

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

13 JUNE 2023 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: M J Hart (Chairman), B Brookes, D Morehead, T L Onslow and D Ross.

Observers:

Councillors: J F Byng, N Martin, F M Oborski MBE and C Rogers.

Observed remotely: Councillors: L Carroll and G Connolly.

CAB.01 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor I Hardiman (Vice-Chairman).

CAB.02 Declarations of Interests by Members

In respect of exempt agenda item 10.1 – Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) – connectivity project, and any discussions around Kidderminster town centre and Bromsgrove Street, Councillor T Onslow declared that she owned a property, what was not part of the project, in that street.

The declaration was made for transparency and was neither a disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI), nor other registrable interest (ORI) nor a non-registrable interest (NRI).

CAB.03 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 21 March 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB.04 Call Ins

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

CAB.05 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

CAB.06 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

CAB.07 Budget and Performance Monitoring Fourth Quarter 2022-23

A report was considered from the Head of Resources and s151 Officer that briefed members 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 Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio presented the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval.

The Cabinet Member gave a summary of the background and key issues detailed in the report. With reference to external income, he explained that as would be expected, the Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the external income, including revenue received from the management agreement with Wyre Forest Leisure Centre. He added that, in general, income had recovered well, although not all commercial activity had returned to pre-pandemic levels.

In conclusion, the Cabinet Member advised that the council tax collection rate for 2022-2023 was 97.02%, which was in line with the previous year's. However collection rate for businesses was 97.99%; previous year's was 99.02%. He added that the difference was attributed to the difficulties faced by businesses.

The Leader of the Council seconded the proposals. He thanked the Head of Resources and s151 Officer, and her team for all their hard work, and particularly the revenues team in terms of the collection rate figures.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor N Martin, presented the recommendations from its meeting on 8 June 2023.

Decision: In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 8 June 2023:

1.1 The Cabinet NOTED:

1.1.1 The projected budget variations and comments within the report and appendices 1 to 6.

1.1.2 The performance against measures and actions as set out in the report and appendix 7.

CAB.08 Exclusion of Press and Public

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 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

CAB.09 Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) - Connectivity project

A report was considered from the Head of Economic Development &

Regeneration, North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) to agree how to proceed with the project in light of a significant projected funding gap.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and the Green Agenda presented the confidential report and formally moved the recommendations for approval.

The Cabinet Member gave a summary of the background and key issues detailed in the confidential report.

He outlined the rationale for proceeding with the project as envisaged. He explained that the project was designed to accelerate the attraction of the Town centre to drive investment and make it accessible for all residents. He added that not proceeding with the project may result in the authority losing over £2m of Government funding. Any delays would increase the cost of the project, and there was not enough time to redesign the scheme to reduce costs within the grant time lines.

The Leader seconded the proposals.

Decision: The Cabinet:

- 1.1 a) **RECOMMEND to Council that the 2023-24 capital programme allocation for Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) should be increased to the amount set out in the confidential report.**
- b) **RECOMMEND to Council that the funding for the increase in the capital programme for the FHSF should be as set out in paragraphs 5.3 and 5.5 of the confidential report.**
- c) **AGREED that the procurement for the construction contract for the FHSF connectivity project, estimated at the amount set out in the confidential report, should commence and APPROVED the evaluation criteria in Appendix 2;**
- d) **DELEGATED authority to award the construction contract to the Head of NWEDR in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and the Green Agenda, the Head of Resources and the Solicitor to the Council, but that no such contract may be awarded until after Council has approved the recommendations in respect of the increase in the capital programme for the FHSF and the funding arrangements for that.**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 6.35pm.