

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER**

**THURSDAY, 8 JUNE 2023 (6PM)**

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**Present:**

Councillors: N Martin (Chairman), F M Oborski MBE (Vice-Chairman), V Caulfield, G Connolly, N J Desmond, P Dyke, N Gale, P Harrison, D Little, C Rogers, D Russell and L Whitehouse.

**Observers**

Councillors: B Brookes, M J Hart and D Ross.

Observed remotely: Councillors: J F Byng and R Drew.

**OS.01 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor H E Dyke.

**OS.02 Appointment of Substitutes**

Councillor P Dyke was a substitute for Councillor H E Dyke.

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

No declarations of interest were made.

**OS.04 Minutes**

**Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**OS.05 Budget and Performance Monitoring Fourth Quarter 2022-23**

The Committee considered a draft of a Cabinet Report from the Head of Resources and s151 Officer on the Council's financial and other performance at the end of Quarter 4 ending 31 March 2023. The report also presented the provisional draft (pre audit) outturn position for the 2022-23 financial year.

The Head of Resources and s151 Officer presented the report and outlined the key issues. She explained that the integrated finance and performance report allowed the Committee and Cabinet a more rounded view of the Council's performance, than consideration of performance measures or financial performance alone. She added that it followed the performance improvement recommendation in the latest Auditors Annual Report received in April 2022 and was considered good practice.

## **Agenda Item No. 4**

The Committee fully scrutinised the report and the Head of Resources, the Head of Strategic Growth and the Head of Community & Environment Services were able to provide members with verbal responses to their questions.

The Committee welcomed the news that the draft statement of accounts had been published in line with the statutory timeline on 31 May 2023, which was now subject to external audit review. This was 2 months earlier than the deadline last year and only about a third of Councils met the publication deadline. The Committee commended the Head of Resources and s151 Officer, the Finance team and colleagues across the authority for this excellent achievement.

**Decision: The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the information in the report and recommend to Cabinet to NOTE:**

- 1.1 The projected budget variations and comments within the report and appendices 1 to 6.**
- 1.2 The performance against measures and actions as set out in the report and appendix 7.**

### **OS.06 Review of inclusive play equipment in the parks owned by WFDC**

The Committee received a briefing paper from the Head of Community & Environment Services that provided an overview of inclusive play equipment in the parks owned by Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC) and suggested the establishment of a review panel.

The Head of Community & Environment Services presented the paper. He explained that the item had been referred to the scrutiny committee from the previous administration of the Council following an alternative budget proposal put forward during the budget setting process by the Conservative Group.

The Committee discussed the report. A member welcomed the proposal. She said that the review should include finding out what inclusive play equipment there was across the whole of the district and not just WFDC parks, she also suggested that the Wyre Forest School should be consulted as part of the review as they would have the expertise to advise on what sort of equipment was needed.

To assist the Committee, a member from the group that had put the original proposal forward gave a summary of the background to the proposal. He said that this was a very important issue and, in his opinion, should have been done many years ago. He said that as the proposal had not been included in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy valuable time had been lost. He added that setting up a review panel would delay the matter further and would not be a good use of officer and member time. He said that the relevant Cabinet Member was more than capable of liaising with all relevant parties and should take a strategic lead on this issue with a view to formulating a detailed plan, and therefore there was no need for a scrutiny review panel.

He proposed that the review of inclusive play equipment be undertaken by the relevant Cabinet Member. The proposal was seconded. Upon a show of hands, the

motion was agreed by the majority of the Committee.

**Decision: The review of inclusive play equipment in the parks owned by WFDC be made by the relevant Cabinet Member.**

**OS.07 Work Programme**

The Committee reviewed and noted the work programme for the remainder of the municipal year.

**OS.08 Press Involvement**

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

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 6.55pm.