

Overview and Scrutiny

Committee

16th December 2009

Minutes

Present:

Councillor Phil Mould (Chair), Councillor David Smith (Vice-Chair) and Councillors K Banks, G Chance, R King and W Norton

Officers:

T Horne, S Horrobin and R Kindon

Committee Services Officers:

J Bayley and I Westmore

129. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Pearce, Taylor and Thomas.

130. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest or of any party whip.

131. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting held on 25th November 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

132. ACTIONS LIST

The Committee considered the latest version of the Actions List. Specific mention was made of the following matters:

a) Scrutiny Training Event

It was reported that a number of Councillors and the Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer had attended a training event at Bromsgrove Council Chamber in November. The session had covered Councillor Calls for Action (CCfA)

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Chair

and Crime and Disorder Scrutiny and had confirmed that the Council was very much in line with current good practice in both areas. The Chair added that the pioneers in the roll-out of CCfA had not experienced much of a response as yet.

RESOLVED that

The report be noted.

133. CALL-IN AND PRE-SCRUTINY

a) Opt-in Chargeable Garden Waste Collection

The Committee received an update on the changes that had been made to the proposals for the Opt-in Chargeable Garden Waste Collection that had been made following the resubmission of the report to the Executive Committee on 9th December 2009.

Officers attended to outline the major amendments that had been made following the initial consideration of the report in November. One of the more significant amendments had been to the pilot scheme, whereby the pilot area was being extended to give a clearer reflection of the impact on the entire Borough. The pilot would now take place in two parts of the Borough, one in the east and the other in the west.

The tone of the report had been altered in those sections that had elicited most comment from Members. It was made clear that an educative approach would be taken with regard to the discouragement of garden waste from being placed in grey bins. This educative approach would be extended to the future provision of the orange sacks throughout the Borough, this service being continued and accompanied by the provision of information on the possibilities available for recycling.

Additional information on sustainability and economy had been incorporated, with predictions of performance and the out-turn for recycling in Worcestershire. On a purely practical level it was now proposed to use green bins with appropriate stickers rather than brown bins for the additional service.

In response to questions from Members it was clarified that there would be no charge for this additional bin, that the charge for the service was to be £35 per annum and that provision had been made through a draft service standard for

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the charging for missing bins. It was also clarified that the area in the east of the town that was to be the subject of the pilot was a part of Matchborough East and Winyates East and West.

It was acknowledged that this would be an additional bin for those householders that took up the service, but the optional nature of the service was highlighted. The bins were also to be collected from properties rather than being put out on the highway for collection.

b) Voluntary Sector Grant Applications 2009/10

Officers informed the Committee that the Grants Officer post that had come about as a result of the Third Sector Task and Finish Group Review was to be made up to a full-time post following a decision made at the meeting of the Executive on 9th December. It was explained that funding for this was being made available through the County Council.

There were no call-ins.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

134. TASK & FINISH REVIEWS - DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENTS

There were no scoping documents for the Committee to review.

135. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

The Committee received reports in relation to current reviews:

a) Dial-A-Ride – Chair, Councillor R King

Councillor King informed the Committee that the Group's activity had been temporarily curtailed following the postponement of several meetings and the loss of the Group's support officer to a secondment. Members were made aware of the Group's concerns at the lack of progress they had been able to make and the circumstances leading to the failure of the Council to secure grant funding from the County Council and the Worcestershire Acute NHS Trust.

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It was agreed that Councillor King would seek an answer in writing from the relevant Director as to the reasons for failing to secure the grant funding. It was also agreed that the completion date for the review be put back to March 2010 in the light of the difficulties that were being experienced.

b) Local Strategic Partnership – Chair, Councillor W Norton

Councillor Norton reported that the first meeting of the Group would be taking place on 14th January 2010.

RESOLVED that

the progress reports be noted.

136. FORMER COVERED MARKET

The Committee received a draft report on the subject of the Former Covered Market in the Town Centre for pre-scrutiny.

Officers provided a brief update on the background to the Covered Market site, noting that the Council did not currently have a use for this asset. The Town Centre Strategy, which had recently been considered by some Members of the Committee, recommended what the consultants deemed to be the best possible use for the site. This was for a single-aspect residential development with ancillary restaurant or retail use. The Committee was informed that the Executive was minded not to proceed with recommendations 3 and 5 in the draft report.

Members expressed a number of views as to their vision for this site. On the one hand it was suggested that the site could be used as a residential scheme for older people. However, support was also given to its use for a residential scheme aimed more at younger people, given the site's proximity to the night time economy of the town. Officers highlighted the other aspects of the Town Centre Strategy that would impact on this site, such as the proposed removal of the Redditch Ringway and the opening up of roads into the town centre.

There was support for declaring the site surplus as there was seen to be little benefit in the Council retaining the asset in the long term. It was suggested that the Council might look to realise some income from use of the site in the time before disposal could be achieved. Members were reassured that the production of a detailed development brief of the site would be expected to be met from within existing resources. The Committee recommended that

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the Executive Committee approve the course of action that was contained within recommendations 1), 2) and 4) of the draft report.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the site be declared surplus to the Council's requirements;**
- 2) Property Services, in conjunction with Planning Services, be authorised to work up a detailed development brief to be reported to a future meeting of the Executive Committee; and**
- 3) Property Services be authorised to secure any short term interim uses of the former covered market area that would generate income, subject to planning.**

137. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BIDS 2009/10 TO 2012/13

Due to the absence of the reporting Officer, this item was not considered in detail by the Committee. Members did raise a number of matters of interest, however.

There was concern that the fencing proposal for local allotments would not be successful as it had been deemed low priority. Members noted that the recent increases in charges for allotments had been predicated on the assumption that maintenance work would be carried out. Officers were also requested to establish which were the two allotments that were due to be provided with a water supply as detailed in bid no. 19.

Concern was also expressed at the potential revenue implications of the capitalisation of the costs arising through the creation of the single management team. This extended to the predictions for the costs of Job Evaluation and for the redundancy costs of the single management team proposal.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

138. FEES AND CHARGES 2010/11

Due to the absence of the reporting Officer, this item was not considered in detail by the Committee.

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It was noted that there was one recommendation, for the Home Support Service, that allowed Members to choose between a rise of 2% or a rise that reflected the cost of the provision of the service in respect of the Home Support Service. Members were informed that the Executive Committee had agreed that this be increased by 2%, which was in accordance with the views expressed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

139. WORCESTERSHIRE HUB - SCRUTINY

The Committee considered a scrutiny proposal from the County Council for a joint scrutiny of the Worcestershire Hub. It was proposed that a member of the Overview and Scrutiny be co-opted onto the Group undertaking this exercise.

RECOMMENDED that

Councillor Robin King be nominated to represent the Council as a co-optee on the Worcestershire Hub Scrutiny Group.

140. CENTRE FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY - GOOD SCRUTINY AWARDS

The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer reported that Councillor Thomas had attended the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) Good Scrutiny Awards 2009 and had subsequently proposed that the Council put forward nominations for the coming year. The Chair proposed that this be considered further at the meeting on 3rd February when additional information would be available to the Committee.

RESOLVED that

the nomination of Redditch Borough Council reviews for the CFPS Good Scrutiny Awards be considered further at the meeting of the Committee on 3rd February 2010.

141. REFERRALS

There were no referrals.

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142. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered its current Work Programme.

Officers highlighted the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny training that was due to take place on Wednesday, 6th January 2010. All Members had been invited but the priority was for Sub-Committee members to attend.

The forthcoming monitoring of the implementation of some of the recommendations made by the Council Flat Communal Cleaning Task and Finish Group was also noted.

Members noted the outcome of the One Place Survey which had been published by the Audit Commission and identified Redditch as having a significant issue to address. The Committee was keen to assist in helping the Council fight for the necessary resources to enable these issues to be addressed and asked for this matter to be considered further at the following meeting.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the current Work Programme be noted; and**
- 2) the outcome of the One Place Survey be considered at the meeting of the Committee on 13th January 2010.**

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.25 pm

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Chair