

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

REGENERATION & ENTERPRISE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

22ND APRIL 2009 (6:00PM)

Present:

Councillors: Mrs F M Oborski (Chairman), P Dyke (Vice-Chairman), J Aston, J Baker, Mrs J Greener, M A W Hazlewood, M B Kelly, H J Martin, D J Millis and K H Prosser.

Observers:

There were no members present as observers.

RAE.68 Apologies For Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: M Ahmed and M J Shellie.

RAE.69 Appointment Of Substitutes

Councillor J Baker was appointed as a substitute for Councillor M Ahmed.
Councillor H J Martin was appointed as a substitute for Councillor M J Shellie.

RAE.70 Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

RAE.71 Minutes

Agreed: The minutes of the meeting held on 18th March 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RAE.72 Wyre Forest Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2009/10

Members considered a briefing paper from the Principal Health & Sustainability Officer which outlined proposals in relation to the adoption of a Climate Change Strategy for Wyre Forest and 2009/10 Action Plan.

Members noted that the proposal to develop a Climate Change Strategy for Wyre Forest had been recommended to Cabinet by this Committee in November 2008, and that the Strategy replaces the previous Sustainability and Affordable Warmth Strategies.

Discussion took place on the thermal imaging exercise that had recently been undertaken for the district, Members highlighted that, as the results were to be published on Worcestershire County Council's website, concerns had been put forward by Age Concern and the Citizens Advice Bureau that elderly residents in the

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district could be targeted by firms offering loft and cavity wall insulation. The Principal Health and Sustainability Officer advised that residents would be able to access their property energy rating by inputting their post code into the website, no information apart from the energy rating for the property would be given.

Furthermore, Members noted that the Council were hoping to use the results of the thermal imaging survey to identify the least energy efficient areas in the district in order that targeted work could be undertaken with these properties to advise of grants and schemes available.

Members felt that the Council could provide advice to residents on ways to reduce their carbon footprint and surface water flooding, which could be included with the council tax information dispatched to households next year.

Recommended to Cabinet:

- 1. The Wyre Forest Climate Change Strategy and 2009/10 Action Plan be adopted.**
- 2. A guide be produced for householders in the district on ways to reduce their carbon footprint and surface water flooding.**

RAE.73 Kidderminster Town Centre Manager's Annual Update Report

Members considered a briefing paper from the Town Centre Manager which highlighted achievements for the period April 2008 to March 2009.

The Town Centre Manager highlighted some of the key achievements including;

- i) The Branding Project with King Charles I School
- ii) Town Centre Business Survey
- iii) Contribution to the 'Connecting Kidderminster' Regeneration Prospectus
- iv) Christmas lights 'switch on'

Furthermore, Members were advised that work was taking place with Kidderminster College on students maintaining the flower towers on Market Street, it was thought that this would give them some ownership of the area.

A Member advised the committee that a political group had recently hired a market stall to promote the interests of the party. Furthermore it was clarified that an application to the highways manager had to be submitted for political parties to hold recruitment stands in Kidderminster Town Centre and that market stalls should not be hired for this purpose.

Discussion took place on the number of empty units in Kidderminster Town Centre, although the report specified the that there were 30 empty units Members asked for clarification on the amount of floor space this equated to.

The Town Centre Manager advised that she did not have the total floor space detail to hand, but that of the three large units available one unit was 72,000sq ft and that from 1999 Kidderminster had seen the town centre area almost double.

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Members noted that, since the briefing paper had been published, two additional stores had opened in Kidderminster Town Centre meaning the number of vacant properties had reduced to 28.

Moreover, members commented that public perception was that Kidderminster Town Centre had moved. The Town Centre Manager clarified that only Marks and Spenser's and Sainsbury's had relocated to new developments.

The Committee commended the Town Centre Manager on the work within Kidderminster Town Centre to date.

Agreed: The information be noted.

RAE.74 Wyre Forest District Local Development Framework Consultation Responses to the Core Strategy Preferred Options

The Committee considered a briefing paper from the Principal Forward Planning Officer which provided information with regard to the level and scope of the responses received in relation to the public consultation undertaken on the Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper.

Members noted that a total of 533 comments had been submitted during the consultation period, which had been extended to allow Parish Councils the opportunity to formulate responses.

The Chairman of the LDF Review Panel advised the Committee that the review panel had gone through all of the comments submitted in detail and recommended the endorsement of the summary of officer recommendations to the responses received on the Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper.

Members noted that the West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA) and the Government Office for the West Midlands had both highlighted the need for the preparation of the Submission Version of the Core Strategy to be closely informed by the recommendations arising from the Regional Spatial Strategy Phase 2 Examination in Public Panel Report. Officers advised that it was expected that this would be published in September 2009, however if this was delayed it would impact upon the timetable for the Submission Version of the Core Strategy.

Recommended to Cabinet:

The summary of officer recommendations to the responses received on the Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper be approved.

RAE.75 Feedback from Cabinet

The Chairman advised the Committee that the recommendation put forward to Cabinet on the List of Buildings of Local Architectural and/or historic Interest (The Local List) – Draft proposals for Wolverley & Cookley Parish, had been agreed.

Agreed: The Information be noted.

RAE.76 Work Programme

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

Discussion took place on the tracking of scrutiny recommendations, Members felt that, for the first meeting of the next municipal year, it would be worthwhile examining the outcome of recommendations put forward in 2007/08 and 2008/09.

The Chairman advised that it had been identified through local Partnership and Communities Together (PACT) forums that the parking of heavy goods vehicles in the district was becoming an issue. Members noted that a review had been conducted in 2003/04 into the need for lorry parking facilities in the district, as a result lorry parking had been made available at New Road car park in Kidderminster. Furthermore it was noted that this issue may be brought forward for consideration by the Committee in the next municipal year.

Agreed: The tracking of scrutiny recommendations for 2007/08 and 2008/09 be added to the work programme for 2009/10.

The meeting ended at 6:55pm.