treasury Management Review Panel from its meeting on 2nd September 2020.

Councillor Edginton-White joined the meeting at 6.23pm.

The Corporate Director: Resources presented the report and gave a detailed summary of the main points. She advised Members that this was the first of three statutory reports which would be presented to the Committee during the municipal year. She was pleased to report that there had been no breaches during the year and the authority had been fully compliant with the requirements of the Code.

She added that the Council's Treasury Management Consultants, Link Asset Services, had provided a comprehensive Member training session on 2nd September, which was followed by a detailed scrutiny of the report by the Treasury Management Review Panel.

Councillor N Desmond congratulated the Corporate Director: Resources and her team for providing members with a very detailed, honest and informative report. He said that as an authority the work that is done on Treasury Management is first class and thanked the Corporate Director: Resources and her team for their hard work.

Agreed: The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends to Council to:

- 1.1 Approve the actual 2019-20 prudential and treasury indicators in the report;**

- 1.2 **Approve the actual 2019-20 non-treasury prudential indicators for Capital Portfolio Fund property acquisitions;**
- 1.3 **Note the annual treasury management report for 2019-20, including information on the non-treasury prudential indicators for Capital Portfolio Fund acquisitions.**

OS.43 Planning Consultation Responses

The Committee considered a report from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place which set out the proposed responses to the Government's recently published consultations regarding changes to the planning system.

The Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place presented the report and gave a detailed summary of the 'Planning for the Future' and 'Changes to the current planning system' consultations which the Government announced in August 2020.

Members were advised that the 'Planning for the Future' white paper was a very complex document which was multifaceted, multi dimensional and not something that was very easy to categorise as something you either support or don't support. The paper proposed '*radical reform unlike anything we have seen since the Second World War*'.

Councillor D Sheppard joined the meeting at 7.16pm

In relation to the 'Changes to the current planning system' consultation, the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place explained that the paper was much more targeted and included some specific proposals around the housing numbers needed in Local Plans. He said that the suggested changes to the standard methodology for calculating housing need would not have an impact on the Local Plan that the authority has submitted for examination; however it would impact when the adopted plan is reviewed in the future.

The Committee fully discussed the report and draft responses set out in the two appendices. Members suggested a few minor amendments for the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place to weave into the proposed response to the Planning for the Future white paper.

Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet that:

The responses set out in the appendices to the paper, subject to the minor amendments, are agreed.

OS.44 Planning s106 Obligations

The Committee considered a report from the Head of Strategic Growth which sought to agree the prioritisation of allocating funding achieved through planning obligations across the various elements (such as education, highways and affordable housing) on sites where there is a shortfall in meeting the costs of all obligations following a viability assessment.

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The Head of Strategic Growth presented the report and advised members that planning obligations, under s106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, were a mechanism which mitigates the impact of a development proposal to assist in making it acceptable in planning terms that might not otherwise be acceptable.

She added that they are focused on site specific mitigation of the impact of development and s106 obligations are often referred to as 'developer contributions' along with highway contributions and the Community Infrastructure Levy (where these have been introduced). She said that the amount of s106 contribution differs in each planning application as each site has different characteristics which dictate the need for s106 to be applied.

Members welcomed the report and fully supported the recommendation to Cabinet.

Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet that:

The priority list set out in paragraph 3.10 of the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is used to determine the allocation of s106 obligations where the viability of sites is deemed to be such that not all policy requirements can be met.

OS.45 Consultation Response to the Pre-Submission Draft of the Shropshire Local Plan Regulation 18

The Committee considered a report from the Senior Planning Policy Officer on the consultation currently running on the Pre-Submission draft of the Shropshire Local Plan (Regulation 18).

The Senior Planning Policy Officer presented the report and advised that the consultation was held from 3rd August to 30th September 2020. She explained that as a neighbouring Local Authority, Wyre Forest District Council had been invited to respond to the Pre-Submission consultation; this was to comply with Duty to Co-operate.

The Committee discussed the draft response and proposed some slight amendments to paragraphs 1 and 8.

Agreed: The Committee recommends the consultation response as set out in Appendix 1 and confirms paragraphs 2 to 7 inclusive and 9 to 13 unchanged and as written and amends paragraph 1 to say:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Shropshire Council Local Plan Review Pre-Submission Consultation document, We are not objecting to the plan but would make the following comments:

Amendment to paragraph 8:

However, Wyre Forest District Council has serious concerns that the future development will result in adverse pressure on existing infrastructure that is important to Wyre Forest District, such as traffic levels on the A442 from Bridgnorth to Kidderminster and additional pressure on the Dowles Road/Welch Gate air quality management area junction in Bewdley and

Stourport. Traffic modelling work must identify highway improvements that may be necessary as a result of future development.

OS.46 Work Programme

The Chairman announced that there were currently no items listed on the work programme for Members to consider at the October meeting. He said If no items were put forward by Officers in the next few days, the meeting would be cancelled.

OS.47 Press Involvement

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

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7.55pm.