

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**COMMUNITY AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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

**5TH MARCH 2008 (6.00PM)**

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**PRESENT:**

Councillors: Mrs F M Oborski (Chairman), Mrs H E Dyke (Vice-Chairman), J Aston, G H Eeles, Mrs J Greener, Mrs P V Hayward, M A W Hazlewood, M B Kelly, D J Millis, Ms T L Onslow, M Price, M J Shellie, J C Simmonds and G C Yarranton.

**OBSERVERS:**

Councillor Mrs A T Hingley.

**CAR.126 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

**CAR.127 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTES**

No substitutes were appointed.

**CAR.128 COMPOSITION AND ATTENDANCE OF PANEL**

**AGREED:**

**The attendance of the Panel, as per the Attendance Record Sheet appended to the Agenda be noted.**

**CAR.129 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Mrs F M Oborski declared a personal interest in agenda item 8, Finding the Right Solutions: The Future of the Lea Castle Centre – Consultation by Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust, in view of being the Vice Chairman of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee at Worcestershire County Council.

Councillor G C Yarranton also declared a personal interest in agenda item 8, Finding the Right Solutions: The Future of the Lea Castle Centre – Consultation by Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust, in view of being a member of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee at Worcestershire County Council.

Councillor Mrs P V Hayward declared a personal interest in agenda item no. 7, The Churchill Conservation Area Appraisal – results of Consultation on Proposed Conservation Area Appraisal, in view of being a resident of Churchill.

**CAR.130**     **MINUTES**

**AGREED:**

**The minutes of the meeting held on 7th February 2008 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**CAR.131**     **PRESENTATION FROM FIVE TELECOMMUNICATION COMPANIES AND THE MOBILE OPERATORS ASSOCIATION**

The Acting Principal Development Control Officer advised Members that at its meeting in December 2007 the Committee had requested to hear a presentation from the mobile phone operators.

A presentation was delivered by the Council Liaison Manager from the Mobile Operators Association (MOA). Members were informed that the MOA was funded by the five mobile phone operators to represent them on planning issues.

The Council Liaison Manager advised Members that mobile phone usage in the UK had increased from under 10 million in 1997 to 70 million in 2007. She also advised that there had been significant changes in the way in which people used their mobile phones, for example people were now using mobile phones in their homes and not just whilst travelling. These issues meant that operators had had to develop networks to accommodate this usage.

Members were advised that each base station could only support a certain number of calls at any one time.

The Council Liaison Manager went on to explain to Members that the development of third generation phones, which expanded the services available from mobile phones, had meant that operators had had to address network coverage as the coverage areas for second and third generation networks differed slightly, this had resulted in some operators requiring new sites

With regard to the potential health risks of mobile phones, Members received information that, according to the Stewart Report, there was no general health risk to people living near to base stations.

Members were also advised that the Advisory Group on Non-Ionising Radiation reported in January 2004 that exposure levels from living near to mobile phone base stations were extremely low, and the overall evidence indicated that base stations were unlikely to pose a risk to health.

In addition to this advice Members also received information that the World Health Organisation had issued a fact sheet concluding that there was no convincing scientific evidence that the weak signals from base stations and wireless networks caused adverse health effects.

Members queried how the positive information on health was communicated to the general public. The Council Liaison Manger of the Mobile Operators Association advised that the mobile phone networks were concerned that, because it was positive news, it was not receiving as much press coverage as it should. She went

on to say that the NHS Choices website was going to be covering the issue of health implications of mobile phones.

Members noted that other European countries were conducting research into the use of mobile phones and cancer of the saliva gland and that the World Health Organisation would be ensuring that any information found in the research would be circulated to other countries.

Members then heard from each individual operator regarding plans and proposals for the District:

### Three

Members were advised by the representative of this network that discussions with T-Mobile were taking place regarding the possibility of network sharing and that the network was awaiting the outcome of these discussions before building any further sites.

Members noted that the application for Grey Green Farm, Crundalls Lane had been agreed on appeal in January 2008 and that the Kidderminster Harriers Football Club, Hoo Road site had not been built.

### O2

The representative of the O2 network advised Members that, as per the roll out plan, 10 sites had been requested and that the possibility of a shared site on Hoo Road was being investigated.

### T-Mobile

Members noted that, as per the Three Network, the possibility of a shared network was being explored. The representative of T-Mobile advised Members that none of the four proposed sites on the roll out plan were being progressed at present as the outcome of talks with Three was awaited.

He went on to say that the Offmore Farm Site and Bournewood Nurseries Site were classified as aborted and the company had been unsuccessful in its application on Eagles Nest, Habberley Lane.

### Vodafone

Members were informed by the representative from Vodafone that, following talks with the Orange network, they had concluded that it was not possible to network share with each other. Members were also advised that Vodafone had achieved its licence obligation of 80% coverage in the UK, although there were some 'holes' in its third generation network.

### Orange

The representative of Orange was unable to attend, the Council Liaison Manager of the Mobile Operators Association confirmed that the roll out plans submitted by Orange in October 2007 remained accurate.

Members queried whether it was possible to build more aesthetically pleasing phone masts, it was felt that if the masts were viewed as public art they could, potentially be, more accepted by local residents. The Council Liaison Manager of the Mobile Operators Association advised the Committee that, in recent years, progress with regard to the design of masts had moved forward.

**AGREED:**

- 1. The information be noted.**
- 2. The Mobile Operators be invited to attend another meeting in November 2008 to present the next roll-out plan.**

**CAR.132     THE CHURCHILL CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL – RESULTS OF CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL**

The Committee considered a briefing paper from the Assistant Conservation Officer which informed Members of the results of public consultation on the proposed Conservation Area Appraisal for the Churchill Conservation Area.

The Assistant Conservation Officer advised Members that the public consultation had run from 11<sup>th</sup> January 2008 to 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2008.

Members noted that two responses to the consultation had been received, both of which were supportive of the draft Appraisal. Discussion took place on the comments received from Churchill and Blakedown Parish Council, regarding the scope for the boundary of the conservation area to be extended and the possibility of adding buildings to the local list. Members felt that it was reasonable to look at including a review of this nature in future business plans, following completion of Character Appraisals for all Conservation Areas in this District.

**RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:**

**The Churchill Character Appraisal be approved.**

**CAR.133     FINDING THE RIGHT SOLUTIONS: THE FUTURE OF THE LEA CASTLE CENTRE – CONSULTATION BY COVENTRY & WARWICKSHIRE PARTNERSHIP TRUST**

The Committee considered a briefing paper from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment which appraised Members of the Consultation on the future of the Lea Castle Centre.

Members discussed, in detail, the potential implications of each of the three options proposed by Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust . The Chairman advised, that in her capacity as Vice Chairman of the County Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a site visit had been conducted to the Lea Castle site to view the condition of the area. The Committee were advised by the Chairman that many of the buildings on the site were boarded up.

A Member informed the Committee that a meeting had been held at the

Kidderminster Town Hall to advise parents and carers of residents of Lea Castle Centre of the proposals for the future of Lea Castle Centre. Feedback from parents indicated that they felt that there had not been enough planning for future accommodation for service users resident at the centre.

Members noted that, in addition to some 30 residents at Lea Castle Centre, there were also some out-patient services run from the site, such as the Child Psychology Service and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.

Members felt that, at present, the Lea Castle Centre did not present a pleasant environment for the residents of the site to live within and were concerned that, should the staff at the centre seek alternative employment, as a result of the proposals, it could force the Primary Care Trust to close the site ahead of schedule.

The Committee discussed the needs of the service users resident at the Centre and felt that, ideally, they should be placed within their local communities and that no closure should take place until alternative, suitable, accommodation had been found for each service user.

Councillor M Shellie left the meeting at this point (7:15pm)

Members agreed to recommend that option 2 be put forward as the preferred option of Wyre Forest District Council. However, Members felt that there should be some safeguard for service users and their families to ensure that, when looking for alternative accommodation, the Primary Care Trusts should take into account the views of those affected.

#### **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:**

**Option 2 of the consultation document, entitled “Finding the Right Solutions: The Future of the Lea Castle Centre” be recommended to the Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Partnership Trust subject to a condition that, in seeking alternative accommodation for the residents of the Lea Castle Centre, any alternative placement must be acceptable to the family of the individual and must be agreed and in place before the closure.**

#### **CAR.134 CENTRO DRAFT WEST MIDLANDS RAIL VISION: NETWORK DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CONSULTATION)**

Members considered a briefing paper from the Assistant Planner which sought Members' views on the West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority's (Centro – WMPTA) consultation on the Draft West Midlands Rail Vision: Network Development Strategy.

The Principal Forward Planning Officer advised members that the strategy looked at the network improvements and schemes for the region, she emphasised that a key issue was that Kidderminster Station was not referred to in the strategy.

Members commented that the issues surrounding Kidderminster Station were the frequency of services and access to Birmingham International. They felt that evening services did not run late enough and that the frequency of services during

evenings and weekends could be improved.

Members queried why there was no direct line from Kidderminster Station to New Street Station. Members were advised that, apparently, there was no capacity to receive additional trains at New Street Station. Members asked that when the New Street Station re-modelling took place that some direct services to and from Kidderminster be requested.

**RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:**

**The officer comments on the Centro Draft West Midlands Rail Vision: Network Development Strategy be endorsed.**

**CAR.135     MATTERS FROM THE CORPORATE SERVICE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Members considered matters from the Corporate Service and Performance Scrutiny Committee regarding the appointment of Members to Review Panels and Fixed Term Penalties for Litter Dropping.

Members agreed that the terms of reference for the Fixed Term Penalties for Litter Dropping Review Panel be:

“To review the policy relating to fixed term penalties for litter dropping including:

1. Resources deployed
2. Education and preventative measures
3. Depositing litter
4. Litter control notices
5. Fly posting / graffiti
6. Legal issues relating to enforcement”

**AGREED:**

1. **Group Leaders be notified when review panels are established and given the opportunity to nominate members.**
2. **The terms of reference for the Fixed Term Penalties for the Litter Dropping Review Panel, as per the scoping sheet, be agreed.**
3. **The membership of the Fixed Term Penalties for Litter Dropping Review Panel be made up of the following members, subject to approval from group leaders; Councillors Ms T L Onslow, Mrs P V Hayward, G C Yarrington, D J Millis, Mrs H E Dyke and M Price.**
4. **The first meeting of the review panel to take place on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> March at 2:00pm.**

**CAR.136     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 Chairman informed the Committee that following the February meeting, two items had been added to the Work programme for this March meeting;

1. Finding the Right Solutions: The Future of the Lea Castle Centre Consultation by Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust
2. Centro Draft West Midlands Rail Vision: Network Development Strategy (Consultation).

The Chairman advised that, following requests from officers, it was proposed that the following amendments be made to the work programme:

1. Revisions to the Waste Management Strategy for Hereford and Worcester be moved to the April 2008 meeting.
2. Regional Spatial Strategy Phase 2 Review: Submitted Proposals Consultation' which was scheduled for the 2nd April 2008 meeting be moved forward to the next municipal year.

**AGREED:**

**The work programme for the current municipal year be approved subject to the amendment of the following items:**

1. **Revisions to the Waste Management Strategy for Hereford and Worcester be moved to the April 2008 meeting.**
2. **Regional Spatial Strategy Phase 2 Review: Submitted Proposals Consultation' which was scheduled for the 2nd April 2008 meeting be moved forward to the next municipal year.**
3. **The Fixed Term Penalties for Litter Dropping Review Panel be added to the Committee's work programme.**

The meeting ended at 7:45pm.

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