

Public Document Pack



Thursday, 22 June 2017

MINUTES

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WORCESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS**MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD****THURSDAY, 22ND JUNE 2017, AT 5:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Councillors R. J. Laight, B. Behan, J. Baker, B. Clayton, J. Squires, A. Feeney, E. Stokes, M. King and J. Hart

Partner Officers: Mr. D. Sutton, Worcester City Council, Mr. V. Allison, Wychavon District Council, Mr. P. Merrick, Malvern Hills District Council and Mr. M. Parker, Wyre Forest District Council

Officers: Mr. S. Wilkes, Ms. C. Flanagan, Mr. P. Field, Mr M. Cox, Ms. S. Garratt, Ms. K. Lahel, Mr. D. Mellors and Mrs. P. Ross

PREVIOUS CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - THE FIRST TWELVE MONTHS OF THE OPERATION OF THE NEW PARTNERSHIP

(Note: Due to the late commencement of the meeting, Members agreed to alter the running order of the agenda).

Councillor B. Behan, Malvern Hills District Council, presented her report on the first twelve months of the operation of the newly constituted partnership.

Councillor B. Behan commented that Members might be wondering why she had submitted a Chairman's report. Partner officers of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Board had thought it would be appropriate that a review of the new operating arrangements be presented by the Chairman of the WRS Board, who had overseen the new operating arrangements.

The new Service Level Agreement had come into effect on 1st April 2016. It was agreed that the new operating arrangements for the partnership would be reviewed at the end of a twelve month period to ensure that the arrangement was working as envisaged.

This was not a formal review, as the shared Service Level Agreement required a formal review of the operation and effectiveness of the shared service arrangements every two years.

The report gave an overview of what the Board had covered during the first twelve months of operation under the new arrangements. Councillor B. Behan commented that she had hoped that Board Members would be

in agreement that it had been a fairly seamless transition from seven partner authorities to six.

Bromsgrove District Council as the host authority had provided the Board with timely and concise budget information so that the Board could ensure the financial probity of the operational delivery.

Councillor B. Behan gave her sincere thanks to the Head of Regulatory Services and officers for their advice and support during her role as Chairman of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board.

RESOLVED that Members note the report, as presented by the Chairman of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board for the municipal year 2016/2017.

1/17

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

A nomination for Chairman was received in respect of Councillor E. Stokes, Wychavon District Council.

RESOLVED that Councillor E. Stokes, Wychavon District Council be elected as Chairman for the ensuing municipal year.

The Chairman took the opportunity to express her sincere thanks to Councillor B. Behan, Malvern Hills District Council as the previous Chairman of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board, and commented that it was interesting to read her report from a Board Member perspective.

Councillor E. Stokes then welcomed Members and nominated officers to the meeting.

2/17

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

A nomination for Vice-Chairman was received in respect of Councillor J. Baker, Redditch Borough Council.

RESOLVED that Councillor J. Baker, Redditch Borough Council, be elected as Vice-Chairman for the ensuing municipal year.

3/17

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors H. Campbell, Malvern Hills District Council and J. Smith, Wyre Forest District Council.

Apologies for absence were also received from Ms. J. Pickering, Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council.

4/17

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

5/17

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board held on 16th February 2017 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board held on 16th February 2017 be approved as a correct record.

6/17

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2016/2017

The Board considered a report which detailed the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Annual Report 2016 / 2017. The report covered the performance of the service for the period 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017.

The Head of Regulatory Services, WRS, informed Members that the report detailed both Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and highlights of activity, with a short summary activity report, as detailed at Appendix 5 to the report. Appendix 5 to the report had been reduced since the Board now received a separate Activity and Performance Data report which provided more detail.

The Annual Report also gave a summary of the financial position, key achievements and covered issues relating to human resources, risk management and equalities.

In response to Councillor B. Clayton, Redditch Borough Council, the Head of Regulatory Services, WRS, informed the Board that notices had been served on the operators at the site referred to by Councillor Clayton, in order to address the dust issues raised by those living in proximity to the development.

The WRS (3 year) Business Plan 2017/2020, as presented to the Board in February 2017, showed at this point that staffing levels were roughly around the minimum service level required for the service to discharge the partner's duties. Staff were stretched in being able to deliver against the large volumes of work faced by the service. To help support staff, WRS would continue to look at technical solutions that would support investigative processes. Investment had been made in updating and expanding the range of noise monitoring equipment available to support this work and, in the case as raised by Councillor Clayton, equipment had been hired to monitor dust and other particulate matter. By investing in equipment that monitored activities, the time officers had to spend at sites under investigation was reduced. The approach would continue with the idea being to invest wisely to help maintain the service's capacity to deal with issues. However, the use of technology could not fully replace the need for officers to witness nuisance activities before issuing abatement notices.

The Business Support Officer, Bromsgrove District Council informed the Board that, the Annual Return as detailed at Appendix 2 to the report, was presented in the prescribed format as required by the accounting regulations service for small bodies which WRS were now classed as. There was no requirement for small bodies to be audited by external auditors, but there was still a requirement to conduct internal audits on internal systems.

The Chairman thanked officers for an excellent report and commented that she was unaware that officers conducted interviews following Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) guidelines, interviews conducted under caution. She was also pleased to note that the officer who transcribed PACE tapes was now delivering the transcribing of PACE tapes for client authorities.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Annual Report 2016/2017 be noted; and
- (b) that a copy of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Annual Report 2016/2017 be forwarded to the Chief Executive, Managing Director and Members of each partner authority and Worcestershire County Council.

7/17

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES REVENUE
MONITORING APRIL - MARCH 2017 & ANNUAL RETURN

The Board considered a report which detailed the financial position for the period 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017 and the Annual Return.

The Business Support Officer, Bromsgrove District Council (BDC), introduced the report and in doing so informed the Board that the report presented the final financial position for Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) for the period 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017.

Members were further informed that, as stated earlier during the course of the meeting, the Annual Return as detailed at Appendix 2 to the report was presented in the prescribed format as required by the accounting regulations service for small bodies.

The Business Support Officer, BDC, drew Members' attention to the information as detailed in the report on the Pension Deficit for 2016/2017 and that this had been absorbed in the financial projections. There had been a payment of £26,370 from Worcestershire County Council for their share of the deficit.

An income budget target of £215,000 was set by WRS Managers for 2016/2017. But through hard work and the successes achieved by WRS, the total income generated from all sources was £461,000. The Business Support Officer, BDC, took the opportunity to congratulate WRS officers on their achievement.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the final financial position for the period 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017 be noted; and
- (b) that the refund of the 2016/2017 underspend of £39,000 to the participating Councils be approved as follows:

| Council | Refund of Savings £'000 |
|-------------------|--|
| Bromsgrove | 6 |
| Malvern Hills | 5 |
| Redditch | 7 |
| City of Worcester | 6 |
| Wychavon | 9 |
| Wyre Forest | 6 |
| | 39 |

8/17

ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE DATA QUARTERS 1, 2, 3, AND 4

The Board considered a report that detailed Worcestershire Regulatory Services Activity and Performance Data for Quarters 1, 2, 3 and 4, 2016/2017.

The Chairman requested that Members focussed on the strategic information detailed in the Activity and Performance Data report; and that she would request that any questions with regard to individual partner authorities, be raised by Members outside of the meeting with the relevant officers.

The Environmental Health & Trading Standards Manager, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) introduced the report and in doing so informed Members that following the spike in food safety and hygiene complaints in the third quarter, numbers remained high in quarter 4, exceeding the numbers in previous years. A problem profile of this area had been commissioned from the Intelligence Team for quarter, 2017/2018 so that officers could better understand this development.

At the WRS Board meeting held on 16th February 2017, Members were advised that officers would look to make up the volume of food inspection work in the final quarter of the year. Officers had succeeded in achieving this, with some 600 inspections being carried out across the County for the year.

The Environmental Health & Trading Standards Manager, WRS, drew Members' attention to the WRS Headlines, as detailed on pages 77 to 88 in the report.

RESOLVED that the Activity and Performance Data report for Quarters 1, 2, 3 and 4, 2016/2017 be noted.

9/17

FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY'S AUDIT - VERBAL UPDATE

The Head of Regulatory Services, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) provided the Board with a brief verbal update on the recent Food Standards Agency audit.

There had been some changes as to the way food enforcement was carried out in Worcestershire. Food enforcement was being carried out, but not to the Food Standards Agency, prescriptive agreed framework for local authorities.

Senior officers were nervous as to how this would be received by the auditors. The audit could not be conducted specifically on WRS, since they provided a countywide service. The auditors had requested to look at Wyre Forest District Council and Redditch Borough Council. Once the audit team had seen the relevant data for Wyre Forest District Council, they determined that this was all that was required, since the same food enforcement was conducted for each partner authority.

WRS officers operated on the principal that visits were tailor made for businesses and decisions made upon those visits, less time was spent with good food businesses, thus enabling officers more time with risky businesses that required additional support.

A formal report from the Food Standards Agency would be issued to the Head of Regulatory Services, WRS and the Chief Executive, Wyre Forest District Council. The Head of Regulatory Services, WRS, would provide a report on the findings of the Food Standard Agency audit to the next meeting of the Board.

The meeting closed at 5.35 p.m.

Chairman