

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 7th September, 2017

## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillor Gay Hopkins (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Anita Clayton (substituting for councillor Jane Potter), Natalie Brookes (substituting for Councillor Andrew Fry), Matthew Dormer, Pattie Hill, Gareth Prosser, Paul Swansborough, Jennifer Wheeler and Nina Wood-Ford

### Also Present:

Councillor Debbie Chance (attending in her capacity as Portfolio Holder for the Local Environment)  
Councillors Michael Chalk and Greg Chance

### Officers:

Sue Hanley, Guy Revans and Andy Morris

### Democratic Services Officers:

Jess Bayley and Amanda Scarce

## 27. ELECTION OF CHAIR

A nomination for the position of Chair was received for Councillor Jane Potter and Members agreed that she should be appointed the Chair of the Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

Following Councillor Potter's appointment as Chair of the Committee a vacancy arose in the position of Vice Chair of the Committee. A nomination for the position of Vice Chair was received for Councillor Gay Hopkins and Members agreed that she should be appointed the Vice Chair of the Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

### RESOLVED that

- 1) **Councillor Jane Potter be appointed Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the remainder of the 2017/18 municipal year; and**

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Chair

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- 2) **Councillor Gay Hopkins be appointed Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the remainder of the 2017/18 municipal year.**

**28. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Andrew Fry and Jane Potter with it being confirmed that Councillors Natalie Brookes and Anita Clayton were attending as their respective substitutes.

**29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP**

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

**30. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 4TH JULY 2017**

**RESOLVED that**

**the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.**

**31. SEASONAL GARDEN WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE - PRE-SCRUTINY (HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES - TO FOLLOW)**

A detailed report and presentation was presented by the Head of Environmental Services and the Environmental Operations Supervisor, which explained the business case for the introduction of a Garden Waste Scheme in Redditch with effect from February 2018.

The presentation covered in detail a number of areas, including:

- Why the Council wanted to introduce a Garden Waste system in Redditch, including expanding the services available to residents and increasing revenue and recycling rates.
- The results of the survey which had been carried out both online via social media and postal responses, which showed the demand was there for such a scheme.
- The recycling rates for the Borough which for composting was the lowest in the County at 2.18%.
- The cost of the service and the projected revenue which could be achieved from this.

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- How the introduction of the service would reduce the volume in the domestic waste stream.
- How the system would work in Redditch – it would be operated by Bromsgrove District Council’s experienced Garden Waste Crews.
- The service would commence on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2018 and run until the end of November 2018, with 20 collections on alternate weeks throughout this period.
- Information was provided on what could be included within the garden waste brown bin.
- How the scheme would be promoted and the leaflets that would be provided to residents, together with details of information available on the website.
- How residents could sign up to the scheme and the social media campaign that would run from October 2017. Sign up could be through the website, by phone or at the One Stop Shops.
- The first 2,000 people would receive a reduced set up fee of £10 before 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018. Payment was by direct debit only.

Following presentation of the report Members raised a number of questions, which were responded to by the Officers. In particular Members raised concerns that a similar scheme had been piloted before and questioned whether in areas where only one or two residents signed up this was value for money. It was also noted that some people might not be able to fill a whole bin or might need more than one. Officers confirmed that it was possible for residents to “club” together and share a bin or for a household to have more than one bin.

As the recycling figures for composting were low, Members asked whether the Council should be doing more to promote composting and the availability of composters. Officers confirmed that this was an ongoing campaign which was promoted throughout the Borough in conjunction with the County Council. This provided an additional service for those already composting.

Whilst appreciating the data in respect of the levels of recycling, Members were mindful that the demographics of Redditch were very different to other areas, which were much more rural. Members also asked whether there was a limit to the number of bins that could be issued and the system could cope with. The Head of Environmental Services explained that initially there was capacity for 4,000 with the option to add another 800 if necessary. The initial set up cost was discussed together with details of the discount scheme and the option for this to be reduced further or the

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period extended, Members also queried when the Council could see the benefit of the revenue that could potentially be raised and it was confirmed that this should be quite quickly following the first year of the scheme. It was confirmed that the set-up fee was only payable for the first year and the subscription would roll over to the next year, with a letter being sent confirming this each year.

Members raised concerns around whether some residents would want to have a third bin to have to store and/or put out and officers advised that this was simply offering residents another form of recycling and it was their choice as to whether they wished to take up the offer. It was commented that given the amount of time spent taking rubbish to the recycling centre the new scheme provided good value for money.

The Head of Environmental Services responded to the concern raised by Members in respect of the scheme which had been exploited previously and it was explained that there had been greater financial risk due to it being set up by the Council. However as this scheme would be delivered by Bromsgrove District Council's existing team that risk was greatly reduced. The vehicles used also had a much lower environmental impact and this was a much more positive scheme going forward.

## **RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) from March 2018 Redditch Borough Council will introduce, and Bromsgrove District Council will run as part of the shared services agreement for Environmental Services, a seasonal (March to November inclusive) garden waste service on behalf of Redditch Borough Council;**
- 2) the charge will be £45 for the initial season to be increased in line with fees and charges as appropriate;**
- 3) a set-up fee of £20 per customer is charged in the first year of service and for new customers in each following year;**
- 4) an introductory offer of a £10 set-up fee will be used to encourage early sign up before 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018;**
- 5) the Head of Environmental Services, in consultation with the designated Portfolio Holder, has authority to temporarily reduce or remove the set-up fee as**

promotional tool to increase and encourage subscriptions;

- 6) should the Recommended Option be pursued, a capital commitment for the next four years of £31,000 in year 1 and £15,000 in years 2 to 4 is to be included in the capital programme;
- 7) once the maximum number of customers has been approached a customer waiting list will be employed. Officers will bring a further report and business case with options for extending the service should it be required;
- 8) the chargeable Orange Sack Service is formally retired as part of the new service charges; and
- 9) a communication plan is devised and implemented to advise residents of the changes to RBC waste collection service and the requirement to use brown bins only for garden waste.

### **32. HOMELESSNESS SHORT, SHARP REVIEW - REPORT (COUNCILLOR WOOD-FORD)**

Councillor Wood-Ford gave a short presentation which summarised the Homelessness Short, Sharp Review's final report and recommendations. Members were advised that Recommendation 1 had already been agreed, recommendation 3 was for the Committee to agree and Recommendations 2, 4 and 5 were to report to the Executive Committee for its consideration.

Following receipt of the presentation Members discussed a number of areas in detail, including:

- The Housing First Schemes – concerns were raised as to where the funding would come from for such a scheme and how it would help. It was explained that it would be particularly helpful for single males over the age of 40, as it had been highlighted that support was lacking for this group of people, with currently the main offer being within hostels and outside of the Borough. The Deputy Chief Executive suggested that funding would be sought at a national level through the West Midlands Combined Authority and it would be through this process that a scheme would be developed.
- Members of the review commented that they had been pleasantly surprised at the amount of support which was available within the Borough. However there was also a

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group of people for whom help was available but who chose not to accept it.

- Swanswell – details around this organisation were provided in respect of their substance abuse programmes and the group had been disappointed that they had been unable to arrange an interview with them. Their work was of such importance that the group felt it would be most useful for the Committee to invite them to attend a future meeting.

In summing up, Councillor Wood-Ford highlighted how impressed the group had been with the work of the Food Bank and the support it provided, which covered a number of other areas. Thanks were given to the group for their detailed short sharp review and it was noted, for future reference, that holding such a review over the summer period had not been ideal due to holiday commitments. Councillor Wood-Ford also took the opportunity to thank the Democratic Services Officer for her hard work over a very short period of time.

Following discussions it was also requested that the MP be asked to write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the Rt. Hon. David Gauke, MP.

## **RESOLVED that**

**Swanswell be invited to attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to deliver a presentation outlining the services they provide to residents in Redditch.**

## **RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) **Redditch Borough Council should take part in any opportunity to deliver Housing First in properties in the Borough. This should include applying to participate in any Housing first pilot schemes operated by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA);**
- 2) **the Leader of the Council should write to the Secretary of State for Work and pensions, the Rt. Hon. David Gauke MP, urging him to end the freeze on Local housing Allowance (LHA) rates; and**
- 3) **the Council's Communications and Arts and Events teams should notify the CAB of any forthcoming events in Redditch which they could attend to promote their services and heighten awareness of their services in the Borough.**

The Committee NOTED that

the draft Redditch Borough Council Housing Allocations Policy has been adopted by the Council.

**33. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES AND SCRUTINY OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME - SELECTING ITEMS FOR SCRUTINY**

The Committee considered the minutes from the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2017. Members noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendation in respect of the Housing Allocations Policy had been approved by the Executive Committee.

Members also considered the content of the Executive Committee Work Programme for the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018. Officers explained that the Committee and Budget Scrutiny Working Group were already scheduled to pre-scrutinise a number of items on the work programme. Upon questioning Officers confirmed that the Matchborough and Winyates District Centre Redevelopment Consultation was already scheduled for pre-scrutiny at a meeting in December 2017.

**34. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee noted that an extra meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would take place on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2017. This meeting would provide Members with an opportunity to reconsider the Leisure Services Provision Short Sharp Review Group's findings together with a chance to pre-scrutinise Officers' suggestions in respect of the future delivery of leisure services.

**35. TASK GROUPS, SHORT SHARP REVIEWS AND WORKING GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS**

The following progress reports were provided for Members' consideration:

a) Budget Scrutiny Working Group

In the absence of the Chair of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group, Councillor Jane Potter, Officers advised that at the latest meeting of the group Members had received an update on the contracts that had been issued in the first quarter of the financial year. Members had also discussed in detail the

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financial information required to enable the group to make a constructive contribution to the Council's budget setting process during the year.

b) Civil Contingencies Short Sharp Review

Officers confirmed that Councillors Matthew Dormer, Gareth Prosser and Yvonne Smith had been appointed by their group leaders to sit on the review. A nomination was received for the position of Chair of the review in respect of Councillor Gareth Prosser.

c) Mental Health Services for Young People Task Group

The Committee was advised that the Task Group had convened in July to discuss questions to include in a questionnaire for local schools about Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) lessons. The group had agreed to postpone distribution of the questionnaires until September when the school holidays would finish. The group would reconvene in due course and report back their findings to the Committee.

d) Performance Scrutiny Working Group

Following the resignation of the previous Chair of the group from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members were advised that there was a vacancy which needed to be filled by a member of the Committee. A nomination was received for the position of Chair of the Working Group in respect of Councillor Matthew Dormer.

Councillor Dormer proceeded to present a report on behalf of the group in respect of the need for an After Care Social Worker to be based at Redditch Town Hall. This had arisen following a meeting with Officers at which Members had discussed the Council's arrangements for housing care leavers in the Borough. It was confirmed that currently this service was only available in Worcester and that there were no financial implications to the Council arising from this recommendation.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) **Councillors Matthew Dormer, Gareth Prosser and Yvonne Smith be confirmed as Members of the Civil Contingencies Short Sharp Review group;**



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- 2) Councillor Gareth Prosser be appointed Chair of the Civil Contingencies Short Sharp Review Group; and
- 3) Councillor Matthew Dormer be appointed Chair of the Performance Scrutiny Working Group for the remainder of the municipal year.

## RECOMMENDED that

an after Care Social Worker should be provided with a base to work in the Housing Options team's office at Redditch Town Hall in order to work with care leavers in Redditch.

### 36. EXTERNAL SCRUTINY BODIES - UPDATE REPORTS (COUNCILLOR NINA WOOD-FORD)

The Committee received updates in respect of the following external scrutiny bodies from Councillor Nina Wood-Ford

- a) West Midlands Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Wood-Ford confirmed that there had not been a meeting of the Committee since 4<sup>th</sup> July 2017. The next meeting of the Committee was due to take place on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

- b) Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)

Councillor Wood-Ford explained that there had been two meetings of HOSC since the last Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting. The first had been held on 19<sup>th</sup> July and had followed the most recent CQC rating of the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust being inadequate. There had appeared to be some positives and a number of areas had been rated as very good, there were improvements to the work force culture, greater accountability and improvement to the training, recruitment and retention of staff. It was believed that 34 new consultants had been employed over the three hospital sites.

Transport issues had been discussed following the removal of the free bus service and it was anticipated that voluntary drivers would be used with the cost being less than that of a taxi. The service would include home pick-ups and Malvern

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CAB was already providing some services to Worcester Royal Hospital.

An additional £29m funding had been confirmed and would be spent on a number of projects including a bridge between the main hospital and the Aconbury West wing and take the beds from the Mental Health Unit at Aconbury East at a cost of £16m. This project would take between 18 and 24 months to complete. A similar project had previously been carried out in Kidderminster. It was understood that there had also been a survey carried out of those who were awaiting treatment in corridors, following the high demand on accident and emergency services.

The second meeting had involved meeting with the new Chairman and Chief Executive, who appeared to be knowledgeable about what was needed to address many of the problems faced by the Trust. Members discussed a number of areas which had been reported in the local press, including the need for more theatres, elective surgery taking place at the Alexandra Hospital and the fact that the Trust remained in special measures.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm  
and closed at 8.22 pm