

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CORPORATE RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

THURSDAY, 14TH JANUARY 2010 (6.00PM)

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**Present:**

Councillors: G W Ballinger (Chairman), J Greener (Vice-Chairman), J Aston, J Baker, A J Buckley, H E Dyke, P B Harrison, J Holden, C D Nicholls, J W Parish, M A Salter, K J Stokes, J Thomas and N J Thomas.

**Observers:**

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

**CR.90 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

**CR.91 Appointment of Substitutes**

No substitutes were appointed.

**CR.92 Declaration of Interests**

No declarations of interest were made.

**CR.93 Minutes**

**Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 10th December 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**CR.94 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

**CR.95 Recommendations from the Regulatory Services Review Panel**

The Committee considered recommendations from the Regulatory Service Review Panel on the Worcestershire Shared Regulatory Service.

The Chairman reminded Members that the Review Panel had met twice on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> January 2010 to discuss key issues following the staff and unions presentation on the 10<sup>th</sup> December 2009 and the consultation that had ended on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2009. Discussions had been held with Review Panel members regarding the possibility of extra time being made available to scrutinise the business case further but the panel felt this would not be necessary.

A paper was circulated to the Committee which contained questions raised by a Member relating to the WETT and responses were provided accordingly.

Members were informed that none of the other Worcestershire Councils had taken the business case through Council as yet although some had considered it in Cabinet.

Members stated that although they had reservations about the business case, there had been no other alternative options proposed.

The Leader of the Council informed the Committee that the Administration had not yet made their feelings known about the business case but he was pleased with the recommendation to support the business case. Partnership working was not seen as being a success in the County and it was perceived that the business case would be an opportunity for all local Councils to be involved from the outset. Wyre Forest District Council would be able to have an input on what the service might look like. It was noted that there were no consultants involved in the business case process, only internal resources had been used.

It was acknowledged that there were still questions to be asked which needed to be clarified, but it was felt there was enough time for this to happen before the business case was presented to the Council meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2010.

The Chairman asked the Leader of the Council to take on board the concerns that the Review Panel had expressed with regard to the impact on the Hub.

Members were reminded that the Council Licensing Policy would not change if the Regulatory Services business case went ahead. Each Council would retain their own Licensing Policy.

**Agreed:**

**Recommended to Cabinet:**

- 1. The Corporate Resources Scrutiny Committee recommends to Cabinet that Cabinet supports the proposals for joint working for regulatory services within the Worcestershire Enhanced Two Tier (WETT) Programme detailed business case.**
- 2. The Committee would welcome further clarification on the proposed Service Level Agreements by the time of the Council meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2010.**

**CR.96      Equality & Diversity December 2009 Update**

The Committee considered a briefing paper from the Equality & Diversity Officer which provided an update on the Equality and Diversity work that was currently taking place as part of the Being Different Together project and detailed recommendations made by an independent report into improving equality and diversity outcomes in Worcestershire.

The Equality & Diversity Officer went through the report and informed Members that

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the results of Internal Equality Monitoring which had been undertaken in August 2009, would be available on the Council's website shortly.

It was noted that Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) training had now been completed for Managers. The completed EqIA screening documents are to be returned by the end of January 2010, with 80% of these forms returned to date.

Feedback was expected on the Equality Framework by 5<sup>th</sup> February 2010.

Members were informed that at the Wyre Forest Radar meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2009, there had been three members of the public in attendance. Local community groups had been directly targeted as attendees. An advert would also be placed in the Kidderminster Shuttle for future sessions which would inform the public what the sessions were about and it was hoped this may increase the numbers attending. It was also hoped to include local schools. 250 leaflets had also been produced to be sent for use in locals shops/restaurants and tourist information offices.

The capacity for the meetings would be approximately 30/40 people.

**Agreed:**

**Noted: To continue to work closely with Worcestershire County Council for the needs of all our communities.**

**Recommended to Cabinet:**

**The Corporate Resources Scrutiny Committee recommends that Cabinet approve the recommendations of the Waterhouse Report.**

#### **CR.97 Recommendations from the Budget Review Panel – Approach to Efficiency**

The Committee received recommendations from the Budget Review Panel following Stage 2 of the budget process – Approach to Efficiency.

Members were informed that this item was scheduled to be on the agenda on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2009 but as the meeting had only considered the Regulatory Services business case, this item had been deferred.

**Agreed:**

**Recommended to Cabinet:**

**The Corporate Resources Scrutiny Committee recommends that Cabinet adopt the Approach to Efficiency document as laid out in Appendix 1 of the report to the Budget Review Panel meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2009.**

#### **CR.98 Comprehensive Area Assessment – Update**

The Committee considered papers from the Corporate Development and Improvement Manager which outlined information on the Comprehensive Area Assessment.

The Chief Executive informed members that the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) document outlined the work of the Council as a whole and the good work it carried out. The CAA replaced the previous Comprehensive Performance

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Assessment (CPA). It was highlighted that Councils within Worcestershire that had scored excellent results under the old CPA regime had received a lower rating under the new CAA system.

Councillor T L Onslow left the meeting at this point, (6.44pm).

In Worcestershire, three other councils had received the same score as Wyre Forest District Council. The rating was adequate but that was not enough: the ambition was for higher scores. It was acknowledged that with the current financial situation it would not be appropriate to commit to a timescale on how quickly a better score would be achievable.

Issues that had been identified in the document would be addressed through various workstreams and transformational change such as the recycling arrangements which would come into force later in 2010. There would not be a separate action plan for the CAA.

Councillor T L Onslow came back to the meeting, (6.47pm)

Members were concerned to note that the Wyre Forest area had one of the highest figures for unemployment in Worcestershire.

The Chief Executive informed the Committee that if there were any particular indicators that needed to be raised, these could be considered in Corporate Performance Clinic meetings.

#### **Agreed:**

**The information be noted and the item would be kept on the Corporate Resources Scrutiny Committee Work Programme.**

#### **CR.99 Corporate Performance Clinics – October and December 2009**

The Committee received a summary report of the outcomes for the items discussed at the Corporate Performance Clinics which had been held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2009 and 17<sup>th</sup> December 2009.

Councillor A J Buckley left the meeting at this point, (6.54pm).

The Policy & Performance Officer informed Members that the clinics had been established in 2009 to promote good performance and better practice. It was pointed out that all Members received the agenda and reports and although the meeting was not held in public, members were welcome to attend.

Councillor A J Buckley came back to the meeting, (6.56pm).

In response to a Member's request, the Chief Executive would liaise with the Members of the Panel to see if the meeting could be changed to 4pm.

The Corporate Development and Improvement Manager informed Members that in March 2010 a review would be held to consider how effective the clinics were.

**Agreed:**

**The Chief Executive would consider whether Corporate Performance Clinic meetings would be held at 4pm in future, subject to agreement of the Panel members.**

**CR.100 Feedback from Cabinet**

The Committee noted the contents of the Cabinet action list of 24<sup>th</sup> November 2009 which related to the Draft Mobile and Flexible Working Policy.

**Agreed:**

**The content of the Cabinet action list, following consideration of the recommendations from its meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2009 be noted.**

**CR.101 Work Programme**

The Committee/Scrutiny Officer informed the committee that the items relating to Emergency Planning and the Workforce Development Plan had been deferred from the January 2010 meeting to the meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2010.

**Agreed:**

**The Committee/Scrutiny Officer to ensure that the items relating to Emergency Planning and Workforce Development Plan be moved from the 14<sup>th</sup> January 2010 meeting to the meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2010.**

**CR.102 Press Involvement**

There were no items that required press involvement.

**CR.103 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.**

**CR.104 Centralised Office Accommodation**

The Committee received a verbal update from the Chief Executive on the Centralised Office Accommodation.

The Chief Executive informed Members that progressing the single site project was a top priority. He updated members on progress with negotiations to purchase the site; and said that a project manager needed to be employed to drive the project forward, this would be charged to the capital part of the project. The Council had no capacity internally to move this forward.

The next meeting of the Centralised Office Accommodation and Transformation Board meeting would be held at 9.30am on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2010 and at the meeting an update report would be presented.

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Members asked for clarification on whether the Stourport Civic Facilities Project Board still existed. It was agreed to clarify this matter. The Leader of the Council informed Members that the Stourport board could not commence until the single site project was underway and the proposed site had been purchased.

Councillor M J Hart left the meeting at this point, (7.08pm).

Members expressed concern regarding the amount of time that had lapsed regarding purchasing the proposed site.

Councillor J Holden left the meeting at this point, (7.13pm).

The Leader of the Council informed the committee that until the project started, no work could be done on the Civic Centre facility.

### **Agreed:**

- 1. The information be noted.**
- 2. Clarification would be given on the status of the Single Site Project Board – Civic Facilities.**

The meeting ended at 7.16 pm.