

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 10th September, 2013

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor David Bush (Chair), Councillor Gay Hopkins (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Simon Chalk, Andrew Fry, Carole Gandy, Alan Mason, Yvonne Smith and Pat Witherspoon

Also Present:

Councillor Michael Braley

Officers:

J Staniland and C Walker

Committee Services Officer:

M Craggs and A Scarce

43. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Andrew Brazier. There was no named substitute.

44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of any party whip. Councillor Andrew Fry declared an other disclosable interest in item 4 of the agenda, Land Ownership and Maintenance, in his role as a Worcestershire County Councillor.

45. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 13th August 2013 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

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Chair

46. LAND OWNERSHIP AND MAINTENANCE REPORT

The Chair reminded Members that this topic had been suggested following a discussion on suitable items for inclusion in the Committee's Work Programme for 2013/14. The Environmental Services Manager introduced the report, which he informed Members outlined the working relationship between the Council and Worcestershire County Council (WCC). It was confirmed that currently the Council manages the maintenance of WCC's assets across the Borough. Both authorities are conscious of the demand placed on limited resources and the need to find better and more effective ways of working. A service level agreement (SLA) was already in place based on this working arrangement, but required updating and formalising.

The working relationship has evolved over a number of years due to the WCC Highways Partnership Team being based at the Town Hall some years ago. This relationship has been built on and regular meetings between both councils have taken place over the last twelve months in order to establish how the councils can assist each other and make decisions at a more strategic service deliver level. The Environmental Services Manager provided details of what would be included within the revised SLA and this would include the Council's adverse weather policy and a Lengthsman Scheme which covered additional services. The SLA would ensure that the role of each authority was clearly set down in one place. Confirmation of WCC's acceptance of the SLA was currently awaited at which point the document would be passed to the Legal Team for comment. It was acknowledged that the Lengthsman Scheme had taken some considerable time to be put in place and the Environmental Services Manager explained that this due to the work within it being very specific and the Council wished to broaden this out further to create further income.

The following points were raised and discussed in detail:

- Land or buildings which were privately owned and in particular the buildings by the Redditch Railway Station. The Executive Director, Planning and Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services agreed to provide Members with an update on the current position of these buildings.
- The amount (and locality) of land which was not owned by either the Council or WCC but which the Council maintained and the cost of this to the Council.
- The New WCC Geographical Information System (GIS) which the Council would be able to access in order to have up to date information available immediately.

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- Responsibility for pathways (it was confirmed that a further report on this topic would be received at the November meeting).
- How Members could assist by reporting any issues within their own ward.
- The SLA being made available for the Committee to scrutinise (the Environmental Services Manager confirmed this would be available once accepted by WCC).

Although the report was informative, Members agreed that a further report or presentation would be helpful which provided details of land, its locality and size, which was not owned by either Council but which was maintained by this Council, together with details of the cost incurred by the Council. The Environmental Services Manager informed Members that it was likely this information would be more readily available when the new GIS system was in place.

RESOLVED that

- 1) a report detailing the new Service Level Agreement between Redditch Borough Council and Worcestershire County Council regarding the maintenance of all County Council land assets across the Borough be added onto the Committee's work programme to be considered when available; and**
- 2) the report be noted.**

47. TASK GROUP REVIEWS - DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENTS

The Committee had received the scoping document containing the draft terms of reference for the Landscaping Review, which was proposed and introduced by Councillor Gay Hopkins.

Councillor Hopkins explained why she had suggested the task group and the work she hoped that it would cover. Discussions had been held with Officers to ensure that the terms of reference took into account the transformation work which continued to be carried out and the work of the Place Team. Councillor Hopkins informed Members that there was a lot of work to get through and she hoped the task group would take the opportunity to see first-hand the good work that was being carried out by members of the Landscaping Team. It was anticipated that the task group would take approximately six months to investigate this topic.

Members discussed the following areas in more detail:

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- The opportunity for Members to see transformation work in progress and be involved in it.
- Conflicting views on the work of the landscaping team and the acceptance of some staff of the changes that they were going through.
- The possible inclusion of pathways within the terms of reference.

There was some concern that it could be difficult for the task group to meet all of the objectives within the set timescale. However, Councillor Hopkins was confident that the work would be completed within the timescale set.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the terms of reference for the proposed Task Group review of Landscaping be approved;**
- 2) Councillor Hopkins be appointed to Chair the Landscaping Task Group; and**
- 3) further nominations to the Landscaping Task Group be confirmed at the following meeting of the Committee.**

48. QUARTERLY RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER

Officers presented the Committee's new quarterly recommendations tracker. It was explained that Members had previously agreed a new approach to monitoring its approved recommendations. This was to be provided in two sections to cover any approved recommendations that had not been implemented but which were still within timescale; and recommendations which were not completed and outside of the original timescale given for completion. The details of all recommendations already acted upon would be published on the Committee's section of the Council's website. This was an opportunity for Members to discuss the new approach to monitoring its approved recommendations.

Members were broadly supportive of the new format, although it was agreed that it would be useful for Members to receive a list of any recommendations that had been implemented since the previous tracker was received.

Regarding the approved recommendations of the Promoting Sporting Participation Task Review, Members heard that the Chair had spoken to Officers in the Leisure and Culture Team in respect

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of the installation of table tennis tables in Morton Stanley Park and Arrow Valley Park. He had been informed that there had been a delay in the delivery of these tables. Members would receive a full update on this issue at their next meeting.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the quarterly recommendation tracker be broken down into three sections as detailed in the preamble above; and**
- 2) the report and quarterly recommendation tracker be noted.**

49. SCRUTINY TASK GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS MONITORING PROCESS

The Committee considered a brief report which outlined its process for receiving specific updates on the implementation of approved task review recommendations. In particular, the Council's Constitution stipulated that the Committee should not monitor approved task group's recommendations sooner than twelve months after the report's consideration by the Executive Committee.

Members felt that twelve months was far too long to receive updates on particular reviews and that the Committee needed to be proactive rather than re-active in the monitoring of its recommendations. It was thought that this would accelerate the process for implementing these recommendations in future.

It was also thought that it would be helpful for each task group to set their own timescales in terms of when it expected its recommendations to be acted upon. It was thought that the Committee's new approach to monitoring its recommendations on a quarterly basis would be more appropriate in helping to make Members better informed.

RECOMMENDED that

the reference that "the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will review implementation of recommendations made in any report not sooner than twelve months after consideration of its report by the Executive Committee" be removed from the Council's Constitution.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

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

Members considered Executive Committee's Work Programme and the Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 2nd September 2013 and noted the reference to the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel holding at least one scheduled meeting during the year to scrutinise the work of the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

RESOLVED that

the latest edition of the Executive Committee's Work Programme be noted.

51. WORK PROGRAMME

Members were informed that, at the request of the Chair, Officers had given consideration to changing the date of the Committee's November meeting as this clashed with the Council's Fireworks Event. Members concurred that it would be appropriate to move the meeting date.

RESOLVED that

1) the November meeting of the Committee be moved to Monday 4th November 2013; and

2) the Committee's Work Programme be noted.

52. CONFIRMATION OF TASK GROUP MEMBERSHIP

The Committee was advised that Councillors Roger Hill, Andrew Brazier and Joe Baker had been nominated to sit on the Voluntary and Community Sector Task Group.

RESOLVED that

Councillors Roger Hill, Andrew Brazier and Joe Baker be appointed to the Voluntary and Community Sector Task Group.

53. TASK GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

The following updates on current Task Group reviews were provided:

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a) Joint Worcestershire Regulatory Services – Redditch Member, Councillor Alan Mason

Members were informed that the first meeting of the Joint WRS Task Group would take place on Thursday 26th September 2013 and would be attended by Councillor Alan Mason as the Committee's appointed representative.

b) Abbey Stadium – Councillor Gandy

Councillor Carol Gandy informed Members that the Abbey Stadium Task Group had recently held its first meeting which had been attended by the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services and the Abbey Stadium Operations Manager. The Task Group had discussed visiting other sports facilities run privately and also those operated by other local authorities. The Head of Leisure and Cultural Services had also been asked to provide data on the usage of the Abbey Stadium, including "bottle necks" and times when it was available with an opportunity for further promotion. However, it had been brought to the group's attention that currently a business case for the Abbey Stadium's further redevelopment was being put together and the group were concerned that its work may overlap or be duplicated. Councillor Gandy informed the Committee that she would be meeting with the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services in the coming days to clarify the situation and would report back to the Committee in due course.

RESOLVED that

the reports be noted.

54. HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Members were advised that there had been a meeting of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) on 4th September 2013, the main item on the agenda had been the Joint Service Review. Unfortunately, this item had been removed from the agenda prior to the commencement of the meeting, with no indication as to when the information would be made available. All Members of HOSC had expressed their disappointment and concern at the delays which had occurred.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

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The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.10 pm