

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

THURSDAY, 10TH JUNE 2010 (6.00PM)

Present:

Councillors: H E Dyke (Chairman), J Phillips (Vice-Chairman), J Baker, R Bishop, J Greener, M A W Hazlewood, J Holden, D J Millis, F M Oborski, M A Salter, J A Shaw, and S J Williams.

Observers:

Councillors: J-P Campion, and P Dyke.

C&R.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: I Hardiman and D R Sheppard.

C&R.2 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor M A Salter was a substitute for Councillor I Hardiman.

C&R.3 Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

C&R.4 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 8th April 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

C&R.5 Temporary Accommodation Use Policy

The Committee considered a report from the Principal Strategic Housing Officer which provided Members with an opportunity to comment upon the Temporary Accommodation Use Policy. Members were advised that the policy was written to ensure that all bed and breakfast establishments that the Council placed homeless people in, complied with a set of quality, managerial and safeguarding standards.

Members were informed that contracts issued by the Council for temporary accommodation would be subject to the providers of the accommodation signing up to the policy. In addition, Housing Officers were to undertake quarterly inspections of accommodation to ensure compliance with the policy.

In response to a question, Members were advised that the provision of temporary accommodation was subject to eligibility criteria, and that applicants

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who were working would be asked for a larger contribution towards the cost of the accommodation.

With reference to eligibility on grounds of ethnicity, a Member suggested that European Union migrants from accession states, who did not qualify for temporary accommodation on grounds of not having lived in the United Kingdom for long enough, could apply for funding from the Migration and Integration in Rural Areas Project (MIRA) which was based at Wychavon District Council.

In response to a question from a Member, the Director of Planning and Regulatory Services advised that the Council's Safeguarding Children Policy was intended to cover posts that did not necessarily need a Criminal Records Bureau check.

Members were advised that as part of assessing cases, Officers had to look for signs of intentionality, and that if it was felt that someone had deliberately become homeless in order to gain temporary accommodation, they would be ruled ineligible.

In response to a question, the Principal Strategic Housing Officer advised that in some cases, people provided with temporary accommodation had not stayed in their accommodation at weekends, and the Council had still been charged for their rooms, which the policy sought to address.

Out of area accommodation had to be provided for cases of harassment or violence, and two hotels in Birmingham were being used.

Furthermore, in cases of temporary accommodation which lasted longer than anticipated, Officers would allow the Community Housing Group 30 days before asking why the service users were still in temporary accommodation.

Agreed: To recommend to Cabinet to approve the Temporary Accommodation Use Policy.

C&R.6 Parking Review Panel

The Committee considered a report which detailed the findings and recommendations of the Parking Review Panel.

The Chairman of the Parking Review Panel presented the report and outlined the recommendations made by the Review Panel. Members were advised that the review had been initiated to investigate concerns raised by residents of Bewdley in relation to Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) which had been issued to vehicles which were parked for longer than 23 hours in one day.

18:29 Councillor P Dyke entered the meeting at this point.

Members were informed that the PCNs had been issued in accordance with a 23 Hour Maximum Stay Rule which applied to Council Pay and Display Car Parks.

Members were advised that one of the key recommendations was to keep the 23 Hour Rule, but allow 24/7 parking for Full, Restricted, and Residents' Parking Passes, subject to a maximum uninterrupted stay of two months, after which

point enforcement action would be taken.

A Member queried why a maximum stay period of two months had been recommended, in response a Member said that this was a sufficient period of time to account for people who may be temporarily unable to move their vehicle, such as recipients of hip replacements.

In response to a question from a Member, the Director of Planning and Regulatory Services advised that the recommendations of the Review Panel were intended to apply across the District, including the recommendation that suitable locations across the District be looked at for the introduction of Residents' Parking Passes.

Agreed: To recommend to Cabinet:

- 1) That the maximum stay period of 23 hours in any 24 hour period remains applicable across the Council's Car Parks, but 24/7 parking be allowed for Full, Restricted and Residents' Parking Passes, with no uninterrupted stay in one space for longer than two months.**
- 2) To continue to provide Residents' Parking Passes in Bewdley, and limit them to one per household.**
- 3) The Director of Planning and Regulatory Services draw up a set of restrictions governing the eligibility of Residents' Parking Passes, and the decision on this be taken at management level.**
- 4) The Director of Planning and Regulatory Services should look at where Residents' Parking Passes might be introduced across the District as part of the budgetary process for the 2011 to 2014 budget.**
- 5) The price of Residents' Parking Passes as set out in the 2010 to 2013 budget should remain unchanged.**
- 6) The Director of Planning and Regulatory Services to examine the possibility of both the overnight roll over of Pay and Display payment, and also weekend tickets, as part of the October 2010 software update to the Pay and Display Ticket Machines.**
- 7) The Director of Planning and Regulatory Services to estimate the cost of providing Residents' Parking Passes as part of the budgetary process for the 2011 to 2014 budget.**
- 8) A letter be sent to Bewdley High School asking whether they would consider setting up a Park and Ride Service using the school car park during peak holiday periods.**

C&R.7 Work Programme

Members considered the contents of the Committee's Work Programme for the municipal year.

The Chairman encouraged Members to suggest topics for the Work Programme

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by completing a Scrutiny Proposal Form, which were available from Democratic Services.

A Member suggested a scrutiny exercise into affordable housing. In response, the Director of Planning and Regulatory Services advised that the Council had a forthcoming audit of strategic housing, and suggested that a scrutiny exercise could be conducted ahead of October 2010, which would allow any recommendations to be submitted as part of the audit.

The Chairman reiterated that Members should suggest topics for consideration by completing a Scrutiny Proposal Form.

Agreed: The contents of the Work Programme be noted.

C&R.8 Press Involvement

Agreed: There were no items requiring press involvement.

The meeting ended at 19:01.