

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Tuesday, 17th April, 2012

## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillor Phil Mould (Chair), and Councillors Peter Anderson, Andrew Brazier, Simon Chalk, Bill Hartnett, Gay Hopkins, Brenda Quinney, Alan Mason and Luke Stephens

### Also Present:

Tim Deakin (Wychavon District Council)

### Officers:

J Pickering, R Bamford, P Liddington and L Hadley

### Committee Services Officer:

M Craggs and A Scarce

## 212. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies were received from Councillors Andy Fry and Mark Shurmer.

## 213. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

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

## 214. MINUTES

### RESOLVED that

**The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 2nd April 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.**

## 215. CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT - ANNUAL MONITORING UPDATE REPORT

The Committee received the annual Civil Parking Enforcement Service Update Report and noted that the service was self-financing and the current arrangements whereby Wychavon District

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Chair

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Council operated the service on half of the Council continued to work well.

Members noted that there was currently three Civil Enforcement Officers who patrolled all areas of the Borough with the option of filling a vacant post if it was deemed necessary.

The Committee received details of the Residents' Parking Schemes (RPSs) and it was noted that the administration of the RPSs was now the responsibility of Wychavon District Council and that all permit applications were undertaken by a postal service and the administration costs were met by the income received from those Permit applications.

The Committee was informed that a superseding report would shortly be considered by the Executive Committee with the recommendation that Pay and Display car parks be discontinued.

Members questioned why it was not possible for the Dial-a-Ride service to drop and pick up passengers closer to the Town Centre without a Blue Badge. Officers explained that this was a legal requirement and not one which had been set by the authority. A Blue Badge could not be issued in respect of a specific vehicle, however if a passenger on the vehicle had a Blue Badge with them, it could be used to enable the Dial-a-Ride service to drop off and pick up passengers at a more suitable location. Officers were asked to liaise with the Dial-a-Ride service to try and resolve this issue.

Members queried whether it would be possible to create a number of designated spaces which were more convenient for dropping off and picking up, an example of this was in closer proximity to the cinema in the town centre. Officers informed Members that this was a Worcestershire County Council's Highways department matter and outside the jurisdiction of the Council.

Officers clarified the role of the Parking Enforcement Appeals Panel, which held a governance and national policy setting role. However, from this discussion Members requested that future reports should include statistically data in respect of appeals which had been made and the success rate.

**RESOLVED that**

**The report be noted.**

## 216. WAR MEMORIAL - UPDATE REPORT

The Committee considered the Monitoring Report in respect of the effectiveness of actions taken to tackle anti-social behaviour around the War Memorial. Although some actions had been put in place, Members were concerned that many of the recommendations were still outstanding. Particular concern was raised in respect of the financial implications of recommendation one as these appeared to be very high and Members suggested alternative sources for the purchase of the planters.

Members agreed that recommendation two should also include the involvement of local schools in order to educate the young people as to why the War Memorial was such an important landmark in the Town Centre and to the residents. Although signage had been erected in respect of recommendation three, Members felt that the wording used could have been stronger and more direct. In respect of recommendation four, Members requested that should a further waste bin be installed it should be dual purpose to enable recycling.

The Committee urged relevant Officers to accelerate progress to implement of the recommendations that were endorsed by the Executive Committee in October 2011 to reduce anti-social behaviour around the War Memorial and to ensure that these were all completed before 11th November 2012.

### **RESOLVED that**

- 1) the Committee receive a further monitoring update on actions taken to implement the recommendations concerning the War Memorial petition at its meeting on 11th September 2012; and**
- 2) the report be noted.**

## 217. FINANCIAL BORROWING REPORT

Members received a verbal report into the Council's financial borrowing position. This had been requested by the Committee during consideration of the quarter three financial monitoring report for 2011/12 at its previous meeting.

Having received the Council's latest financial borrowing figures, a Member suggested that it might be more advantageous for the Council to finance the development of housing stock through short rather than long-term loans as it was thought that the interest rates would be lower. Officers responded that while interest rates were

usually lower for short-term loans, these would increase considerably if the Council was unable to repay the loans by set dates.

Officers confirmed that they would be able to provide Members with more detailed information on this matter at a forthcoming meeting.

## **RESOLVED that**

- 1) A further report on the Council's financial borrowing position be considered by the Committee and included on it's work programme for its meeting on 19th June 2012; and**
- 2) the report be noted.**

## **218. ACCESS FOR DISABLED PEOPLE TASK GROUP - FINAL REPORT**

Councillor Alan Mason, Chair of the Access for Disabled People Task Group provided the Committee with a presentation which summarised the work of the Task Group, its findings and the proposed recommendations following completion of the review. Councillor Mason explained that he had proposed this topic as he felt the needs of people with disabilities living in Redditch needed to be investigated, however it had soon become apparent that the topic was wide reaching that it was agreed that the main objectives of the review would be to consider how people with disabilities accessed Redditch town centre by bus or taxi and the provision of disabled parking spaces. Each member of the Task Group was responsible for meeting a particular objective in order to complete the review within the allotted timescale.

The Committee was shown a "safer journey" card which had been designed specifically for the needs of bus users with disabilities and which allowed them to travel independently, by making the driver of the vehicle aware of their needs in a discreet manner. Members were also made aware that at recommendation seven, in respect of the use of audio-visual systems on buses, since completion of the report First Bus Group had also indicated that they would be interested in participating in negotiations for such a system.

Members were informed that regarding recommendation one, the Group had come up with a majority and minority recommendation as they were unable to reach a consensus position. Recommendation two was dependant upon the minority recommendation being carried forward.

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Councillor Mason thanked the Members of the review and supporting Officers, in particular, Jess Bayley, for their help and support in what was a very detailed investigation.

Members also discussed the following areas in more detail:

- The responses to the questionnaire prepared by the Task Group.
- The inclusion of the map showing disabled parking spaces on the Council's website.
- The number of disabled parking spaces available and legislative requirements.
- Drop off and pick up points and any improvements that could be made (and the role of Worcestershire County Council's Highways Department in providing these).
- The availability of the area and possible uses of the rear of the Debenhams store (this would be subject to the appropriate planning permission being granted for some of the suggested uses).
- Access to the Shop-mobility scheme and provision of different types of wheelchair.
- The Town Centre Partnership and the sale of the Kingfisher Centre.
- The use of the blind and deaf system already in place at the Kingfisher Centre, which it was understood had not been activated at the moment.

The Committee agreed that further input from partner agencies was required before the recommendations could be passed to the Executive Committee for endorsement.

## **RESOLVED that**

- 1) The Access for Disabled People Task and Finish Group undertake further discussions with relevant agencies to complete all outstanding areas of the review; and**
- 2) A revised final report be considered by the Committee at its future meeting on 11th September 2012.**

## **219. YOUTH SERVICES PROVISION TASK GROUP - FINAL REPORT**

Councillor Simon Chalk, Chair of the Youth Services Provision Task Group, provided a presentation which summarised the work of the Group, its findings and the proposed recommendations following completion of the review. Cllr Chalk explained that he had

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proposed the topic as he was concerned that there was little available for young people to do in Redditch and wanted to help young people to access what was available. The review was undertaken at a time when Worcestershire County Council (WCC) was reviewing its methods for delivery of youth services and the Task Group considered WCC's proposed changes. The recommendations were therefore, largely designed to influence the new provision of those new services; how the funding available could be put to the best use, how the activities could be facilitated and communicated to the young people in Redditch.

The Committee discussed the following areas in more detail:

- The availability of activities for young people and what the young people would like to see provided.
- The promotion of activities and the most appropriate method of communicating with young people (including through Redditch Matters, Facebook and Twitter).
- Access to the activities including the cost and availability of public transport.
- The Plug and Play website and the Frog intranet system currently used by the local High Schools and the development of both these systems.

Members agreed that recommendation two needed to clarify that the proposed youth work co-ordinator post would be funded from the monies provided by WCC to the Commission Group and not from the Council's budget. The Committee therefore asked that this recommendation be re-worded to ensure there was no confusion.

Councillor Chalk thanked the members and supporting Officers for the hard work shown throughout the investigation and gave specific thanks to Harry Bishop, a student at Trinity High School, who had been co-opted on to the Group and had attended several meetings to ensure that a younger person's perspective was provided throughout the review.

## **RECOMMENDED that**

**further to the re-wording of recommendation two as detailed above, all of the final recommendations of the review be approved.**

## **RESOLVED that**

**the report be noted.**

## **220. ACTIONS LIST**

The Committee received a brief summary of the updated actions since the previous meeting. Members received clarification on how visitor numbers for local attractions are counted, and were informed of the Council's procedure for dealing with Dial-a-Ride vehicles that remain off the road due to being uneconomic to repair.

Members were also informed that Hereford and Worcestershire Golf Partnership's contract to provide the Golf Professional Services for the course had been extended by three years. The Committee expressed its satisfaction upon learning this as they felt that this reflected an excellent service.

### **RESOLVED THAT**

**the actions list be noted.**

## **221. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES AND SCRUTINY OF THE FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee received the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 3rd April 2012 and considered the latest edition of the Forward Plan.

Members noted that all the recommendations contained within the final report of the Increasing Rates of Recycling Review had been endorsed by the Executive Committee.

### **RESOLVED that**

**the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 3rd April 2012 and the Forward Plan be noted.**

## **222. TASK & FINISH REVIEWS - DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENTS**

There was no draft scoping documents for consideration.

## **223. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS**

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

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a) Access for disabled People – Chair, Councillor Alan Mason

There was no update as the final report had already been considered by the Committee.

b) Promoting Sporting Participation – Chair, Councillor Luke Stephens

Councillor Stephens explained that the recommendations had been formulated and that the final report would be ready for consideration by the Committee at its next meeting on 22nd May 2012.

c) Youth Services Provision – Chair, Councillor Simon Chalk

There was no update as the final report had already been considered by the Committee.

**RESOLVED that**

**The update report be noted.**

**224. HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Councillor Quinney had been unable to attend the recent meeting of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) and was therefore unable to provide the Committee with an update.

**225. CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY PANEL - CHAIR'S UPDATE**

The Chair of the Redditch Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel, Councillor Bill Hartnett, delivered an overview of his report for the most recent Panel meeting on 11th April 2012.

Members were informed that the main agenda item had been the Annual Report of the Chair of the Community Safety Partnership and the Panel was provided with a response to three specific questions which had been submitted in advance. These were on the subjects of the Victim Support and Community Payback schemes, and finally in relation to two officers of the Community Safety Team receiving training to become specialist advisors on crime prevention.

The Panel had also considered the Partnership's quarter three performance tables and it was noted that although there had been increases in incidents of domestic burglary, criminal damage and



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serious acquisitive crime compared to the previous year, West Mercia was a low crime area.

**RESOLVED that**

**the report be noted.**

**226. REFERRALS**

There were no referrals.

**227. WORK PROGRAMME**

As this was the final meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2011/12, the Chair took the opportunity to thank Members for their hard work and dedication over the past twelve months and in particular gave special thanks to Councillor Anderson who would not be standing for re-election at the forthcoming elections.

**RESOLVED that**

**The Committee's Work Programme be noted.**

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm  
and closed at 9.12 pm