

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CORPORATE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

THURSDAY, 8TH JANUARY 2009 (6:00 PM)

Meeting in Public

PRESENT:

Councillors: G W Ballinger (Chairman), M Ahmed, A J Buckley, 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 – Leader of the Council and Councillor M J Hart – Cabinet Member for Leisure Services.

CSP.98 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs J Greener - Vice-Chairman and N J Desmond – Cabinet Member for Community & Corporate Services.

CSP.99 Appointment of Substitutes

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

CSP.100 Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

CSP.101 Minutes

Agreed: The minutes of the meeting held on 13th November 2008 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CSP.102 Recommendations from the Section 106 Review Panel

The Committee considered a report from the Chairman of the Section 106 Review Panel which detailed the recommendations from the Review Panel. He informed members, that in his capacity as a Worcestershire County Councillor, he would take this forward to Scrutiny.

In response to a query regarding Section 106 contributions to Catholic schools, the Head of Legal & Democratic Services agreed to send Members a briefing note.

Members thought that the Section 106 Review Panel should be reconvened in the future.

Agreed:

1. **The Head of Legal & Democratic Services to send Members information with regard to Section 106 education contributions to Catholic Schools.**
2. **The Committee/Scrutiny Officer to arrange for the Section 106 Review Panel to be added to the work programme for the next municipal year.**

Recommendation to Cabinet

1. **Ward Councillors should be consulted when there was a possibility of open space Section 106 monies being available to provide facilities in their Ward with advice from Officers on location and need.**

As there would be a short timescale for responses due to the requirements on determination of planning applications, the consultation scheme to be provided by the Head of Planning, Health & Environment to suit those timescales and to fully comply with operational and legislative requirements and Government Circular Guidance and include provision for a final decision by the Head of Planning, Health & Environment.

2. **The Head of Planning, Health & Environment to provide Councillors with the Annual Summary of the Operation of the Section 106 Education Contributions policy in the Wyre Forest district when it is received from Worcestershire County Council.**
3. **Amendments to be made to the Section 106 Monitoring Sheets. They would include more detailed information in respect of contributions received and spent and a checklist for officers to ensure there has been appropriate Member consultation.**

CSP.103 Business (Service) Continuity Plan

The Committee received a verbal report from the Head of Property & Operational Services on the Council's Business (Service) Continuity Plan.

Members were informed of the following points:

- a. Under the 2004 Civil Contingency Act, all authorities were requested to compile a register for probable disasters i.e. loss of buildings, staff etc.
- b. The register consisted of all divisional plans that could affect the Council should a disaster happen. These had been completed by the relevant Chief who had responsibility for their department with the Chief Executive taking the ultimate responsibility.
- c. The document had been passed by the Contingency Office and now required to be endorsed by Members to ensure it was fit for purpose.
- d. The Emergency Plan dealt with the protection of the public whilst the Business (Service) Continuity Plan dealt with the Council's services.

Agreed:

Recommendation to Cabinet:

The Business (Service) Continuity Plan for 2008 be endorsed.

CSP.104 Corporate Plan Priorities 2008/09

The Committee considered a report from the Head of the Chief Executive's Office which informed Members of progress up to 30th November 2008 with regard to the Priorities for 2008/09 as set out in the Corporate Plan 2008/2011.

Members went through the report and were informed of the following:

- a. A report would be produced for a future Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee summarising each key priority and setting out what the new targets would be for 2009/10. This would be agreed as part of the forthcoming budget process.
- b. The Committee/Scrutiny Officer would obtain details of the definition of "Affordable Housing" and circulate it to Members.
- c. BP08 34b – A total of 52 completions for affordable housing had been completed. This equated to 20% between April and November 2008. An update would be provided for the next meeting of this committee. The targets had been set at a time when they were believed to be realistic but due to present circumstances, targets had been moved.
- d. BP09 13 – There was concern from Weavers Wharf Managers regarding the siting of recycling facilities as there could potentially be problems with servicing the units. An alternative, a recycling facility had been located outside Kidderminster College in Market Street.
- e. BP08 49a - The Head of the Chief Executive's Office would obtain details on the final proposals for the delivery of Stourport Pride and inform Members.
- f. BP08 27 – Bereavement was not included in the sickness figures. Each Head of Service was responsible for checking their divisional sickness report. Sickness pay was paid for six months.

Members agreed that the relevant Cabinet Member and Officer for the relevant priority item(s) under discussion be requested to attend the relevant Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee meeting.

Agreed:

- 1. The Committee/Scrutiny Officer to ask the Head of Planning, Health & Environmental for the definition of "Affordable Housing" and to circulate to Members.**
- 2. The Head of the Chief Executive's Office to inform Members what the final proposals were for PHEBP0849a – Delivery of Stourport Pride Initiative.**

- 3. The relevant Cabinet Member and Officer for the relevant priority item(s) under discussion be requested to attend the relevant Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee meeting.**
- 4. The Committee/Scrutiny Officer to arrange for sickness monitoring to be added to the Work Programme for the next municipal year.**

CSP.105 Equality & Diversity

The Committee received a report from the Head of the Chief Executive's Office which provided an update on Equality & Diversity (E&D) activities.

The Policy & Performance Assistant went through the report and highlighted the following:

- a. Work had started on the action plan.
- b. The No Barrier Awards may take a different format this year.

In response to questions, Members were informed that the Council were legally obliged to provide flexible working arrangements.

It was noted that the Policy & Performance Assistant had recently been commended on the work she had undertaken on Equality & Diversity.

Agreed:

- 1. The update be noted.**
- 2. The Head of Legal & Democratic Services to arrange for Members to receive a copy of the guide "Disability Etiquette" issued by Worcestershire County Council.**

CSP.106 Use of Resources

The Committee received a verbal update from the Head of Financial Services on the Use of Resources.

The Head of Financial Services went through a slide presentation, the contents of which are attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes. The following points were highlighted:

- a. The Council had been assessed in five areas for 2007/08 and had been assessed at level 2 and final results were being awaited. The scale used was 1 lowest and 4 highest.
- b. Auditors would begin to assess the Council from January 2009 for 2008/09.
- c. The Audit Commission had released their internal review on the Icelandic Bank issue and had found that money had been invested in good faith.

Councillors J-P Campion and K J Stokes left the meeting at 7.18pm.

In response to a question, Members were informed that there had been a problem with the collection of council tax at the beginning of January 2009, this had been delayed by five days. The Council's bankers, Co-Operative Bank, had confirmed that there would be no loss of interest.

Councillor J-P Campion came back into the meeting at 7.20pm.

Councillor K J Stokes came back into the meeting at 7.23pm.

Agreed: The information be noted

CSP.107 Budget Consultation

The Committee received a verbal update from the Head of Financial Services on the Budget Consultation carried out in October 2008.

The Head of Financial Services went through a slide presentation, the contents of which are attached as Appendix 2 to these minutes. He informed members that the results showed that 65% of respondents had stated the Council were delivering a good value for money service.

Agreed: The Committee/Scrutiny Officer to circulate to Members the slide presentation on the recent Budget Consultation.

CSP.108 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 Committee/ Scrutiny Officer agreed to contact Members with regard to arranging an additional meeting of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee to look at the recommendation tracking forms for 2007/08.

Agreed: The Committee/ Scrutiny Officer to contact Members to arrange an additional meeting of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee to look at the recommendation tracking forms.

CSP.109 Press Involvement

No items were identified for scrutiny that might require publicity.

CSP.110 Exclusion of the Press and Public

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 paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

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.111 Exempt Minutes

Decision: The exempt minutes of the meeting held on the 13th November 2008 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

The meeting ended at 7.55 pm.