



# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Thursday, 3rd January,  
2019

## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillor Joe Baker (Chair), Councillor Debbie Chance (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Joanne Beecham, Michael Chalk, Andrew Fry, Julian Grubb, Pattie Hill and Anthony Lovell

### Officers:

Jayne Pickering, Guy Revans and Paul Spooner

### Democratic Services Officers:

Jess Bayley and Amanda Scarce

#### **74. DEVELOPMENT PARTNER TO PROGRESS THE POSSIBLE REDEVELOPMENT OF WINYATES AND / OR MATCHBOROUGH DISTRICT CENTRES AND SURROUNDING AREAS - PRE-SCRUTINY - TO FOLLOW**

The Chair welcomed the Interim Head of the North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) and invited him to present the report.

The Interim Head of NWEDR explained that the report outlined the initial proposals for the redevelopment of Winyates and Matchborough district centres. These proposals would be considered by the Executive Committee at a meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> January which would then move the project on to the next stages, to include the establishment of a partnership board to oversee the work.

The following areas were then highlighted in detail:

- The bid for Worcestershire One Public Estate (OPE) funding to support the proposed feasibility study.
- The need to work with Homes England and the Delivery Partner Panel to carry out soft market testing.

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Chair

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 3rd January, 2019

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- The fact that both centres suffered from dated layout and design, which impacted on trade and income potential. This in turn led to an impact on the overall environment of the centres.
- The need for regeneration and improvement and the options available – the importance of getting this right was highlighted, in order to meet the needs of all concerned and to ensure that the Council was not put at a financial risk.
- The potential high costs of such a project and the work which had been carried out in recent months between NWEDR, the Planning and Regeneration Team and Homes England, together with Worcestershire OPE to explore a partnership approach.
- The funding streams which might be available and how to access these. This included a bid for £200k which was detailed within the report.
- The potential to provide additional housing of up to 400 units and to enhance the sports and leisure facilities.
- The need for the Council to work in partnership with the Arrow Vale RSA Academy and other public sector partners to ensure all related community services were integrated within the planned development.
- The process and advantages of working with Homes England and its Delivery Partner Panel to ensure that any risks to the Council were mitigated.
- The fact that all options would remain open to the Council upon completion of the soft market testing and the authority would not be obliged to commit to any of these options at the end of the process.
- The Interim Head of NWEDR had previous experience of working with a number of members of the Delivery Partner Panel and he advised that they had the expertise in similar projects and would be able to advise on what would be the best options available at the sites.
- The possibility of having one centre between the two areas and the use of all available land in appropriate ways.
- The Strategic Partnership framework and the restrictions which came with this option. It was highlighted that these partnerships were intended to support housing directly and did not have mixed use development experience. Should the Council opt for a Strategic Partnership an early commitment would need to be made to work with the partners on that partnership.

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Thursday, 3rd January, 2019

The Interim Head of NWEDR concluded that he would suggest to the Executive Committee that the Delivery Partner Panel was the most suitable option for the Council to consider at this stage. This would allow for the soft marketing exercise to take place and help shape the Council's own plans, with an option then to go back to the market with more formal proposals at a later date. This created minimal risks for the Council and provided an opportunity to receive expert advice on the best way forward in order to secure the ambitions of the Council to regenerate these areas in the best way possible.

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

- Previous plans which had been drawn up in respect of the regeneration of Matchborough and Winyates district centres. It was confirmed that these had been very basic but would help to form a vision of what the Council would like and would provide an indication to potential developers of what was expected.
- Whether residents had been consulted. Officers acknowledged that the report made little reference to consultation stages. However, as this was the very earliest stage of the process it was confirmed that consultation would not take place until completion of the soft market testing. Subsequently a steering group would be set up which would include all interested parties and would lead on stakeholder engagement.
- The potential for one district centre rather than two in the location and how this would be addressed in light of the current infrastructure in the area was discussed (reference to the Warwick Highway in particular was made). Officers acknowledged this issue and Members' attention was drawn to the plan provided within the report and the potential wider development area and land available.
- The number of houses that might be available and the breakdown of these. Specific reference was made to affordable housing and the potential loss of 29 Council houses as part of the redevelopment. Officers confirmed that there was the potential for up to 400 houses to be developed in line with the Council's planning strategy and this would include 30 per cent of the properties developed as affordable housing. There was further potential to increase the number of Council owned properties dependent on the final plans.

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Thursday, 3rd January, 2019

- The potential for one centre to service both areas and the impact of this on through traffic was considered. Members discussed the thinking behind the Redditch Development Corporation's original plans in the 1960s and 1970s, the development of the individual wards and how each area was served by highways infrastructure.
- The importance of consulting with Ward Councillors and local residents. Members expressed concerns that this had not happened for the redevelopment of Church Hill district centre to the detriment of the development, the community and partner organisations. Officers acknowledged that this was an important point to note.
- A number of Members noted that they were not particularly comfortable at this stage to opt for a particular route in respect of taking the development forward. Officers explained that by using the Delivery Partner Panel the Council was not making a commitment to a particular developer or route and therefore was able to make changes once the soft market testing had been completed, thus leaving the Council with all options still available to it.
- Members sought assurances that the mistakes made during the redevelopment of Church Hill district centre would not be repeated and any lessons learned would be taken on board.
- The importance of the provision of social housing, including Council housing, and the need for the authority to not just focus on developing affordable homes. Officers assured Members that there would be more detail around this within the next stage of the project. However, Members were assured that any plans would meet the Council's planning requirements and there was the potential for the number of Council owned houses to increase as part of the redevelopment.
- Members also questioned when local residents would be consulted and officers advised that consideration would be given to a statement being issued following the decision made at the Executive Committee meeting.
- Clarification in respect of the Arrow Vale Trust was requested and it was explained that this was the governing body of the Arrow Vale Academy.
- Reference was made to the photographs used in the bid document within the report and why the choice had been made to include these images. Officers noted that whilst

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Thursday, 3rd January, 2019

these did not show the centres in the best light, they had been used specifically for the purpose of the bid.

Members discussed the recommendations which would be considered by the Executive Committee and after further discussion the Committee

**RESOLVED that**

**the recommendations detailed in the report be noted; and**

**RECOMMENDED that**

**assurances be given that no Council housing stock or business unit assets would be lost from the redevelopment of the Winyates and Matchborough district centres.**

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm  
and closed at 7.57 pm

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