



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 2nd April, 2013

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Juliet Brunner (Chair), and Councillors Andrew Brazier, David Bush, John Fisher, Andrew Fry, Pattie Hill, Gay Hopkins, Pat Witherspoon and Roger Hill.

Also Present:

Mr M Hall, (Co-opted Member of the Arts and Culture Centre Task Group and Chair of the Arts in Redditch Network).

Officers:

L Berry, J Pickering, L Berry and F Scott and F Scott.

Democratic Services Officers:

J Bayley and M Craggs

164. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Simon Chalk. Councillor Roger Hill was confirmed as his substitute.

165. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

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

166. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 5th March be approved as a true and correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

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Chair

167. ARTS AND CULTURE CENTRE TASK GROUP - FINAL REPORT

As Chair of the Review, Councillor Gay Hopkins presented the Committee with the findings and recommendations of the Arts and Cultural Centre Task Group. Members were provided with a summary of what the task group had accomplished during the review, the venues Members had visited, who they had interviewed, and what the group had found.

It was explained that final outcome of the review was not what had initially been expected. The group was ultimately proposing that in the short term there should be a focus on more effectively promoting and publicising existing arts facilities and attractions in the town, in order to raise awareness of existing facilities. This would include the development of new maps to highlight where local residents and visitors could find all of the main arts and culture attractions, events, and relevant groups in the town. In the long-term it was possible that a community group would be able to establish an arts and culture centre in Redditch, though the group was not proposing that the Council should establish, fund or manage this type of venue.

Councillor Hopkins thanked all of her fellow task group members for the enthusiasm they had shown throughout the review. Officers were also thanked for their guidance and assistance, especially Jess Bayley for all her hard work and support.

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee congratulated the task group on completing an excellent review. In particular, The Chair noted that the group had generated a superb response to the public consultation.

The Committee were united in their support for the group's findings and recommendations. In addition, Members proposed that a new logo should be created to brand the arts in Redditch.

RECOMMENDED that

Recommendations that could be implemented in the short to medium term:

- 1) **the Arts in Redditch Network, and the benefits to be accrued from membership of the network, should be promoted to local arts groups;**

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- 2) the Arts in Redditch Network should maintain a list of existing arts groups in Redditch on their new website;
 - a) the Council should continue to maintain a link from the local authority's website to the new Arts in Redditch Network website;
- 3) an online Redditch Arts Map, including an arts trail, outlining the location of public art works and venues in the Borough and linked to an icon on the new information kiosks in the town centre, should be introduced;
- 4) art exhibition space, where local artists can display their work, should be introduced at the Palace Theatre and the Abbey Stadium;
 - a) the Arts in Redditch Network should promote opportunities to display local artists' work;
- 5) the Council should continue to provide support and advice to any community group aiming to introduce a new arts group in the town. In addition:
 - a) action should be taken to increase public awareness of the support and advice provided by the Council to community groups with an interest in the arts;
 - b) any new enquiries should be signposted to the Arts in Redditch Network to facilitate the formation of new arts groups; and
 - c) a new logo be created for the arts in Redditch;
- 6) the evidence gathered by Members during the course of the review and the information contained in the Arts and Culture Centre Task Group's final report should be taken into account by Officers when producing the new Redditch Arts Strategy;

Recommendations that could be implemented in the long-term:

- 7) in an ideal world an arts centre would be established in Redditch by a community group. However, in order for this objective to be achieved the community group needs to be aware of and to address the following barriers:
 - a) the extent to which local arts groups would make use of an arts centre;
 - b) the financial costs involved in establishing and maintaining an arts centre;

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- c) funding application requirements;
 - d) creating a sustainable business case;
 - e) legal liability and accountability issues;
 - f) availability of volunteers to operate the centre; and
 - g) management arrangements for the centre.
- 8) the Council should provide the following support and advice to any community organisation that aims to establish an arts and culture centre in the town:
- a) guidance on how to complete funding applications for grants
 - b) advice on how to produce a business case; and
 - c) signpost groups to relevant expert contacts for further specialist help;
- 9) the 'Creative Redditch' artwork should be prioritised for use on the next bus shelter that is installed in Redditch town centre.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

168. ACCESS FOR DISABLED PEOPLE TASK GROUP - MONITORING UPDATE REPORT

Members received a monitoring report update on action taken to implement recommendations made by the Access for Disabled People Task Group in August 2012.

Members received updates on the following recommendations:

Recommendations 3 and 4: Accessibility of Taxi Services

The Committee was informed that the outcomes of a six week consultation with local taxi drivers and the local Taxi Association on the possibility of offering extend licenses for adapted vehicles to 12 years, rather than 9 years for standard vehicles, were to be reported for the consideration of the Licensing Committee at its meeting on 1st July 2013. Members commented that the Council needed to make it more financial viable for taxi operators to purchase adapted vehicles for their fleet.

The Licensing committee was also proposing that taxi drivers should be offered mandatory disability awareness training. This was similarly subject to the outcomes of consultation with relevant stakeholders.

Recommendation 6: Member Development

Members were advised that an equalities training session had already been held for Councillors. It was reported that this session had been relatively successful, although the subject matter could not be discussed in any great detail, especially around what is meant by 'discrimination', due to the brevity of the session. However, Members in attendance did return positive feedback. Therefore it was proposed that a similar session be included on an annual basis in the Member Development schedule.

Recommendation 10a: Shopmobility Access Ramp

Officers had been asked to investigate the potential for a canopy to be installed over the ramp access to Shopmobility. This review had been completed in time for the meeting and Officers reported that the installation of a canopy would require planning permission as well as permission from the Kingfisher Centre. Plans outlining a possible design for the canopy had been submitted by Officers, though Members were advised that these plans could be amended. The Committee was advised that it would cost the Council £4,857.00 to install a canopy at this location if these plans were adopted, which would require an in-year bid from Council balances.

Members recognised that the Council had to consider this level of expenditure on Council services very carefully. However, the Committee concurred that the idea should still be pursued as the canopy would provide much needed shelter for Shopmobility customers.

Recommendation 10d: Disability Parking spaces - Former Covered Market

Officers proposed that no further action be taken to introduce disabled parking spaces or a Dial a Ride collection and delivery point in the former covered market area. Members were informed that the majority of local stakeholders consulted on the proposal were opposed to the idea. There were health and safety concerns relating to the potential for conflict between vehicles and pedestrians. Furthermore, planning permission was unlikely to be obtained for any additional car parking in the location as the area had been designated for retail development.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) a disability awareness session should be delivered on an annual basis as part of the Member Development Programme at Redditch Borough Council;
- 2) funding of £4,857 be released from balances in 2013/14 to meet the costs associated with the installation; and

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

169. LIVING WAGE - OUTLINE REPORT

The Committee considered a report regarding the Living Wage and the current implications for employees. The issue was initially raised as a 'Motion on Notice' at the Full Council meeting of 15th January 2013, whereupon it had been referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for further investigation.

Members heard that the national Living Wage of £7.45 (for those living outside of London) was above the current earnings of thirty six members of staff, and also Scale 1 of the new salary grades that would soon be introduced once Job Evaluation had been formally agreed with the relevant trade union representatives. However, it was confirmed that all members of staff would be employed on at least Scale 2 once Job Evaluation came into effect, and therefore would earn in excess of the Living Wage.

Members agreed that the Committee should take another look at this issue in six month times. In particular, Officers were asked to provide an update in this report on the progress that had been made in implementing job evaluation.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider an update report on the Living Wage at its meeting on 8th October 2013; and
- 2) the report be noted.

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170. WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL SCRUTINY NETWORK - UPDATE REPORT

Councillor Witherspoon provided a verbal update on the West Midlands Regional Scrutiny Network meeting that took place on 21st March 2013 at Malvern Hills District Council, which had focused on education scrutiny.

The Committee expressed some concern that any scrutiny undertaken by local authorities into the performance of schools might conflict with the work undertaken by Ofsted. Furthermore, it was felt that head teachers, school chairmen and governors would not welcome additional scrutiny.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

171. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES AND SCRUTINY OF THE FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meetings of the Executive Committee held on Tuesday 12th March and the latest edition of the Executive Committee Work Programme be noted.

172. ACTIONS LIST

RESOLVED that

the Actions List be noted.

173. TASK GROUP REVIEWS - DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENTS

The Committee considered a proposal received from Wychavon District Council to undertake a joint scrutiny of Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS).

It was explained that every Council in Worcestershire, apart from the County Council, had expressed an interest in participating in the review and the draft terms of reference had already been agreed by Bromsgrove District Council, Malvern Hills District Council, Worcester City Council and Wychavon District Council. The review would be facilitated by Bromsgrove District Council as the host authority for the WRS.

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Members noted that the review was not due to start until the new municipal year. Appointments from the Council to the joint review would therefore be made alongside other Committee appointments during the annual meeting of Council in May 2013.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Redditch Borough Council Scrutiny Members participate in the joint scrutiny of Worcestershire Regulatory Services;**
- 2) the terms of reference for the proposed review of Worcestershire Regulatory Services, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved; and**
- 3) the report be noted.**

174. TASK GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

The Committee received the following reports in relation to current reviews:

- a) Arts and Culture Centre – Chair, Councillor Gay Hopkins

There was no update as the final report had already been considered by the Committee.

- b) Housing Density – Chair, Councillor David Bush

The Housing Density Task Group had held two meetings to date. Relevant Officers from the planning and housing teams had attended to give background information to the review, and had been requested to provide further details.

The group had also met with Officers to discuss a possible public consultation in order to obtain local residents' views on the matter.

RESOLVED that

the update report be noted.

175. HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor Witherspoon updated the Committee on the latest business of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC).

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Members were advised that at a recent informal meeting, representatives received information on Worcestershire HealthWatch, an independent consumer body that would be accountable to the County Council and was to be based in Pershore. Representatives were also informed about where HealthWatch would fit into the local NHS structure.

Members were interested to find out more information on the proposals for HealthWatch due to the potential significance to local residents. The Committee therefore requested that a representative of Worcestershire HealthWatch be invited to a forthcoming meeting to explain how it would affect the district. It was suggested that this presentation should be opened up for all Borough Councillors to attend.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **a representative of Worcestershire HealthWatch, be invited to present information on the new body and the implications for the Borough at a forthcoming meeting of the Committee; and**
- 2) **the report be noted.**

176. REFERRALS

There were no referrals.

177. WORK PROGRAMME

Members were informed about Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Planning Event scheduled for Monday 13th May which would be open for all Borough Councillors to attend.

RESOLVED that

the Committee's Work Programme be noted.