

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 1st March, 2016

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Jane Potter (Chair), Councillor Gay Hopkins (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Natalie Brookes, David Bush, Andrew Fry, Gareth Prosser, Jennifer Wheeler and Nina Wood-Ford

Officers:

Helen Broughton, Rachel Dobson, Jayne Pickering and Amanda Singleton

Democratic Services Officers:

J Bayley and A Scarce

81. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Joe Baker and Paul Swansborough and it was confirmed that Councillor Natalie Brookes was attending as substitute for Councillor Baker.

82. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest nor of any party whip.

83. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting held on 16th February be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

84. LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP - MONITORING UPDATE REPORT

The Chair reminded Members that following a recommendation made a number of years ago the Committee was responsible for holding the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) to account and received this report on an annual basis.

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Chair

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Officers introduced the report and provided background information in respect of the Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and the recent mini refresh of the SCS's priorities which had been undertaken during 2015. During the presentation of the report the following areas were highlighted:

- There were various groups and bodies that formed the LSP or contributed to the work of the partnership.
- The Redditch Partnership Executive Group (RPEG) was chaired by the Chief Officer from the YMCA. This would assist with the Connecting Families Project moving away from being Council led as the programme developed.
- Connecting Families was a new way of working, which was being rolled out across Worcestershire with a pilot scheme in Redditch.
- The Redditch Economic Development Theme Group (REDTG) was chaired by the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Greg Chance and involved a number of other elected Members and local business representatives.
- Redditch Community Wellbeing Trust (RCWT) was supported by a dedicated officer from Worcestershire County Council (WCC). A significant number of projects were commissioned by this group.

The Wellbeing in Partnership Newsletter had been produced following a number of requests for the production of a directory of local groups and projects. Members were advised it was not practicable to produce such a directory due to the resources needed to set up and maintain such a document. The newsletter was a simple and quick format in which to highlight what was currently available.

Following presentation of the report Members raised a number of points and discussed these in detail:

- The action that could be taken to monitor the impact of the work of the LSP.
- The difficulty for Members knowing where to refer residents as there were so many different projects and voluntary organisations.
- The option for a "high level" directory to be produced in order for Members to have some contact details for specific projects.
- The measures in place to ensure projects did not overlap or duplicate work, with particular reference being made to the Connecting Families project and the work of Early Help.

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- The role of the Locality Teams and how the officers assessed what support would be most appropriate for a family to in the first instance.

**RESOLVED that
the Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy Monitoring
Update Report March 2016 be noted.**

85. HOUSING BENEFITS - PRESENTATION

The Chair reminded Members that this item had been brought before the Committee as a result of discussions at the training event held at the beginning of the municipal year whilst Members were considering topics for further scrutiny. Officers proceeded to deliver a detailed presentation which covered the impact of changes to welfare support; (the presentation is attached at Appendix 1 to these Minutes).

Following presentation of the report Members discussed a number of points including the allocation of the Spare Room Subsidy in respect of families with shared child care arrangements. It was confirmed that ordinarily the subsidy would be allocated to the parent in receipt of the Child Benefit, in accordance with specific guidelines. Members also questioned whether people with severe health problems, which necessitated use of the spare room of their home, were required to pay the Spare Room Subsidy. Officers confirmed that whilst there were strict guidelines which needed to be adhered to, in exceptional circumstances officers could work with the individuals and / or their family to identify possible support.

The Committee noted that there would be further significant changes taking place in the coming months, which had been announced in July 2015, and asked that an update report be received when those changes were in place.

RESOLVED that

- 1) a further presentation be delivered on the subject of welfare reforms and housing benefit changes in due course; and**
- 2) the report be noted.**

86. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

The Chair introduced the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's draft Annual Report 2015/16. In so doing she thanked Members of the Committee and the Democratic Services Officers with lead

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responsibility for scrutiny for their hard work and support over the past 12 months.

During her presentation of the report, the Chair highlighted the following areas:

- The success of the LGBT Task Group and the production of a leaflet by LGB&T Support Services Redditch, which would make a difference to the lives of so many people in the Borough.
- The improved Budget Scrutiny process and the detailed work which had been carried out. Officers in the Financial Services department were thanked for their hard work on this process.
- The disappointing response from the Committee in respect of the Leisure Services Short, Sharp Review.
- The work of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel.
- The regular updates received from the Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC), Councillor Nina Wood-Ford.
- The attendance by Portfolio Holders on two occasions which had been most useful and a positive step forward.

Following presentation of the annual report Members discussed the Committee's relationship with the Executive Committee and the role of being a critical friend. Members also considered future plans and ideas for short, sharp reviews and task groups together with specific training needs for the following year.

RESOLVED that

the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Annual Report 2015/16 be approved.

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

Officers confirmed that there were no updates in relation to Overview and Scrutiny within the Executive Committee minutes from 22nd February 2016. In respect of the Work Programme Officers confirmed that the latest version, which had been tabled at the meeting, contained a number of updates and new items, which Officers highlighted to Members, whilst reminding them that there was an opportunity for pre-scrutiny of any items which they felt were suitable. Members discussed the Leisure Intervention Update which was due to be considered by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 19th April. Officers agreed to confirm whether the

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report would be available in time for the Committee to pre-scrutinise in April.

RESOLVED that

the Leisure Intervention Update be included within the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for pre-scrutiny in April 2016.

88. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Officers confirmed that there were no updates to the Work Programme; however Members were reminded that there would be a presentation in respect S106 Funding and the Corporate Dashboard, to which all Members had been invited.

RESOLVED that

the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme be noted.

89. TASK GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

Improving Disabled People's Access to Redditch's Taxi Fleet Short, Sharp Review – Chair Councillor Gay Hopkins

Councillor Hopkins informed Members that the Short, Sharp Review was moving at a fast pace and had already held two meetings and begun to interview relevant witnesses. The Members had formulated some ideas for the final report, which would be presented at the Committee meeting due to be held on 12th April 2016.

Joint Worcestershire Increasing Physical Activity Task Group – Redditch Borough Council Representative, Councillor Gareth Prosser

Councillor Prosser informed Members that progress continued to be slow and a date was yet to be set for an interview with the relevant Cabinet Member as there had been difficulties in finding a convenient date for all Members.