

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

HELD REMOTELY

THURSDAY, 4TH FEBRUARY 2021 (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, C J Barnett, J F Byng, V Caulfield, A Coleman, R H Coleman, H E Dyke, P Dyke, I Hardiman, N Martin, F M Oborski MBE, C Rogers and P W M Young.

OS.60 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

OS.61 Appointment of Substitutes

No substitutes were appointed.

OS.62 Declarations of Interests by Members

Councillor R Coleman declared, in respect of agenda item no. 7 – Scrutiny Proposal, that he was a dog owner.

Councillor A Coleman declared, in respect of agenda item no. 7 – Scrutiny Proposal, that she was a dog owner.

OS.63 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 5th November 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Councillor V Caulfield joined the meeting at 6.08pm.

OS.64 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 2020.

The Business Improvement Officer presented the report and appendices which included an exception report for all purposes detailing actions that were approaching their due date or were overdue; a detailed report of performance

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against the purpose of 'Place'; an overview report on Bewdley Museum and a capital projects report.

The Committee considered each page of the report and appendices in turn. Members were advised that the data for LE015 – Total recorded ASB incidents, was out of date. The information is provided by West Mercia Police and as at September 2020 they were unable to provide the data. The Business Improvement Officer advised members that an update would be circulated to members as soon as the data became available, and a response to the queries raised in relation to LA065 - Yearly percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting, and LA071/LA072 Fly tipping incidents and enforcement actions would be circulated in due course.

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

Councillor N Desmond joined the meeting at 6.15pm.

OS.65 Treasury Management Strategy 2021-22

The Committee received 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 Committee also considered the recommendations from the Treasury Management Review Panel from its meeting on 2nd February 2021.

The Corporate Director: Resources presented the report and gave a summary of the main points. She advised members that this was the last, and most important, of the three statutory reports that would be presented to Committee during the municipal year, as it sets out the policies and risk appetite of the authority for the 2021-22 financial year. She was pleased to report that there were no breaches to report and all the treasury management activities were in full compliance with the Council's approved strategy.

She added that the Council's Treasury Management Advisors, Link Asset Services, had provided a comprehensive member training session on 2nd February, which was followed by a detailed scrutiny of the report by the Treasury Management Review Panel. The Corporate Director: Resources said that the training was very well attended and thanked members for their input.

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

- 1.1 Approve the restated Prudential Indicators and Limits for the financial years 2021-22 to 2030-31 included in Appendix 3. These will be revised for the February 2021 Council meeting, as per paragraph 7.2 of this report, following any changes to the Capital Programme brought about as part of the budget process.**
- 1.2 Approve the updated Treasury Management and Investment Policy and Strategy Statements for the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 (the associated Prudential Indicators are included in Appendix 3 and the detailed criteria is included in Section 10 and Appendix 5).**

- 1.3 Approve the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement that sets out the Council's policy on MRP included in Appendix 1.**
- 1.4 Approve the Authorised Limit Prudential Indicator included in Appendix 3.**
- 1.5 Notes that the separate, but intrinsically linked, Capital Strategy 2021-31 to be approved separately by Council, sets out the policy statement covering non-treasury investments including the related suite of prudential indicators.**

OS.66 Scrutiny Proposal

The Committee considered a scrutiny proposal form submitted by a member of the Committee, Councillor M Rayner, regarding fireworks.

The Chairman advised that the form had also been submitted in the name of Councillors Anna and Roger Coleman, and it was proposed that a task and finish group be set up to look at the issues raised. He acknowledged that the sale and use of fireworks was dealt with in legislation, which members cannot change; however there were certain things that members would be able to influence in terms of policy on Council owned land and the communications that the authority has with members of the public about adhering to the legal restrictions on the use of fireworks.

Councillor Rayner presented the form which set out in detail the scrutiny proposal. She outlined the key issues and explained that over time firework designs had changed from being just a visual display with low levels of noise to being extremely loud and noisy. She said that she had been contacted by a number of residents who were concerned about the distress loud fireworks cause to vulnerable people and animals.

A discussion ensued. Members welcomed the proposal and agreed that it would be an opportunity to examine the current legal framework on the use of fireworks and fully explore the situation across the district with a view to recommending appropriate ways to deal with the issues identified as part of the review.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Capital Investments and for Localism said that Wyre Forest District Council takes a responsible attitude with regards to Chinese lanterns and helium balloons within its parks. She said there was no harm in looking to take a responsible attitude regarding fireworks on Council owned land and hoped that the proposal would proceed.

Agreed:

- A task and finish group (review panel) of six members be established to undertake the scrutiny exercise; the membership of the panel will consist of one member from each political party.**
- Councillor M Rayner be appointed as Chairman of the review panel.**
- Nominations for the panel to be sent by Group Leaders to the Principal Committee and Member Services Officer by Thursday 11th February 2021.**

OS.67 Work Programme

The Committee reviewed the work programme for the remainder of the municipal year. The Chairman advised that the Principal Committee and Member Services Officer was in the process of confirming the attendance of the Environment Agency for the March meeting. He said that it was important that the Committee kept the flooding issues in the district at the forefront of their minds and additional meetings would be held if necessary.

OS.68 Press Involvement

The Chairman advised that the following items would require publicity:

- Review of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs)
- Update from the Environment Agency – Flooding Outcomes

OS.69 Capital Portfolio Fund – Quarterly Fund Report

The Committee received a report from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place which provided an update on the performance of the Capital Portfolio Fund (CPF) for the final quarter for the period up to the end of December 2020.

The Corporate Director: Resources introduced the report and reminded members that the performance reports were presented to the Committee on a bi-annual basis. She said it was an important report and urged members to ask questions and seek clarification on any points that they were unsure of.

The representatives from the Council's advisers, Jones Valerio, presented members with an executive summary which set out the key challenges and opportunities facing the CPF during quarter 4 2020, alongside the solutions being delivered to reduce risk and deliver opportunity. Members were advised that it was the Asset Managers summary of the larger and more comprehensive Quarterly Fund Report (QFR) as set out in the exempt appendix and did not therefore comment upon all areas of the report due to commercial sensitivity of information included in the exempt part of the agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.40pm and resumed at 7.45pm. At 7.56pm the Committee agreed unanimously to suspend Council Procedure Rule (Standing Orders) 1.1 (iii) to allow the meeting to continue past 8pm.

The representatives from Jones Valerio, led members in detail through the executive summary. The Committee fully scrutinised the report by way of a question and answer session with the representatives from Jones Valerio.

OS.70 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.71 Capital Portfolio Fund – Quarterly Fund Report: Appendix 1

The Committee received a detailed confidential quarterly performance report from Jones Valerio.

Agreed: The performance of the Capital Portfolio Fund be noted.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 8.30pm.

The full open meeting is available for viewing on the Council's website:

<https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/53298>