



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

20th August 2008

Committee

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Phil Mould (Chair), Councillor David Smith (Vice-Chair) and Councillors K Banks, W Hartnett, W Norton and D Thomas

Also Present:

Councillor B Quinney

Officers:

T Beech, L Bellaby, G Harris, T Kristunas and J Staniland

Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer:

H Saunders

47. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Chalk and Taylor.

The Committee was informed by the Labour Group Leader that, further to the decision of the Council on 11th August, he had yet to appoint the extra minority Overview and Scrutiny Committee Member to the Committee. He explained that he would inform the Committee as soon as possible of the identity of the new Member.

48. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

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

49. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday the 30th of July be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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Chair

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50. ACTIONS LIST

The Committee considered the latest issue of the Actions List.

Officers informed the Committee that Action Six, regarding the outcome of the discussion during the Work Programme Planning Afternoon on the subject of relations between the Overview and Scrutiny and the Executive Committee had been completed. The Executive Committee had considered this issue at their meeting held on the 13th of August and had concurred with the comments made.

It was reported that for Action Eleven, Councillor Smith had approached Officers to request that the start date of the Housing Mutual Exchange review, which he was due to chair, be moved from 26th of November to the 17th December. Members agreed this suggestion and requested that Officers amend the Actions List and Work Programme accordingly.

Officers explained that they had investigated the constitutional requirements for the composition of Task and Finish Groups as requested in Action Twelve. Officers confirmed that, when appointing Members to Task and Finish Groups, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee were obliged to consult with Party Group Leaders. Officers explained that consultation with the Group leaders on the membership of the current Task and Finish Groups had taken place. This had resulted in one extra Member appointment to the Third Sector Task and Finish Group.

Officers informed the Committee that the seven points listed under Action Thirteen, that had resulted from the Committee's consideration of the Performance Outturn Report, had been completed and responses emailed to Members. With regards to points 2 and 3 relating to indicator ET05 "incidents of fly tipping", Officers from Environmental Services had offered to attend a future meeting of the Committee to explain these points in further detail. Members agreed this proposal.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Officers amend the Work Programme to reflect the new start date of 17th December for the Housing Mutual Exchange review; and**

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- 2) **Environmental Services Officers attend a future meeting of the Committee to provide further detail regarding fly tipping in the town.**

51. CALL-IN AND PRE-SCRUTINY

There were no call-ins and no proposed items for scrutiny.

52. TASK & FINISH REVIEWS - DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENTS

There were no draft scoping documents on this occasion.

53. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

The Committee considered update reports in relation to current reviews.

The following oral reports were given:

a) The Role of the Mayor Task and Finish Group

In the absence of Councillor Chalk, Officers provided an update for this item. The Committee were informed that the Group had held their second meeting where they had interviewed the Mayor's Secretary about current arrangements for the Mayor. Officers also reported that at this meeting the Group had decided that they would like to interview past Mayors from other local authorities in Worcestershire. Officers were in the process of organising interviews to take place in September.

b) Third Sector Task and Finish Group

Councillor Thomas reported that the Group had undertaken their third and fourth meetings. At the third meeting, members of the Group had interviewed the Council's three Party Group Leaders. The objective of these interviews was to clarify the Council's purpose for giving out grants and donations. Councillor Thomas explained that at this meeting, the Group discovered that the Council had not officially signed up to the Worcestershire Compact, as the Council had not been officially represented at the relevant meeting of the Compact Group.

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Councillor Thomas explained that, at their fourth meeting, the Group had interviewed the Acting Borough Director about the Council's purpose for giving out grants and donations. The Group had decided to interview other comparable local authorities that had reviewed their procedures for allocating grants and donations. The Group had decided to interview Officers from Gloucester City Council and from Worcestershire County Council. In the case of other comparable local authorities that were located too far away for interviews to be practical, a list of questions was to be sent to relevant Officers to complete.

The Committee was informed that, at the next meeting of the Group, Councillor Thomas and co-opted member Ann Sowton were due to present information to the Group on how to work towards an "outcomes focus". In addition, the Group were due to compile a list of questions for their interview with Officers from Gloucester City Council and other comparable local authorities.

RESOLVED that

the Task and Finish Group reports be noted.

54. JOINT SCRUTINY EXERCISE ON FLOODING

Officers provided an update on the ongoing Joint Scrutiny Exercise on Flooding. The Committee was informed that the final report was currently being drafted and circulated amongst members of the Scrutiny Group. Once this was completed, the report would be presented to each of the District authorities' Overview and Scrutiny Committees. It was anticipated that Worcestershire County Council and each District authority would follow their own processes in consideration of the report at the Overview and Scrutiny stage and in submission to their Executives.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

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55. JOBS, EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMY – REVIEW OF SCRUTINY REPORT

The Committee considered a review of previous Overview and Scrutiny work in the area of Economic Development.

At a previous Committee meeting in March, members of the Committee had outlined several points for further scrutiny on issues relating to economic development. Officers explained that these points had been listed in the Actions List under Action Three. The first point had requested that the Jobs, Economy, and Employment report produced by the old Leisure, Tourism and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee be re-circulated for consideration at a future meeting of the Committee. Officers explained that Members needed to decide what action, if any, they wished to take on the remaining points for further scrutiny.

Officers explained that a report was due to be considered at a meeting of the Executive Committee on the 3rd of September. This report focused on presenting draft economic development priorities for the Council. The Committee was informed that many of the findings contained within the Jobs, Economy and Employment Scrutiny Report had been taken into account and that the Scrutiny report was appended to the report to the Executive Committee. Members of the Committee decided that, as issues of economic development were due to be presented to the Executive Committee, no further action was required on this item.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **no further action be taken at the present time with regard to the scrutiny of economic development; and**
- 2) **the report be noted.**

56. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE MONITORING APRIL - JUNE 2008

The Committee considered the first quarter performance monitoring report.

Officers explained that National Indicators denoted by 'NI' in the spreadsheet information had been introduced to replace the old Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) from April 2008. Officers explained that these National Indicators were expected to

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be the only indicators to be reported to central Government. However, until the National Indicators had been fully embedded, the Council would continue to collect information on the old BVPIs and on some of the local indicators.

Members requested clarification on how indicator NI191 'residual household waste per household' was measured. Officers responded that this indicator was measured in kilograms per household. Officers offered to clarify this in the indicator description. Members also queried the 'Target' column. Officers confirmed that this column referred to the annual targets for each of the indicators. Officers explained they would adjust the title of the column to reflect this.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Officers amend the Performance Monitoring Report as set out in the preamble above; and**
- 2) the report be noted.**

57. QUARTERLY BUDGET MONITORING APRIL - JUNE 2008

The first quarter budget monitoring report was considered by the Committee.

Members queried whether the assumptions made within the report took into consideration the current national economic situation. Officers responded that they had not noticed any significant potential problems. Members asked whether contingencies had been factored in to budget projections. Officers explained that consideration would have to be given to projections on fuel for vehicles used by the Council. It was likely that as the Council used fixed term contracts for fuel there could be potential problems when these ended.

RESOLVED that

the Quarterly Budget Monitoring report be noted.

58. REFERRALS

The Committee considered a referral from Councillor Hicks about an issue that had arisen at a recent Winyates PACT meeting.

Councillor Hicks had suggested that a scrutiny exercise might be

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undertaken to look at the Council's response to neighbour nuisance. Members queried the Council's remit in dealing with neighbour nuisance that resulted from private tenants or householders. Officers explained that the Council was required to deal with issues of neighbour nuisance from Council tenants. However, the Council could act where situations of neighbour nuisance had occurred with private tenants or householders if a Council tenant was involved.

Officers advised that, as the wider Anti-Social Behaviour service area was so large, any such scrutiny would need to be extremely focused to concentrate on neighbour nuisance. The Committee decided that it wished to receive further information from Councillor Hicks regarding this proposed review.

RESOLVED that

Councillor Hicks be invited to submit a scoping document for consideration at a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 7.45 pm