

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

THURSDAY, 7TH JANUARY 2010 (6:00PM)

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**Present:**

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

**Observers:**

Councillors: J-P Campion, N J Desmond, J Greener, M J Hart, A T Hingley, F M Oborski, and T L Onslow.

**C&R.76 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D R Godwin.

**C&R.77 Appointment of Substitutes**

Councillor P B Harrison was appointed as a substitute for Councillor D R Godwin.

**C&R.78 Declaration of Interests**

No declarations of interest were made.

**C&R.79 Minutes**

**Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd December 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**C&R.80** The Chairman agreed that Agenda Item No. 7 "Scrutiny Proposal Form: Bewdley Resident's Season Tickets" be brought forward as the first substantive agenda item, as the Cabinet Meeting being held on the same date was awaiting its outcome.

**C&R.81 Scrutiny Proposal Form: Bewdley Resident's Season Tickets**

The Committee considered a Scrutiny Proposal Form which requested the establishment of a Review Panel on issues relating to Bewdley Resident's Season Tickets.

Attached to the report as Appendix 1 was a report from the Director of Planning and Regulatory Services which provided contextual and background information relating to the issues covered by the Scrutiny Proposal Form.

The Director of Planning and Regulatory Services advised members of a 23 Hour Maximum Stay Rule at Council Car Parks which was in place following legal advice.

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The purpose of the rule was to prevent Season Ticket Holders from attempting to claim ownership rights of particular parking spaces.

The Director of Planning and Regulatory Services advised the Committee that he perceived there to be two central issues at the heart of the proposed scrutiny exercise, being:

- 1) The provision of a 23 Hour Maximum Stay Rule in Council Car Parks.
- 2) The provision of Parking Season Tickets to Residents.

The Leader of the Council perceived that these issues affected all wards and not just Bewdley. Furthermore, he commented that annual changes to parking charges and conditions would be made in October 2010, and that should a review panel be established, any subsequent recommendations would be best made several months in advance of this date.

A Member commented that the local press had reported on parking issues in Bewdley, but that residents of Comberton Hill, Kidderminster had contacted the Member regarding similar problems.

18:11 Councillor M Price entered the meeting at this point.

In addition, the Member commented that the issue of the maximum stay rule and Resident's Parking Passes concerned Hotels purchasing parking season tickets for the use of guests.

The Chairman reiterated to Members the two central issues which had earlier been raised by the Director of Planning and Regulatory Services, and suggested that these formed the basis of a Review Panel's Terms of Reference.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services perceived that should a Review Panel be established, it would need to ensure that any proposals were workable. It was also suggested that the Review Panel might wish to examine the possibility of temporary exceptions to the 23 hour rule for people when sick or on holiday.

The Chairman subsequently commented that the Review Panel should consist of Members from all wards, and not overwhelmingly represent one particular area.

The Chairman drew Members' attention to an email (copies of which were circulated at the meeting) from a member of the public, who had made comments regarding the proposed Review Panel's potential Terms of Reference.

In addition the Chairman commented that the Review Panel may wish to designate smaller groups which could then be assigned individual research tasks.

In response to a question from a Member, the Assistant Scrutiny / Committee Officer advised that an email would be sent to political Group Leaders requesting nominations for Membership of the Review Panel, and individual Members should communicate their interest in being part of the Review Panel to the Committee Section.

**Agreed: A Review Panel be established to examine the below issues:**

- i. The function of the 23 Hour Maximum Period of Stay Rule in Council Car Parks**
- ii. The function of Residents' Season Tickets**

**It was clarified that the Review Panel would consider these issues from a District wide perspective, and not focus upon a particular area.**

18:20 Councillors J-P Champion, N J Desmond, J Greener, M J Hart, A T Hingley, and T L Onslow left the meeting at this point.

**C&R.82 Waste Core Strategy for Worcestershire: Emerging Preferred Options Consultation Document (November 2009)**

The Committee considered a report from the Senior Forward Planning Officer which sought Members' views on the proposed representations to be submitted on the Waste Core Strategy for Worcestershire - Emerging Preferred Options Consultation Document (November 2009).

The Senior Forward Planning Officer informed Members that the report built upon a similar submission from 2009. The Committee was informed that detailed comments made by Officers in response to the Strategy were attached to the report as Appendix 2.

The Senior Forward Planning Officer informed the Committee of several key comments which had been submitted regarding the Strategy, a summary of which is provided below:

- i. Spatial Portrait – Most of the proposed Waste Facilities were located in North Worcestershire, and Officers had commented that this should be rectified to focus around Worcester to reflect future plans for development.
- ii. Vision and Emphasis – Officers wanted to emphasise the importance of a precautionary approach.
- iii. Location Hierarchy – Officers felt that Bewdley was listed too highly in the Location Hierarchy which set out the proposed areas for waste facilities.
- iv. Restricting Further Landfill – Officers supported the plan to restrict the creation of further landfill sites in the District, providing that other facilities were created in order to divert waste from landfill.
- v. Energy From Waste – Officers felt that this issue needed to be based upon the most up to date scientific evidence.

The Committee subsequently considered each page of Appendix 2 to the report, and a summary of the points raised is provided below:

- i. A Member agreed with the Officers submitted Comment that Bewdley was wrongly placed in the Location Hierarchy.
- ii. Regarding item "WCS10: Energy from Waste" on page 23/4 of Appendix 2 to the report, the Senior Forward Planning Officer advised Members that Officers had commented that the use of the phrase "...basically sustainable" should read "fully sustainable" and that extra criteria regarding health and safety and pollution should be included.
- iii. In response to a Member, the Senior Forward Planning Officer

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commented that the idea behind Energy from Waste was to use non recyclable waste.

**Agreed: To endorse and recommend to Cabinet that the representations, attached at Appendix 2 of the report , should form the District Council's response to the County's Waste Core Strategy for Worcestershire – Emerging Preferred Options consultation document.**

#### **C&R.83 Kidderminster Town Centre Strategy – Issues & Options Paper**

The Committee considered a report from the Policy and Regeneration Manager which sought Members' views on the Kidderminster Town Centre Strategy Issues and Options Document, which would form the basis for a consultation.

The Policy and Regeneration Manager advised the Committee that the paper set out the desire for an appropriate Town Centre Management System and Associated Partnership Working Structure for Kidderminster Town Centre. Members were advised that the paper did not seek to override other documents such as the Local Development Framework or ReWyre Initiative, but aimed to formalise the current arrangements for the management of Kidderminster Town Centre, in order to move forward and link the management system with planned regeneration efforts.

The Policy and Regeneration Manager informed the Committee that part of the role of the Town Centre Manager was to implement the Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership Business Plan of April 2007, which was due to expire in 2010.

The Policy and Regeneration Manager advised members that the current management system was operating at a low level and lacked influence over strategic decisions affecting Kidderminster. The aim of the strategy was to broaden the operation and membership of the partnership and to address issues of under representation. Furthermore, the paper set out a framework within which the management system could move forward, in the light of other towns such as Worcester having adopted successful high level town centre management systems.

A discussion ensued and a summary of the key points raised is listed below:

- i. The Chairman perceived that the membership of the Town Centre Partnership was not very broad and lacked membership of national store chain representatives. In order to address this, the Chairman perceived it was necessary for the Partnership to be more ambitious in the issues it addressed.
- ii. A Member perceived that the profile of the Partnership was low, and felt that it required a root and branch restructuring. Furthermore, the Member perceived that a revised Partnership should be led by people whose economic prosperity and viability was dependent upon the vitality of the town centre.
- iii. The Kidderminster Town Centre Manager commented that the Town Centre Partnership had a low profile and perceived that it needed to raise its credibility.
- iv. The Chairman commented that ideally the Partnership should be consulted on significant local issues, but wasn't currently perceived to be a significant enough body to warrant this.
- v. A Member perceived that there were "small wins" to be achieved in the environment of Kidderminster Town Centre, where relatively small amounts of

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expenditure or effort, such as providing street seating, could have a dramatic impact on the overall shopping experience.

- vi. In response to a question from a Member the Policy and Regeneration Manager commented that the strategy aimed to reinvigorate the Partnership by linking it into the ReWyre Initiative, and then tying in with District and County channels, and local business leaders, with a possibility of attracting public funds to develop the Partnership further.
- vii. A Member questioned whether significant action was necessary to improve Kidderminster Town Centre. In response, the Policy and Regeneration Manager advised that as part of the Local Development Framework, telephone interviews had been conducted, which had given feedback regarding the popular perception of Kidderminster Town Centre, a summary of which was listed as part of Appendix 2 to the report.
- viii. The Policy and Regeneration Manager informed the Committee that research had been conducted which showed a reduction in the number of people from the District travelling to Merry Hill Shopping Centre for clothes shopping, since the opening of Weavers Wharf in Kidderminster.

**Agreed: To endorse and recommend to Cabinet the Kidderminster Town Centre Strategy Issues and Options Paper, and the accompanying Town Centre Audit set out at Appendices 1 and 2 of the report.**

#### **C&R.84 Feedback from the District Representative on the Worcestershire County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Committee considered an update from the District Representative on the work of the Worcestershire County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC). A report was circulated at the meeting.

The District Representative informed Members that if they wished to have a question raised at a HOSC meeting, she was happy to do so, on their behalf.

The District Representative outlined several key points concerning HOSC, a summary of which is listed below:

- i. The District Representative was concerned about the format of the HOSC meetings, and perceived that they were overloaded with presentations and information.
- ii. A detailed scrutiny exercise was planned to look at the winter stress period.
- iii. The District Representative perceived there to be concerns regarding the performance of the Worcestershire Mental Health Trust.
- iv. The Admiral Nursing Service, which provided dementia care, was due to be extended across Worcestershire.
- v. A decision regarding cancer treatment was anticipated regarding the possible centralisation of head and neck cancer treatment, which the District Representative felt could result in the movement of services out of Worcestershire.
- vi. Wyre Forest was designated as part of the Black Country Cancer Network.

A discussion ensued, a summary of which is provided below:

- i. A Member asked whether there had been any developments relating to mental health provision, to which the District Representative responded that there

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was a possibility of linking Day Care Provision in with the County Council, although the County were planning to vacate a local Day Care Centre before June 2010.

- ii. A Member perceived that should head and neck cancer services be moved out of Worcestershire, this might cause problems for the staff and surgeons who lived in Worcestershire. Furthermore, the Member commented that the Urgent Care Centre based at Kidderminster Hospital was not receiving enough patients. In response the District Representative perceived that it would be preferable to link the day time provision at the Urgent Care Centre with the out of hours provision, with patients being advised to either attend the Urgent Care Centre or other provision depending upon the time of day.
- iii. A Member commented that District Councillors were treated as members of the public at HOSC meetings, and perceived that Members' questions were best directed through the District Representative.
- iv. A Member commented that there had been little progress with the Lucy Baldwin Unit, to which the Chair responded that this might be best raised at a HOSC meeting by the District Representative.

**Agreed: The contents of the report and the comments raised be noted.**

#### **C&R.85 Work Programme**

A Member highlighted an issue relating to the Community Housing Group Tenant Consultative Committees, and proposals to establish Neighbourhood Agreements.

**Agreed:**

- i. **The Chairman to contact the Director of Community and Partnership Services in order to ascertain more information about Neighbourhood Agreements, in order to decide whether or not it should be considered by the Committee.**
- ii. **The changes to the Work Programme be noted.**

The meeting ended at 19:27.