



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 2nd September, 2014

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Jane Potter (Chair), Councillor Gay Hopkins (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Joe Baker, Natalie Brookes (substituting for Councillor Andrew Fry), David Bush, Carole Gandy, Alan Mason, Paul Swansborough and Pat Witherspoon

Also Present:

Paul Finnemore (Commissioning Manager, WCC), Mark Healy (Matchborough Positive Activities Zone), Hayley Capper (Matchborough Positive Activities Zone), Maureen Hayden (What's Your Point), Paul Woolcock (Batchley Support Group) and Darren Venness (YMCA)

Officers:

H Broughton, R Cooke and K Dicks

Democratic Services Officer:

J Bayley and A Scarce

23. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Andrew Fry. Councillor Natalie Brookes attended as substitute.

24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

Councillor Jane Potter declared an other disclosable interest in respect of Minute No 33, the Proposals for Change by Tudor Grange Academy . She left the room and took no part in the discussions about this item.

Councillor David Bush declared an other disclosable interest in respect of Minute No 33, as a member of the board of governors at Walkwood Middle School, part of the pyramid group which would be affected by the changes proposed by Tudor Grange Academy. He left the room and took no part in the discussions about this item.

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Chair

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In light of the Chair having to leave the room it was noted that the Vice Chair would preside over the relevant part of Minute No 33.

25. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 22nd July 2014, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

26. POSITIVE ACTIVITIES - UPDATE REPORT

Paul Finnemore, the Worcestershire County Council (WCC) Commissioning Manager – Younger People delivered a presentation on The Positive Activities project. Members were informed that providers of Positive Activities had also been invited to answer questions on how the scheme had worked from a “grass roots” perspective.

Mr Finnemore explained that the Positive Activities funding of £1 million was used to commission projects and was divided amongst the six districts throughout Worcestershire. The aim of those projects was not simply to provide activities for all young people. Instead young people living in particular geographical areas where there was a high number of those not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs) or where there was a high rate of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). The funding was time limited with the third year of three year contracts being reached in July 2014. At the WCC Cabinet meeting on 17th July it had been proposed and agreed that the current approach to Positive Activities should be reviewed to see whether a sufficient local offer would be available in accordance with its legal duties without any funding being required from WCC for service delivery with effect from 2016/17. The existing level of funding and allocation per district would be maintained and managed under the current terms for the duration of the review and contracts with providers would therefore be extended for a further year.

Further areas covered by this presentation were:

- The involvement of local Members in discussions to identify solutions to ensure the sustainability of the projects.
- The principles of Act Local and support for local organisations.
- The role of the Redditch Community Wellbeing Trust.

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- The focus on supporting and preparing organisations to make their projects sustainable, with a decrease in emphasis on holding them to account for performance.
- Support for young people with disabilities and young carers would continue.

Members expressed concerns that the emphasis would no longer be on holding organisations to account for performance. However, Mr Finnemore explained that from the current monitoring process it was apparent that the services provided, exceeded to those that could be expected given the financial outlay. This was due to the people and volunteers involved in delivering the projects and had been highlighted in the Hot Stuff programme of free activities over the summer period which had been provided in collaboration with a number of providers.

Members discussed and raised questions on the following areas:

- When the funding would cease.
- The possibility of the Council becoming a major funder and having input into the activities carried out.
- Local schools being involved in Positive Activities projects and the important role that they could play – Arrow Vale Academy took a major role in the Positive Activities Zone.
- The impact on educational attainment levels in the Borough.
- The provision of counselling for young people and the training provided in respect of this to youth workers.
- Engaging young people in activities and whether levels of participation had increased over the years.
- The impact in respect of reducing ASB and overall benefits.

The Chair thanked Mr Finnemore and his colleagues for attending and providing such a comprehensive and enlightening presentation.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

27. REDDITCH SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY - MONITORING REPORT

Officers provided Members with background information as to why the Committee received updates on the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Partnership. During delivery of this presentation the following areas were covered:

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- The current Sustainable Community Strategy which had been in place since March 2011 and was due to run out at the end of 2014.
- The partners and the overall structure of the Partnership. The partnership's board had recently been reconfigured and was now known as Redditch Partnership Executive Group.
- The four key priorities and the three issues which would be focused on within those key priorities.
- The Redditch Community Wellbeing Trust and their role in overseeing the Redditch Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Following the presentation of the report concerns were raised as to how some of the priorities and the success of the work carried out in respect of those priorities, could be measured. Members referred in particular to Priority One – Health inequalities and the focus on smoking, alcohol and obesity/healthy lifestyles and difficulties ascertaining whether any work that was carried out to address these problems was making a difference. Councillor Potter, as Chair of the Tackling Obesity Task Group, commented that this was something which the Task Group had already raised and would consider further during the review. Officers confirmed that whilst this was a problem which needed to be addressed within the health profile work which was being carried out, results did not happen overnight and the work towards healthy lifestyles needed to be undertaken, even if it was not currently measurable.

The committee discussed opportunities for elected Members to engage more actively with the work of the partnership. It was acknowledged that this was an area where further progress could be made. Members noted that the minutes from the Partnership Board's meetings had, at one time been appended to the full Council agenda in order to raise awareness with all Members of the role of the Redditch Partnership and to enable them to raise and questions about the work being carried out. The Committee suggested that this should be revisited.

RECOMMENDED that

the minutes of the Redditch Partnership Executive Group and Redditch Community Wellbeing Trust be appended to the Council agenda.

28. FOOTBALL TASK GROUP - FINAL REPORT

Councillor David Bush, as Chair of the Football Task Group, presented the group's final report for the Committee's consideration. Councillor Bush explained that this was the second

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element of the work of the group and its objective was to establish the current and future need for community football in Redditch, including existing provision in the Borough, potential alternatives and how provision could be helped and supported. The group had had a short break during the election period and the Committee had agreed in June for the group to continue.

Prior to recommencing its work, the Task Group had been made aware that a Football Stakeholder Group had been established by Leisure Services in order to support strategic plans for developing and supporting football in the Borough. In light of this information the group had agreed to cease its work and to pass on any relevant information to the Stakeholder Group for consideration, as Members were keen to ensure that Officer time was not wasted and work duplicated.

Councillor Bush explained that there were three recommendations for the Committee to consider and a further recommendation for the Committee to refer on to the Executive Committee if it wished to do so. It was highlighted that the wording of the recommendation for the Executive Committee might need to be changed in due course.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the activity being undertaken by Leisure services and the Stakeholder Group to find ways of pulling resources into Redditch to support football is endorsed;**
- 2) the Playing Pitch Strategy, when produced later in 2014, be brought to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to inform Councillors of the outcomes;**
- 3) in order not to duplicate work being carried out by Leisure Services in association with the FA and Football Stakeholder Group, the Task Group work is concluded; and**

RECOMMENDED that

the Executive ensure that the playing pitch strategy identified clear links to the emerging local plan requirements for playing pitch provision.

29. TASK GROUP REVIEWS - DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENTS

Councillor Joe Baker introduced his proposal and in so doing highlighted that this topic had been brought to his attention as both a County and District Councillor, by a number of residents, who

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were concerned that there was little or no support for the LGBT community or their families in the Borough. Prior to putting forward the proposal Councillor Baker explained that he had spoken to a number of schools regarding the support they provided to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender pupils. He suggested that the responses he had received had been concerning, particularly when compared to findings detailed in a report produced by Stonewall in 2012 which indicated that young people from the LGBT community often had difficult experiences at school. Councillor Baker highlighted the six key objectives of the review and confirmed that he would like to Chair the Task Group should the proposal be accepted. He anticipated that the investigation should take six months.

Following presentation of the proposal Members discussed the following areas in detail:

- Whether the existing LGBT Group attended meetings of the Redditch Community Forum and how the Council could re-engage with the group.
- LGBT “history” month and events which were held in Bromsgrove
- The suicide rate within Worcestershire for people from the LGBT community.
- How the Council could affect changes or make recommendations to services which were outside of its control.
- The potential to hold a Redditch Pride event and Pink Picnic.
- The lack of any appropriate venue within the Town Centre for people from the LGBT community to meet and feel safe.
- The Hate Crime video which Members had been shown and further information being received by the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel at its next meeting.

The Chair reminded Members that if a Task Group were to be launched then this could not commence until the Proposals for Change by Tudor Grange Academy Short, Sharp Review was completed as the Committee had previously agreed that only two scrutiny investigations would be undertaken at anyone time.

Following further discussion it was

RESOLVED that

- 1) the terms of reference for the proposed Task Group in respect of the Provision of Support Networks for LGBT be approved;**

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- 2) Councillor Joe Baker be appointed to Chair the Provision of Support Networks for LGBT Task Group; and
- 3) the Provision of Support Networks for LGBT Task Group commence following completion of the Proposals for Change by Tudor Grange Academy Short, Sharp Review.

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

Officers confirmed that the Executive Committee had considered the Voluntary Sector Task Group's Final Report and had approved the recommendations subject to a number of small changes in the wording. Feedback had already been received on some of the recommendations and full details would be provided in the tracker document at the following meeting of the Committee.

The latest edition of the Executive Committee's Work Programme was tabled at the meeting and considered by the Committee. Officers informed Members that the Budget Position 2014/15 – 2015/16 and Fees and Charges were already scheduled in to the Committee's Work Programme.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the Executive Committee held on 29th July and the latest edition of the Executive Committee's Work Programme be noted.

31. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair discussed with Members the items which were scheduled in for the October and November meetings and raised concerns around the workload. It had been suggested that an extra meeting could be called, however the Chair proposed that a number of items be moved to later in the municipal year. The following amendments to the Committee's Work Programme were discussed:

- The Extensions to Social Housing Presentation. It was agreed that this should be postponed until January 2015.
- Transformation of Services Presentation. It was suggested that as the content of this presentation could be covered at a Shared Services Board meeting there was no need for this item to be retained on the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme. (It was highlighted that the next meeting of the Shared Services Board would take place at Redditch on 6th October at 6.00pm).

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- Market Task Group – Monitoring Update Report. Although it was suggested that this should be postponed, Members expressed concerns that this was a long outstanding item which needed to be carefully monitored as little progress on the recommendations appeared to have been made to date.
- The November meeting would also include an update from the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel and the final report from the Proposals for Change to Tudor Grange Academy Short, Sharp Review.

Members were reminded that at the meeting on 21st October there was an item in respect of Free Swimming, which the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and tourism had agreed to attend. Similarly, at the 24th November meeting in respect of the item on Concessionary Bus Travel, the relevant Portfolio Holder would be attending, though had requested details of any pre prepared questions. The Chair asked Members to forward any questions on either subject to Officers as soon as possible.

Councillor Bush commented that he had previously requested an update in respect of defibrillators, which had not been forthcoming. Officers were asked to follow this up with a view to an update being received at the next meeting.

RESOLVED that

subject to amendments detailed in the preamble above the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme be noted.

32. CONFIRMATION OF TASK GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Officers informed Members that although the current scrutiny reviews were now underway, confirmation of the membership of these needed to be formally recorded.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Councillor Pat Witherspoon be appointed Chair of the Proposals for change by Tudor Grange Academy Short Sharp Review, with Councillors Carole Gandy, Pattie Hill, David Thain and Nina Wood-Ford as supporting Members; and**
- 2) Councillor Jane Potter be appointed Chair of the Tackling Obesity Task Group, with Councillors Joe Baker, Andrew**

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Brazier, Natalie Brooks and Paul Swansborough as supporting Members.

33. TASK GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

Proposals for Change by Tudor Grange Academy Short, Sharp Review – Chair, Councillor Pat Witherspoon

Councillor Witherspoon informed Members that meetings had been set up, but it was likely that further meetings would be needed. Councillor Witherspoon also clarified the reasons for the review, which was to look at the process in which the proposals were put into public arena for consultation and the involvement of the public, teaching staff and pupils.

Councillor Witherspoon expressed her disappointment at a recent letter published in the local press criticising the launch of the review. She explained that such criticism was not helpful to either the review or the Committee and that there was a strict protocol which should be followed by all Members who were on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Witherspoon reiterated that the Committee had not said that the Short, Sharp Review was able to influence the school's decision, but that it would investigate the process to ensure that this had been carried out correctly.

There had been some delay in arranging interviews with relevant witnesses and therefore it was anticipated that the final report would be brought back to the Committee at its November meeting.

Tackling Obesity Task Group – Chair, Councillor Jane Potter

Councillor Potter informed Members that they group had held two meetings and carried out its first interview. A further meeting was planned where the group would be looking at relevant literature and questions for future witnesses. The group were interested in pulling together all the different services available to ensure that they were effective and looking at some sort of measures which could be put in place.

The Chair also requested that, where possible, she would like Task Groups and Short Sharp Reviews to restrict the number of recommendations to five.

RESOLVED that

the update reports be noted.

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34. HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor Pat Witherspoon, as the Council's representative on the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) informed Members that the Committee had been put on hold due to the Joint Service Review. However, there was a meeting arranged for Wednesday 10th September and she would provide an update at the following meeting.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 9.00 pm