

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

19TH JUNE 2008 (6.00PM)

Present:

Councillors: Mrs H E Dyke (Chairman), J Phillips (Vice-Chairman), J Baker, G H Eeles, Mrs J Fairbrother-Millis, Mrs J Greener, Mrs P V Hayward, Mrs S M Hayward, C D Nicholls and G C Yarranton.

Observers:

Councillor: Mrs T L Onslow.

CMS.1 Apologies for Absence:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor: A J Buckley.

CMS.2 Appointment of Substitutes:

Councillor Mrs J Greener was a substitute for Councillor A J Buckley.

CMS.3 Declaration of Interests:

Councillor Mrs H E Dyke declared a personal interest in agenda item number 5 in as the Vice Chairman of the Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership.

CMS.4 Minutes:

Agreed:

The minutes of the meeting of the Community & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 5th March 2008 and the minutes of the Corporate Service & Performance Scrutiny Committee held on 1st April 2008 be noted.

CMS.5 Performance of the Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership 2007/08:

The Committee considered a briefing paper (circulated with the agenda) from the Community Safety & Partnerships Officer giving details of the performance of the Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership in reducing crime, disorder and anti social behaviour in the district.

The Community Safety & Partnerships Officer drew Members' attention to the table on page 2 of the report which demonstrated that the Community Safety Partnership had been successful in exceeding the British Crime Survey Comparator Crime

Targets.

Officers clarified that, with reference to the Wyre Forest Hate Incident Partnership, the name of the partnership had been informed by the Home Office as 'Hate Crime' was a legal definition. Members were advised that 'Hate Incident Partnerships' existed across Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Areas, in order to achieve consistency, and to minimise confusion for anyone wanting to report an incident of hate crime, the name remained the same.

Members were advised that an annual survey on residents views on fear of crime was conducted, within the District. The survey included questions on whether residents felt safe in Town Centre areas during the day and evening.

The Strategy, Partnerships & Communications Manager advised the Committee that the Community Safety Partnership, through its ongoing research, development and district tasking groups, had developed a forward plan. The forward plan detailed potential crime hotspots during the year, enabling a targeted approach to crime and disorder across the district.

Furthermore, Members were advised that all statistical information collected was forwarded to the Home Office, which was then fed into iQuanta, the Home Offices' statistical analysis tool.

Members noted that the classification of some crimes altered from year to year, and this affected the way in which statistical information could be compared over several years.

The Chairman of the Committee drew Members' attention to the fact that the report on the proposed merger of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnerships had been withdrawn from the June 2008 Cabinet meeting. The Committee were also advised that the Member Briefing Session taking place on 30th June 2008 would give Members further information regarding Local Area Arrangements and the Community Leadership Fund.

Agreed:

- 1. The content of the briefing paper be noted.**
- 2. The Community Safety & Partnerships Officer supply Members with information on the definition of crimes and the terms of reference for the Wyre Forest Hate Partnership.**

CMS.6 Recommendations from the Fixed Penalty Notice for Litter Dropping Review Panel:

Members considered a briefing paper (circulated with the agenda), presented by Councillor Yarrington, setting out the recommendations of the review panel following its scrutiny of the policies relating to fixed penalty notices for litter dropping.

Members noted that the term time litter campaign referred to in recommendation 4.2 would focus on high schools as primary and middle schools did not generate the

same level of litter. It was noted by Members that this could be as a result of high school pupils independently making their way to and from school.

The Operational Services Manager clarified that before any enforcement programme took place in the areas surrounding schools, liaison would take place with appropriate school staff.

Members welcomed the proposal set out in recommendation 4.4 of the briefing paper to distribute a letter to all District, Town and Parish Councillors advising of the procedure for reporting any incidences of litter dropping from vehicles they witness.

Members requested clarification on the enforcement procedure for the prosecution of drivers who use their mobile phone whilst driving.

Further discussion took place on this item during the exempt section of the meeting.

Agreed:

- 1. The recommendations, as set out in the briefing paper be put forward to Cabinet:**
 - i) To run a litter programme during August and early September 2008, as this period sees the highest number of visitors to the District, to raise the profile of the Council's Enforcement Powers.**
 - ii) To run a second litter programme during term time, in September 2008, in order that schools and the areas surrounding them can be targeted.**
 - iii) The Operational Services Manager ensures that refuse vehicles are emptied at regular intervals to ensure that litter does not overflow.**
 - iv) To distribute a letter to all District, Town and Parish Councillors advising of the procedure for reporting incidences of litter dropping.**
 - v) To have a regular slot in Newswyre to promote the Council's enforcement policy and the number of fixed penalty notices issued, subject to the approval of the Newswyre Editorial Panel.**
- 2. The Property / General Solicitor provide Members with details regarding the prosecution of drivers for using their mobile phone whilst driving.**

CMS.7 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 advised the Committee that some amendments were required to the current work programme and that a number of suggestions had been put forward for additional work to be carried out by the Committee:

1. The item on Newswyre be deferred until September 2008 in light of information received from the Leader of the Council.
2. A request had been received from the Leader of the Council for the Committee to scrutinise the work of the Citizens Advice Bureau in the District.
3. Members were advised that the Post Office were in a period of pre-consultation before they released information on Post Offices in the District proposed for closure. It was noted that Malvern Hills District Council had received a presentation from the Post Office and invited Town and Parish Councillors to attend.
4. The Primary Care Trust had approached the District Council as it was due to begin a period of consultation on its application for Foundation Trust Status.
5. The Chairman advised that discussion had taken place at the Committees work programme meeting regarding an item on the co-ordination of external funding across the Council.
6. A request had been received from Councillor Phillips for the Committee to scrutinise the decision of the Driving Standards Agency to close the Castle Road Test Centre in Kidderminster.
7. Councillor Mrs Oborski had put forward a suggestion for a scrutiny into the need for an arts centre in Kidderminster.

Agreed:

The work programme for the current municipal year be approved subject to the following changes:

1. **The item on Newswyre be deferred until September 2008.**
2. **A review panel be established to scrutinise the work of the Citizens Advice Bureau in the District. The review panel consist of the following members, Councillors: Mrs H E Dyke, Mrs S Hayward, G Yarrington and H Eeles.**
3. **The Post Office be invited to present to the July meeting of the Committee. Town and Parish Councillors also be invited to attend for this item.**
4. **The Primary Care Trust be invited to present to the August meeting of the Committee regarding their application for Foundation Trust Status.**
5. **An item on external funding be added to the work programme for November 2008.**

6. The Scrutiny Committee Officer prepare a background report on the Castle Road Test Centre, Kidderminster, together with information on the Driving Standards Agency's agenda to move towards new Multi Purpose Test Centres.

The Regeneration and Economic Prosperity Manager provide details of potential sites in the district, focusing on the West Midlands boundaries of Kidderminster, that could be used by the Driving Standards Agency to develop a Multi Purpose Test Centre.

The Media Officer investigate the options available for media coverage on this item.

A review panel be established, with a view to meeting following the 2nd July 2008 meeting of the Committee. The review panel consist of the following Members, Councillors: Phillips, Baker and Yarrington.

7. The relevant form be sent to Councillor Mrs Oborski in order that the Committee get more information regarding the proposal and its anticipated outcomes.

CMS.8 Exclusion of the Press & Public

Decision:

Under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of "Exempt Information" as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

CMS.9 Summary of Minutes

Discussion took place on the legal difficulties in enforcing fixed penalty notices.

CMS.10 Minutes

Agreed:

The exempt minutes of the Corporate Service and Performance Scrutiny Committee meeting held on the 1st April 2008 be noted by the Committee.

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