

CABINET SCRUTINY PANEL
EARL BALDWIN SUITE, DUKE HOUSE, CLENSMORE STREET,
KIDDERMINSTER

Wednesday 26th January, 2005

PRESENT:

Councillors: M M G Oborski, K J Stokes, J Baker, G W Ballinger, Mrs H E Dyke, M A W Hazlewood, J Holden, M B Kelly, Mrs J L Salter, M J Shellie.

Observers:

Councillor S J M Clee (Leader of the Council)
Councillor Mrs F M Oborski
Councillor C D Nicholls

CM.679 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs A T Hingley and Mrs L Hyde.

CM.680 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor M B Kelly substituted for Councillor Mrs L Hyde.

CM.681 COMPOSITION AND ATTENDANCE OF COMMITTEE

Members considered the attendance of the Committee, as per the Attendance Record Sheet appended to the Agenda.

The Chairman reminded Members that under their joint Chairmanship, the chair was rotated as per the Council's protocol.

The Chairman reiterated the importance of regular attendance at the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee in order to keep it consistent.

CM.682 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were made.

CM.683 MINUTES

AGREED:

- 1. The minutes of the meeting held on the 17th November 2004 be confirmed as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.**
- 2. Panel Chairmen be invited to attend future Cabinet Scrutiny meetings to given an update to other Members on their Panel's work.**
- 3. A standing item be placed on future Cabinet Scrutiny Agendas entitled "Update from Panel Chairmen on work within their Panel".**

CM.683(a) Scrutiny Matters

The Chairman advised the Committee that Megan Montgomery, the Council's Scrutiny Officer, had recently left the Authority on sick leave and would commence her maternity leave imminently.

At this moment in time, a replacement for Megan's post had not been appointed, but Members would be kept updated of the situation.

With so many Task and Finish Groups commencing and completing projects, it was suggested by Members that it would be helpful to have some indication about what Groups were in progress and what Tasks had been completed, which would ascertain at a glance what work had been carried out. It was agreed that this was something that could be considered in greater detail once someone was in post.

AGREED:

A letter be sent to Megan Montgomery, Scrutiny Officer from Members of the Committee to thank her for her work to date and wishing her all the best for the remainder of her pregnancy.

**PRIORITY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: THIRD-QUARTER
PROGRESS REPORT 2004/2005**

Members considered a Briefing Paper from the Corporate Performance Advisor detailing progress on the performance Indicators (PIs) for the Council's 17 Annual Priorities for 2004/2005.

He reiterated how PIs provided essential information that enabled the Council to monitor the standard of the service it was providing, and whether elements of the service needed improving, how this compared with other service providers and whether any factors were impeding progress.

The following points were raised during the course of the discussion.

(NB: please note that the numbering reflects the numbering in the Appendix to the briefing paper).

**1. Community Strategy : LPI – Launch a web-based
Community Information database**

In response to a query about whether the Data Protection Act 1988 (DDA) prohibited the publication of names on websites, the Corporate Performance Advisor told Members that the inclusion of individuals' names rather than posts on the website would require the written permission of the post-holder.

**2. Housing : LPI – Additional Units (per annum) of top-up
funded affordable Housing**

Members noted the adjustment to the number of Units available. The figure contained in the previous report had taken into account the (Housing) Units supported by Wyre Forest Community Housing or provided through Section 106 agreements, thus incorrectly representing Council-funded Units. In total, 20 Units had been achieved against a target of 40.

**4. Public Health : Pest Control – Site Visits completed
within 3 working days of request**

There had been an unusually high volume of requests for visits during August and September, particularly with regard to wasps' nests, and that the relevant Division (Cultural, Leisure and

Commercial Services) had responded promptly and in a professional manner to the requests.

Members noted that there was an error in the collection of previous data, and requested clarification from the Corporate Performance Advisor.

AGREED:

The Corporate Performance Advisor report back to Members on the following issues:

- a) **Correct figures to be recalculated and the data be provided to Members.**
- b) **Number of Pest Control Officers currently in post to be confirmed.**

4. Public Health : BVPI 199 – the proportion of land and highways that is assessed as having combined deposits of litter and detritus across four categories of cleanliness

Members noted that the Council is expecting to continue to have less than 30% below 'Grade B' for cleanliness in litter and detritus across the District.

(NB: For the reader's information the Cleanliness Standard Grades are as follows:-

Grade A – no litter or refuse;

Grade B – predominantly free of litter and refuse apart from small items such as cigarette ends, rung pulls etc.,

Grade C – widespread distribution of litter and refuse with minor accumulations, particularly along kerb lines and boundaries;

Grade D – heavily littered with significant accumulations)

8. Council Accommodation : LPI – Carry out the next phase of a feasibility study for long-term Council accommodation

In response to a query about the Crossley Retail Park being included in the study, Members were informed that this site had been added at the request of the Single Site T&F Group and was being considered along with Stourport-on-Severn Civic

Centre and Churchfields Business Park, Kidderminster.

The Chairman clarified the point that the Single Site Task and Finish Group's remit was to appraise and evaluate the potential of the 3 sites for the location of a Single Site.

Members noted that The Cabinet would consider single site recommendations at a future meeting.

11. Equal Opportunities/Training : BVPI 11B – Black and ethnic minority employees in senior management

Members noted that the 5% target referred to had been set by the Government and it was generally felt that the target was unrealistic for Wyre Forest.

12. Local Plan : BVPI 109a - Major Planning Applications

The Corporate Performance Advisor clarified the point raised by Members about 'phone masts, by confirming that a 'phone masts did not constitute a Major Planning Application.

13. Recycling BVPI 91 – Residents served by kerbside recycling

Members asked what current percentage of residents was served by kerbside recycling.

AGREED:

The Corporate Performance Advisor report back to Members on current percentage of residents served by kerbside recycling.

17. Kidderminster Town Hall : LPI – Complete the second phase of the feasibility study into a possible Arts Centre at the Town Hall

Members were pleased to note that an allocation of £82,000 had been earmarked by Cabinet to progress the Arts Centre scheme.

AGREED:

The briefing paper be noted.

CM.685 HIGHWAYS PARTNERSHIP UNIT AND HIGHWAYS PARTNERSHIP FORUM

The Vice-Chairman reported back to the Committee on progress to date.

Prior to the Christmas break Members of the Task and Finish Group had gathered together all background information from the Council's files.

A meeting had been scheduled for 3rd February 2005.

Members noted that work from Task and Finish Groups could be carried over into the new Municipal Year.

AGREED:

Notes from previous meeting be copied to Members of the Task and Finish Group.

CM.686 WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman invited the Panel Chairmen who were present, to give updates on work within their Panel, and the following summaries were given.

Environment and Economic Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Panel

The Chairman of the Environment and Economic Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Panel gave the following summary on work within her Panel.

Evening Economy

Councillor Mrs Oborski was hoping to meet with Simon Swaffield, Developer of 'The Warehouse Cinema' in Kidderminster, to discuss concerns relating to the size of the cinema screens and what films would be presented.

Opportunity Bewdley – Scrutiny

Councillor Mrs Oborski raised her serious concerns about Opportunity Bewdley. She recently had a meeting with Councillor Frank Baillie who had resigned from Opportunity Bewdley because of his serious concerns about the accountability and the use of funds.

She informed the meeting that there seemed to be a lot of money spent on staff and consultants but very little tangible benefits.

Councillor J W Dudley had recently attended a meeting with members of Opportunity Bewdley and would report back to the Panel at their meeting on 9th February 2005, when a Task and Finish would be set up to undertake a Scrutiny exercise.

Stourport Forward – forthcoming Scrutiny review

The Panel would be involved in a scoping exercise involving Stourport Forward at its meeting on 9th February 2005. It was hoped that lessons would be learned from the issues surrounding Opportunity Bewdley to enable a successful scrutiny of Stourport Forward to be undertaken.

Finance and Corporate Affairs Policy and Scrutiny Panel

The Chairman of the Finance and Corporate Affairs Policy and Scrutiny Panel gave the following summary on work within his Panel.

Budget Scrutiny

A Task and Finish Group meeting had been scheduled for 3rd February 2005 and it was hoped that draft recommendations would be discussed with the Panel at their meeting scheduled for the same date.

Single Site

Members noted that the Single Site Task and Finish Group and Panel recommendations would go to a future Cabinet meeting.

Rushock

A meeting of the Task and Finish Group had been scheduled for 24th February 2005.

West Mercia Police Authority: Budget Strategy

The Panel was due to consider a letter dated 14th January 2005 from the Deputy Director to the West Mercia Police Authority advising the Council of the Police Authority's proposed budget strategy for 2005-2006 and annual Policing Plan, at its next meeting on 3rd February 2005. Comments were requested, if possible, by 8th February as the Authority would be meeting on 15th February to agree its budget and policing plan for the coming financial year.

Members noted that this was a tight timescale which left very little time for the Council to undertake a thorough scrutiny of these budget proposals. Nevertheless, the Panel undertook to compile a response within this constraint.

AGREED:

The Cabinet Scrutiny Committee include in its Work Programme for November/December 2005 to consider scrutinising the Police Authority's Budget position for 2006/2007.

Housing, Health and Rural Affairs Policy and Scrutiny Panel

The Chairman of the Housing, Health and Rural Affairs Policy and Scrutiny Panel gave the following summary on work within his Panel.

The Housing, Health and Rural Affairs Policy and Scrutiny Panel had previously identified Services for Older People as an area of concern, and had agreed to conduct a Scrutiny Review into the Council's Services for Older People, with particular emphasis on Disabled Grants Facilities and Lifeline. The Panel had agreed to appoint a Task and Finish Group to conduct the review, who had met several times since its formation in October 2004.

The meetings had culminated in a comprehensive report and detailed draft recommendations, which were reported back and agreed at the Panel's meeting on 19th January 2005, and the

Chairman was scheduled to report the recommendations to the Cabinet scheduled for 17th February, 2005.

Members of the Panel had agreed that the exercise had provided an excellent example of how Scrutiny should work.

Members of the Task and Finish Group all agreed that they had learned a great deal from the exercise and had a better understanding of the operational and administrative skills required to implement Services for Older People.

North Worcestershire Care and Repair Programme

Members had recommended that the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Rural Affairs be involved in the North Worcestershire Care and Repair Programme, and the recommendation would be made to Cabinet on 17th February, and to Council on 23rd March 2005.

Meeting in New Municipal Year

The Chairman of the Panel requested that the Housing, Health and Rural Affairs Policy and Scrutiny Panel had an early slot for a meeting in the new Municipal Year, once the calendar has been formalised.

Forthcoming Reviews

The Chairman advised that one of the issues to be discussed in the new Municipal Year would relate to Climatic change, and looking at ways of cutting down pollution in the environment.

Community & Leisure Services Policy and Scrutiny Panel

The Chairman of the Community and Leisure Services Policy and Scrutiny Panel was not present to give an update on work within his Panel. However, the Panel noted the following issue.

Skateboarding

The Task and Finish Group had formalised a report and presented it to the Panel on 11th November 2004. After

agreeing the recommendations, the report was presented to Cabinet on 16th December 2004. At this meeting, the Policy Holder for Community and Leisure Services commented that some Members had brought to his attention that further evidence was needed in order to complete the scrutiny exercise on skateboarding.

It was suggested the further consultation should take place with the Chair of the Youth Strategy Group, the Skateboarding Group, the Fun Box Committee and residents and users in Offmore and Comberton. It was felt that a lot more of the people actively involved in skateboarding should be asked to give evidence for the scrutiny exercise.

To this end, it was decided that skateboarding should be referred back to the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee to examine the issues further.

The Chairman of the Skateboarding Task and Finish Group explained that the short timescale given to collect all of the evidence had proved inadequate.

AGREED:

- 1. The Skateboarding Task and Finish Group's report to be referred back to the Community and Leisure Services Policy and Scrutiny Panel for it to reconsider at its meeting on 10th March, 2005.**
- 2. To include on next Agenda a brief officer report detailing suggested options are if an item gets referred back.**

Commercial Services P&S Panel

The Chairman of the Commercial Services Policy and Scrutiny Panel gave the following summary on work within his Panel.

He advised Members that the Panel had just completed a Scrutiny exercise on Cemetery provision within the District, which had been well received by Cabinet. The Panel was currently undertaking a scoping exercise on street cleansing which included a Zone Pilot Project for street cleansing in Stourport-on-Severn and the possibility of introducing similar

schemes in Kidderminster and Bewdley.

Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

The Chairman advised Members that he had received a letter from Chaddesley Corbett Parish Council regarding their Parish Plan: results of survey. The document had been very well written and he suggested he write on behalf of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee to congratulate them.

AGREED:

- 1. Members to note the letter received from Chaddesley Corbett Parish Council re: Parish Plan: results of survey.**
- 2. The Chairman to write on behalf of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee to Chaddesley Corbett Parish Council congratulating them on the work done to date.**

CM.687 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

DECISION:

Under Section 100A(3) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of an item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of confidential information provided by a Government Department upon terms which forbid the disclosure of the information to the public.

CM.688 SUMMARY OF MINUTES

The following matter was considered after the press and public had been excluded from the meeting. A summary of the minute relating to this item has been made as 'Exempt Information' would be disclosed if the minute was published in full

CM.689 MINUTES

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 17th November 2004.

NOTE:

**PRIORITY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: THIRD-QUARTER PROGRESS
REPORT 2004/2005**

With regard to Minute CM.684 detailed above, Members of the Panel were forwarded a copy letter from the Corporate Performance Advisor to Councillor M M G Oborski, Joint Chairman, Cabinet Scrutiny Committee, dated 8th February 2005. The letter dealt with the issues raised by Members with regard to the Priority Performance Indicators: Third-quarter progress report 2004/2005.

