

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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4th November 2009

## Minutes

### Present:

Councillor Phil Mould (Chair), Councillor David Smith (Vice-Chair) and Councillors K Banks, G Chance, R King, W Norton and W King

### Also Present:

M Collins

### Officers:

T Horne, G Revans, Head of Environment and S Horrobin

### Committee Services Officer:

J Bayley and H Saunders

### 103. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors Pearce, Taylor and Thomas. Cllr W King was named as a substitute for Councillor Taylor.

### 104. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest or of any party whip.

### 105. MINUTES

#### RESOLVED that

**the minutes of the meetings held on Thursday 1st October and Wednesday 14th October be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.**

### 106. ACTIONS LIST

The Committee considered the latest version of the Actions List. Specific mention was made of the following matters.

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Chair

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a) Arrow Valley Countryside Centre - Consultants' Report

Officers reported that they had approached the relevant Head of Service for this report. The consultants' report was scheduled to be considered by the Executive Committee on either 7th January or 27th January. Depending on which date was agreed, it would be possible for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to pre-scrutinise this report at either of their meetings scheduled for 16th December or 13th January.

b) Mayoral Web Pages

Officers explained that the Member Services' Officer had been in contact with Councillor Chalk and Officers from IT Services to arrange a meeting to discuss the enhancement of the content of the Mayoral web pages on the Council's website.

**RESOLVED that**

**the Actions List be noted.**

**107. CALL-IN AND PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee considered the latest version of the Forward Plan. Officers explained that there was a report listed on the Forward Plan scheduled to be considered at the Executive Committee on 9th December regarding the Council's Single Equalities Scheme. Members agreed that it was important for the Committee to pre-scrutinise this report if possible.

There were no call-ins.

**RESOLVED that**

**the Single Equalities Scheme report be pre-scrutinised by the Committee at the following meeting scheduled for Wednesday 25th November.**

**108. TASK & FINISH REVIEWS - DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENTS**

There were no draft scoping documents.

## 109. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

The Committee received reports in relation to current reviews.

a) Dial-A-Ride – Chair, Councillor R King

Councillor King informed the Committee that the Task and Finish Group had agreed that, while waiting for the Officer report regarding actions to overcome the shortfall in funding for the service for the current year, the Group had decided that they would be able to progress other tasks. He explained that the Group had met with the WRVS, which operated a bus and social car scheme within Bromsgrove. From information provided during this meeting, the Group had decided that they would like to investigate the possibility of linking in with other service providers in the area including taxi firms, to enhance the Dial-a-Ride service.

b) Neighbourhood Groups – Chair, Councillor K Banks

Councillor Banks informed the Committee that the Group had completed their consultation with all of the Neighbourhood Groups and had received feedback forms from many attendees. In addition, the Group had arranged to undertake consultation with the Student Council. The Group was in the process of writing the final report which they looked forward to presenting before the Committee at the following meeting.

c) Local Strategic Partnership – Chair, Councillor W Norton

Officers informed the Committee that there would be a presentation on the subject of the Local Strategic Partnership at the following meeting of the Committee on 25th November. The Councillors who would be undertaking the review alongside Councillor Norton had been invited to attend that meeting of the Committee to consider the information contained within this report.

**RESOLVED that**

**the progress reports be noted.**

## 110. GARDEN WASTE STRATEGY

The Committee received a Power Point presentation from Officers detailing proposals for the Council to introduce an optional chargeable garden waste collection (Appendix One). Officers

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explained that that the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy, which the Council had signed up to, had set a target of 43% for the recycling or composting of waste materials by 2014. In addition, the national non-statutory target for recycling household waste had been increased from 33% to 45% by 2015. It was important that Redditch Borough Council played its part in achieving these targets.

Members were informed that further reasons to undertake a chargeable garden waste collection included: the fact that it reduced biodegradable waste to landfill; that residents had indicated a demand for this service; and that it had been found to be successfully delivered by other local authorities. Members were informed that, currently, 7% of the waste collected by the Council was garden waste that could be composted. The Council permitted residents to dispose of a small amount of garden waste in their grey bins. Orange sacks, which were charged for by the Council, enabled residents to dispose of extra waste and it had been found in 2008/09 that out of 5000 orange sacks collected in the summer months, around 70% contained garden waste.

Officers outlined the proposals for the additional service to Members. They explained that the service would be optional for residents and that residents taking part in the service would be provided with a brown 240 litre capacity bin in which to put their garden waste. Bins would be collected on alternate weeks between March and November. Officers proposed two options for introducing the service. The first option involved undertaking a pilot in one area of the Borough while the second option would be to deliver the service on a Borough wide basis. Officers commented that the preferred option was to deliver this scheme in a pilot area first. This would enable the Council to assess the take up of the scheme and evaluate its success in one area before deciding on whether to extend the scheme to the rest of the Borough.

It was proposed that the scheme be piloted in the west of Borough. The pilot area was chosen because it was an area where residents lived in traditional types of housing and because of the larger size of gardens. However, Officers had also ensured that a mix of housing types with various sized gardens were included in the pilot area. Indications from consultation conducted as part of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy had indicated that residents would be willing to pay £30 a year for this service.

Members questioned whether this scheme would reduce the numbers of people composting and also commented that it would appear to be less environmentally friendly to move garden waste in

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fuel inefficient vehicles around the Borough rather than to continue to encourage people to compost. Officers had acknowledged in their presentation that the Council's carbon footprint would rise as a result of the proposals but stressed that to offset these extra emissions, the Council would have to look to cut emissions elsewhere.

Some Members felt that the proposed pilot area would not produce a true reflection of residents' views of this scheme. It was felt that the west side of the town was more rural than the east of the town which was considered more urban with a higher density of houses and smaller gardens. Officers explained that, if Members felt strongly about this, the pilot could be run in two different areas one in the east and one in the west of the Borough providing that it could be delivered within two collection days.

Some Members commented that they felt they were yet to be convinced of the case for supporting the introduction of a chargeable garden waste scheme. It was felt that this scheme was being proposed in order to achieve three things: to generate income; to achieve performance targets set locally and nationally; and to fulfil environmental objectives. Members commented on the take up of the service. It was felt by some of the Committee that the people that usually would dispose of all waste in their grey bins could continue to do so and that those people who made efforts to compost would be the most likely residents to use the scheme. It was also questioned how likely it would be that residents who currently took their garden waste to the household waste disposal site would pay £30 a year for it to be collected from their door.

Members asked Officers how they would assess whether the pilot project had been successful. Officers agreed that this was something they needed to think about. They agreed to put in additional information in the report for the Executive Committee about how this could be assessed. Members commented on the accompanying proposals to stop the sale of orange bags and to not permit residents to put garden waste in green bins. They asked what kind of measures would be undertaken to police this. Officers explained that as part of the waste collection process for recyclables, residents' green bins were checked on collection and this would be the approach taken for green waste and grey bins. The Council had not had to take any enforcement action against residents for misuse of bins and so it was considered unlikely to be a major cause of concern.

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Officers presented eight recommendations and one resolution that would be presented to the Executive Committee at their meeting on 18th November. Members voted in favour of introducing the scheme, however there was a split vote with four Members voting for and three Members voting against the scheme. They requested that this split in the vote be observed by Officers during the course of the Executive Committee meeting. All Members agreed that, if approved, the collection should be introduced in a pilot area initially rather than throughout the Borough. They also requested that the Council pursue recommendations 7a and 8a rather than recommendations 7b and 8b in the Officers' report.

## **RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) the Executive Committee approve Officers' recommendation to introduce an 'opt-in' chargeable garden waste collection;**
- 2) the Executive Committee agree to implement this scheme initially in the pilot area suggested by Officers;**
- 3) the Executive Committee endorse recommendation 7a that 'the amendment of the Council's current collection policy relating to garden waste in grey bins be considered to coincide with the start of the new service to prevent garden waste being placed in grey bins in the pilot area;**
- 4) the Executive Committee approves recommendation 8a that 'the amendment of the Council's collection policy relating to the sale of orange sacks be considered to coincide with the start of the new service to prevent waste, including garden waste being disposed of in orange sacks in the pilot area; and**

## **RESOLVED that**

- 5) the report be noted.**

## **111. CONSIDERATION OF BUDGET BIDS**

Officers informed the Committee that it had not been possible to provide the report detailing the budget bids in time for that meeting of the Committee. It had been suggested that, as it would be difficult to arrange for reports in the budget setting process to be completed for the Committee to pre-scrutinise, the Committee instead undertake post-scrutiny of those items.

Officers explained that the budget bids report was due to be considered by the Executive Committee on 18th November. It was therefore suggested that the Committee post-scrutinise this report at their meeting scheduled for 25th November. It had been suggested that the Fees and Charges report be post-scrutinised at a meeting of the Committee on 16th December following consideration of this report by the Executive Committee at its meeting scheduled for 9th December. Whilst it was expected that the majority of the decisions made during the meeting would be forwarded to Council as recommendations, the Executive Committee would also be able to make resolutions. However, the Committee was advised that any recommendations it wished to make on the Fees and Charges report could be referred back to the Executive Committee at their meeting on 7th January or to full Council on 1st February.

Members expressed concern that they had not been able to pre-scrutinise the Budget Bids report. They requested that a detailed explanation be provided by senior Officers which would clarify why reports relating to the budget bids and fees and charges items could not be provided for pre-scrutiny.

#### **RESOLVED that**

**further information be provided by senior Officers to the Committee explaining the reasons why the Budget Bids and Fees and Charges reports could not be provided for pre-scrutiny.**

#### **112. REFERRALS**

Officers informed the Committee that an issue for scrutiny was to be referred to the Committee from the Complaints Appeal Panel. This issue related to the procedures used by Property Services. The minutes of Panel would be submitted for consideration at the following meeting of the Committee which would help to provide further details about this referral.

#### **113. WORK PROGRAMME**

Members considered the Committee's Work Programme. They requested that an item be added to the Work Programme for consideration of the Committee. Members asked for the Committee to review the current Civil Parking Enforcement Scheme. Officers explained that this scheme had been introduced as a result of a scrutiny review into the subject and that a report could be tabled for

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the Committee as part of the Committee's role in monitoring scrutiny recommendations.

**RESOLVED that**

**Officers be invited to present information regarding the Civil Parking Enforcement Scheme at a meeting of the Committee in January.**

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm  
and closed at 8.45 pm

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Chair