

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

7 FEBRUARY 2023 (6PM)

Present:

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

Observers:

Councillors: M J Hart and F M Oborski MBE.

Observed remotely: Councillors: P Dyke, C Edginton-White and I Hardiman.

CAB.44 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

CAB.45 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

CAB.46 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 20 December 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB.47 Call Ins

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

CAB.48 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

CAB.49 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

CAB.50 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-2026 & Capital Strategy 2023-2033

A report was considered from the Head of Resources that updated Cabinet on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2023-2026 and made recommendations to Council on the proposed budget decision. The report also sought approval of the Capital Strategy for 2023-2033 including prudential indicators which set limits for non-financial investments and to fulfil the key requirements of the DLUHC Investment Guidance.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio presented the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval. She said that the proposals had been shaped by the views of residents who completed the council's annual budget consultation and consideration of the alternative budgets shared by the Liberal Democrat and Conservative groups at the Strategic Review Panel meeting on 12 January. She added that the proposals in the report had been scrutinised at the Strategic Review Panel meeting on 29 January.

She said that the Cabinet were grateful to the public for sharing their views and to the other groups for their suggestions.

The Cabinet Member outlined the nine Cabinet proposals as set out in the report. She said the MTFs was set against ongoing uncertainty and resultant risk due to rising prices, uncertain global and national political and economic conditions and further delays to funding reform.

She said the strategy continued with the programme of work to consider options for how the council might deliver services differently in future to save costs and protect front line services. She said the ongoing service transformation was not easy and not all risk could be mitigated, however the authority would continue to work hard to build on its impressive track record to achieve the savings required whilst also protecting services as far as possible.

In conclusion, the Cabinet Member said that the proposals represented a realistic way forward that reflected the aspirations of the Cabinet. They acknowledged the alternative proposals put forward by the opposition groups, whilst still allowing the authority to continue to balance the books in these challenging times.

The Leader of the Council seconded the proposals.

Decision: The CABINET having re-considered the Financial Strategy 2023-2026, the results of the Budget consultation exercise, alternative budget proposal and recommendations of the Strategic Review Panel RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that it:

- 1.1 THREE YEAR BUDGET, CAPITAL STRATEGY AND POLICY FRAMEWORK 2023-2026**
- 1.1.1 APPROVES the updated Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2023-2026.**
- 1.1.2 APPROVES the Cabinet Proposals – taking into account the impact on the Council's Capital and Revenue Budgets for 2023-2026 as shown in the tables in paragraphs 6.1 and 6.3 and as set out below:**
 - a) Approval to provide community leadership funding of £1,000 for each councillor in 2023-24, at a cost of £33,000 in 2023-24.**
 - b) Approval to provide additional staffing resources to address**

capacity issues at a cost of £119,000 in 2023-24, £166,000 in 2024-25 and £189,000 in 2025-26.

- c) Approve investment for a further 5 year period in the ICT strategy which has revenue implications of £6,000 in 2023-24, £49,000 in 2024-25 and £123,000 in 2025-26. The ICT Strategy will deliver £1.6m capital investment over the period 2023-24 to 2028-29.
 - d) Approval to fund 2 generic Civil and Environmental enforcement posts £65,140 in 2023-24 and £67,740 in 2024-25.
 - e) Approval to provide additional litter picking resource in Stourport and Bewdley, a £10,000 pa core element to cover six weeks in the summer and a £10,000 pa match funding element subject to match funding from the Town Councils.
 - f) Approval to provide a £5,000 Community Fund to provide grants of £100 - £500 to support community, charity and residents' groups to deliver events to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III.
 - g) Approval to provide new culture/arts events grants to town councils £20,000 pa.
 - h) Approval of up to £1,000 pa for the costs of the No Barriers Awards scheme on the basis that there is an absolute minimum of administrative support provided by WFDC.
 - i) Approval of the inclusion of the Housing Fund grant offer in the Capital Programme. The grant offer of £706,000 will support capital expenditure in 2023-24 of £876,000. The balance to be met from the Evergreen Investment Fund.
- 1.1.3 APPROVES the fees and charges in line with this Strategy, and the impact on the Council's Revenue Budget for 2023-2026, as shown in Appendix 3.
- 1.1.4 APPROVES the Council's updated Capital Strategy:
- a) Approval of the Capital Strategy 2023-2033 set out in Appendix 1 of the December Cabinet report and the updated, associated Qualitative Indicators set out in Appendix 2C of the report.
 - b) Approval of variations to the Capital Programme and Vehicle, Equipment and Systems Renewals Schedule as set out in Appendices 2A and 2B, of the report (which updates Appendix 1 of the Capital Strategy report to December 2022 Cabinet).
 - c) Approval of the limits for gross debt for non-treasury investments compared to net service expenditure and for commercial income as a percentage of net service expenditure

as set out in Appendix 2C of the report.

- 1.1.5 **APPROVES** that any Final Accounts savings arising from 2022-2023, together with surplus Earmarked Reserves, be allocated by the Head of Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio.
- 1.1.6 The General Fund Revenue Budget be **APPROVED** including all updates from the position in December 2022 as set out in the report.
- 1.2 **COUNCIL TAX AND BUSINESS RATES**
 - 1.2.1 a. **SETS** the Council Tax for Wyre Forest District Council on a Band D Property at £236.21 for 2022-2023 (£229.34 2022-2023) which represents an increase of 3% on Council Tax from 2022-2023.
 - b. **ENDORSES** the provisional Council Tax on a Band D Property in 2023-2024 of £234.27 and £250.57 in 2024-2025, being increases of 3%.
 - 1.2.2 **NOTES** the Head of Resources (as Chief Financial Officer) opinion on the budget proposals, recommended by the Cabinet in the report, as detailed in Appendix 4 of the report.
- 1.3 **The Cabinet APPROVED:**
 - 1.3.1 Delegated authority is given to the Head of Resources, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital portfolio, to make any appropriate adjustments to the General Fund Revenue Budget recommended under paragraph 1.1.6 above, as a result of any further notifications from Central Government.
- 1.4 **The Cabinet NOTED** in line with the recommendations of the Strategic Review Panel:
 - 1.4.1 The Alternative budget proposals as detailed within Appendix 5 of the report, further noting that updated versions as appropriate will be provided for Full Council on the 22nd February 2023.

CAB.51 Wyre Forest District Council Health and Wellbeing Supplementary Planning Document

A report was considered from the Head of Strategic Growth that presented the draft Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC) Health and Wellbeing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for public consultation.

The Leader presented the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval.

The Leader gave a summary of the background and key issues detailed in the report. She explained that the SPD gave details on how matters on health and wellbeing should be positively addressed through the development planning process in the district.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor M Hart presented the recommendations from its meeting on 2 February 2023. He said the document was well written and would help interested parties. He said the Committee had suggested a number of minor points of refinement and were unanimous in their endorsement of the document.

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

Decision: In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 2 February 2023, Cabinet AGREED that the Health and Wellbeing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is consulted on from February for 6 weeks.

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