

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

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

19TH JULY 2023 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: C Rogers (Chairman), J F Byng (Vice-Chairman), J Aston, E Bourne, B Brookes, L Carroll, V Caulfield, G Connolly, N J Desmond, R Drew, P Dyke, K Gale, N Gale, J Griffiths, I Hardiman, P Harrison, M J Hart, K Henderson, D Little, M McDonnell, S Miah, D Morehead, F M Oborski MBE, T L Onslow, M Rayner, D Ross, D Russell, A Sutton, L Whitehouse, N Wilson and P W M Young.

C.75 Prayers

Prayers were said by Rev Nick Collison, Trinity Methodist Church, Foley Park.

Councillor T Onslow joined the meeting at 6.03pm

C.76 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: H E Dyke and N Martin.

C.77 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

C.78 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

C.79 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

C.80 Chairman's Communications

The Council received a list of functions attended by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman since the Council's last meeting.

C.81 Leader of the Council Announcements

Agenda Item No. 4

The Leader of the Council referred members to his tabled report. A copy of the announcements is available for viewing on the Council's website.

https://forms.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/council/docs/doc58772_20230719_council_report.pdf

Councillor N Desmond joined the meeting at 6.07pm.

C.82 Review of the May 2023 Elections

Council received a report from the Returning Officer for the District and Parish Elections on the local elections held on 4 May 2023.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Well-being presented the report. He gave a summary of the background and key issues as detailed in the report and formally moved the recommendation for approval. The Leader seconded the proposal.

A discussion ensued. The Returning Officer responded to the questions and points raised. He invited members to contact him if they had any outstanding questions which they felt had not been covered in the report, and he would ensure that those questions were answered.

On behalf of Council the Leader thanked the Returning Officer and his team for their hard work.

Decision: Council NOTED the report on the May 2023 elections.

Following a request from a member that they wished to discuss the confidential elements of the reports for agenda items 9 (a) and 9 (d), the Chairman announced a revised running order for the meeting:

Agenda items 9 (a) and 9 (d) would be taken first and item 9 (b) would follow in the open session. Agenda item 9 (c) had been withdrawn from the agenda.

C.83 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.

C.84 Policy and Budget Framework – Matters which require a decision by Council

(a) Recommendations from Cabinet 13 June 2023

- **Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) – Connectivity project**

The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and the Green

Agenda Item No. 4

Agenda presented the recommendations and formally moved them for approval. The Leader seconded the proposals.

In response to a member question, the Cabinet Member outlined the rationale for proceeding with the project as envisaged and gave a detailed summary of the financial implications and potential funding sources for the project.

Upon a vote, the proposals were agreed.

Decision: Council AGREED:

- 1.1 a) **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) **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.**

(d) Recommendations from Cabinet 17 July 2023

- **Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) project**

The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and the Green Agenda presented the recommendations and formally moved them for approval. The Leader seconded the proposals.

A discussion ensued. In response to a member question, the Cabinet Member gave a detailed summary of the financial implications and potential funding sources for the project as set out in the confidential Cabinet report.

The Leader acknowledged the frustration and concerns raised regarding the unforeseen matters that had come to light. However he was confident that, when the final project has been delivered, it would be a valuable asset to the Council.

Upon a vote, the proposals were agreed.

Decision: Council AGREED that the capital programme allocation for the Future High Streets Fund is amended to include an additional amount as set out in the confidential report, on the basis of the funding arrangements set out in section 5 of the confidential report.

At 7.09pm, Council reversed the decision to exclude the press and public. The remainder of the meeting was held in the open session.

(b) Recommendations from Cabinet 17 July 2023

- **Localism: Stourport Sports Club and Bewdley Museum**

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Well-being presented the recommendation in respect of Stourport Sports Club Ltd and formally moved it for approval.

The Leader seconded the proposal. A discussion ensued and a number of members spoke in support of the recommendation.

Upon a vote, the proposal was agreed.

Decision: Council AGREED that It should rescind its decision in the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2022-25 which involved exiting the Council's involvement in the Stourport Sports Club Limited.

C.85

Questions

One question had been submitted by a member of the council in accordance with standing orders.

Question from Councillor L Carroll to the Leader of the Council

Could the leader of the Council please inform members why his administration no longer deems it necessary to continue with the Green Advisory Panel?

Answer from Leader of the Council

This administration believes in delivery on the green agenda, on action and not words. Hence, we have given the green agenda responsibility within the Cabinet role of Councillor Dan Morehead. We want to spend more time delivering and we believe in action, not words.

Supplementary question

Does the Leader of the Council agree that a bit of cross-party involvement is crucial in such an important matter affecting every ward in our district, especially as what he once said 'no one party has a monopoly on green issues'?

Answer

Of course, no one party has the monopoly on good ideas, but of course one party, and I think we are the only party in the district to do so, stood and published a manifesto for our communities and our electorate. If there were other manifestos, they certainly did not pass their way across my desk and more importantly they did not find favour with the electorate. How many hours do you think were spent on talking about non-delivery? How many hours, how many meetings? Between July 2020 and April 2023 there were 26 meetings, averaging an hour and 13 minutes a meeting and at least five hours per month of preparation, pre and post meeting by officers. How many electric vehicle charging points did the Progressive Alliance deliver in

four years after 26 meetings? Not one. That is why there is no longer a Green Advisory Panel.

C.86 Motions Submitted under Standing Orders

No motions were received by the deadline.

C.87 Emergency Motions submitted under Standing Orders

There were no emergency motions.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7.18 pm.

The open part of the meeting is available for viewing on the Council's website

<https://wyreforestdc.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcasts>