

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 1st February,
2024

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Sid Khan (Chair), Councillor Sharon Harvey (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Imran Altaf, Karen Ashley, Chris Holz, Joanna Kane, Emma Marshall, Jane Spilsbury and Monica Stringfellow

Also Present:

Councillor Matthew Dormer – Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Development, Commercialism and Partnerships

Officers:

Guy Revans, Ruth Bamford, Matthew Bough (on Microsoft Teams), Jonathan Cochrane and Matthew Eccles (on Microsoft Teams).

Democratic Services Officers:

M Sliwinski

64. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no apologies for absence.

65. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

Councillor Harvey declared that the report at Minute Item 69. Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategies named the school where she was employed. However, it was confirmed that no further interest existed than coincidental naming of the school in the report. Therefore, Councillor Harvey remained in the room and took part in the debate during the consideration of the above item.

66. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 4th January 2024 were submitted for Members' consideration.

Chair

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 1st February, 2024

During the consideration of the minutes, progress on actions following on from the last meeting were discussed.

RESOLVED that

the Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 4th January 2024 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

67. PUBLIC SPEAKING

There were no public speakers registered to speak at this meeting.

68. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY - INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS

It was announced that this item was withdrawn from the Executive Committee Work Programme and was therefore no longer available for pre-scrutiny.

69. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY - PLAYING PITCH AND BUILT FACILITIES STRATEGIES

The Development Services Manager presented the report on the Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategies business plan and in doing so drew Members' attention that these were the two outstanding strategies arising from the Leisure and Culture Strategy that was presented to Overview and Scrutiny, and subsequently approved by the Executive Committee in October 2022.

The Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategies covered the following points:

- How many of these facilities did Redditch have?
- What was the quality of these facilities?
- Were these facilities accessible?
- What was the current demand?
- What was the future demand up to the final year of the Local Plan in 2040?

These documents were designed to assist the Council in making decisions with regard to playing pitches and built facilities. It was highlighted by Officers that physical activity levels were relatively low in Redditch and it was therefore imperative that appropriate interventions could be designed to encourage people to be

physically active, particularly groups which faced barriers to taking part in physical activity.

Officers presented the recommendations of the report. It was explained that the first recommendation asked that both strategies be endorsed, the second recommendation asked that the authority be delegated to the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, to implement the first tranche of recommendations as listed in the report recommendations.

Officers reported that with respect to the Executive Summary for Playing Pitch Strategy (Appendix D), this had to be republished subsequently to the publication of the papers as the original version contained an error in the listing of the recommendations. The correct version was printed at Additional Papers 4 to the agenda for this meeting.

Following the presentation, Members discussed the contents of the report. The following points were raised:

- Transport from South of the Borough to sports and leisure facilities – Officers noted that this would be addressed through recommendation 8 of the Built Facility Strategy which proposed that the Council's Development Services Team to focus their resources on areas where most transformative impact could be made. This aligned with the national strategy for local authorities to address physical inactivity through cross-departmental work and through work with partners and stakeholders. This would include working transport providers to allow appropriate access to facilities.
- Integrated operational leisure management across Redditch and Bromsgrove – It was noted that this Recommendation 2 of the Built Facility Strategy could only be implemented once appropriate governance changes within Rubicon had taken place.
- External Funding Sources – It was noted that the Council was awaiting news as to whether it would be eligible to have access to a place-based national funding pot from Sports England (£250m) within the next 2 years.
- Public Use of Schools' Sports Facilities – Officers noted that discussions would be taking place to enable use of schools' facilities by the public outside school hours through Community Use Agreements with the schools where plausible.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 1st February, 2024

- Governance arrangements – Officers explained that the strategy process (for both Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategies) was managed by a Steering Group and signed off by Sports England as the supervising body over the Strategies.
- It was explained that it was not possible to provide timelines for the implementation of the next tranche of recommendations as some of the recommendations of both Strategies were dependent on national policy.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **The Built Facility Strategy at Appendix A and the Playing Pitch Strategy at Appendix B are endorsed.**
- 2) **Delegated authority be granted to the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Leisure to implement the following recommendations:**

Built Facility Strategy: 1, 3, 5, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14

Playing Pitch Strategy: 1.1, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 5.1, 6.1, 6.3, 7.1, 7.2, 8.1, 8.3, 8.5

70. **PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY - CARBON REDUCTION STRATEGY - ANNUAL REVIEW**

The Chair introduced this report and in doing so noted that the Performance Scrutiny Working Group had made a recommendation with respect to this report at their meeting on 8th January 2024. The recommendation read as follows: *that tree and hedgerow planting be added to the list of performance measures in the Carbon Reduction Strategy.*

The Climate Change Manager and the Strategic Housing Services Manager jointly presented the report. Members were advised that when the Carbon Reduction Strategy was approved by Members in autumn 2022, it had been agreed that there should be an annual review of the strategy and the Council's progress with achieving carbon reduction targets. Following the Council's declaration of a climate emergency, the authority was aiming to achieve net zero by 2040. The aims and objectives detailed in the strategy would enable the Council to address this objective.

In terms of the eleven targets detailed in the report, seven had already commenced or been completed whilst four remained to be started. In particular, there had been a significant amount of work

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 1st February, 2024

undertaken in respect of Local Authority Delivery Phase 3 (LAD 3), to retrofit properties in the private sector for low income households. The Town Hall improvement works that had already been undertaken as well as a reduction of 41 per cent in car mileage for staff employed by Redditch Borough Council had also had a significant impact on the progress with the Strategy that had been achieved to date.

It was noted that work on targets 5, 6 and 9: relating to creation of performance dashboard measures for carbon savings from streamlining operations, energy audit of server rooms, and energy assessment of shop mobility hub at Kingfisher Centre would commence this year.

Following the presentation, Members discussed the report and the following matters were raised:

- Carbon Reduction Strategy Performance Dashboard – Officers noted that once the dashboard is finalised, it would first be available internally to Officers only. When Officers had finalised the suite of measures, it would be released publicly, subject to elected members' agreement. It was anticipated that the Performance Dashboard would be finalised by end of year two of the current Strategy (i.e. February/March 2025).
- Trial of eScooters in Redditch – It was confirmed that this would no longer be going ahead.
- Complete Carbon Literacy training for Corporate Management Team, 4th Tier Managers and Councillors – It was noted that roll-out of this training was almost complete. Sessions to elected members would again be delivered in the new municipal year.
- It was requested by Members that at the next review a revised version of the Plan be provided with updated numbering and dates as the version provided included target dates that were now out of date. Officers undertook to correct this in the next iteration of the Plan.
- Members thanked the Officers for bringing the Carbon Reduction Strategy to Overview and Scrutiny. It was noted that this was the third time the Strategy was scrutinised this year, following scrutiny at meetings of Performance Scrutiny Working Group and Climate Change Working Group.

Following the discussion, the recommendation that was put forward by Performance Scrutiny Working Group on the 8th January 2024 was moved and seconded for recommending to the Executive Committee and on being put to the vote it was carried.

A second vote then took place on the recommendations as printed in the reported and on being put to the vote, they were endorsed.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) The findings of this annual review of the Carbon Reduction Strategy (Appendix 2) be endorsed.**
- 2) Council accept the proposal to align Carbon Reduction Strategy measures to the Climate Action Scorecard into an accessible performance dashboard.**
- 3) Tree and hedgerow planting be added to the list of performance measures in the Carbon Reduction Strategy.**

71. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

The Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report was submitted for Members' consideration.

During the discussion, Members commented on the lateness of the reports submitted to this Committee meeting and the confusion caused by the large number of additional paper packs. The Committee Officer apologised for any inconvenience caused by the large amount of papers submitted for this meeting.

The Chairman noted that the Annual Report highlighted that scrutiny had considered and scrutinised a wide range of topics during this municipal year. The Chairman thanked all Members of the Committee for all of their hard work over the course of the current municipal year.

RESOLVED that

Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2023-24 be approved.

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

The Executive Work Programme was submitted for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED that

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 1st February, 2024

the contents of the Executive Committee's Work Programme be noted.

73. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme was submitted for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED that

the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be noted.

74. TASK GROUPS, SHORT SHARP REVIEWS AND WORKING GROUPS - UPDATE REPORTS

Updates on Task Groups and Working Groups were provided as follows:

- a) Budget Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Kane

Councillor Kane reported that the next meeting of the Working Group was scheduled for Monday 5th February 2024.

- b) Performance Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Holz

Councillor Holz reported that a meeting took place on 8th January 2024 at which recommendation was made with respect to Carbon Reduction Strategy, which was endorsed earlier in the meeting. There were to be a further two meetings of the Working Group over February / March 2024.

- c) Fly Tipping and Bulky Waste Task Group – Chair, Councillor Khan

Councillor Khan reported that the next meeting of the Task Group was due to take place on 8th February 2024.

RESOLVED that

the Task Groups, Short Sharp Reviews and Working Groups Update Reports be noted.

75. EXTERNAL SCRUTINY BODIES - UPDATE REPORTS

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 1st February, 2024

Councillor Marshall had submitted written reports on the following meetings of external scrutiny bodies she attended:

- West Midlands Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 29th January 2024
- West Midlands Combined Authority Transport Delivery Overview and Scrutiny – 22nd January 2024
- Worcestershire Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 9th January 2024.

The Committee thanked Councillor Marshall for providing comprehensive reports from the meetings of these external bodies.

During the discussion, reference was made to the 'state of the region' report of WMCA and the fact that across the West Midlands region, there was reduction in people taking up apprenticeship and a relatively low educational attainment by young people. It was noted by Members that data from WMCA would be important in the context of the proposal for a short, sharp review of post-16 education in the Borough (which would be discussed at the next Overview and Scrutiny meeting on 19th February). Councillor Marshall noted that Officers from WMCA could be invited to a meeting of the Short, Sharp Review Group if this was felt to be necessary.

RESOLVED that

the External Scrutiny Bodies updates be noted.

76. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that

Under S100 A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matters on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 of the said act, as amended.

Minute Item No. 77 – Pre-Decision Scrutiny – Termination of Shared Service Arrangement: North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration.

77. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY - TERMINATION OF SHARED SERVICE ARRANGEMENT: NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

The Interim Executive Director presented a report which detailed proposals for the termination of the shared service for North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWeDR).

Members were informed that in the summer of 2023, the Leader of Wyre Forest District Council had approached the Leader of the Council as well as the Leader of Bromsgrove District Council, which also formed part of the shared service, to advise them of Wyre Forest District Council's intention to ask to end the shared service agreement. This shared service had been in place for over 10 years and had provided economic development and regeneration services in the north of the county during this time. Officers had subsequently been attending meetings with representatives of Wyre Forest District Council to discuss this matter further and, subject to an exit agreement between all parties, the shared service would cease to operate on 30th June 2024. End of terms were still being negotiated and would need to address issues such as indemnity clauses.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) to agree that the Collaboration Agreement relating to the Provision of Economic Development and Regeneration Services should be terminated mutually under clause 15.1 (Determination of this Agreement), with effect from 30th June 2024 and that a new Exit Agreement be entered into;**
- 2) to delegate to the Executive Director (interim) and the Executive Director for Resources, following consultation with the Executive Member for Planning, Economic Development, Commercialism and Partnerships, authority to negotiate, finalise and approve the Exit Agreement and to take any other steps that arose from the termination process; and**
- 3) an additional budget of £72,836 be approved for the new structure.**

(During the consideration of this item, Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to move to exclude the press and public prior to

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 1st February, 2024

any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed which related to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and which related to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority).

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 8.09 pm