

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL**

**THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC CENTRE, STOURPORT-ON-SEVERN**

**22ND OCTOBER 2009 (6 PM)**

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**Present for all or part of the meeting:**

Councillors: M Ahmed, J Aston, J Baker, G W Ballinger, A J Buckley, J-P Campion, N J Desmond, Mrs H E Dyke, P Dyke, G H Eeles, B T Glass, D R Godwin, Mrs J Greener, P B Harrison, M J Hart, Mrs S M Hayward, M A W Hazlewood, Mrs A T Hingley, J Holden, M B Kelly, H J Martin, Miss S C Meekings, D J Millis, C D Nicholls, Mrs F M Oborski, Mrs T L Onslow, J W Parish, M Price, K H Prosser, M A Salter, M J Shellie, D R Sheppard, K J Stokes, J Thomas, S J Williams and G C Yarranton.

**C.69 Minute's Silence and Prayers**

The meeting commenced with a minute's silence in memory of the late Councillor Mike Partridge. This was followed by prayers read by the Reverend Peter Hesketh, Catholic Deacon in the Stourport Area.

Councillor Campion led the tributes to Councillor Partridge, acknowledging his individual character and positive approach for life, his love of Stourport and his dedication for those he served in his Ward.

The tributes continued with eulogies from Councillors H J Martin, M J Kelly, Mrs H E Dyke and Mrs F M Oborski, all of whom praised his dedication for the people of Stourport and community spirit. All Members remembered fondly his sense of humour and cheerfulness and acknowledged his loss to the Council and community.

**C.70 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs R Akathiotis, S J M Clee, Mrs P V Hayward, J Phillips and N J Thomas.

**C.71 Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

**C.72 Minutes**

**Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 30th September 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the amendment of minute C.58 and the reply from Councillor Desmond to Councillor Ballinger. To amend the sentence 'We are sixth and Malvern seventh' to 'We are fifth and Malvern sixth.'**

**C.73**

**Public Participation**

No one had registered to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

**C.74**

**Questions**

The Council received a report setting out a range of questions from Councillor G W Ballinger and Councillor Mrs F M Oborski, directed at the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members, as detailed below:

**Question from Councillor G W Ballinger**

Would the Leader inform Members of the process concerning the checking of Members expense claims from the time this administration took control of Wyre Forest District Council in 2004 up to the present time and as a result, have there been any requests for Members to repay any amounts which they had previously over claimed?

**Reply from Councillor Campion**

Members complete and return forms to the payroll office, these are checked against the attendance list for meetings and also against the diaries for Directors and Outside Bodies where they represent the authority. I am not aware of any expenses being required to be returned by any District Council Officer but I am aware of a joint investigation with Worcestershire County Council which has resulted in some of the expense claimed in error being repaid, for which the Council has had returned £51.

**Supplementary Question from Councillor G W Ballinger**

When will the Leader take a lead and advice and look at these issues as the public want to know? Or at least the matter should be referred to the Ethics and Standards Committee.

**Reply from Councillor Campion**

At the end of the day, on all the sides none of us are perfect; mistakes can happen and as long as we have the appropriate systems, mistakes can be rectified. We have an independent Ethics and Standards Committee over which we don't hold sway and it is up to them to decide if rules have been broken, and if they have been broken they will be dealt with appropriately.

**Question from Councillor Mrs F M Oborski**

According to the Kidderminster Shuttle, Disability Action Wyre Forest believes that the Council may not have carried out the proper procedures when changing the hours of operation of the Bus Pass Scheme because:

"The council has a legal duty as a local authority through its own disability equality scheme to undertake an equality impact assessment when changing policy or service that would impact on disabled people. Disability Action Wyre Forest has contacted the Equality and Human Rights Commission for advice and has written to the District Council for details of its equality impact assessment on this issue."

Could the Cabinet Member give me an assurance that all proper procedures were indeed carried out?

**Reply from Councillor Desmond**

I can confirm that all the proper procedures were duly followed.

**Supplementary Question from Councillor Mrs F M Oborski**

Can I look forward to seeing a statement to that effect in the Shuttle as the public are concerned about its handling?

**Reply from Councillor Desmond**

I am happy to look into that.

**Question from Councillor Mrs F M Oborski**

Residents in Worcester City have been informed that, within the opening of the Envirosort facility at Norton; from January 2010 they will be able to place all recyclable plastics, cardboard and Tetra Paks in their kerbside recycling bins. Could the Cabinet Member assure me that the same facilities will also be available for Wyre Forest Residents?

**Reply from Councillor Desmond**

The short answer is that the Chamber will be advised of the finalised decision in due course and a paper will be presented setting out our strategy.

**Supplementary Question Councillor Mrs F M Oborski**

I understand that we are the collecting authority and the County Council are responsible for disposal. So if Norton can dispose for the rest of the County am I honestly being told that they won't dispose for Wyre Forest?

**Reply from Councillor Desmond**

Everything will be explained in a paper to Cabinet in November and Council in December and a clear strategy will be shown.

**C.75**

**Chairman's Communications**

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

The Chairman announced that his Halloween Charity Dinner Dance had been cancelled; however details of a wine and cheese function would be circulated shortly where the prizes that have been donated could be won. Moreover any monies that had been donated for the Charity Dinner Dance would be sent to the Chairman's designated charity.

**C.76**

**Leader's Announcements and Report**

The Leader of the Council confirmed that he had no announcements to make.

**C.77**

**Recommendations from the Appointment and Appeals Committee 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> October 2009**

The Council received a report (copies of which were tabled) on the appointment of a new Chief Executive.

The Leader of the Council introduced the report and recommended Mr Ian Miller to be appointed as the new Chief Executive. Members were

advised of the rigorous process that had been undertaken the calibre of the candidates, and he concluded that Mr Ian Miller stood out as an exceptional candidate who had the qualities needed to move the Council forward.

The Leader expressed his grateful thanks for the support he had received from the Interim Chief Executive during the selection process

The appointment was seconded by Councillor Hart, who fully endorsed the comments of the Leader of the Council concluding that this was an excellent appointment and that he believed Mr Ian Miller was the right choice to lead the Council through future challenges.

Councillor G W Ballinger, C D Nicholls and H J Martin all supported the recommendation and agreed that Mr Ian Miller was the best candidate and the Council would benefit from his appointment.

**Decision: Mr Ian Miller be appointed as the Chief Executive of Wyre Forest District Council.**

At this point in the meeting Mr Ian Miller was invited to join Members and he took the opportunity to introduce himself to the Chamber, stating that he was looking forward to joining the Wyre Forest District Council.

**C.78 Recommendations from the Audit Committee 28<sup>th</sup> September 2009**

The Council considered a report from the Director of Resources, which recommended alterations to the Committee's Terms of Reference, in light of feedback from the Audit Commission.

**Decision: The proposed Terms of Reference (as specified in Appendix 1 to the original report to the Audit Committee) be adopted.**

**C.79 Motions Submitted Under Standing Order No. D1 (1)**

Council received a motion submitted by Councillor John-Paul Campion regarding Members expenses claim forms

Members were advised that the motion has been tabled following a similar one submitted by Worcestershire County Council. A lengthy discussion ensued and Councillor Campion agreed to amend the motion to include the suggestion that if a member claimed no expenses, the figure "0" would be put against their name.

There was unanimous support from each of the political groups for this motion, although it was noted that not all Members claimed their expenses.

**Decision:**

- 1. That all expenses claim forms from Members be published on the Council's website in full with only the personal information redacted such as signature and car registration numbers. A nought be put against the names of those members who claimed no expenses.**
- 2. That the system of the publication of Councillors allowances and expenses be reviewed by the Ethics and Standards Committee in due course.**

**C.80**

**Urgent Motions Submitted Under Standing Order No. D1 (7)**

No notices of motion were received in accordance with Standing Order D1(1).

**There being no further business the meeting ended at 18:54**