



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 31st May, 2012

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Juliet Brunner (Chair), and Councillors Simon Chalk, Andrew Brazier, David Bush, Gay Hopkins, John Fisher, Pattie Hill and Pat Witherspoon

Also Present:

Councillors Luke Stephens and Mark Shurmer

Officers:

A De Warr, J Heyes, and L Kerrigan.

Committee Services Officer:

J Bayley and M Craggs

228. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Andy Fry.

229. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

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

230. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 17th April 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

231. PROMOTING SPORTING PARTICIPATION TASK GROUP FINAL REPORT

Councillor Luke Stephens, Chair of the Promoting Sporting Participation Task Group, provided a presentation which helped to explain the findings of the review and the recommendations of the final report.

.....
Chair

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 31st May, 2012

He explained that the review's initial focus was on how the expected increased interest in sport before and during the Olympics could be fully utilised to help increase overall levels of sporting participation in Redditch. However, the review soon evolved to begin to take a wider look at the quality and quantity of existing provision for sporting participation in the Borough. The Group soon realised that while Redditch possesses many excellent facilities for sport, the level of information about where and when people could play sport in the town needed to be publicised more widely.

Cllr Stephens ran the Committee through all of the five recommendations of the report and explained the reasoning behind each. In particular, it was felt that the development of a prospective new website was very important as it could give independent sports clubs the opportunity to promote their activities to a wider audience free of charge. It was also thought that more clubs would choose to register their activities once the website began to develop. Members heard that the Officers could utilise a database of contacts for all of the accredited sports clubs in the town.

Regarding the recommendation that new branding for sport in Redditch be developed to compliment the new website, the Committee suggested that a competition could be launched for local students to design the branding. It was suggested that this could help raise young people's awareness of sport in the Borough and also of the prospective new website. The Group agreed to include this proposal as part of recommendation two.

In terms of the recommendation that the Council look to maximise the benefits of parks and green spaces in Redditch by introducing more informal games areas in these places to increase sporting participation and physical recreation in the town, Members were keen to ensure that there was sufficient provision for older people. In particular, it was suggested that there should be increased provision for chess in public places. The Group agreed to include this proposal as part of recommendation three.

RECOMMENDED that

further to the re-wording of recommendations two and three as detailed above, all of the final recommendations of the review be approved; and

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

232. JOINT WORCESTERSHIRE HUB SCRUTINY REVIEW - MONITORING UPDATE REPORT

Officers provided a monitoring report on the Worcestershire Hub Scrutiny Report which was jointly undertaken by all of the local authorities in the county. The report provided an update on the recommendations that required action in Redditch.

The Committee returned a number of positive comments about how customer service arrangements at the Borough Council had greatly improved and the Customer Services Team were praised for the services they delivered. Members were especially pleased that more face to face customer service was being provided for local residents rather than self-service as encouraged in the report. It was subsequently proposed that the Chair of the Committee issue a letter to the Chair of the Worcestershire Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board outlining Redditch Members' satisfaction with the customer services at the Council, the beneficial impact of transformation on customer services in and the potential for the wider hub to learn from best practice in Redditch.

Elsewhere, Members proposed that blue badge holders should be issued with automatic reminders before their permit expired. It was suggested that enclosing these reminders alongside the annual Council Tax information packs could be cost-effective. Officers agreed to review the proposal.

RESOLVED that

- 1) a letter be issued from the Committee to the Chair of the Worcestershire Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board explaining its support for the customer service approach at the Borough Council; and**
- 2) the report be noted.**

233. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION TRACKER

Members were informed that out of 54 recommendations that had been made by the 2011/12 Committee, 47 had been approved by the Executive Committee, 6 and a half had been rejected, and half a recommendation was still pending a final decision. Members very much welcomed these figures and felt it proved that the Committee makes a real contribution to the overall work of the Council.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

234. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TRAINING - FEEDBACK

The Committee considered a number of potential scrutiny reviews that had initially been suggested at the Overview and Scrutiny Training session on Monday 14th May 2012. The Chair welcomed all of the suggestions yet explained that it would be impossible to accept all of the proposals for scrutiny reviews. It was therefore suggested that the Committee focus on reviewing issues that clearly fell within the Council's remit. Members were also keen to avoid undertaking reviews that had recently been scrutinised. It was the Chair's clear intention that no scrutiny review would take longer than six months to complete.

Of the 17 topics identified as possible scrutiny reviews, three were shortlisted as being appropriate for either a short-sharp or task and finish review. The initial proposers were invited to complete a scoping document outlining the terms of reference for the review to be considered by the Committee at a forthcoming meeting. The shortlist included the following topics:

- Arts Centre – to identify whether there is a suitable venue in Redditch that could be utilised as an Arts Centre.
- Management of Redditch Trees – to focus on ongoing maintenance requirements for trees in Redditch and the Council's criteria for felling trees.
- Regeneration in the Town Centre – to focus on actions that could be taken to re-use and reclassify property and land in the town centre, including Council properties, to regenerate the town centre.

For a number of topic areas that were not shortlisted, it was agreed that relevant Officers would be invited to provide the Committee with further information to enable Members to consider whether the topic warranted further scrutiny, potentially as part of a scrutiny review. These issues included: dog fouling in Redditch; taxi vehicles' road worthiness; proposed plans for advertising on the roundabouts located in Redditch; and on current policy for sales of vehicles on grass verges.

In addition, Members requested a monitoring update report outlining the impact of recommendations made by a Scrutiny Group that

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 31st May, 2012

reviewed ASB (completed in 2006), and proposed that the annual update report on civil parking to include information about work that could be undertaken to help residents living in areas outside the enforcement zone.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) relevant Members and Officers meet to develop scoping documents for the proposed reviews for consideration at forthcoming meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**
- 2) Officers to arrange to deliver a monitoring update report on the impact of the ASB review recommendations during the year;**
- 3) Officers to arrange to deliver a presentation on the subject of the dog fouling campaign and the impact that this campaign has had locally;**
- 4) Officers to arrange to deliver a report on parking enforcement at a forthcoming date of the Committee;**
- 5) Officers to arrange to deliver a presentation on the subject of taxi vehicles' road worthiness and potential requirements for further work which could be facilitated by scrutiny;**
- 6) Officers to arrange to deliver a presentation on the proposed uses for roundabouts in Redditch;**
- 7) Officers to arrange to deliver a presentation on the subject of the sale of vehicles on grass verges; and**
- 8) the report be noted.**

235. ACTIONS LIST

The Committee requested that an update on the outcomes of transformation and the implications for recommendations detailed in the final report of the External Refurbishment of Housing Stock Short Sharp Review be delivered at a forthcoming meeting for its consideration.

Members received a verbal update concerning the £250,000 variance that had been paid from the Housing Revenue Account to

the General Fund. It was confirmed that all other outstanding actions had very recently been completed.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the Committee receive an update report on the outcomes of transformation and the implications for recommendations detailed in the final report of the External Refurbishment of Housing Stock Short Sharp Review at a suitable future meeting; and**
- 2) **the actions list be noted.**

236. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES AND SCRUTINY OF THE FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 24th April 2012 and considered the latest edition of the Forward Plan.

Members noted that the vast majority of recommendations contained within the final report of the Youth Service Provision Review had been endorsed by the Executive Committee. The Chair of the Review, Councillor Simon Chalk, explained that the report had also been presented to the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership at the invitation of Worcestershire County Council.

Members noted that reports on the subjects of the revised Medium Term Financial Plan, and on the Concessionary Rents Policy, were scheduled to be presented for the Executive Committee's consideration during forthcoming meetings. Members agreed that these reports were suitable for pre-scrutiny.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the report on the Medium Term Financial Plan be added onto the Committee's Work Programme for its meeting on 19th June 2012 for pre-scrutiny;**
- 2) **the report on the Concessionary Rents Policy be added onto the Committee's Work Programme for its meeting on 17th July 2012 for pre-scrutiny; and**
- 3) **the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 24th April 2012 be noted.**

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 31st May, 2012

237. TASK & FINISH REVIEWS - DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENTS

There were no scoping documents.

238. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

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

a) Access for Disabled People

The Committee was informed that Councillor Andy Fry had been appointed as the new Chair of the review.

At the Group's first meeting since the local elections in May the Group agreed to: interview relevant Planning Officers to discuss car planning in the town centre; review the Shopmobility base for the Kingfisher Centre; and write to the Highways Department at County Council regarding the potential locations for mini-bus passengers to disembark.

b) Redditch Market

Members appointed Councillor Andrew Brazier as the new Chair of the Redditch Market Task and Finish Group. The previous Chair, Councillor Brenda Quinney, was no longer a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and therefore had to relinquish her position.

The Committee heard that the membership of two Labour representatives onto the Group was still outstanding. The Leader of the Labour Group, Councillor Bill Hartnett, would therefore be contacted to appoint two Labour members.

c) Promoting Sporting Participation

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

RESOLVED that

the update report be noted.

239. HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Members received a verbal update on the most recent meeting of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee that took place on 22nd May 2012, from the Council's new representative on the Committee, Councillor Pat Witherspoon.

Councillor Witherspoon explained that she had expressed concern that no community meetings had yet been set up in Redditch to discuss the proposed re-organisation of health services across the county. While it was understood that arrangements were being made to facilitate such meetings in the Borough, it was felt that these meetings should have been held earlier in the consultation period.

During a discussion on changes to ambulance service provision in the county, Councillor Witherspoon also raised concern that a second ambulance hub to service Redditch had not been proposed, especially as most of the other districts already possessed two ambulance hubs.

Finally, Members heard that under an item to discuss the Acute Stroke Services in Worcestershire, concern was raised that many residents in Redditch would struggle to access the Stroke Unit at Worcester Royal Hospital, especially as it was thought that many of the patients and their relatives would be elderly and would not have access to a car. Members therefore queried whether the existing Stroke Unit in Bromsgrove could be enhanced so that more local patients could be treated.

The Chair thanked Councillor Witherspoon for her report.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

240. REFERRALS

There were no referrals.

241. WORK PROGRAMME

Officers confirmed that dates had now been set for each of the seven Portfolio Holders to deliver their annual reports to the Committee.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 31st May, 2012

It was noted that the submission of a scoping document for a potential scrutiny review on equalities and diversity issues relating to staff employed by the Council remained outstanding. The initial proposer would therefore be contacted to establish whether it was their intention to bring the proposal forward for the Committee's consideration.

RESOLVED that

the Committee's Work Programme be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 9.02 pm