

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY,
KIDDERMINSTER

2 NOVEMBER 2021 (5.57PM)

Present:

Councillors: J Aston (Chairman), P Dyke (Vice-Chairman), G W Ballinger, C J Barnett, J F Byng, V Caulfield, S J Chambers, A Coleman, R H Coleman, B S Dawes, N J Desmond, H E Dyke, C Edginton-White, I Hardiman, P Harrison, M J Hart, K Henderson, L J Jones, A L L'Huillier, N Martin, S Miah, F M Oborski MBE, T L Onslow, M Rayner, C Rogers, S E N Rook, D R Sheppard, J W R Thomas, L Whitehouse and P W M Young.

C.50 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: N Gale and A Totty.

C.51 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

C.52 Exclusion of the Press and Public

Decision: Under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of “exempt Information” as defined in paragraphs 8 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Councillors A L L'Huillier and L Jones joined the meeting at 6.02pm.

C.53 Recommendations from the Audit Committee 27 October 2021: Audit Review – Unity Park (Former Frenco Site) Provision of 9 Industrial Units

The Chairman of the Audit Committee, Councillor R Coleman, presented the recommendations and formally moved them for approval.

He thanked the Audit Manager, Cheryl Ellerton, for all her hard work in carrying out the review. He said that he hoped the comprehensive set of recommendations would safeguard the financial position of the council in future contracts.

The Leader seconded the proposals.

Upon a show of hands, the vote was unanimously carried.

Decision: Council NOTED that:

- a) **In consultation with Procurement Officer colleagues from West Mercia Police, the Solicitor to the Council and Corporate Director: Resources will work up proposals for revisions to the Contract Procedure Rules to include a framework for applying financial appraisals for consideration by the Audit Committee at its next meeting, the framework to include a threshold for size of construction contracts above which there should be a financial evaluation criterion;**
- b) **Consideration should be given as part of that revised framework to what provision the Contract Procedure Rules should make about vetting of potential new construction contractors, in respect of financial standing and evidence of completion of previous comparable contracts, in addition to any self-assessment provided; in what circumstances the mitigation measures in PPN 02/13 should be considered, including performance bonds; in what circumstances arrangements about retention are required and what they should be; and what steps should be taken in the event that a contractor's invoice during a contract is rejected in whole or in part, including reporting the fact to councillors;**
- c) **The Committee considers that, in future, no project should proceed where the logic of creating an income stream is found to work only if the accepted contractor's price is all that makes it viable and that contractor's price is both the lowest and significantly lower than others received.**

C.54 Unity Park - construction of industrial units

Council considered a confidential report from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place to decide whether to provide additional funding within the capital programme to allow works to proceed to complete construction.

The Cabinet Member for Operational Services presented the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval. He thanked the Officers, Chairman and members of the Audit Committee for their in-depth investigation into the project.

He explained that the units were in a prominent and strategic location and were designed to meet the needs of increased employment opportunities within the district for business to evolve from initial incubation units to a larger unit. He said the completion of the project would enable revenue income streams to be realised as there was a market demand for the much needed small, individual industrial units. The proposals provided the council with a viable option for supporting economic growth within the district and other options may not provide value for money for the council.

The Leader seconded the proposals.

A discussion ensued. A vote on the motion was carried and agreed.

Decision: Council AGREED:

- 1.1 To appoint the company named in paragraph 2.1 of the confidential report, as the contractor to complete the works at Unity Park, Silverwoods Way.**
- 1.2 That the Capital Programme is amended to transfer the amounts shown in the confidential report to the Industrial Units on the Unity Park Site, from the Capital Portfolio Fund and from the Evergreen Investment Fund to provide a revised overall Capital budget for the Unity Park site of the amount shown in the confidential report. This will enable the completion of the nine industrial units on the site.**

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7.02pm.