

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

SERVICE POLICY PANEL

THE EARL BALDWIN SUITE, DUKE HOUSE, CLENSMORE STREET, KIDDERMINSTER

21ST JUNE 2006 (6.00PM)

PRESENT:

Councillors J Holden (Chairman), M J Shellie (Vice-Chairman), P Dyke, B T Glass, Mrs S M Hayward, Mrs R L Lewis, Miss M A Mason, C D Nicholls, M A Salter, K J Stokes, G C Yarranton.

OBSERVERS:

Councillors G W Ballinger, N J Desmond, M J Hart, Mrs A T Hingley, M M G Oborski, Mrs J L Salter.

SPP.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs H E Dyke, Miss S C Meekings and D R Sheppard.

SPP.2 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTES

Councillor P Dyke was a substitute for Councillor Mrs H E Dyke. Councillor B T Glass was a substitute for Councillor D R Sheppard.

SPP.3 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

SPP.4 CABINET MEMBER RESPONSE FORMS

The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services was in attendance to present the Cabinet Member Response Forms for the scrutiny recommendations relating to the Kidderminster Street Market, public conveniences and health and safety issues relating to memorial stones.

The Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services was in attendance to present the Cabinet Member Response Form for the Skateboarding review.

AGREED:

The Cabinet Member Response forms for the Kidderminster Street Market, public conveniences, memorial stones and skateboarding, be noted.

SPP.5

OUTSIDE BODIES: NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR CLEAN AIR AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (NSCA) AND WEST MIDLANDS LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION: URBAN COMMISSION

The Panel considered background information on the Urban Commission and the National Society for Clean Air and Environmental Protection (NSCA). Members were reminded that at the Annual Council meeting on 17th May 2006, it had been agreed that these two organisations would go to the relevant Policy Panel to recommend to the relevant Cabinet Member whether or not to appoint someone to attend these organisations.

AGREED:

As no member had the capacity to undertake these additional commitments at this time, it was felt inappropriate to pursue these appointments.

SPP.6

UPDATE ON YOUTH PROVISION SCRUTINY REVIEW

The Panel considered a briefing paper from the Cultural Services Manager updating Members on the progress of the Youth Provision Task and Finish Group which was an ongoing review from the former Community and Leisure Services Policy and Scrutiny Panel, and the following points were noted.

The Group was in the process of issuing a questionnaire to local schools to try to establish how best the Council might enhance leisure and recreational opportunities for young people.

Big Lottery Fund

The Panel was informed that, since the start of the scrutiny exercise the Big Lottery Fund (BLF) had announced an allocation of approximately £207,000 to Wyre Forest. The Council played the lead role in co-ordinating this money.

A formal application, together with a play strategy, was intended to be produced by mid-November 2006.

The Cultural Services Manager advised that a Big Lottery Fund group had been established with partners (including the Youth Service, Community Housing Group and the Play Council) to co-ordinate this approach. It was intended to consult with play providers across the District.

The funding could potentially complement the work of the Task and Finish Group, in that potential resources could be made available through the BLF to fund recommendations from the Task and Finish Group.

It was anticipated that future meetings (from July 2006) would be co-ordinated between the BLF Group and the Youth Provision Task and Finish Group.

AGREED:

The information be noted.

SPP.7

PETITION - ICE RINK

The Panel considered a letter and signatures supporting the proposal of an Ice Rink within the District. The petition had been instigated and submitted by a local schoolgirl, ten year old Chloe Worley, who was present with her mother to hand over a further set of signatures to the Panel as an addendum to the original petition.

Members were reminded that the original petition had been formally presented at the Council meeting on 19th April 2006 and subsequently referred to the next appropriate meeting of the relevant Panel. (Minute C.116 refers).

The Panel applauded Chloe's initiative and thanked her for taking the time to attend the meeting.

The Panel received a verbal report from the Cultural Services Manager on her recent discussions with Telford and Wrekin Council concerning Telford Ice Rink.

AGREED:

- 1. The information be noted.**
- 2. The Cultural Services Manager provide further information regarding the ice rink at Telford, at the Panel's next meeting.**

SPP.8

HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATE

The Panel considered a briefing note from the Housing Services Manager on the implementation of the Council's Housing Strategy 2004 - 2007, prior to it being considered by the Cabinet at its meeting scheduled on 29th June 2006. The following points were noted.

- a) The Council's Housing Strategy 2004-2007, which had been approved by the Government Office for the West Midlands as "Fit for Purpose", had an Action Plan, with key milestones to be achieved between 2004-2007.
- b) The performance against these milestones and general progress on implementation were previously reported to the former Housing, Health and Rural Affairs Policy and Scrutiny Panel.
- c) The Housing Policy, both nationally and regionally was being developed and implemented at a rapid pace, and the Council was fully participating in this work.

- d) Members referred to The Housing Action Plans for 2004 – 2007 which were attached at Appendix 1 to the report, in particular the commentary on progress against the key priorities. Significant new areas of work had been added to the Action Plan with achievement targets, which the Cabinet would be requested to agree.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet:

- 1. The proposed new targets set out in The Housing Action Plans for 2004-2007 at Appendix 1 to the briefing paper.**
- 2. The progress made in delivering the Council's Housing Strategy be noted.**

SPP.9

PROPOSAL FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF A LOCAL LETTINGS POLICY FOR THE HURCOTT ROAD ESTATE, KIDDERMINSTER

The Panel considered a briefing paper from the Housing Services Manager on the history and context of the problems and issues on the Hurcott Road Estate, Kidderminster. Approval was sought regarding a Local Lettings Policy to help address these issues, as part of a comprehensive approach to regenerate the area.

Members agreed that the Local Lettings Policy for Hurcott Road Estate had provided opportunities for service providers to work on issues that affected their locality. This high rise, high-density development had a history of serious management problems regarding community safety. Therefore in partnership with Wyre Forest Community Housing, strategies had been put into place to make the estate a more desirable place to live and create a safer and more sustainable community.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet:

- 1. Approval be given to the principle of a Local Lettings Plan as outlined in the briefing paper.**
- 2. The Head of Planning, Health and Environment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, Health and Environment, finalise the necessary policy and procedural changes for the Local Lettings Plan for Hurcott Road Estate, Kidderminster, to include any appropriate amendments to the Council's Housing Waiting List Policy.**

SPP.10

CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

The Panel considered a briefing paper and Climate Change Action Plan 2006/2007 from the Senior Health and Sustainability Officer.

Members noted that the former Housing, Health and Rural Affairs Policy and Scrutiny Panel had carried out an in-depth scrutiny exercise to consider the Worcestershire Climate Change Pledge. The Panel had formulated several recommendations, which had been agreed by Cabinet in November 2005.

In December 2005, the Council made a public declaration to reduce its climate change emissions, by signing the Worcestershire Climate Change Pledge.

The Panel was advised that the Council's Climate Change Action Plan 2006/2007 was intended to focus the Council's activities on Climate Change adaptation and mitigation, ensuring the Council delivered on commitments made in the Worcestershire Climate Change Pledge.

AGREED:

The information be noted.

SPP.11 **COUNTY COUNCIL HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL**

The Panel received a verbal update from the Chairman on matters considered by the County Council Health Scrutiny Panel. Members noted that he was the elected member serving on the County Council's Health Panel, which was currently considering National Health Service redundancies.

A meeting had been scheduled with Eamonn Kelly, Chief Executive of Wyre Forest Primary Care Trust, on 23rd June, to which all Members had been invited. The meeting would focus on the impact of health cuts on the Wyre Forest District.

AGREED:

The information be noted.

SPP.12 **PRESS INVOLVEMENT**

The Panel noted that if it wished to involve the press in any future scrutiny reviews, the Media and Marketing Officer would attend the relevant meeting in order to give advice and assistance to Members.

AGREED:

The information be noted.

SPP.13 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel considered its work programme for the current municipal year with regard to the Community Strategy, Corporate Plan, Annual Priorities and the Forward Plan.

The Vice-Chairman presented the Panel with a completed Scrutiny Proposal Form. He asked Members to consider undertaking a scrutiny review to identify an area of ground for the riding and education of riders on mini motorised vehicles.

AGREED:

- 1. A Task and Finish Group be appointed to undertake a review into identifying an area of ground for the riding and education of riders on mini motorised vehicles.**
- 2. Items be added to the work programme during the current municipal year.**

The meeting ended at 7.15 pm.