

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
CABINET
HELD REMOTELY
22ND DECEMBER 2020 (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: J F Byng, A Coleman, R H Coleman, N J Desmond, C Edginton-White, I Hardiman, M J Hart, K Henderson, C Rogers, A Totty, L Whitehouse and P W M Young.

CAB.44 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

CAB.45 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

CAB.46 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 10th November 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB.47 Call Ins

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

CAB.48 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

CAB.49 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

CAB.50 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-24

A report was considered from the Corporate Director: Resources which in accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules and in line with the Wyre Forest Forward programme, provided the Cabinet with financial information in order to make proposals for the Budget Strategy for the period 2021-24.

The Leader presented the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval. He said the report presented the Cabinet Budget proposals to balance the books following one of the most challenging years in Wyre Forest District Council's history.

He added that the Council had already been facing a £1.7 million shortfall by 2022-23 before Covid-19 struck, putting extra demands on services and resources and drastically reducing income. And although Government funding had offset some of the costs of the pandemic as set out on page 19 in the table in paragraph 5.7, it did not cover all costs and losses incurred and the funding gap was now forecast to increase to £2.6m by the end of 2023-24.

The Leader said the provisional settlement issued last Thursday had provided additional one-off funding for 2021-22 of £684,887. Whilst this new funding was very welcome, it would not fundamentally change the Council's funding position as they are both one-year only. He explained that on the assumption that the extra costs/lost income are already in the base budget this would simply serve to smooth out the profile of the currently spikey funding gap and hopefully provide a bit more time to implement savings plans. He advised that tables of reworked figures would be included in the February reports together with any other changes from the final settlement.

In conclusion he said that this Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was set against the greatest uncertainty and resultant risk the Council had ever faced. The Cabinet Proposals and detailed plans set out in the report would ensure the Council can go further, faster, to ensure financial sustainability. He said it would not be easy and not all risk can be mitigated, but the authority would work hard to build on the impressive track record of this Council to achieve the savings required whilst also protecting services as far as possible.

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

The Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Protection said it was very important that the Council continued to work with Town and Parish Councils to protect services, and thanked them for their co-operation and hard work.

Decision: Cabinet NOTED:

- 1.1 The fees and charges as set out in Appendix 4 – Part 1.**
- 1.2 The comments from the Strategic Review Panel at its meeting on the 29th October 2020;**
- 1.3 The results of the Budget Consultation survey included in Appendix 6 and summarised in paragraph 9 of the report;**

Cabinet ENDORSE and RECOMMEND to the Strategic Review Panel for scrutiny:

- 1.4 The Council's updated Medium-Term Financial Strategy taking**

into account the results of the Budget Consultation;

- 1.4.1 There are two Cabinet Proposals – taking into account the impact on the Council’s Capital and Revenue Budgets for 2021-24 (paragraph 10.2) as follows;
- a) Approval of a further programme of phased savings for the strategic repositioning of the Council from the Wyre Forest Forward Savings Programme as set out in 10.2.1 and table 6.21 of £0.8m in 2021-22, £1.2m in 2022-23, £1.5m in 2023-24 ongoing after this year;
 - b) Approval of £200k generic capital budget to support expansion of the Council’s income generating activity, to be funded from prudential borrowing with the revenue costs met from within approved financially viable business cases. The Innovation Fund will be used to fund any one-off revenue business case costs.
- 1.4.2 The level of net expenditure and resultant Council Tax for 2021-24 as per paragraphs 10.1 and 10.4 including the revenue implications of the Capital Strategy report also on the agenda;
- 1.4.3 The fees and charges in line with this strategy and the impact on the Council’s Revenue Budget for 2021-24, as shown in Part 3 of Appendix 4 (paragraph 10.1 also refers) which incorporate decisions taken by Council on 9th December in respect of licensing fees and charges;
- 1.4.4 The removal of the priority about affordable housing from the Corporate Plan.

Cabinet APPROVED:

- 1.4.5 The fees and charges as set out in Appendix 4 – Part 2.

CAB.51 Capital Strategy 2021-31

A report was considered from the Corporate Director: Resources and the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place to seek Council approval of a Capital Strategy for 2021-31.

The Leader presented the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval. He said the report complements the MTFs and the Treasury Management Service Strategy; and sets out the Council’s Capital Plans for 2021-31.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Capital Investments seconded the proposals. She said it was a very far reaching strategy and hoped it would be successful for the Council.

Decision: Cabinet ENDORSE and RECOMMEND to the Strategic Review Panel for scrutiny:

The Council's updated Capital Strategy:

- a) Approve the Capital Strategy 2021-31 including the associated Quantitative Indicators in Appendix 2, the updated Capital Portfolio Strategy in Appendix 4 and the revised Asset Management Plan in Appendix 5;**
- b) Approve variations to the Capital Programme and Vehicle, Equipment and Systems Renewals Schedule as set out in Appendix 1, Appendices A and B;**
- c) Approve the limits for gross debt of non-treasury investments compared to net service expenditure and for Capital Portfolio and Development Loans Fund income as a percentage of net service expenditure as set out in Appendix 2;**
- d) Approve the limits for loan investments as set out in Section 5.1.**
- e) Delegation of authority to Cabinet to make amendments to the Capital Programme in instances where the Council receives external capital grants and the full amount of the grants to be distributed is met from the external funding source.**
- f) Delegation to the Corporate Director: Resources and Corporate Director Economic Prosperity and Place to make revisions to the Capital Portfolio Strategy and Asset Management Strategy in order to comply with best practice and latest relevant guidance.**

The Leader thanked everyone of the Council's staff for the brilliant job they had done during the pandemic; and there being no further business, he declared the meeting closed at 6.23pm.

The full meeting is available for viewing on the Council's website
<https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/53298>