

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

THURSDAY, 8TH APRIL 2010 (6:00PM)

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**Present:**

Councillors: H E Dyke (Chairman), J Phillips (Vice-Chairman), A J Buckley, D R Godwin, P V Hayward, M A W Hazlewood, D J Millis, M Price, K H Prosser, J A Shaw, M J Shellie, D R Sheppard, and S J Williams.

**Observers:**

There were no members present as observers.

**C&R.98 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor G C Yarranton.

**C&R.99 Appointment of Substitutes**

Councillor A J Buckley was appointed as a substitute for Councillor G C Yarranton.

**C&R.100 Declaration of Interests**

No declarations of interest were made.

**C&R.101 Minutes**

The Chairman advised the Committee that minute C&R.93 ' West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Interim Policy Statement: Provision of New Accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople' had been amended after the publication of the agenda, and a revised copy of the minute was circulated to Members.

**Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 4th March 2010, including the amendments to minute C&R.93 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**C&R.102 Health and Wellbeing in Wyre Forest**

The Committee considered a report from the Principal Health and Sustainability Officer which provided an update on work to improve Health and Wellbeing in Wyre Forest, which included an update on the progress of the Wyre Forest District Council Health Action Plan for 2009/2010. The report also sought endorsement of the Wyre Forest District Council Health Action Plan for 2010/2011.

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

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

- A Member queried whether the Health Action Plan targeted deprived communities. In response, the Principal Health and Sustainability Officer advised that the Action Plan largely focused upon Health issues internal to the Council, but clarified that the Council did have wider health projects underway which tended to focus upon deprived areas.
- In response to a question from a Member, the Health Improvement Facilitator advised that a Total Place Pilot Programme was underway in the Oldington and Foley Park area, which involved an assessment of all of the different public services which were provided in that area, in order to see if there were any efficiencies or improvements to services which could be identified through better cooperation/coordination of agencies.
- A Member queried how many Councillors participated in the Wyre Forest Matters Partnership. In response, the Director of Community and Partnership Services advised that the Leader of the Council sat on the Wyre Forest Matters Board, and that the Wyre Forest Matters Forum was jointly chaired by a District Councillor and a representative from the Federation of Small Businesses. In addition, she felt that some areas of the Partnership's work could benefit from greater involvement with Members, and that this required further discussion.
- The Chairman advised that Members could be involved in Wyre Forest Matters Theme Groups, and that a scrutiny review into the Partnership had previously been undertaken.
- A Member informed the Committee of a previous scrutiny review which had examined the work of the Oldington and Foley Park Pathfinder Project, and suggested that the Project be looked at by the relevant scrutiny committee in the municipal year 2010/2011.
- In response, the Chairman advised the Committee that selecting topics for scrutiny in the coming municipal year would be the task of the relevant committee's membership, and that it was up to Members to suggest topics in the new municipal year.
- A Member suggested that the health of people living in well insulated and poorly insulated properties in the District be compared.
- Several Members drew attention to rambling and walking groups within the District, and in response the Chairman requested that the Health Action Plan provide more information regarding walking and rambling groups. In addition, the Chairman requested that details of the times and dates of health walks be circulated to Members.
- In response to a question, the Director of Community and Partnership Services advised that the Total Place Programme only analysed the work and cost of voluntary organisations which received grant funding from Central Government.

#### **Agreed:**

- 1. Details of the location, time and date of health walks in the District be circulated to Members.**
- 2. The Health Action Plan for 2010/2011 be amended to include information regarding walking and rambling schemes in the District.**
- 3. The Health Action Plan for 2010/2011 be endorsed.**

**C&R.103 Climate Change Strategy Annual Action Plan**

The Committee considered a report from the Principal Health and Sustainability Officer which provided a progress update on the Wyre Forest Climate Change Action Plan 2009/10 and sought endorsement of the Wyre Forest Climate Change Action Plan 2010/11.

The Principal Health and Sustainability Officer advised the Committee that the Action Plan sought to achieve the following three aims:

1. Raise awareness of issues relating to climate change;
2. Reduce climate change causing gas emissions in the District;
3. Adapt to the effects of climate change in the District.

Members were informed that the Comprehensive Area Assessment for the municipal year 2010/2011 would focus upon what action districts were taking to fight climate change.

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

- A Member requested clarification regarding the role and purpose of Transition Towns, and to what extent the Council was involved in their operation. In response, the Principal Health and Sustainability Officer advised that they were part of a nationwide initiative, and that there was only one Transition Town group established within the District, which was in Bewdley. In addition, the Principal Health and Sustainability Officer agreed to circulate to Members information relating to Transition Towns.
- A Member stated that he was involved with Transition Groups and suggested that he could send to Members information relating to the aims of the scheme.
- A Member felt that the Council should make its planning regulations more demanding in terms of energy efficiency requirements. In response, the Principal Health and Sustainability Officer advised that national building regulations would increase their requirements for energy efficiency from October 2010 onwards. The Assistant Scrutiny / Committee Officer agreed to circulate information relating to national building regulations changes to Members.
- A Member felt that in order to achieve excellent BREEM Ratings in new buildings (BRE Environmental Assessment Method - an internationally recognised standard for the assessment of the environmental impact of buildings) appropriate consultations regarding the environmental implications of the building would need to be carried out at a very early stage.
- In response to a question from a Member, the Chairman suggested that she would enquire into the sustainability implications of the planning process for the proposed Single Site of Office Accommodation.
- A Member queried whether the Council could use a Refuse Collection Fleet which ran on Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) in order to reduce fuel costs and emissions. In response, the Principal Health and Sustainability Officer advised that a Green Fleet Review had been undertaken in recent years, and that a number of the recommendations of the Review had been taken

## **Agenda Item No. 4**

on board by the Council.

- A Member queried whether environmental factors were considered as part of the assessment criteria for tenders for vehicles. In response, the Principal Health and Sustainability Officer advised that the equality section of tender assessments included environmental factors. The Assistant Committee / Scrutiny Officer agreed to seek clarification regarding the consideration of environmental factors within tender assessments for Council vehicles.
- A Member perceived that rural parts of the District were undertaking more work relating to fighting climate change than they were credited for.

### **Agreed:**

- 1. The Principal Health and Sustainability Officer to circulate to Members information relating to Transition Towns.**
- 2. The Assistant Scrutiny / Committee Officer to circulate information relating to national building regulations changes to Members.**
- 3. The Chairman to enquire into the sustainability implications of the planning process for the proposed Single Site of Office Accommodation.**
- 4. The Assistant Committee / Scrutiny Officer agreed to seek clarification regarding the consideration of environmental factors within tender assessments for Council vehicles.**
- 5. The Wyre Forest Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2010/11 be endorsed.**

### **C&R.104 External Funding Position Statement 2009/10**

The Committee considered a report from the Regeneration Officer which provided an update on the amount of external funding which was attracted into the District in the year 2009/10; and the variety of projects for which the funding was contributing towards for the benefit of the District and its' residents.

The Chairman asked whether the recommendations made previously by the External Funding Review Panel had helped to improve the collation of external funding data. In response, the Regeneration Officer advised that after the scrutiny review into external funding, the process for the collection of data had been reinvigorated which had resulted in a vast improvement.

A Member queried how the Council publicised this information, and asked whether the Council could do more to promote the Council's successes in attracting external funding to the District. In response, the Director of Community and Partnership Services advised that information relating to external funding had previously been distributed along with Council Tax Bills, and that each individual funded project was publicised, but agreed that the Council should be doing more to publicise the level of funding attracted.

The Chairman suggested that the information be publicised on the Council's website.

**Agreed:**

- 1. Information detailing the levels of External Funding being attracted to the District be published on the Council Website.**
- 2. The amount of External Funding being attracted to the District, as outlined in the appendix to the report, be noted.**

**C&R.105 Feedback from Cabinet**

**Agreed: The contents of the Feedback from Cabinet item be noted.**

**C&R.106 Work Programme**

The Chairman asked the Chairman of the Renewable Energy and Efficiency Review Panel to update Members on the progress of the Review Panel. Members were informed that the Review Panel had recently visited Hobson's Brewery in Cleobury Mortimer in order to see an innovative Ground Sourced Heating and Cooling system, and an 11kw wind turbine. Members were informed that the business had received considerable grant funding towards the cost of the installation of the technology and expected that it would pay for itself within a relatively short timeframe.

The Chairman then asked the Chairman of the Parking Review Panel to inform the Committee about developments from recent meetings of the Review Panel. He then explained that a Bewdley Residents Parking Consultative Panel had been invited to a meeting of the Review Panel in order to hear their concerns and evidence regarding parking and the 23 Hour Maximum Stay Rule. Members were advised that the Review Panel were expecting to form recommendations at the next scheduled meeting.

**Agreed: The information be noted.**

**C&R.107 Press Involvement**

**Agreed: No items requiring press involvement were identified.**

**C&R.108 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 1, 2 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act.**

**C&R.109 The Provision of a new District Cemetery, Crematorium and Associated Facilities**

The Committee received an update report from the Director of Community and Partnership Services regarding the progress of plans for a new District Cemetery, Crematorium and associated facilities.

Members were advised that the company responsible for the operation of the site was keen to provide a detailed presentation to Members.

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

In response to comments from a Member regarding the aesthetics of the building, a Member commented that the design for the building had been previously considered by both the Planning Committee and the Cemetery Review Panel.

#### **Agreed:**

- 1. The contractors responsible for the building and operation of the new District Cemetery, Crematorium and Associated Facilities be invited to provide a presentation to all Members of the Council regarding the new facilities, at an evening meeting.**
- 2. The progress of plans for a new District Cemetery, Crematorium and Associated Facilities, as outlined in the report, be noted.**

Meeting Ended: 19:28