

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

THURSDAY, 3RD SEPTEMBER 2009 (6:00PM)

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**PRESENT:**

Councillors: Mrs H E Dyke (Chairman), J Phillips (Vice-Chairman), G H Eeles, D R Godwin, Mrs P V Hayward, M A W Hazlewood, M B Kelly, D J Millis, M Price, K H Prosser, M J Shellie, D R Sheppard, S J Williams, G C Yarranton

**Observers**

Councillors: G W Ballinger, Mrs F M Oborski

**C&R.26 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from the Cabinet Member for Community & Partnership Services, Councillor M.J. Hart.

**C&R.27 Appointment of Substitutes**

No substitutes were appointed

**C&R.28 Declaration of Interests**

Councillors M B Kelly, M J Shellie, and G C Yarranton declared a personal interest in relation to Agenda Item No.5, the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS) Phase Three Revision – Options Consultation, and also Agenda Item No.6 Cultural Strategy and Action Plan as they are members of the Wyre Forest Community Housing Group.

**C&R.29 Minutes**

**Agreed: 1. The minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee held on the 8<sup>th</sup> April 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**2. The minutes of the meeting of the Regeneration and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee held on the 13<sup>th</sup> July 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**C&R.30 West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS) Phase Three Revision – Options Consultation**

A report was considered from the Regeneration and Economic Prosperity Manager, relating to the Options Consultation of the Phase Three Revision of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS).

Copies of Appendix 1 to this report had been distributed electronically, however several Members expressed concern that they had experienced difficulties in attempting to download this document.

Members were advised to download all attachments immediately upon receipt, thus allowing sufficient time to obtain a hard copy, or I.T. support, should they encounter any difficulties. Furthermore, Members were advised to inform the Committee Section upon encountering any difficulties with downloading attachments.

The purpose of the report was to provide background and an update on the responses submitted by WFDC to the West Midlands Regional Assembly for the deadline of the 14<sup>th</sup> August 2009. Members were informed that the Regeneration and Economic Prosperity Manager had written to the West Midlands Regional Assembly, as agreed in the meeting of this committee of 18<sup>th</sup> June 2009 to request an extension to the consultation period, but that the request had been turned down for operational reasons.

In response to Question GTQ3 on page 24 of the consultation response (Appendix 2), relating to Gypsies and Travellers, Members were advised that Option 2 had been chosen, which entailed the provision of 35 new Gypsy and Traveller pitches within the District over the period of 2007-2017.

Members raised several questions relating to this, including:

- How many existing pitches were in the District? The Regeneration and Economic Prosperity Manager advised that he would need to obtain the information and forward it to Members.
- Whether or not a pitch equated to one caravan or one family. Members were advised that there was no clear current guidance on this point.
- Whether or not the figure of 35 new pitches took account of tolerated sites. It was clarified that the figure of 35 new pitches was in addition to existing provision and tolerated sites.
- A Member also suggested that more pitches for transient travellers might be required in addition to permanent ones.

In response to Question ENV20 on p.33, relating to Renewable Energy Targets, Members raised several points:

- The absence of overarching regional targets could lead to differences in performance at sub regional level. The Regeneration and Economic Prosperity Manager advised that different areas had different features hence them having different targets.
- A perceived lack of support and advice for people wishing to adopt carbon friendly energy measures was highlighted, and contrasted with the performance of Shropshire, where local energy measures such as wind turbines have been set up in several locations. The impact of this consultation on District planning policy was also questioned. The Regeneration and Economic Prosperity Manager advised that the Council was dependent to an extent upon policy and initiatives from Central Government, and proposals and interest from the private sector. However, this issue could be looked at in detail by the Sustainability Team through the Local Development Framework

- Furthermore, several Members raised the issue of hydroelectric power, and it was requested that an additional comment be added to the response to the question, emphasising the importance of this form of renewable energy to the District.

**Agreed: 1. The responses submitted to the WMRA in relation to the WMRSS Phase Three Revision Options Paper be noted.**

**2. To highlight hydroelectric power as a particular concern to take forward in the next stage of consultation - the preferred options, scheduled to take place in Spring 2010.**

### **C&R.31 Cultural Strategy and Action Plan**

A report was considered from the Cultural Services Manager regarding the Action Plan for Wyre Forest as part of the Cultural Strategy for Worcestershire.

The purpose of the report was to update Members on the progress of the consultation carried out on the Action Plan for Wyre Forest, and the changes which had been made. Members were advised that the previous Cultural Strategy had expired, and that the local Action Plan for Wyre Forest was a part of the new Cultural Strategy for Worcestershire.

Members were advised that the Action Plan was an organic document which is expected to change over time. Several pending additions to the Action Plan were listed – an application for funding from Access to Nature for Hurcott woods; a Tree Management Plan, subject to Council adoption; an Action Plan for Arts Strategy, and the Carpet Museum.

A Member informed the Committee that the Cultural Strategy was due to be formally launched at Rock Village Hall on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2009. In addition Members were advised that European Union Funding was being made available through the Leader Project. This was for rural areas and was generally 100% funding, for small cultural projects. Members were advised that if they had potential projects in their communities to take the opportunity to apply for funding.

Members were advised that if they had any suggested additions to the list of Consultees, that they submit them to the Cultural Services Manager, as it might be possible to add them to a subsequent version of the Action Plan.

Some Members were concerned about the Building Schools for the Future project and the role of third party school facilities managers. It was suggested that there could be a conflict between the demands upon facilities by schools and communities. Members were advised by the Cultural Services Manager that this concern was being addressed at County level, and that there were plans to devise a specification for the use of facilities in conjunction with Sport England.

**Recommended: The Action Plan, including comments from partners, for Wyre Forest and the Cultural Strategy, be endorsed and referred to Council for adoption.**

**C&R.32 Feedback from Cabinet**

Members considered the action list from Cabinet for 21<sup>st</sup> July 2009

Recommendations had been made to Cabinet on the following items:

- **The List of Buildings of Local Architectural and/or Historic Interest (The Local List)**
- **Hurcott Road Local Lettings Policy**
- **Cultural Strategy and Action Plan**

Members were informed that the recommendations made to Cabinet had been agreed.

**Agreed: The information be noted.**

**C&R.33 Work Programme**

The Committee reviewed the Work Programme for the current municipal year.

Members were reminded that there would be:

1. An update on KTC.3 on the 5th November 2009.
2. Tracking Recommendations from the last two years on the 8<sup>th</sup> October 2009.

**Agreed: To note the changes to the Work Programme.**

**C&R.34 Press Involvement**

No items were identified which might require press involvement at present.

**C&R.35 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 consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of “Exempt Information” as defined in paragraphs 8 and 9 of Parts 2 & 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act.**

**C&R.36 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.**

**C&R.37 Cemetery Update**

A briefing paper was considered from the Director of Community and Partnership Services, regarding plans for a new District Cemetery, Crematorium and Associated Facilities.

#### **Agenda Item No. 4**

The purpose of the paper was to update the Committee on the progress of the project.

The Director of Community and Partnership Services agreed to keep the Committee informed of developments in the project.

**Agreed: To note the progress made to date, and to receive regular updates on the progress of the project.**

**The meeting ended at 19:07.**