

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**HELD REMOTELY**  
**THURSDAY, 3RD JUNE 2021 (6PM)**

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**Present:**

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

**Observers**

Councillors: G W Ballinger, J F Byng, A Coleman, H E Dyke, I Hardiman, M Rayner, C Rogers, J W R Thomas and A Totty.

**OS.11 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor N J Desmond.

**OS.12 Appointment of Substitutes**

Councillor K Henderson was appointed as a substitute for Councillor N J Desmond.

**OS.13 Declarations of Interests by Members**

No declarations of interest were made.

**OS.14 Minutes**

**Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 13th May 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**OS.15 Kidderminster Future High Streets Fund – Update**

The Committee considered a report from the Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWedR) which provided a high-level update on the progress of the Kidderminster Future High Streets Fund programme.

The Head of NWedR presented the report and outlined the key issues. He advised that despite the delay from Central Government in the decision on the funding award, the deadline for spending the monies remained as March 2024. He gave a brief summary of the three projects that form the basis of the fund namely; the former magistrates court; Worcester Street / Bromsgrove Street connectivity and the former Crown House / Bull Ring site.

Members were advised that in addition to agreeing the governance arrangements, the Council had recently appointed external project and cost control managers to

assist with overseeing the delivery of the projects.

The Chairman lost his IT connection at 6.24pm; the Vice Chairman chaired the meeting in his absence.

The Chairman returned to the meeting at 6.28pm and resumed the Chair for the remainder of the meeting. Councillor M Rayner joined the meeting at 6.30pm.

The Committee fully considered the update. In response to a member question, the Head of NWedR assured members that despite the tight deadline, the team were working hard and was confident that the delivery of the programme would be achieved. He said that the Council had excellent external support, and the risk register was regularly monitored, and every effort was being made to mitigate potential issues and delivery risks.

A member congratulated the Head of NWedR on what had been achieved in the relatively short time following the announcement of the funding in December 2020. He said the projects would benefit the whole of Wyre Forest and the delivery programme was in a safe pair of hands.

**Agreed: The update be noted.**

**OS.16 Work Programme**

The Committee reviewed the work programme for the municipal year.

**OS.17 Press Involvement**

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

**OS.18 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.19 Kidderminster Property Acquisitions**

The Committee received a confidential report from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place to agree the acquisition of properties in Kidderminster.

The Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place presented the report. He gave a comprehensive and thorough explanation of the proposal including the location, valuation and tenancy details. He said the proposal was an opportunity for the Council to consider a more comprehensive redevelopment opportunity aligned with the FHSF and offered further added value to the overall regeneration of the town centre.

The Corporate Director: Resources gave an explanation of the financial implications of the proposal and highlighted the risk analysis as set out in the confidential report.

#### **Agenda Item No. 4**

She assured members that appropriate due diligence had been undertaken.

The Committee fully scrutinised the report. Members agreed that this was an exciting opportunity for the authority and fully supported the recommendations to Cabinet.

Councillor D Sheppard had IT connection issues during the consideration of this item and was unable to vote on the proposal.

**Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet that the Council acquires the properties set out in the exempt report to create a comprehensive redevelopment opportunity and to recommend inclusion within the Capital Programme.**

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7.30pm.

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/>