

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

13 FEBRUARY 2024 (6PM)

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**Present:**

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

**Observers:**

Councillors: L Carroll and F M Oborski MBE.

Observed remotely: Councillors: H E Dyke and A Sutton.

**CAB.60 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

**CAB.61 Declarations of Interests by Members**

No declarations of interest were made.

**CAB.62 Minutes**

**Decision: The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on the 20 December 2023 and the minutes of the additional meeting held on the 16 January 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**CAB.63 Call Ins**

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

**CAB.64 Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

**CAB.65 Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

**CAB.66 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-2027 and Capital Strategy 2024-2034**

A report was considered from the Head of Resources that updated Cabinet on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2024-2027 and made recommendations to Council on the proposed budget decision. The report also sought approval of the Capital Strategy for 2024-2034 including prudential indicators which set limits for non-financial investments and to fulfil the key

requirements of the DLUHC Investment Guidance. As part of the overall approval sought the report of the Head of Resources in respect of statutory duties placed on Local Authority Chief Financial Officers in relation to budget setting and monitoring was considered.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio presented the report. He thanked the Head of Resources for the comprehensive and detailed report and formally moved the recommendations for approval.

The Cabinet Member gave a summary of the background and key issues detailed in the report. He explained that in December the Cabinet considered proposals for the budget strategy for 2024-2027 including the intrinsically linked Capital Strategy 2024-2034. He added that the final Local Government Finance Settlement was published on 5 February 2024 and the report provided an updated position and a proposed budget decision for Council to consider on 21 February 2024.

The Cabinet Member further explained that the responses to the budget consultation survey had been considered by the Strategic Review Panel in January and he thanked the Liberal Democrat Group for submitting a set of alternative budget proposals.

Councillor H Dyke left the meeting at 6.20pm

The Cabinet Member said that the MTFs contained the Cabinet's spending proposals. He explained that they had been revised following careful consideration of the budget consultation responses and alternative budget proposals. He added that the ten proposals demonstrated investment to deliver actions set out in the new corporate plan. He outlined each proposal in turn.

The Leader seconded the recommendations.

**Decision: The CABINET having re-considered the Financial Strategy 2024-2027, the results of the Budget consultation exercise, alternative budget proposals and recommendations of the Strategic Review Panel RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL that it:**

- 1.1 THREE YEAR BUDGET, CAPITAL STRATEGY AND POLICY FRAMEWORK 2024-2027**
- 1.1.1 APPROVES the updated Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2024-2027.**
- 1.1.2 APPROVES the Cabinet Proposals – taking into account the impact on the Council's Capital and Revenue Budgets for 2024-2027 as shown in the tables in paragraphs 6.1 and 6.3 and as set out below:**
  - a) provision of community leadership funding of £1,000 for each councillor across the period of the MTFs, at a cost of £33k in each year.**

- b) **delivering actions set out in the new corporate plan by increasing capacity in the Civil Enforcement team at a cost of £39k in the second year. This will provide funding for one additional enforcement post in 2025-26.**
- c) **delivering actions set out in the new corporate plan by increasing litter picking activity at a cost of £52k/£56k in 2024-25 and 2025-26.**
- d) **capital investment of £50k for accessible play equipment, which will have a revenue cost for the borrowing of £7.5k/year.**
- e) **a spend to save proposal to provide permanent capacity within the property team, at a cost of £116k/£120k/£123k to progress commercial rental income growth in line with the priority within the 2023-27 Corporate plan; cost of temporary agency resource is currently met from risk reserves; cost to be fully recouped from income growth from commercial rents.**
- f) **changes to the senior management structure to provide capacity for delivery of the priorities in the corporate plan, at a cost of up to £11k/£15k/£15k.**
- g) **introduction of free one hour parking at one car park in each of the three towns, Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm. This builds on the arrangements put in place in Bewdley in November as a consequence of the long-term traffic works. This is anticipated to cost £51k/£54k/£57k.**
- h) **to introduce web casting of meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Committee at a cost of £1k in each year to allow maximum access for the public and in order to be fully open and transparent.**
- i) **to explore and develop a commercial proposal to bring long term empty homes back into use to increase housing supply and help meet housing demand; and support an allocation from the Innovation Fund of up to £10k to fund the feasibility study.**
- j) **to hold a public engagement event with businesses, residents and stakeholders at Wyre Forest House for a State of the Area debate.**

**1.1.3 APPROVES the fees and charges in line with this Strategy, and the impact on the Council's Revenue Budget for 2024-2027, as shown in Appendix 3.**

**1.1.4 APPROVES the Council's updated Capital Strategy:**

- a) **Approval of the Capital Strategy 2024-2034 set out in Appendix 1 of the December Cabinet report and the updated, associated Quantitative 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 2023 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 2023-2024, 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 2023 as set out in the report.**
- 1.2 COUNCIL TAX AND BUSINESS RATES**
- 1.2.1 That Council Tax is increased by the higher limit specified by the Government of 3% and:**
- a. **SETS the Council Tax for Wyre Forest District Council on a Band D Property at £243.29 for 2024-2025 which represents an increase of 3% on Council Tax from 2023-2024.**
  - b. **ENDORSES the provisional Council Tax on a Band D Property in 2025-2026 of £250.58 and £258.09 in 2026-2027, 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 21st February 2024.**

**CAB.67 Wyre Forest District Council Local Development Scheme**

A report was considered from the Head of Strategic Growth that presented the updated Wyre Forest District Council Local Development Scheme (LDS).

The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and the Green Agenda presented the report. He gave a summary of the background and key issues detailed in the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval.

He explained that Local Planning Authorities were required to produce a LDS under Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011). He said the LDS must specify the documents which make up the Local Development Documents (LDDs) for the area.

The Cabinet Member added that for Wyre Forest the Development Plan Documents are the Local Plan and any Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). The LDS sets out the timetable for the production of the LDDs which will be produced by the authority over a three-year period (2023-2026).

In conclusion he said adoption of the LDS would meet the statutory requirement under the Act and it was necessary to introduce or update policy documents to reflect current national and local policy.

The Leader seconded the recommendations.

The Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor F Oborski MBE presented the recommendations from its meeting on 11 January 2024. She thanked the Officers for an excellent report.

**Decision: In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 11 January 2024:**

**The Cabinet AGREED the adoption of the revised Local Development Scheme.**

**CAB.68 Review of Statement of Community Involvement**

A report was considered from the Head of Strategic Growth that presented the draft Wyre Forest District Council Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and sought agreement that it be consulted upon.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and the Green

### Agenda Item No. 3

Agenda presented the report. He gave a summary of the background and key issues detailed in the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval.

He explained that the Council's first SCI was produced in May 2006 and updated in February 2013 as there had been a number of changes to planning policy and legislation. He said these were introduced through the Localism Act 2011 and the National Planning Policy Framework in March 2012. The SCI was partially updated in 2020 in response to updated government regulations (April 2020) as a result of the Covid-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic. He added that under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended), Local Authorities were required to review their SCI every 5 years.

The Cabinet Member further explained that although not formally required, it was considered good practice to go out to consultation and therefore it was proposed that a six week consultation period be held between 19 February and 2 April 2024. He added that following the consultation period, a final version of the revised SCI would be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a view to it being adopted by Cabinet in summer 2024.

The Leader seconded the recommendations.

Councillor F Oborski MBE presented the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 11 January 2024.

**Decision: In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 11 January 2024:**

**The Cabinet AGREED that a six week public consultation on the revised draft Statement of Community Involvement be undertaken.**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 6.34pm.

The meeting is available for viewing on the Council's website  
<https://wyreforestdc.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcasts>