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Overview and Scrutiny

9th June 2015

Committee

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Jane Potter (Chair), and Councillors Joe Baker, Tom Baker-Price, David Bush, Pattie Hill, Gareth Prosser, Paul Swansborough, Jennifer Wheeler and Nina Wood-Ford

Also Present:

Councillor Pat Witherspoon, (Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism)

Officers:

Sue Hanley and John Godwin

Democratic Services Officers:

Jess Bayley and Amanda Scarce

1. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrew Fry and Gay Hopkins with Councillors Pattie Hill and Tom Baker-Price attending as substitutes respectively.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

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

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting held on 7th April 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The Chair took the opportunity to inform Members that following the feedback from the Executive Committee in respect of the Tackling Obesity Task Group and the items which this Committee had resolved, arrangements had been made for her to attend meetings of both the Redditch Community Wellbeing Trust and the Health and Wellbeing Board on 23rd June and 15th July respectively.

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Chair

4. LEISURE SERVICES PRE-SCRUTINY BRIEFING REPORT - STAGE 1

The Chair, for the benefit of those Members new to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, provided background information on this item and explained that the recommendations from a Task Group report on the Abbey Stadium had been approved by the Executive Committee in June 2014. Members were provided with a copy of the recommendations relevant to this meeting. It was further explained that at the previous meeting of the Committee it had been agreed that the Committee should adopt a three stage process of scrutinising this topic, with this meeting being the first stage of that process. The second stage would involve looking at the consultants' report which had been commissioned the previous year and the third stage would be to pre-scrutinise the final report prior to it being considered by the Executive Committee in July.

Officers explained to Members that the report before them, as requested, covered the commissioning of the consultants' report, the process and the information around the specification that officers had provided to the external consultants. This had included looking at corporate options, the potential for different models together with details of the services that could be included within those models.

In providing background information Officers informed Members that a number of consultants, who were experts in this field, had been approached with a view to providing an options appraisal, which would form part of the Review of Operation of Leisure Services report. However, Members were advised that only two or three consultants had responded, though Officers asked to clarify the exact number after the meeting. The table provided at Appendix 1 had been formulated in consultation with various officers in the Leisure Services Team. The email also at Appendix 1 was a summary of various discussions Officers had had with the consultants around the specification and the needs of the Council.

Following presentation of the report, Members raised a number of points and discussed the following areas in detail:

- The procurement process which was followed and whether it was appropriate for the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services to be involved in that process.
- How the final consultant was chosen and whether this had been based on price alone. Officers informed Members that whilst

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cost had been one consideration, timescales and the closest match to the Council's requirements had also been taken into consideration.

- Whether the option of a leisure trust had been considered prior to the Abbey Stadium Task Group investigating such an option or whether this had arisen out of the recommendation from the Task Group.
- The methodology in producing the service mix options as detailed in the report and any possible conflict of interest in respect of the Head of Service. Officers explained that from a corporate perspective the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services had been tasked with putting together the scope from his wide knowledge of the industry and the internal workings of the Leisure Team. The consultants role was to provide a report on the options for future delivery of services.
- Other relevant correspondence referred to within the report and between Officers and the consultants was also discussed.
- It was highlighted in the consultant's offer that a significant amount of information would be needed in order to produce the options appraisal.
- The reasons for the delay in the consultants providing the options appraisal. Officers explained that this was largely due to the Council's internal systems being incompatible with those of the consultants and their being unable to analyse some of the data provided because of this. This necessitated more work than had originally been anticipated having to be carried out.

Officers explained that the first drafts of the options appraisal had been received in July and October 2014 and, following amendment, the final document had been provided in late January/early February 2015. In order for Members to best understand the resultant report, which they would consider at the following meeting, it was agreed that the information referred to in this report and highlighted by Officers should be provided at that meeting. It was acknowledged and accepted by the Committee that the majority of that information would need to be considered within confidential session.

Members discussed whether it would be useful to invite a representative of the consultants to present the options appraisal at the following meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Officers informed Members that the consultants had been approached and were in principle willing to attend, although it should be noted that the consultants were likely to charge a fee for attendance at that meeting. The Chair also highlighted that an additional meeting of the Committee would need to be held in order

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to ensure that all stages of this scrutiny exercise were completed prior to the Executive Committee meeting to be held on 14th July 2015.

The Chair reiterated her concern that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was not being used to its full potential and that its role was to help and support the Executive Committee in the decision making process. This could only be achieved if the reports were readily available for the Committee to consider in a timely manner.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the Consultants' Options Appraisal be made available to Members of the Committee, together with the following additional information:**
- 2) the information requested by The Sports Consultancy in their Leisure Management Options Appraisal letter, as detailed below:**
 - **A full schedule of all services and facilities to be considered.**
 - **Historic financial performance for the past 3 years as well as 2014/15 budget.**
 - **Condition surveys of the main facilities (if available).**
 - **Future asset plan (including any planned or necessary facility works to be undertaken).**
 - **Staffing list.**
 - **Support services and central costs (legal, financial, marketing, property etc.)**
- 3) the correspondence between officers and the consultants on the subject of the consultant's report;**
- 4) copies of previous drafts of the consultant's report prior to the final version presented in January 2015;**
- 5) the briefing note sent by the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services to the Consultants;**
- 6) that an additional meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be arranged for Wednesday 24th June 2015; and**
- 7) the Chair use her discretion when the documents referred to above were available as to whether the consultants be invited to attend that meeting.**

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(During consideration of this item Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed relating to financial and business affairs. However, there is nothing exempt in this record of the proceedings.)

5. FEEDBACK FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TRAINING

The Chair thanked all those who had attended the training session and reiterated that the Committee was in a unique position in that it was able to help the Council. She suggested that the Committee should focus this year's work on more strategic areas and assist with how the Council makes savings through budget scrutiny. This would not necessarily be through Task Groups as Short, Sharp Reviews were an effective process which the Committee needed to make better use of in the future.

There had been a number of areas which had been discussed at the training session; however Members were mindful of the work already included within their work programme and it was suggested that those items be included for consideration later on in the year.

RESOLVED that

Officers arrange presentations to be included within the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme in respect of Council Tax/Bedroom Tax/Housing Benefit and Housing/house building/development.

6. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION TRACKER

For the benefit of those Members new to the Committee it was explained that the Recommendation Tracker was used to monitor the implementation of recommendations which had been made by the Committee to the Executive Committee.

The following recommendations were discussed in detail:

- Landscaping Recommendation 4 – the provision of data for landscaping reported by ward area for Members on an annual basis. Members discussed the data and questioned whether it was useful and really helped Members to fulfil their roles. The Committee also noted the officer time spent preparing and disseminating the information. As the Executive Committee had previously agreed in April 2014 to

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review the efficacy of this process and whether there was a continuing need for the data Members agreed it should be recommended that this process be discontinued.

- Voluntary and Community Sector Recommendation 8 – introduction of a Staff Award in recognition of voluntary work carried out by staff. Members were informed that there had been no response to an item recently placed in the Staff Newsletter requesting staff to report back on voluntary work they carried out. Members also discussed the Pride of Redditch Awards and whether this could be linked celebrating staff volunteering.
- Voluntary and Community Sector Recommendation 2 – consideration was given to employing an apprentice to assist the Grants Officer. Officers advised that due to staff sickness this had been delayed.
- Committee recommendation – officers had been asked earlier in the year to approach the Kingfisher Shopping Centre in respect of further funding for the Shopmobility scheme. Members were informed that this had been done and the Kingfisher Shopping Centre had declined.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) Officers no longer be required to provide landscaping data for each ward on annual basis to elected Members, as proposed in the fourth recommendation from the Landscaping Task Group in April 2014;**

RESOLVED that

- 2) the Voluntary and Community Sector Recommendation 8 remain in place for a further 12 months; and**
- 3) the report be noted.**

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

During the consideration of the Executive Committee minutes from the meeting held on 14th April 2015 Officers highlighted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendations in respect of the Redditch Market had been received and noted. It had also been highlighted it was felt premature for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to receive the consultants' report for the market.

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Members questioned whether the Committee was able to view the report as an exempt agenda item and it was confirmed by officers that the Committee was able to request sight of this document if it so wished. This was due for consideration at the Executive Committee's July meeting and therefore could potentially be made available to Members to carry out pre-scrutiny at the extra meeting, planned for 24th June 2015.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Officers to request, on behalf of the Committee, sight of the Redditch Market consultant's report for consideration at the meeting to be held on 24th June 2015; and**
- 2) the Executive Committee Minutes of the 14th April and the latest edition of the Executive Work Programme be noted.**

8. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Officers confirmed that the work programme would be updated to include all the items discussed at this evening's meeting.

RESOLVED that

the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme be noted and updated as detailed within the minutes.

9. TASK GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

Provision of Support Networks for the LGBT Community Task Group – Chair, Councillor Joe Baker

Councillor Baker confirmed that the investigation was coming to a close, with six recommendations being formulated and the final report drafted. A number of interviews had recently taken place, which had produced some useful information and raised Members' awareness about the support currently available to the LGBT community, particularly in respect of health related issues and preventative actions. Members had identified a training need for frontline staff in particular areas and had reviewed the Council's Equal Opportunity Policy. Positive feedback had been received from an Officer working within schools and overall the work of the task group had been very positive.

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RESOLVED that

the update report on the Provision of Support Networks for the LGBT Community Task Group be noted.

10. HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Chair welcomed Councillor Wood-Ford to the Committee and as the Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC).

Councillor Wood-Ford informed Members that she had attended a visit to the Patient Flow Centre, which was based at the Wildwood site and staffed by the Health Care Trust. It co-ordinated Acute Hospital patient discharges according to which Pathway was most appropriate (for example, home with support/community hospital/residential care) and was a multi-partner facility. The aim of the centre was to enable patients to be discharged from acute hospitals as soon as they were ready by overcoming the problems which can prevent this, such as transport care or facilities needed at home. This has been particularly important with growing numbers of people being admitted to hospital, especially older people with more complex needs.

Councillor Wood-Ford had been impressed with the work of the Centre and had found the visit most informative.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.22 pm