

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

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

22ND FEBRUARY 2017 (6 PM)

Present:

Councillors: R Bishop (Chairman), D Little (Vice-Chairman), J Aston, J Baker, J-P Champion, S J Chambers, S J M Clee, J R Desmond, N J Desmond, H E Dyke, P Dyke, S E Fearn, N Gale, I Hardiman, J A Hart, M J Hart, K Henderson, V Higgs, A T Hingley, N Knowles, N Martin, S Miah, F M Oborski MBE, T L Onslow, M Rayner, C Rogers, J A Shaw, J D Smith, R J Vale, S J Walker, S J Williams and G C Yarranton.

C.62 Prayers

Prayers were said by Dr John Jenkins, Elder, Offmore Evangelical Church.

C.63 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R Wilson.

C.64 Declarations of Interests by Members

Councillor J-P Champion declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) in Agenda Item 13 Council Tax 2017-18, which sought to approve the formal resolution for setting the Council Tax for 2017-18. As this included the precepts by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia in his capacity as the Police and Crime Commissioner, he would leave the room whilst the agenda item was discussed.

Councillor T Onslow declared a DPI in Agenda Item 13, Council Tax 2017-18, as she was employed by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia and would leave the room whilst the agenda item was discussed.

C.65 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 14th December 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

C.66 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

C.67 Questions

There were no questions to Council.

C.68 Chairman's Communications

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

C.69 Leader of the Council Announcements

The Leader of the Council referred Members to his tabled report.

C.70 Motions Submitted Under Standing Orders.

Two motions were received in accordance with Standing Orders (Section 7,4.1).

1) Motion from the Conservative Group on Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust.

The Leader of the Council presented the motion and commented that he recognised that health services were an important and emotive issue for Wyre Forest residents and hoped for unanimity in voting in favour of the motion. He drew Members' attention to an amendment to the motion at the request of the Independent and Liberal Democrat Group which he was happy to incorporate.

A full and robust debate on the amended motion took place. A number of Councillors praised the superb work of nursing staff at the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals and welcomed the Consultation. A number of Councillors referred to the mention of Mark Garnier MP in the motion, with one Member saying that he could not support the motion for that reason.

Upon a vote the amended motion was agreed.

Decision: The following motion from the Conservative Group on Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust be agreed:

This Council notes the Consultation launched in respect of the Future of Acute Services and welcomes the fact that this Consultation, which is long overdue, is now underway.

This Council welcomes that the Kidderminster site is to be retained and planned procedures are to continue to take place and would encourage further activity to ensure that this asset is utilised to its full potential to the benefit of local patients.

This Council supports the continued provision of services from the Kidderminster site and the retention of the minor injuries unit.

This Council expresses deep concern at the current state of the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust, in particular regarding Accident and Emergency at the Worcestershire Royal Site.

This Council notes under the current Consultation, there are proposed changes to provision at the Alexandra Accident and Emergency site in Redditch, and that this will inevitably increase activity on the Worcester Royal site and urges the Trust to ensure that it has adequate capacity to ensure that the Worcester Royal can cope with this and thus ensuring that Wyre Forest residents are not affected by this change.

Council is however concerned that, as presently constituted the Sustainability and Transformation Plan for Herefordshire and Worcestershire would see in the period to 2021, Acute beds in Worcestershire decrease by 3 beds whilst Community Beds would be cut from 324 to 182, a reduction of 44%.

Council is concerned that any such reduction could potentially see more delayed discharges from the Worcester Royal Hospital, thus increasing pressures on the Acute Trust.

This Council supports Mark Garnier MP's work in lobbying hard on behalf of Wyre Forest residents to raise his concerns with the Secretary of State and requests that he continues to do so in the strongest possible terms to ensure that the trust is effectively run and managed.

This Council resolves to write to the new Chairman and Chief Executive of the Trust to invite them to give a presentation to this Council as a matter of urgency.

This Council resolves to request the Chief Executive to write on behalf of WFDC and support the clinical model as having considered the consultation document this best supports the needs of Wyre Forest residents as it is essential that we have a safe, sustainable and fit for purpose Health Service.

2) Motion from the Conservative Group in respect of the Governance Structure at Wyre Forest District Council

The Leader of the Council presented the Motion and reaffirmed the administration's commitment to the current model of governance adopted by Wyre Forest District Council which allowed for the Cabinet style governance and the Strong Leader model. He highlighted the importance of the value and contribution of all 33 elected Members, who played a vital role in decision making and emphasised that the current model was

entirely fit for purpose.

A lengthy and robust debate ensued. A number of Members referred to the governance structure in previous years when there were 2 Overview and Scrutiny Committees. One Member referred to the Strong Leader model, and suggested that important decisions should be debated on by the full Council and not decided on by an administration.

Councillor N Martin entered the meeting at 6.58 pm.

The Leader of the Council responded to Members' comments. He confirmed that all Members were encouraged to debate issues in a democratic way and were included in all important matters. He further added that Overview and Scrutiny meetings had been known to be cancelled due to lack of business, but the administration welcomed scrutiny. He added that the system of governance was fair, open and transparent.

Upon a vote, the motion was agreed:

Decision: The following motion from the Conservative Group in respect of the Governance Structure at Wyre Forest District Council be agreed:

This Council wholeheartedly supports the current structure of Governance adopted by Wyre Forest District Council.

As a result of the Local Government Act 2000, the Cabinet style system was adopted by this Council on 18 June 2001 with effect from 1 September 2001.

This Council adopted the strong leader model on 1 December 2010 as a result of the 2000 Act as amended by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

This Council values the work and contribution of all 33 elected members.

This Council acknowledges the ways in which all elected members play an active part in decision-making as the revenue budget, council tax and capital programme, local plan, other strategic policies relating to planning and licensing and a range of issues relating to elections and civic matters are decisions reserved for Full Council, where all members have the opportunity to speak and vote and such votes are by majority decision.

This Council acknowledges and values the opportunities afforded at meetings of full Council for any Councillor to propose a motion or ask a question; and for members of the public to address Councillors or present a petition.

This Council acknowledges that decisions of a regulatory nature are taken by the Planning Committee and Licensing Committee and they are politically proportioned allowing cross party representation on these Committees.

The Council acknowledges the independence of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the work and decisions of the Executive and supports the Leader's decision to recommend to Council that the chairmanship and vice-chairmanship of this committee are drawn from councillors who are not members of the administration.

This Council rejects any assertion that the current structure is undemocratic and that a return to a Committee style of Governance would be more democratic or better serve the electorate; and believes that such a change would be an unnecessary and costly distraction.

C.71 Urgent Motions Submitted Under Standing Orders.

There were no urgent motions.

C.72 Policy and Budget Framework.

a) Recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 2nd February 2017

Treasury Management Report for 2017/18

Decision:

- 1. The restated Prudential Indicators and Limits for the financial years 2017-18 to 2019-20 included in Appendix 3 of the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be approved. These have been revised, as per paragraph 7.3 of the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, following any changes to the Capital Programme brought about as part of the budget process.**
- 2. The updated Treasury Management and Investment Policy and Strategy Statements for the period 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018 (the associated Prudential Indicators are included in Appendix 3 and the detailed criteria is included in Section 10 and Appendix 5 of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee) be approved.**
- 3. The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement that sets out the Council's policy on MRP included in Appendix 1 of the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be approved.**

4. The Authorised Limit Prudential Indicator included in Appendix 3 of the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be approved.

The Chair of Treasury Management Committee thanked those who attended the Treasury Management training session and urged other Members to attend. She thanked the Council's Officers for their excellent work.

b) Recommendations from the Licensing and Environmental Committee, Monday 6th February 2017.

- **Review of Fees and Charges for the Council's Licensing and Regulatory Services Function 2017/18**

Decision: The proposals for fees and charges within the Council's Licensing, Food, Health, Safety and Pollution Control functions for 2017/18, as detailed in the report to the Licensing and Environmental Committee be included in the Council's 2017/18 budget strategy.

C.73 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017-20

A report was considered from the Chief Financial Officer which updated Council on the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017-20, having considered the proposed decision and budget reports recommended to Council by Cabinet on 7th February 2017 including:

- Base Budget Projections 2017-20
- Capital Programme
- Cabinet Proposals
- Fees and Charges
- Report of the Chief Financial Officer in respect of Sections 25-28 Local Government Act 2003
- Efficiency Plan

The Cabinet Member for Resources led Members through the report and explained that it set out a robust and balanced budget for future spending and direction over the next 3 years, with bold ideas to grow income for the Council and supported regeneration, housing and economic growth.

He added that the Council would face financial challenges and the reduction in £600,000 in New Homes Bonus monies meant that the Council would have to seek new ways of generating income. He highlighted the Council's excellent track record in generating income to protect front line services, having successfully grown income to 33% of net revenue budget over the last 4 years. He confirmed that the administration were happy to take on board the Labour Group's amendment to consider the Wealden District Council model for investment, which looked at housing growth through an arm's length trading company.

Agenda Item No. 11

The Cabinet Member for Resources further explained that up to £35 million would be borrowed, £10 million for Loans to Third Parties and up to £25 million to create a portfolio fund, expenditure of which would be considered on individual business cases. He added that the budget also contained proposals for the first stage of investment at the Green Street Depot site, and to raise fees and charges by an average of approximately 5% which meant that Council Tax could continue to be frozen.

Councillor P Dyke left the meeting at 7.24pm and returned at 7.26 pm.

Councillor Oborski presented an amendment to the Budget Proposals on behalf of the Independent and Liberal Democrat Group, which sought to divert £500,000 from the Worcester Street project to facilitate a cleared site for marketing and redevelopment of Crown House, increased staffing in Civil Enforcement teams and reviewed the content of the previous Master Plan for Stourport Riverside to inform an updated Plan.

Councillor J Desmond left the meeting at 7.45 pm and returned at 7.48 pm.

A lengthy debate ensued. The Cabinet Member for Resources acknowledged that there were broad similarities between the proposals of the administration and those of the Independent and Liberal Democrat Group, although the proposals for Crown House were fundamentally different. He confirmed that, although both parties would like to see the building demolished, it would not be economically viable to do so and hence the priority lay with the redevelopment of Worcester Street.

The Leader of the Council thanked the Independent and Liberal Democrat Group for their alternative budget and added that it was a shining example of how all Members can have their say. He confirmed that the administration did not intend to propose a huge increase in Council Tax and added that the Government imposed a maximum increase of 2% or £5, whichever was greater, thus there would be no sharp increase in Council Tax payments at the end of the freeze. He acknowledged that the public wanted Crown House demolished but this should not be at the taxpayers' expense. He confirmed that £0.5 million had already been allocated to the Worcester Street Development, and Worcestershire County Council had allocated another £0.5 million and Wyre Forest District Council would not want to lose that fundamental and vital scheme.

A named vote on the Independent and Liberal Democrat Group amendment was recorded as follows and the amendment was defeated:

For: (5)

Councillors: J Aston, H Dyke, P Dyke, S Miah and F Oborski.

Against (27)

Councillors: J Baker, R Bishop J-P Champion, S J Chambers, S J M Clee,

Agenda Item No. 11

J R Desmond, N J Desmond, S E Fearn, N Gale, I Hardiman, J A Hart, M J Hart, K Henderson, V Higgs, A T Hingley, N Knowles, D Little, N Martin, T L Onslow, M Rayner, C Rogers, J A Shaw, J D Smith, R J Vale, S J Walker, S J Williams and G C Yarranton.

Councillors N Gale and G Yarranton left the meeting at 8.23 pm and returned at 8.25 pm

The Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Protection referred Members to the substantive report and commented that it was a bold plan and a plan for the future. She added that it was pleasing to see money earmarked for Brinton Park and the Community Leadership Fund as over 100 local projects and groups had been helped by the fund.

Councillor R Vale left the meeting at 8.25 pm and returned at 8.27 pm.
Councillor J Baker left the meeting at 8.27 pm and returned at 8.28 pm
Councillor S Fearn left the meeting at 8.27 pm and returned at 8.29 pm.

The Leader of the Council stated that the proposals were a budget for growth and sustainability for the future of the residents of Wyre Forest.

A named vote on the substantive budget proposal was recorded as follows and was agreed.

For (23)

Councillors: J Baker, R Bishop, J-P Campion, S J Chambers, S J M Clee, J R Desmond, N J Desmond, S E Fearn, N Gale, I Hardiman, J A Hart, M J Hart, K Henderson, A T Hingley, D Little, N Martin, T L Onslow, M Rayner, C Rogers, J D Smith, R J Vale, S J Williams and G C Yarranton.

Against (5)

Councillors: J Aston, H Dyke, P Dyke, S Miah and F Oborski

Abstained (4)

Councillors: V Higgs, N Knowles, J Shaw and S Walker.

Decision:

1. THREE YEAR BUDGET, CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND POLICY FRAMEWORK 2017-20

- 1.1 The updated Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017-20 be approved.**
- 1.2 The Cabinet Proposals – taking into account the impact on the Council’s Capital and Revenue Budgets for 2017-20 as shown in Appendix 3 of the report to Council**

be approved, including:

- a) **The new Council Policy on Loans to Third Parties to support our corporate priority of regeneration and economic development as set out in Appendix 3/1 of the December report.;**
- b) **The new Council Policy to create a Capital Portfolio Fund to support our corporate priority of regeneration and economic development and to create a net revenue income stream as set out in Appendix 3/2 of the December report to Cabinet.**

The approval of both in-principle decisions on a) Policy on Loans to Third Parties and b) Policy to create a Capital Portfolio Fund includes:

- i) **An initial allocation of £10m to support progression of the policy on Loans to Third Parties and £25m to support progression of the policy of a Capital Portfolio Fund is made to the capital programme in 2017-18, this being a maximum sum in both cases. Expenditure will be subject to specific approval of the business case for each proposal by the Cabinet following consideration by Overview and Scrutiny Committee and due diligence.**
 - ii) **The financing of such expenditure be delegated to the Chief Financial Officer and that requisite amendments are made to the revenue budget to reflect potential financing costs (likely to be PWLB loan finance) and income streams to support the initial capital allocation in a) and b) above.**
 - iii) **Subject to this approval, delegation is given to the Chief Financial Officer to make the requisite updates to the Financial Regulations and Treasury Management Service Strategy (TMSS) in due course.**
- 1.3 The fees and charges in line with this Strategy and the impact on the Council's Revenue Budget for 2017-20, as shown in Appendix 4 of the report to Council, be approved.**
- 1.4 The Capital Programme and Vehicle, Equipment and Systems Renewal Schedule as set out in Appendix 2, Parts 1 and 2 of the report to Council, be approved.**
- 1.5 Any Final Accounts savings arising from 2016-20 over and above the target allowed for in the Council's Financial Strategy, together with surplus Earmarked**

Reserves, be allocated by the Chief Financial Officer in consultation with the Leader be approved.

- 1.6 The Efficiency Strategy 2017-20 as set out in Appendix 6 of the report to Council be approved.
- 1.7 The General Fund Revenue Budget including all updates from the position in December 2016 and 7th February 2017 as set out in the report to Council be approved. .

2.1 COUNCIL TAX

- 2.1.1 The Council Tax for Wyre Forest District Council on a Band D Property at £205.36 for 2017-18 (£205.36 2016-17) which represents a freeze on Council Tax from 2016-17 be set
- 2.1.2 The provisional Council Tax on a Band D Property in 2018-19 of £209.34 and £213.40 in 2019-20, being an increase of 1.94 % in both years be endorsed.
- 2.1.3 The Chief Financial Officer's opinion on the budget proposals, recommended by the Cabinet in the report to, as detailed in Appendix 5 of this report be noted.

Councillors J-P Campion and T Onslow left the meeting at 8.48 pm

C.74 Council Tax 2017-18

Council considered the formal resolution for setting the Council Tax for 2017-18. The amount of Council Tax depends on the budget proposal recommendations from Cabinet to Council on 7th February 2017 which includes the precepts by Worcestershire County Council, The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia and Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority.

A named vote on the Council Tax resolution was recorded as follows and was agreed:

For: (30)

Councillors: J Aston, J Baker, R Bishop, S J Chambers, S J M Clee, J R Desmond, N J Desmond, H E Dyke, P Dyke, S E Fearn, N Gale, I Hardiman, J A Hart, M J Hart, K Henderson, V Higgs, A T Hingley, N Knowles, D Little, N Martin, S Miah, F M Oborski MBE, M Rayner, C Rogers, J A Shaw, J D Smith, R J Vale, S J Walker, S J Williams and G C Yarranton.

Decision: The formal Council Tax Resolution 2017-18 at Appendix 1 of the report to Council, taking into account information contained in Appendices 2 to 5 of the report to Council, be approved.

Councillors J-P Campion and T Onslow returned to the meeting at 8.51 pm

C.75 Community Governance Review – Stourport-on-Severn

A report was considered from the Chief Executive on the results from Stage 1 of the Community Governance Review for Stourport on Severn.

The Cabinet Member for Resources referred Members to the report and advised of the recommendations that the number of Stourport - on -Severn Town councillors for the North and Stour & Wilden wards would be changed to four for each ward, and would take effect from May 2019. He added that this was a sensible option which produced a more even distribution of electors to Councillors across the wards.

Decision:

- 1.1 Following feedback from Stage 1 of the Community Governance Review for Stourport-on-Severn, the number of Stourport-on-Severn Town Councillors for the North and Stour & Wilden wards should be changed to four for each ward, which would take effect from May 2019.**
- 1.2 Subject to obtaining the formal consent of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to the recommendation in paragraph 2.1 of the report to Council, an order should be made under section 86(2) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to give effect to the outcome of the review, with delegated authority for the Solicitor to the Council to prepare the order and arrange for its sealing.**

C.76 Annual Report of the Chief Executive

Members received the Annual Report of the Chief Executive.

Decision: The Annual Report of the Chief Executive be noted.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 8.56 p.m.