

**[OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, 2ND MARCH 2011 – EXTRACT FROM MINUTES]**

**199. REDDITCH SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY – PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee received the Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy 2011-14 for pre-scrutiny.

Members were advised that the four priorities contained in the strategy in part reflected the issues identified in the 2009 Comprehensive Area Assessment where Worcestershire had been given a 'red flag' for differences in the quality of life for people living in Redditch compared to the rest of the County. Redditch had been performing particularly poorly against the rest of the county in terms of health inequalities and educational attainment. The Council had also undertaken two consultation events in 2010 which had informed the development of the refreshed strategy.

Members suggested that the Plan needed to have a focus on the growing problem of young people being in neither education, employment nor training (NEET). Officers acknowledged the concern and suggested that further discussion was required with local education providers. Schools had stressed during consultation that raising levels of attainment and aspiration was very important. Members further suggested that putting a greater emphasis on the equal value of vocational learning and academic learning could help stem the rising number of NEETs.

Members further suggested that the strategy should address issues around mental health and old age to sufficiently prepare for an ageing population. It was acknowledged that the general population of Redditch was ageing gradually. However, it was not felt that this had become a pertinent issue in the Borough, especially in comparison to neighbouring areas.

The Committee raised concerns that the four action plans that formed appendices to the strategy contained insufficient information regarding the allocation of resources and where responsibility for delivery was located. It was felt that the lack of available information might imply either a lack of ownership or accountability for delivery. However, it was recognised that the action plans were working documents and therefore it had not been possible for all of the suggested information to be provided at the date of publication.

The appropriate measures for the actions to tackle obesity were discussed. Due to the nature of the subject and the actions involved it was accepted that it would be difficult to measure success. In these circumstances it was suggested that the actions should be regarded as aspirations rather than as deliverables.

Members urged all members of the Redditch Partnership to ensure that key organisational policies aligned with the strategy's aims and planned actions. This would help to meet the Local Strategic Partnership's core objectives.

Finally, reference was made to Appendix D to the report, the Winyates Areas of Highest Need (AOHN) Action Plan. Members suggested that the precise streets and locations referred to as the Winyates Centre for the purposes of the project should be specified.

**RECOMMENDED that:**

**subject to noting the Committee's comments, the Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy be approved.**