

Overview and Scrutiny

Committee

Tuesday, 3rd March, 2015

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Jane Potter (Chair), and Councillors Joe Baker, David Bush, Andrew Fry, Carole Gandy, Alan Mason, David Thain (substituting for Councillor Gay Hopkins) and Pat Witherspoon

Also Present:

Councillor Natalie Brookes

Officers:

S Hanley and R Bamford

Democratic Services Officers:

J Bayley and A Scarce

83. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Gay Hopkins and Paul Swansborough with Councillor David Thain attending as substitute for Councillor Hopkins.

84. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

Councillor Jane Potter declared an other disclosable interest in respect of Minute No.89, the Proposals for Change by Tudor Grange Academy Short, Sharp Review Further Feedback Report, she left the room and took no part in the discussions in respect of this item.

Councillor David Bush also declared an other disclosable interest in respect of Minute No 89, as a member of the board of governors at the Walkwood Middle School, part of the pyramid group which would be affected by changes to Tudor Grange Academy Redditch's admissions policy. He left the room and took no part in the discussions in respect of this report.

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Chair

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In the absence of the Vice Chair and in light of the Chair having to leave the room it was noted that a Chair would need to be appointed to preside over Minute No. 89 during the Committee's consideration of the Proposals for Change by Tudor Grange Academy Short, Sharp Review Further Feedback Report.

RESOLVED that

Councillor Carole Gandy be appointed Chair for Minute No. 89 during consideration of the Proposals for Change by Tudor Grange Academy Short, Sharp Review Further Feedback Report.

85. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th February 2015, e confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

86. REDDITCH MARKET CONSULTANTS' REPORT - PRE-SCRUTINY

Officers explained that this item had been deferred on the Executive Committee's Work Programme and was expected to be received at its meeting on 14th April 2015. The report was therefore not available for the Committee to pre-scrutinise.

Officers informed Members that the delay was due to a change in the wording of the recommendations and highlighted that the Executive Committee meeting on 14th April was also the day of the Staff Awards. There would therefore be limited time for the Committee to carry out pre-scrutiny of the report.

Members commented that this was an important issue which had been raised following the work of the Market Task Group report. After further discussion it was agreed that an additional meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would take place on 7th April at an earlier start time of 4.30 pm in order for the report to be considered.

RESOLVED that

a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be held at 4.30 pm on 7th April in order to consider the Future Management of Redditch Outdoor Market Report.

87. TACKLING OBESITY TASK GROUP - FINAL REPORT

Councillor Potter, as Chair of the Tackling Obesity Task Group, introduced the report and delivered a presentation. Councillor Potter explained that the subject was of huge importance not only to this country but to the world as a whole and the effects of obesity led to a number of serious health implications, which in turn caused pressure and great expense to the National Health Service. The Chair provided information on a scheme which had been set up by the Mayor of Oklahoma City which had led to it being the healthiest state in the USA. The group had found during its investigations that there was lots of support available to the residents of Redditch, but she believed it was motivation that people lacked and it was this which needed to be addressed.

The Chair highlighted the following findings of the investigation during her presentation:

- Details of the terms of reference and areas investigated.
- Information the group received during its investigations to assess whether there was an obesity problem in Redditch and the cost of obesity related health conditions to the local NHS.
- In respect of Recommendation 1 and a communications strategy it was highlighted that there were many activities available within the Borough. However, there was limited awareness.
- A communications campaign could help to raise the profile of local projects and activities.
- Officers had confirmed that social media was currently the most popular form of communications.
- Recommendation 2 in respect of GP practices – the group had been disappointed at the limited response received from GPs. As Members believed that GPs were often a patient's first port of call for people they felt that more should be done to promote healthy lifestyle initiatives in GP practices.
- Recommendation 3 and an investigation into the potential for a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in respect of hot food takeaways– whilst it was acknowledged that this had its limitations and could not guarantee future businesses would provide healthy food the Chair suggested it would be a move in the right direction and had the potential to make an impact in the long term.
- The Chair stressed that at this stage the group were simply requesting that the Planning department investigate the potential for an SPD to be introduced.
- Health Chats training – recommendation 4. The Chair said that she and Councillor Natalie Brooks had attended these sessions and found them both informative and useful, giving them an

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understanding of the difficulties facing people with this condition. It also provided them with the tools to help residents if appropriate.

- There were also a number of areas which the group, whilst not making any recommendations, wished to highlight and support. These included Measures of Success, Healthy Eating Awards from Worcestershire Regulatory Services and the Council leading by example through the work it was already carrying out.
- The group had concluded that the Council had a moral obligation to take action that could lead to improvements in public health.
- By approving these recommendations the group was also suggesting that the council would be helping to meet both the LSP's priority of tackling health inequalities and the Council's strategic purpose; help me live my life independently (including health and activity).

Councillors Joe Baker and Natalie Brooks, as Members of the Task Group, reiterated the Chair's comments and informed the Committee that they had found the group informative. They suggested that it was important to find a way of providing overweight and obese people with the motivation to make healthy changes to their lifestyles. They urged the Council to take on board the work that needed to be done in order to improve the obesity levels within the Borough.

Following presentation of the report Officers were invited to comment on Recommendation 3, in respect of the Supplementary Planning Document, and made the following points:

- A health impact assessment was carried out in conjunction with Worcestershire County Council (WCC) as part of the Local Plan process.
- A number of policies were in place, particularly for new developments to take account of, including open spaces. An example was provided of a new development in Brockhill which would have good links with both the Abbey Stadium and Arrow Valley and included walks and cycle paths.
- Members needed to ensure that the inclusion of any policy was not to the detriment of or in conflict with the purpose of another policy. Officers suggested it should be noted that retail and food outlets were directed to the town centre and district centres. Most schools in Redditch were within 400 metres of the town centre or a district centre so an SPD would be at odds with these retail policies.
- The work of the Redditch Town Centre Partnership to bring food outlets into the centre of town.

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- There were a set amount of retail shop fronts that could be hot food outlets in district centres. This was about 20 or 25 per cent.

Members discussed the following areas in further detail once the presentation and comments had been delivered:

- The number of hot/fast food takeaways in what was a relatively small area and particular “hot spots” in locations such as Headless Cross.
- Concerns around the Health Chats and the role of Members in delivering associated support to residents.
- The links between obesity and dementia and the need for this to be highlighted.
- Research and methods of tackling the obesity problem which were carried out in the USA.
- Concerns around obesity in children and the need to educate the parents in order for them to set a good example.
- The abundance of both support and activities available within the Borough.
- The lack of response from the GPs and whether the recommendation in respect of providing them with monthly updates would be effective and resource intensive.
- The underlying causes of obesity in some people and how these needed to be treated sympathetically. For example due to bereavement or mental health problems.
- The planning process and the restrictions arising from this on particular types of usage.

Members discussed how they could best make use of the resources available. For example officers suggested that remaining Choose How You Move resources, such as bicycles, could be deployed to encourage greater participation in physical activities. The legacy of the initiative would be the provision of walking and cycle routes together with an increasing use of public transport. It was also suggested that local walks could be advertised through the press on a regular basis.

Following the discussions it was agreed that the wording supporting recommendation 4 would be amended to reflect the concerns raised by Members in the pre-amble above.

The Chair thanked the Members of the Task Group for their hard work together with thanks to the Democratic Services Officer for her support throughout the process.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) a **Communications Strategy** should be developed to enable the Council and partner organisations to promote existing healthy eating projects, physical activities and other initiatives that help people to live healthier lifestyles. This strategy should particularly focus on using social media to market local projects.
- 2) **GP practices** should be notified of all of the healthy eating and physical activities that partners are delivering in the local community. Consideration should be given to providing GP practices with monthly updates.
- 3) **Officers** should investigate further the potential for a **Supplementary Planning Document** for hot food takeaways to be introduced at Redditch Borough Council. Officers should report back to Committee on the outcomes of their investigations; and
- 4) **elected Members** should all be encouraged to attend health chat training. Frontline service Officers should also attend health chat sessions if they have not already done so.

88. DRAFT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Annual Report for 2014/15 was considered by Members. The Chair explained that despite reduced resources the Committee had carried out a number of successful scrutiny exercises and that her first year as Chair the Committee had been very productive.

Officers provided a brief update in respect of the summary of the Proposals for Change by Tudor Grange Academy Short, Sharp Review, detailed in the annual report. Members were assured that recent developments, due to be discussed under Minute No 89, would be incorporated into the report prior to consideration by Council on 30th March.

There had also been developments since publication of the agenda, in relation to the Worcestershire Shared Services (WRS) Joint Scrutiny Task Group. Members were reminded that the final report, which contained 12 recommendations, had been considered at its June 2014 meeting. The recommendations had then passed to the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee, the decision making body for WRS, in October 2014. The Joint Committee had approved a number of the group's proposals, though initially rejected all recommendations relating to changes to the governance arrangements for the partnership. However, in February 2015

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further proposals had been brought forward by Officers in relation to the governance of the partnership and these appeared to have been significantly influenced by the work of the Joint Scrutiny Task Group. Members were advised the proposals were out to consultation.

Bromsgrove District Council, as the host authority for the review, would be monitoring the implementation of the approved WRS scrutiny recommendations. Any updates received from Bromsgrove District Council on this subject would be reported for Members' consideration. Members were asked to note that the Chair and Vice Chair of the Task Group were considering submitting this report in the Centre for Public Scrutiny's Good Scrutiny Awards 2015. It was likely that the report would be submitted in the category dedicated to "Working Together".

The Chair of the Committee concluded discussions by thanking Jess Bayley and Amanda Scarce, the lead Democratic Services Officers supporting the scrutiny process, for their hard work during the year.

RESOLVED that

subject to incorporating the updates detailed in the preamble above, the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2014/15 be noted.

89. PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE BY TUDOR GRANGE ACADEMY SHORT, SHARP REVIEW - FURTHER FEEDBACK

In the absence of the Chair of the Committee, as agreed under Minute No. 84, Councillor Carole Gandy chaired the meeting whilst the Committee was considering the Proposals for Change by Tudor Grange Academy Short, Sharp Review Further Feedback Report.

The Chair, explained that following the recommendations of the group the Chief Executive had written to the Secretary of state for Education and Minister of State for Schools and a response had recently been received from the right Honourable David Laws MP. The letter acknowledged receipt of the group's report and noted the concerns that had been raised by parents and schools. The letter advised that the Minister of State for Schools had asked departmental officials to review the current guidance to ensure that expectations were clear in the context of three-tier arrangements.

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Members concurred that this response was a real boost for those involved and showed that the group's concerns had been acknowledged and acted upon.

In respect of the second recommendation, requesting that Worcestershire County Council (WCC) involve Borough Councillors in the changing relationships with local schools, this had been taken on board. For the first time WCC had delivered a briefing to Members on the subject of the changing school landscape on Friday 27th February; the invitation to this briefing had been extended to all Councillors including County Councillors. Nine Members had been able to attend, the feedback received from this briefing had been very positive and WCC were keen to carry out further briefings as necessary.

Councillor Witherspoon, as the Chair of the scrutiny group, commented that the group had produced an excellent report which had been able to make some very positive changes to the benefit of all residents of the Borough. She encouraged all Members to support the submission of the report in the Centre for Public Scrutiny's Good Scrutiny Awards. Whilst there was no guarantee that it would be shortlisted, it was felt appropriate as it would continue to maintain awareness of the subject.

RESOLVED that

1) the submission of the final report produced by the Proposals for Change by Tudor Grange Academy Short, Sharp Review in the Centre for Public Scrutiny's Good Scrutiny awards process 2015 be noted; and

2) the report be noted.

90. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES AND SCRUTINY OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the Executive Committee's Minutes from the 23rd February 2015 together with the latest edition of the Work Programme.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the Executive Committee held on 2nd^d February 2015 and the latest edition of the Executive Committee's Work Programme be noted.

91. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme and whilst doing so Officers highlighted that the completion date for the LGBT Task Group should have been listed as July 2015 and this would be amended for future Work Programmes.

RESOLVED that

the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme be noted subject to the amendment detailed in the pre-amble above.

92. TASK GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

Provision of Support Networks for the LGBT Community – Chair, Councillor Joe Baker

Councillor Baker informed Members that he had attended the LGBT History Month event held at the Library and reported that he had been disappointed in the event. He expressed concern that it had consisted of a great deal of negative information, such as Hate Crime and Sexual Health information, rather than concentrating on the history of the community and giving example of positive role models. Councillor Baker explained that he was keen to ensure that this was not seen as a reflection of the officers who had put a great amount of effort into the event, but that it was something which should be considered in the future. Councillor Baker explained that he would be writing to the Chief Executive to express his disappointment.

Members commented that this could be regarded as a missed opportunity to celebrate the diversity of Redditch and the Council should learn from this experience and ensure that future events were more successful. Officers suggested that it might be appropriate in future years for the LGBT Community and for elected Councillors to be invited to contribute and assist with the organisation of the event.

In respect of the Task Group, Councillor Baker report that they had interviewed Inspector Rebecca Love and Superintendent Jim Baker from West Mercia Police at its last meeting. The group had been impressed by the passion and understanding that the Police Officers seemed to have in order to meet the needs of LGBT victims of hate crimes and incidents. The group also welcomed the fact that such senior representatives of the police force had been

willing to attend the interview and believed that this was the first time a Superintendent had attended a scrutiny meeting in Redditch. Councillor Baker and the group felt that this representation demonstrated that the police took the subject extremely seriously.

Unfortunately, Councillor Baker informed Members that at some of the group's meetings evidence had been received which suggested that some members of the LGBT community felt reluctant to report hate crimes or incidents to the police for a variety of reasons and there appeared to be under reporting of homophobic and transphobic hate crimes and incidents as a consequence. It was hoped that the turnout of the senior police officers at the meeting would help to demonstrate to the local LGBT community that the local police force were committed to investigating homophobic and transphobic hate crimes and incidents that were reported to them. The LGBT community were therefore urged to have the confidence to approach the police if they experience any form of homophobic or transphobic abuse. The group had also been interested to learn that the police were keen to engage more actively with the LGBT community. This has been a challenge in the past as there had been no established LGBT group in the Borough.

Councillor Baker advised that at the following meeting the group was due to interview Officers about opportunities for the LGBT community to participate in sports and the arts. Members were also hoping to visit LGBT support groups based in Birmingham as well as to consult with representatives of Stonewall.

RESOLVED that

the update report be noted.

93. HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor Witherspoon, the Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC), informed Members that she had attended the latest meeting of HOSC that morning (3rd March). The meeting had concentrated on mental health services for older people, with particular reference to dementia, and the current position at the Alexandra Hospital.

Members had received an excellent presentation which had shown a worrying increase in the numbers of dementia sufferers and the statistics had shown that two thirds of these were women aged over 60. This was due to women living longer than men. There was a need for increased awareness and training to be made available,

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not just medical but across the county to ensure that it was identified and the appropriate assessments were carried out. Councillor Witherspoon highlighted a particular project which was being piloted in Droitwich and the results from this project would be analysed and hopefully this would be adopted in other areas.

Members also discussed the links between dementia and other illnesses such as obesity and diabetes and the cost to the health service for treating those suffering from it. It was understood that research was being carried out in America which had been very successful in stemming the disease, if not reversing it. Councillor Witherspoon also highlighted the good work which was carried out by the Dementia Café.

The Committee was informed that representatives from the Board of the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust (WAHT) had attended the meeting. The main discussions had been around the problems at the Alexandra Hospital and whilst some very probing questions had been asked from both Councillor Witherspoon herself and other Councillors, the responses received had been unsatisfactory. They had refused to provide details as to why the consultants had resigned, despite Members understanding that the consultants had given permission for this information to be released. Some Members had questioned whether, had such a situation occurred in the private sector, questions would have been asked and an investigation carried out to see whether there was a problem.

The WAHT representatives had insisted that the matter was being dealt with and that the A&E department at the hospital would not be compromised. Two of the consultants had agreed to extend their periods of notice and it was confirmed that if necessary locum consultants would be called in. The WAHT representatives also said they were receiving support and assistance from neighbouring trusts, but refused to state which.

Members discussed whether it would be possible for the Committee to put pressure on the WAHT to release details or at least to confirm that the letter referred to had been received. Consideration was given as to whether it was appropriate for the Committee to write to the individual consultants requesting further information.

After further discussion it was

RESOLVED that

a letter be sent to the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, requesting

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**information as to why the consultants had resigned from the
Alexandra Hospital.**

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 9.17 pm