

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

22 MARCH 2022 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: H E Dyke (Chairman), G W Ballinger (Vice-Chairman), N Martin and M Rayner.

Observers:

Councillors: M J Hart and F M Oborski MBE.

Observed remotely: Councillor S Miah.

CAB.66 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J W R Thomas.

CAB.67 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

CAB.68 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 8 February 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB.69 Call Ins

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

CAB.70 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

CAB.71 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

CAB.72 Budget Monitoring Third Quarter 2021-22

A report was considered from the Head of Resources on the Council's financial performance for Quarters 1 to 3 ending 31st December 2021 and presented the current projected outturn position for the 2021-22 financial year for both revenue and capital expenditure.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio presented the report

and formally moved the recommendations for approval. She said that the paper reported against the revised estimate approved by Council on 23 February 2022 and provided forecasts on the Capital Programme spend for 2021-22.

She was pleased to report that there was a £227k revenue underspend against the revised budget which would make a modest contribution towards closing the funding gap. She added that the capital forecast spend was £16.1 million against a full programme of £25.2 million. She explained that much of the unspent programme related to the Capital portfolio fund and would be re-profiled to be spent in 2022-23. She added that the Outturn projections would undoubtedly change at final accounts as the impact of the Omicron variant was only now feeding into the council's monitoring information. She added that the report also set out the current progress against the savings and efficiency targets being delivered by the Wyre Forest Forward Programme and the Localism Partnership agenda.

The Cabinet Member outlined the key points from the report. She explained that external income had been an important element within the finances of the council for some time, and the Covid-19 pandemic had undoubtedly had a significant impact. She said the graphs at paragraph 4.5.2 and 4.5.6 of the report show the impact very clearly.

She further explained that the biggest reductions since the pandemic had been in connection with the Leisure Centre and the Capital Portfolio fund. She said in general the Leisure Centre had recovered well, and in some cases activities and headcounts are out-performing that achieved in 2019 (pre-pandemic). However recovery in gym and fitness membership remains challenging and the omicron variant this winter further impacted performance. She added that it was projected that the Capital Portfolio Fund would break even this year, a slightly improvement to the revised budget position.

In conclusion, she said that the current forecast for the outturn position for 2021-22 was a welcome saving of £227k compared to the revised budget. The final position would, however, undoubtedly be different as there were many variables including decisions made on provisions and reserves at year end.

The Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Safety seconded the proposal.

Decision: Cabinet DECIDED that the projected budget variations and comments outlined within the report and appendices 2 to 6 be noted.

CAB.73 Recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 3 March 2022 – Fireworks Review Panel

Cabinet received the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Fireworks Review Panel was established to conduct a review of concerns about the use of fireworks in the Wyre Forest area because of the high number of complaints from members of the public around the distress that fireworks can cause.

Agenda Item No. 3

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor M Hart, thanked the members that had been involved in the review and formally moved the recommendations for approval.

The Leader of the Council thanked Councillor Hart and his committee for their hard work. She assured him that the Cabinet had fully considered the suite of recommendations and discussed the constraints of the legislation and the difficulty in enforcing policies surrounding the use of fireworks.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio moved a proposal to condense the seven recommendations into two and produce a guide on the website promoting the safe and considerate use of fireworks.

The Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Safety seconded the proposal.

Decision: Having considered and noted the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and recognising that national legislation sets the rules governing the sale and use of fireworks, Cabinet resolves:

- 1) to assemble and promote an information guide by the end of April 2022 which would incorporate advice from the RSPCA and Government guidelines on the safe and considerate use of fireworks within the community;**
- 2) as part of the information guide to provide local residents, businesses and those organising community displays any other signposting on existing legislation for the safe and considerate use of fireworks.**

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 6.23pm.