

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

29th November 2011

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Phil Mould (Chair), Councillor Mark Shurmer (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Peter Anderson, Andrew Brazier, Simon Chalk, Andrew Fry, Gay Hopkins, Brenda Quinney and Alan Mason

Also Present:

Councillor J Brunner (Portfolio Holder – Community Safety and Regulatory Services)

Officers:

L Hadley, A Heighway, R McAndrew, E Hopkins, J Pickering and S Singleton

Committee Services Officer:

M Craggs, D Sunman

125. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Hartnett and Stephens.

126. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest nor of any party whip.

127. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Tuesday, 8th November 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

128. ACTIONS LIST

Members considered the latest version of the Committee's Actions List.

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Chair

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Officers reported that information regarding Action 1, removal of unused bin cupboards from Council properties to discourage further fly tipping, would soon be circulated to members of the Committee, when finalised.

RESOLVED that

the Committee's Actions List be noted.

129. PETITION - TOWN CENTRE PARKING

The Committee received a petition regarding Short Stay Parking in Redditch, Church Green and surrounding areas.

Members were informed that the Lead Petitioner was not available to attend the meeting and that a meeting of relevant town centre agencies would take place on 2nd December 2011 to discuss a way forward. It was proposed, therefore, that consideration of the petition be deferred until the next meeting to enable the lead petitioner to attend and for Members to receive feedback from the meeting on 2nd December 2011 to help inform discussion.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the petition had been received and discussion deferred to the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 24th January 2012; and**
- 2) Officers present a report on parking issues following the meeting of relevant town centre agencies on 2nd December 2012.**

130. PETITION - SEXUAL HEALTH INFORMATION SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The Committee received a petition regarding the Time 4 U Sexual Health Service provided at Arrow Vale High School.

Members were informed that Worcestershire County Council, as the provider of the Time 4 U Sexual Health Service, had also received the petition and would be addressing the issues raised at the next meeting of the Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Committee on Thursday, 1st December 2011.

RESOLVED that

the petition be noted.

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131. PORTFOLIO HOLDER ANNUAL REPORT - COMMUNITY SAFETY AND REGULATORY SERVICES

Further to consideration of the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Regulatory Services written report at the meeting of this Committee on 18th October 2011 and members' agreed questions to be put to the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Juliet Brunner, in respect of her Annual Report, the following responses were provided:

- 1) What affect will the cuts in Police numbers have on crime and disorder in Redditch?

Members were advised that West Mercia Police were still recruiting Police Officers but staffing implications for Redditch were still unclear and subject to an ongoing review. A meeting had taken place between Councillors and the Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) to raise concerns about any reductions in relation to the potential effect on crime and disorder. The ACC gave assurances that resources would be made available to tackle areas of highest need, of which there are three areas in Redditch which West Mercia Police have identified as priority neighbourhoods.

- 2) What will the future provision of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) be in Redditch?

Members were informed that research and project work to identify savings within West Mercia Police was ongoing. It is expected that Redditch is in a strong position to command a significant portion of the PCSO resources once these have been decided given that three of West Mercia's priority policing areas are located in the Borough. Assurances had been given that every effort would be made to secure as many PCSOs for Redditch as possible.

- 3) To what extent have the location of CCTV cameras in Redditch been reviewed and. In particular, how possible would it be to relocate CCTV cameras from existing locations to areas of greater need, if considered necessary?

Existing camera locations had been individually assessed to ensure that landscaping (particularly tree growth) did not impact negatively. Street lighting improvements had been carried out on Unicorn Hill and in Matchborough following assessment by CCTV that white lighting was required in those areas.

In areas where new development is proposed CCTV

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requirements will be reviewed at the planning stage. E.g. Church Hill shopping centre.

A joint agency approach has been carried out for site evaluation of any suggested new sites for CCTV to facilitate identification of the most suitable and cost effective solution for that site.

Once enacted the 'Protection of Freedoms Bill' the Home Office will be required to publish a Code of Conduct for the use of CCTV to identify where CCTV cameras are to be installed in future. Following this Code will provide an effective mechanism for the assessment of the Redditch CCTV scheme.

Members were advised that relocating existing CCTV cameras could be complex and dependent on the type of system in operation and the location and costs could vary greatly. In future, use of wireless technology could assist in redeployment of cameras to identified 'hotspots' more easily.

- 4) What action, if any, is planned to address the noise caused to scrap metal dealers? To what extent can this be addressed through the licensing processes?

Members were informed that, owing to the transient nature of the activity, it cannot be classed as a statutory nuisance as defined in the Environment Protection Act 1990 unless some form of loudspeaker was being used to amplify the bugle sound. However, action could be taken if offenders were caught in the act of using loudspeakers. Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) together with partners, including the police, would continue to carry out spot checks regarding safety of vehicles and trading provisions.

- 5) What will the implications of the introduction of directly elected police commissioners for community safety budgets? What implications, if any, will there be for CCTV systems in the town?

Members were advised that the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) could impact on future resourcing of Community Safety Partnerships. Funding regimes had already changed and Redditch would receive £56,068 in 2012/13 compared to £107,400 for 2011/12. However, the reduction of funding was to be less severe in Redditch compared to many neighbouring areas due to needs based funding formula being introduced.

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From 2013/14 funding for Community Safety Partnerships (CSP), Drug Intervention Programmes and the Violence Against Women and Girls would be transferred to the PCCs. There would, however, be a mutual duty of cooperation between PCCs and CSPs when compiling Police and Crime Plan and CSP strategic assessments.

Funding for CCTV was not the direct responsibility of the West Mercia Police or the CSP. Therefore, the new PCC will not have a direct impact on provision of the service.

A slide presentation was shown that highlighted the following projects:

- Redditch Roadway Arts Project
- Home Security Guide / Smart Water Initiative
- Security Improvements at Beoley Grange and Winyates
- Community Cohesion
- Anti Social Behaviour
- CCTV Accreditation

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

132. HOUSING TRAILBLAZERS - PRESENTATION

The Committee received a report and presentation on the Council's Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer Initiative 2009 to 2011, which had been grant funded by the Department of Communities and Local Government. The grant had been awarded in recognition of the 'good practice' that had been introduced following the recommendations made by the former Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee in their report 'Preventing Homelessness' published in 2006.

Officers provided information on examples where the intervention of the Housing Options Team had made a significant difference and had prevented homelessness.

Officers agreed to provide additional information regarding the use of Housing PODs as part of the scheme.

Members congratulated relevant Officers on the success of the Housing Trailblazers scheme in Redditch.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

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133. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2012/13 - 2014/15

The Committee received an oral update on the budget build for 2012/13, 2013/14-2015/16.

Officers suggested that it would be useful for Members to consider the budget bids for 2012/13 early in the New Year. The Chair proposed the meeting be held under the auspices of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with all non-Executive Committee Members invited.

As requested, Officers agreed to provide members with the criteria for defining low income working people.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the report be noted; and**
- 2) that an additional meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be arranged mid January 2012 to provide members with a further update on the budgets for 2012/13, 2013/14-2015/16.**

134. REGIONAL SCRUTINY NETWORK MEETING

The Chair reported that he and an Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer had attended a meeting of the Regional Scrutiny Network on 17th November 2011 at the University of Birmingham.

The topics discussed had included:

- a) Working arrangements for the Regional Scrutiny Network;
- b) Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP);
- c) West Midlands Councils – the Regional Agenda; and
- d) National Legislation and Scrutiny.

A handout of the presentation slides on the LEP was circulated at the meeting for information.

The Chair suggested that two members of the Committee (one from each party) attend the next meeting of the Regional Scrutiny Network on 15th March 2012.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

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135. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES AND SCRUTINY OF THE FORWARD PLAN

The Committee reviewed the contents of the Forward Plan and considered whether any items were suitable for scrutiny.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the Core Strategy – Consultation be subject to post-scrutiny at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 24th January 2012.**
- 2) the Executive Committee minutes for 15th November 2011 be noted.**

136. PORTFOLIO HOLDER ANNUAL REPORT - LEISURE AND WRITTEN PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee received a written report which detailed the performance of services within the remit of the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism, Councillor Derek Taylor.

On the basis of the information contained within the report Members requested that the following questions be addressed by the Portfolio Holder in his Annual Report to the Committee, which has been scheduled to be delivered on 24th January 2012.

- 1) What process does your department have in place for promoting community liaison?
- 2) In relation to the Palace Theatre:
 - a) has the introduction of a new management structure and changes to the Theatre's productions generated the savings and additional income expected?
 - b) what work has been done to ensure that the new productions are attracting as wide a section of the local community to the Theatre?
- 3) How well is the new contract at the Arrow Valley Countryside Centre working for people in Redditch?
- 4) What events are being arranged around the Olympic torch coming through Redditch in the summer?
- 5) What impact has the new shared service arrangements in your department made upon the Council's revenue?

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- 6) How is the additional income that is being generated from the sale of timber through the Parks and Open Spaces policy being used elsewhere by the Council?

RESOLVED that

the content of the written performance report be noted.

137. TASK & FINISH REVIEWS - DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENTS

Councillor Quinney presented a proposal to review the Redditch Market.

Members were informed that North Worcestershire Economic Development Service are responsible for managing the markets in both Redditch and Bromsgrove. Officers outlined ongoing work to appoint a Markets Supervisor and subsequently produce a business plan, which would assist in the evidence gathering for the proposed review.

Members gave their support to the concept of the review. However, concerns were expressed regarding the availability of resources to begin a Task and Finish Review immediately. It was suggested that a more suitable start date might be to begin the review in May or June 2012, following the local elections and the conclusion of existing scrutiny reviews. Councillor Mason suggested that it might be useful to begin evidence gathering immediately to facilitate the review.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **a Task and Finish review of the Redditch Markets be launched to begin in May / June 2012; and**
- 2) **Councillors Quinney and Mason be appointed to the review group, the former as Chair, and to organise evidence gathering with Officers to inform the review at its start date.**

138. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

The Committee received the following reports in relation to current reviews:

- a) Facilities for Disabled People – Chair, Councillor Alan Mason

Councillor Mason reported that a questionnaire had been compiled and was now available for completion. A number of interviews had taken place with relevant agencies to help

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gain a further understanding of the facilities for disabled people in the Borough.

b) Improving Recycling – Chair, Councillor Gay Hopkins

Members were informed that at its most recent meeting on 23rd November 2011 the Group had received a number of presentations on the local recycling process, including on local provision for Bring Banks recycling, and on the 100% Project which had been established in 2007 to provide all households in Redditch with a regular recycling collection.

The Group had also visited the EnviroSort Materials Reclamation Facility (MRF) in Norton on 9th November 2011 where they received a tour of the plant and learned how the recyclable materials collected by the Council are processed.

i) Promoting Sporting Participation – Chair, Councillor Luke Stephens

On behalf of the absent Chair, Officers reported that a meeting had been held with the Sports Development Unit on 10th November 2011 to discuss provision of sport for disabled people in Redditch. Members heard that opportunities for disabled to play sport in the Borough were beginning to increase.

The Group had a couple of forthcoming meetings, including holding a joint meeting with the Youth Services Provision Task and Finish Group on Monday, 12th December to interview the Council's Communications Manager.

c) Youth Services Provision – Chair, Councillor Simon Chalk

Members were advised that a meeting had taken place with the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services. A visit had been arranged to the Lounge at Alvechurch, an internet coffee shop for young people to help determine whether a similar facility could be set up in Redditch.

RESOLVED that

the reports be noted.

139. HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor Quinney reported that she had no update for this meeting.

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140. REFERRALS

No referrals had been received for consideration.

141. WORK PROGRAMME

Members were advised that the meeting of the Committee scheduled for 3rd January 2012 had been cancelled.

The Meeting commenced at 6.02 pm
and closed at 9.02 pm

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Chair