

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC CENTRE STOURPORT - ON - SEVERN

30TH NOVEMBER 2011 (6.00 PM)

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**Present:**

Councillors: J Aston, J Baker, G Ballinger, R Bishop, A Buckley, J-P Campion, S Clee, N Desmond, H Dyke, P Dyke, B Glass, D Godwin, J Greener, I Hardiman, P Harrison, J Hart, M Hart, P Hayward, A Hingley, J Holden, T Ingham, D McCann, F Oborski, T Onslow, J Parish, J Phillips, M Price, K Prosser, C Rogers, M Salter, N Thomas, S Williams, and G Yarranton.

Before the meeting commenced the Chairman asked that Council observe a minutes silence to commemorate Gilbert Edwards, a former Leader and Chairman of the Council.

**C.53 Prayers**

Prayers were said by Pastor Dudley Anderson of Cornerstone Family Church.

**C.54 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: M Ahmed, N Gale, V Higgs, M Kelly, H Martin, C Nicholls, A Sewell, J Shaw, and D Sheppard.

**C.55 Declaration of Interests**

Declarations of interest were received from

- Councillor F Oborski declared a personal interest as a Member of the Friends of St George's Park.
- Councillor H Dyke declared a personal interest as the Chairman of the Community Safety Partnership.

**C.56 Minute's**

**Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 28th September 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**C.57 Public Participation**

No members of the public wished to address the Council in accordance with the Council's scheme of public participation at meetings of Full Council.

**C.58 Questions**

The Council received a report setting out a range of questions from Councillors Ballinger and Shaw, directed to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members.

**Question 1 from Councillor G Ballinger to Councillor T Onslow, Cabinet Member for Community Well-Being.**

#### **Agenda Item No. 4**

What is the latest prediction for the already delayed, opening date for the newly built Wyre Forest Cemetery and Crematorium?

**Answer from Councillor T Onslow.**

16<sup>th</sup> December.

**Supplementary question for Councillor G Ballinger.**

Given these delays, was this not an opportunity to introduce a roundabout by the new offices that would consider the dignity of the mourners, therefore avoiding the need to having to do a u-turn on the industrial estate? Further why was the boundary sign by the cemetery entrance recently removed?

**Answer from Councillor T Onslow.**

I cannot comment on the roundabout as it is an issue for County Council Highways, and the issue regarding the entrance has not been raised by the undertakers. I cannot comment on the sign.

**Question 2 from Councillor G Ballinger to Councillor M Hart, Cabinet Member for Environmental Services.**

How much incentive was on offer from Central Government for this Authority to opt to return to weekly refuse collections and what were the restrictions?

**Answer from Councillor M Hart.**

There was no cash incentive to this Authority, as the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) allocated the £250m pot for the whole of the country.

**Supplementary question for Councillor G Ballinger.**

Given the publicity surrounding the notice that this money was available, I was surprised to see a statement from the Cabinet Member some 10 days before the Waste Management Review Panel. This Panel had its first meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> October, by which time Councillor Hart said this Council would not be participating. What due consideration was given to Members that this Council was not participating, given it was 10 days after the press statement.

**Answer from Councillor M Hart.**

The Waste Review Panel was looking at medical waste and a 4 day collection. It was never the intention of the Panel to look at the Government announcement and see if this Council would revert to a weekly collection. This is two different issues and it is wholly confusing and misleading to lump these two issues together.

**Question 3 from Councillor G Ballinger to Councillor T Onslow, Cabinet Member for Community Well-Being.**

Is this Council aware of any similar schemes within Worcestershire, where the Local Authority is involved in support 'friends of...' local parks and spaces initiatives, such as those at St George's Park, Baxter Gardens and Springfield Park?

**Answer from Councillor T Onslow.**

Yes, there are similar schemes across other Worcestershire District Councils - Redditch Council work with Friends of Morton Stanley Park, Friends of Wirehill Woods and Friends of Southcrest Woods. Bromsgrove work with Friends of Sanders Park and Worcester with Friends of Gheluvelt Park. There are two councils that do not - Malvern and Wychavon.

**Supplementary question for Councillor G Ballinger.**

This is good news given the good track record of the Friends of the Parks. It was therefore surprising to know that recent publicity regarding work at Northcote Lane received adverse comments in the press, and comments were made at the Planning Committee regarding the use of land on the power station site for play activities. Has the Cabinet member lost control of the Parks Department?

**Answer from Councillor T Onslow.**

Consultation meetings had been held with Bewdley Town Council on 25th September, and letters had been written to residents and posters put up on site. No work is due to commence until March and further consultation will be undertaken. I have not lost control of Parks Department.

**Question 4 from Councillor G Ballinger to Councillor J Phillips, Cabinet Member for Place-Shaping.**

How many properties are scheduled to be built on the Wyre Forest District Council area by Wyre Forest Community Housing or other similar and named agencies, during the remainder of the year 2011/12 and then in the financial year 2012/13?

**Answer from Councillor J Phillips.**

I take this as homes built by registered social landlords, being similar to Wyre Forest Community Housing Group. Currently the programme looks like this. There are 76 to be built in 2011/12 and up to 96 in 2012/13.

There was no supplementary Question from Councillor G Ballinger.

Due to the absence of Councillor Shaw, Cabinet Members were asked to formally write to Councillor Shaw and to send copies of the responses to the Democratic Services team so that the answers could be shared with all Members.

**C.59 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 thanked Members for bringing the groceries that would be circulated by Franche Community Church on behalf of Nightstop. He reminded them that they had until Monday should they wish to bring additional donations. The Chairman also reminded Members of the Scout Post and that a post box was in the Civic Centre foyer and also at the Hub in Kidderminster.

**C.60 Leader's Announcements and Report**

The Leader of the Council made the following announcements:

#### **Agenda Item No. 4**

The Council was successful in the Icelandic Supreme Court in upholding the Council's "priority" status on the Landsbanki investment. The Council had joined with all other UK local authorities and other public sector depositors in the further and final challenge that had been made by commercial bond holders to the Council's status. Success in this area now meant that the Council was likely to recover between 95 to 98% of the original deposit and interest. However, it was not possible to be more precise on the final settlement due to issues such as foreign exchange rates.

Moreover, following the Court's announcement, the solicitors acting on behalf of the Council have continued to work with the Winding Up Board for Landsbanki to establish individual settlement agreements with each local authority affected. Members were advised that as soon as the discussions were complete it would clear the way for the first dividend payments to be made. However, the exact timing of these payments had not yet been confirmed, although there remained every possibility that the first payment, in excess of 25% of the original deposit, would be back in the Council's accounts by Christmas.

In addition, good progress continued to be made in relation to the recovery of the investments with the Heritable and Kaupthing Singer and Friedlander with regular dividend payments still being received. The Council had received just over £3.8m in dividends from these two investments, with further payments expected in the New Year. Members were advised that should further information emerge in relation to the recovery of these investments then all members would be briefed accordingly.

Members were advised that the report by MLA and the Arts Council Survey of arts in the West Midlands showed that Bewdley Museum was 14<sup>th</sup> on the list of those attractions that received 100,000 visits. The Museum has reported that it has received 126,262 visitors, and was on course this year to have received over 140,000 visitors. Further, it was the only district run museum to make the list and the 6<sup>th</sup> most popular local authority museum. It was noted that the museum was a value for money organisation that contributed to the local economy and the staff and volunteers that support the Museum should be congratulated for their endeavours.

Members were informed that there had been a failure in the Christmas lighting that was due to be displayed in Kidderminster. Council was reassured that new lights had been secured and these would be installed during the following week.

Members were advised that the Council had maintained core services despite the strike and only a small percentage of the workforce had taken strike action. Members were advised that there had been an impact on the recycling service; however information was available on the website for collections missed due to strike action.

#### **C.61 Policy And Budget Framework – Matters which require a decision by Council**

#### **Recommendations from the Cabinet meeting – 18<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

**Review of Safeguarding Policy**

Council received a report from the Director of Community and Partnerships on the update of the Safeguarding Policy for Children, Young People and Adults. Members were advised that the main changes included clarification of who should have Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks, and updating the policy so that it included children and young adults and also vulnerable adults.

In response to a question about training, Members were advised that appropriate training would be given to all relevant staff.

**Decision**

- 1. Paragraph 4.8 of the safeguarding policy be adopted.**
- 2. The constitution and Employee Code of Conduct be amended as outlined in paragraph 4.8 of the report to Cabinet.**

**Recommendations from the Cabinet meeting – 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2011**

**Review of the current arrangements for the collection of waste and recycling**

Council received a report from the Director of Resources regarding the review of the current arrangements for the collection of waste and recycling. Members were advised that the Council was required to reduce the current costs of the Refuse and Recycling Service.

The Cabinet Member for Resources thanked Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their review and asked Council to note that whilst the working week would change to 4 days, the staff would still be working 37 hours, and that oral consent to the changes had been received from the workforce. Moreover it was envisaged that the changes would commence Spring 2012.

**Decision**

- 1. The amendment of the terms and conditions of the staff within the Waste and Recycling Service in respect of the introduction of a 4 day working week be supported.**
- 2. On the grounds of improvements to the environment and the cost savings it would generate, the frequency of the collection of medical waste be amended to fortnightly, with additional capacity if required.**

**Community Safety Partnership Future Arrangements**

The Council received a report from the Director of Community Partnerships that sought approval for Wyre Forest District Council Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to amalgamate with North Worcester Partners, namely Redditch and Bromsgrove to form a North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership.

Members were advised that this arrangement would not impact on the funding or staffing of the CSP and that focus would remain on local delivery.

**Decision: That Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and Wyre Forest District Council (as the responsible authority) agrees to the restructuring of the current CSP arrangements into one CSP for North Worcestershire, by merging with Redditch and Bromsgrove CSP's.**

**C.62 Senior Management Structure**

Council received a report from the Chief Executive on the process to be adopted consequent upon the resignation of the Director of Resources. Members were advised that the Director would be leaving the authority at the end of February 2012, but this would be after the Budget was presented to Council.

**Decision: The process as set out in paragraph 4.2 of the report to Council be adopted.**

**C.63 Constitutional Amendments**

Council received a report from the Director of Legal and Corporate Services that asked Council to agree amendments to the Constitution regarding the use of photographic, video and sound recording equipment and the use of ICT in meetings.

**Decision: The amendments as set out in Appendix A of the report to Council be adopted.**

**C.64 Motions Submitted Under Standing Orders**

No notices of motion were received in accordance with Standings

**C.65 Urgent Motions Submitted Under Standing Orders**

No notices of motion were received in accordance with Standing Orders.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 18.27