

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**HELD REMOTELY**  
**THURSDAY, 13TH MAY 2021 (6PM)**

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**Present:**

Councillors: M J Hart (Chairman), S E N Rook (Vice-Chairman), S J Chambers, N J Desmond, P Dyke, C Edginton-White, S Griffiths, A L L'Huillier, T L Onslow, D R Sheppard and A Totty.

**Observers**

Councillors: G W Ballinger, J F Byng, A Coleman, R H Coleman, H E Dyke, N Martin and C Rogers.

**OS.01 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S Miah.

**OS.02 Appointment of Substitutes**

Councillor A Totty was appointed as a substitute for Councillor S Miah.

**OS.03 Declarations of Interests by Members**

No declarations of interest were made.

Councillor S Rook joined the meeting at 6.04pm.

**OS.04 Minutes**

**Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 1st April 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**OS.05 “How are we doing?” Q4 update (Housing and Planning)**

The Committee considered a report from the Business Improvement Officer which updated members on the performance of the Council for quarter 4, from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

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; detailed reports of performance against the purposes of ‘Planning’ and ‘Housing’; and a report on the Capital Projects.

The Committee considered each page of the report and appendices in turn and agreed to note the update.

**Agreed: The progress in performance for quarter 4 be noted.**

In relation to agenda item no. 7 - Update from Worcestershire County Council – Flooding Outcomes, the Chairman advised that the County Council Officers felt it was appropriate for the relevant Cabinet Member to attend the meeting with them. As the Cabinet had not yet been appointed, representatives will attend a future meeting of the Committee to provide an update.

Councillor N Desmond joined the meeting at 6.13pm and Councillor D Sheppard joined at 6.20pm.

**OS.06 Update from the Environment Agency – Flooding Outcomes**

The Committee received an update from the Environment Agency (EA) on the flooding in January 2021.

Dave Throup, Environment Manager Hereford & Worcestershire, gave a brief presentation which provided a summary of the events on the latest bout of flooding because of Storm Christoph. Members were advised that the flooding was due to large but not exceptional upland rainfall, the rivers Severn and Wyre were most impacted, driven by Welsh water. The river Severn levels were similar but slightly lower than the levels recorded in February 2020 and was the third highest on record at Bewdley.

He added that there was much less impact on smaller rivers and surface water which was reflected in the damage that was done across the Severn catchment. Unfortunately, there were approximately 100 properties flooded, some of which were in Bewdley, however over 1000 properties were protected as a result of the flood defences during that period. He said the flooding event was a continuation of the trend of severe flood events over the last few years.

Dave Edwards, Partnership & Strategic Overview Team Leader, gave a brief update on their response to the incident and how the EA staff and assets were deployed to sites across the West Midlands with as little face-to-face contact as possible. He explained that six flood warnings were issued across the Wyre Forest District and a number of flood advisory service teleconferences had been held which enabled the EA to share information and update multi-agency partners on weather forecasts, river levels etc.

The Committee discussed the update. In response to a member question, Dave Edwards advised that the ground investigation works at Beales Corner were ongoing, and the topographic surveys had been completed for both the proposed permanent flood risk management scheme and the investigation into the incident with the temporary flood barriers. He said that the ecological surveys were scheduled to be carried out in late May / early June and they would be used to help with the design of the proposed permanent scheme. He added that the project team were planning to organise a wider community event in July. Members were advised that the temporary barrier post incident review was currently on schedule. It was hoped that the results will be shared with partners in the summer.

Dave Throup assured the Committee that the EA were committed to getting the

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permanent scheme done in Bewdley and the delivery of the project remained a priority for them.

The Chairman thanked the EA representatives for the updates and for attending this and previous meetings.

**Agreed: The update be noted.**

#### **OS.07 Wyre Forest Health and Wellbeing Plan Update**

The Committee considered a report from the Principal Health and Sustainability Officer which provided an update on work to improve health and wellbeing in Wyre Forest and to seek endorsement of the new Wyre Forest Health Action Plan 2021-22.

The Principal Health and Sustainability Officer led members through the report and outlined the key issues.

The Committee discussed the report and acknowledged the hard work of the team of Officers in delivering the plan during the Pandemic. Members welcomed the work around the mental health advice and awareness. The Committee unanimously supported the recommendation.

**Decision: Recommend to Cabinet that the Wyre Forest Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Health Action Plan 2021-22, as attached at Appendix 1 of the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, is approved.**

#### **OS.08 Kidderminster 2040 – A Town Centre Vision**

The Committee considered a report from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place which set out the vision for the future of Kidderminster Town Centre for the next 20 years.

The Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place presented the report and outlined the key issues.

The Committee discussed the report. Members agreed that Wyre Forest District Council had a good track record for Economic Development and gave thanks to the Corporate Director and his team for their hard work. The Committee agreed that the document provided a high level direction of travel for building for the future and unanimously supported the recommendation.

**Decision: Recommend to Cabinet that the Kidderminster 2040 Vision is agreed.**

#### **OS.09 Work Programme**

The Committee reviewed the work programme for the new municipal year.

#### **OS.10 Press Involvement**

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

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There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7.32pm.

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

<https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/your-council/councillors-committees-and-meetings/council-meetings/>