

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

22nd July 2010

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Diane Thomas (Chair), Councillor Anita Clayton (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Kath Banks, Bill Hartnett, Robin King, William Norton, Brenda Quinney, Mark Shurmer and Graham Vickery

Also Present:

Councillors Michael Braley, Brandon Clayton and Derek Taylor

Officers:

A de Warr, L Tompkin, J Bough, J Staniland, C Felton and S Powell
W Arthur and A Baker (Worcestershire County Council)

Committee Services Officer:

J Bayley, Denise Sunman

41. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor D Prodger, Worcestershire County Council.

42. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest or party whip.

43. ACTIONS LIST

The Committee considered the Overview and Scrutiny Actions List.

a) Referrals to the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel – Actions 1 and 4

Officers reported that Items 1 and 4, relating to actions which the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel had been asked to consider, had been completed during a meeting of the Panel on 15th July 2010. A further report on the work of the Panel to address these issues would be provided at the following meeting of the Committee on 4th August.

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b) REDI Centre – Action 10

The Committee was advised that copies of the presentation that had been delivered on the subject of the REDI Centre had been circulated for consideration as requested.

c) Budget Scrutiny – Action 12

As outlined in item 12 Members were informed that a meeting had been arranged for the Chair to meet with the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources and the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services on 16th August to discuss budget scrutiny.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

44. CONSIDERATION OF THE FORWARD PLAN

Members considered whether any items on the Forward Plan, 1st August to 30th November 2010, were suitable for further scrutiny.

RESOLVED that

the following reports be subject to further scrutiny:

- 1) **Council Plan (Part 1)**
- 2) **Climate Change Strategy**
- 3) **Pitcheroak Golf Course – Operational Options.**

45. TASK & FINISH REVIEWS - DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENTS

There were no draft scoping documents for the Committee to review.

46. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

The Committee received oral reports in relation to current reviews, namely:

a) Local Strategic Partnership

Members were informed that a report would be presented at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4th August 2010.

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b) Worcestershire Hub Review

Members were informed that no further meetings had taken place regarding this review.

RESOLVED that

the updates be noted.

47. BUS PASS SCHEME: COUNTY PROVISION - UPDATE

The Chair welcomed Officers from Worcestershire County Council (WCC) to the meeting.

The County Officers reported that WCC's strategic aim was to promote sustainable travel throughout the County. Members were informed that little information on future funding had been received from the Department for Transport (DfT). He confirmed that, although there was awareness that concessionary fares were more of an issue for parts of the County, the County Council would be looking for a consistent approach across all districts. It was further reported that different enhancement levels would be investigated across the districts but assistance with funding for these would be required at district level.

Members highlighted their concerns that any changes to the concessionary fares scheme, particularly removing availability for travel before 9.30am, would have a greater effect on Redditch residents than those living in the more rural areas of the County. They asked whether any investigations had been carried out to identify the effect of removing concessionary fares prior to 9.30am on the provision of public transport.

Members were informed that the County would provide a scheme that was in line with national requirements. Any discretionary enhancements to the scheme would need to be funded by each district. The County Council would be required to publish the scheme by 1st December 2010.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **a motion be put to full Council on 9th August 2010 asking that a letter be sent to the Department of Transport expressing concern about the lack of detailed information regarding funding for concessionary fares in 2011; and**

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- 2) the Executive Committee request that the Member of Parliament for Redditch be requested to make representations on behalf of the Council to the Department of Transport regarding funding for concessionary fares in 2011.

48. OLDER PERSONS HOUSING STRATEGY

Members received further information and a verbal presentation regarding the Older Persons Housing Strategy for pre-scrutiny by this Committee.

Members were informed that three Categories were being proposed:

- 1) Category A
 - a) Older Persons Supported Housing:
Suitable for persons aged 65 years old and over and who have an assessed support need.
 - b) Older Persons Housing (60 and over) – Bungalows:
Suitable for persons aged 60 years old and over with preference to be given where there is an assessed support need or to a wheelchair user.
- 2) Category B

Older Persons Housing (60 and over):
Suitable for persons aged 60 years old and over with or without an assessed support need.
- 3) Category C

Over 50's Housing:
Suitable for persons aged 50 years old and over with or without an assessed support need.

Members were informed which properties were included in each category.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) a further period of consultation on the options be carried out prior to any decision by full Council; and

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- 2) the Council ensure that as a minimum standard, the same number of properties in each category be maintained for each area of the Borough.

49. COUNCIL FLAT COMMUNAL CLEANING TASK AND FINISH REVIEW- MONITORING - CONSULTATION UPDATE REPORT

Members considered a report on the outcome of focused consultation in Exhall Close and Winyates regarding communal cleaning arrangements in Council properties as suggested by the Council Flat Communal Cleaning Task and Finish Group in June 2009.

This further consultation work had been commissioned following consideration of the outcome of a wider consultation process with a larger number of local residents in February 2010 which had received a low response rate. During a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in March it had been agreed that this response had been disappointing and that a more focussed approach to consultation might generate a larger response rate.

The Committee was advised that whilst the response rate had risen, particularly in Winyates, the number of residents who had participated in the more recent, focussed consultation exercise had remained low. Furthermore, whilst a number of respondents had been in favour of receiving a communal cleaning service there had been little support amongst residents regarding payment for this service.

The Committee concluded that the consultation process had revealed a lack of interest amongst residents in progressing the application of a communal cleaning service in all Council properties. Therefore, they agreed that no further consultation was required from Officers. However, members noted that residents could still collectively ask for a chargeable communal cleaning service to be introduced for specific Council properties where required.

RECOMMENDED that

no further action on consultation regarding cleaning of communal areas in Council properties take place unless groups of residents in properties, not currently included in the cleaning contract, approach the Council for a cleaning service.

50. REFERRALS

There were no referrals to the meeting.

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51. WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the Committee's current Work Programme and noted that the following items would be considered during the meeting on 4th August 2010.

- 1) Local Strategic Partnership Task and Finish Group – Final Report;
- 2) Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel – Report from meeting on 15th July 2010; and
- 3) Petition – Winyates Ward.

Members were reminded that a Scrutiny Work Programme Planning Event, to which all members had been invited, would take place on Monday, 26th July 2010 in the Council Chamber commencing at 6pm.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00p.m.
and closed at 9.12p.m.

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Chair