

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CORPORATE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

THURSDAY, 2ND OCTOBER 2008 (6:00 PM)

PRESENT:

Councillors: G W Ballinger (Chairman), Mrs J Greener (Vice-Chairman), M Ahmed, Mrs H E Dyke, J Holden, J Phillips, K J Stokes, J Thomas, N J Thomas, and S J Williams

Observers:

Councillors: J-P Campion and P Dyke.

CSP.65 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence

CSP.66 Appointment of Substitutes

No substitutes were appointed.

CSP.67 Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

CSP.68 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 4th September 2008 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CSP.69 Matters Arising

The Leader confirmed to Members that as a result of the Customer Services Review, no staff would be moving from the Worcestershire Hub to Worcestershire County Council.

CSP.70 Equality and Diversity

The Committee considered a report from the Head of the Chief Executive's Office which provided an update on Equality and Diversity activities.

The Head of the Chief Executive's Office took members through the report and highlighted the following:

- a. There was a legal duty on the Council to have an Equality and Diversity Scheme in place and a three-year plan was required.

Agenda Item No. 4

- b. An action plan had been put together to enable structures and processes to be set.
- c. The Community Fair was one example where community groups could work together.

In response to questions, members were informed the following:

- a. Ethnic Link was used for translation of services, if required.
- b. Worcestershire County Council were looking to provide a full access link for Members of the public.
- c. Lawful discrimination had been put to test in the Courts and it had unanimously been found to be lawful.
- d. The Head of the Chief Executive's Office would report back to Members on the cost of translating documents for all six authorities in the County.
- e. £230,000 in funding had been received for the Equality & Diversity project, and none of this was district funding.
- f. Staff were trained to deal with people with disabilities and a member of staff at the Civic Centre, Stourport had been trained in sign language in case this service was ever needed.
- g. A new Community Cohesion grant of £150,000 was available on a three year basis and the Council would be applying for this grant. In addition, a small amount of money would be added to the Community Cohesion next year.
- h. No information was currently available regarding a breakdown of male and female employees in the County but this was something that needed to be addressed in the future.
- i. The Council's website could be designed in order that it can be seen in different languages.

Agreed:

- 1. The Head of the Chief Executive's Office to report back to the Committee, the cost of translating services for the six authorities in Worcestershire.**
- 2. The information be noted.**

Recommended to Cabinet to recommend to Council: The Single Equality Scheme be adopted and implemented.

CSP.71 Comprehensive Area Assessment

The Committee considered a report from the Head of the Chief Executive's Office which advised Members of the Audit Commission's latest views on Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA).

Agenda Item No. 4

The Head of the Chief Executive's Office took members through the report and highlighted the following:

- a. The Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) document was out for consultation at present.
- b. Some systems to allow CAA to take place were not ready yet and needed to be addressed.

Councillor Ballinger left the meeting at this point, (6.45pm).

- c. Members were informed that National Indicators were part of performance management element of CAA.
- d. The Policy & Performance Officer was attending working groups throughout the County on NI's to develop a consistent approach and best practice.
- e. Members would receive a report on National Indicators for Quarter 1 & Quarter 2 in November 2008.
- f. A meeting had been arranged for 17th October 2008 at 10.00am between County and District Council's to discuss the way forward for CAA.

Councillor Ballinger returned at this point, (6.50pm).

Agreed: The information relating to Comprehensive Area Assessment be noted.

CSP.72 Corporate Plan Priorities 2008/09

The Committee considered a report from the Head of the Chief Executive's Office which informed Members of the progress regarding the Priorities for 2008/09 as set out in the Corporate Plan 2008/2011.

The Head of the Chief Executive's Office went through the report.

In response to questions, Members were informed of the following:

- a. Sites needed to be identified for social housing and the Council had sites which might be suitable for affordable housing.
- b. If Members wanted specific subjects to be reported on, that information could be subject of reports for future meetings.

Agreed:

- a. **The information relating to Corporate Plan Priorities 2008/09 be noted.**
- b. **The report format for Corporate Plan Priorities be amended to reflect areas of concern.**

CSP.73 Feedback from Cabinet

The Committee noted the content of the Cabinet action list of 25th September 2008 which related to the Customer Services Review.

Agreed: The information be noted.

CSP.74 Work Programme

The Panel considered its work programme for the current municipal year with regard to the Sustainable Community Theme, Corporate Plan Aim and the Forward Plan.

The Chairman of the Section 106 Review Panel informed Members of the Committee that staff from Worcestershire County Council had been in attendance at the last two panel meetings. Another meeting of the Panel was scheduled for November 2008 where recommendations would be forwarded to the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee.

Agreed: The information be noted.

CSP.75 Press Involvement

No items were identified for scrutiny that might require publicity.

CSP.76 Exempt Information

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

CSP.77 Summary of Minutes

The following proceedings were considered after the press and public had been excluded from the meeting. A summary of the minutes relating to these items has been made as "exempt Information" would be disclosed if the minutes were published in full.

CSP.78 Minutes

Decision: The exempt minutes of the meeting held on the 4th September 2008 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CSP.79 Single Site

A verbal update was received from the Leader of the Council regarding the current status of a single site for the Council.

The meeting ended at 7.23 pm.