

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**CIVIC HALL, NEW STREET, STOURPORT-ON-SEVERN**

**31ST JANUARY 2012 (6.00 PM)**

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**Present:**

Councillors: J-P Campion, N J Desmond, T L Onslow and J Phillips.

**Observers:**

Councillors: G W Ballinger, H E Dyke, I Hardiman, C D Nicholls, F M Oborski, J W Parish, M A Salter, J A Shaw, D Sheppard and N J Thomas.

**CAB.82 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M J Hart.

**CAB.83 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor N J Desmond declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item no. 10.1 as he was a former board member of the Oldington & Foley Park Network.

**CAB.89 Future Arrangements for the Management of Sports and Leisure Centres**

A report was considered from the Director of Community and Partnership Services on the future arrangements for the management of the sports and leisure centres.

The Cabinet Member for Community Well-Being led Members through the report. She reported that there was a misconception that leisure centres made money; as reported in the budget book, it cost the council £1m per annum to fund the facilities. Members were informed that several options had been considered and these were referred to in the Cabinet report. A review panel had also been established to enable scrutiny of the available options and from this a public consultation had been conducted. The conclusion had been the best possible option for the district would be a new build leisure centre and The Glades in Kidderminster be closed.

However, following the meeting of the Budget Review Panel on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2012, a request was made for an additional Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be held to enable further consideration and for Members to fully understand the financial implications of the proposal by Cabinet. It had been agreed that this would be held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2012 and therefore, a revised recommendation was made that the report would be re-presented to the Cabinet meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2012 when a decision would be made.

### **Agenda Item No. 3**

A Member had concerns that not all 42 Members would be able to have an input into the meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> February in what was felt an important item for the Council and that the final decision would be made by the Cabinet. The Leader of the Council responded that the Council had adopted The Local Government and Public in Health 2007 Act which was implemented in 2011 and this gave the Executive powers to make decisions.

All Members were encouraged to attend committees that they were not a member of as they could still have an input to the discussions. He felt that it was unfair to say that not all Members could get involved as there was ample opportunity.

In response to a Member question, the Leader of the Council responded that the project had not been rushed through; the matter had been discussed for the last 18 months and had been rescheduled to be discussed and placed on the Forward Plan for re-consideration in January 2012. In addition to another comment, he replied that at Council in 2011, the Eastern Gateway Project had been given the go ahead and there were plans for the site.

A Member reiterated that when the review panel had been set up, it had been known that there was a 2-year lead up to the end of the contract with DC Leisure. It was also pointed out that during the course of the review panel there had been no mention that the Eastern Gateway Project would go ahead.

She continued to state that the cost of a refurbishment could be greater than a new build and upon reflection the build of the Glades had not been as good as it should have been. She also asked that Cabinet defer the decision at Council in February 2012 to enable further debate.

It was perceived that if only 2% of the public had responded to the consultation then perhaps the rest of the public were content. It was felt that this figure was not in any way different to any other public response to a consultation. The 2% represented approximately 500 responses.

The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee stated that all Members were welcome to attend the meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> February to enable them to give their views. All Members would also receive (electronically) all documentation that was presented to the Review Panel.

The Cabinet Member for Community Well-Being informed Members that it was the recommendations from the review panel that had suggested a public consultation be carried out. She also stated that if a new build was the preferred option this could possibly be located in Kidderminster. In addition, she pointed out that the majority of the people that had responded to the consultation had wanted to retain the facilities and it was not the case that the majority wanted a new leisure centre.

**Decision:**

**In line with the recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2011 on the broad principles for future arrangements for sport and leisure centre provision including “refurbishment of the Glades is not considered to be an option”; and consistent with the Council's emerging planning policy for the Eastern Gateway as set out in the Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan Development Plan Document which was approved by full Council for consultation on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2011:**

- 1. The Cabinet DECIDED that the site of The Glades Leisure Centre would not form an appropriate location for future leisure provision for the district. This decision includes, if necessary, vacating the site in order to allow its development by any purchaser prior to the building of a new leisure centre.**
- 2. Except as decided above, the Cabinet NOTES the recommendations set out in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.7 of the report to Cabinet, pending the advice of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and will take final decisions on these matters at its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2012.**