

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

THURSDAY, 15TH JULY 2010 (6.00PM)

---

**Present:**

Councillors: H E Dyke (Chairman), J Baker, R Bishop, B T Glass, I Hardiman, M A W Hazlewood, J Holden, D J Millis, F M Oborski, M A Salter, J A Shaw, D R Sheppard, S J Williams and G C Yarranton.

**Observer:**

Councillor D R Godwin

**C&R.9 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: J Phillips (Vice-Chairman), J Greener and K J Stokes.

**C&R.10 Appointment of Substitutes**

Councillor B T Glass was appointed as a substitute for Councillor K J Stokes.  
Councillor M A Salter was appointed as a substitute for Councillor J Phillips.  
Councillor G C Yarranton was appointed as a substitute for Councillor J Greener.

**C&R.11 Declaration of Interests**

Councillor G C Yarranton declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item number 11 relating to Funding for Affordable Housing as he is a Board Member of the Community Housing Group.

**C&R.12 Minutes**

**Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 10th June 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**C&R.13 Report of the Renewable Energy and Efficiency Review Panel**

A report was considered from the Assistant Scrutiny/Committee Officer that detailed the key findings of the Renewable Energy and Efficiency Review Panel. The Chairman of the Panel gave the committee a brief resumé of the work undertaken by the Panel. He thanked the Assistant Scrutiny/Committee Officer and members of the Panel for the work they had undertaken.

The Chairman of the panel reiterated the importance of using renewable energy especially for the Council's new single site. He drew Members' attention to the recommendations relating to planning guidance and the possibility of introducing additional validation requirements for planning applications.

## **Agenda Item No. 4**

The Chairman of the Panel was congratulated on the excellent work that had been undertaken and a Member suggested that the details of the scrutiny exercise should be included on the Centre for Public Scrutiny's website.

Members were advised that with regard to the Community Housing Group, a considerable amount of work had been done on measuring the energy efficiency of properties in their ownership and thus improving the SAP (Standard Assessment Procedure for Energy) ratings.

A Member informed the Committee of a scheme that operated at Swindon City Council whereby residents who installed photovoltaic panels received a favourable tariff from the local electricity provider and the City Council received payment for any additional electricity that was generated. The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee requested that further information be obtained about this scheme by the Principal Health and Sustainability Officer and to email this information to members of the Scrutiny Committee.

The Senior Forward Planning Officer alluded to the fact that Wyre Forest District Council was likely to be one of the first Councils in Worcestershire to set a percentage requirement for renewable energy as part of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy.

Members also discussed establishments where ground sourced heating was used and this included Red Hill School in Worcester, Peter Church in Hereford and Haybridge High School in Hagley as well as Rock Village Hall.

The Chairman thanked the Members of the Panel for their comprehensive review and report.

### **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:**

#### **Sustainability**

- 1. For the Sustainability Section to build upon their promotional work in the community with regard to awareness of fuel poverty, energy efficiency, renewable energy, and grants and support, by providing relevant literature and holding awareness raising sessions at locations which will target those most vulnerable to fuel poverty, such as at Surestart Children's Centres.**
- 2. To provide a breakdown to Members regarding areas of high fuel poverty and low uptake of grants and support, so that ward Members can promote energy efficiency, grants and support to those most in need whilst carrying out their ward duties.**
- 3. To promote sustainability across as many areas of the Council's business as possible, including an advertising campaign on the Council Refuse Fleet.**
- 4. To develop the Sustainability webpage to include the following:**
  - l) A section outlining renewable energy technologies and their**

**practical applications and benefits.**

- II) To invite local residents and businesses who have adopted renewable energy technologies and/or high standards of energy efficiency to submit their experiences, in order to compile a showcase of best practice case studies.**
  - III) Further information detailing available funding, support and grants for energy efficiency and renewable energy.**
- 5. To invite a speaker to provide a presentation regarding Transition Towns to the next meeting of the Quarterly Scrutiny Briefing.**

#### **Planning**

- 6. That the Local Development Framework process encourages renewable energy and energy efficiency amongst new developments following the adoption of the Core Strategy, particularly within the Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan and Site Allocations and Policies Documents.**
- 7. To ensure that the Development Control process fully implements the Sustainable Development Standards Policy as set out in the Core Strategy, once adopted.**
- 8. At the appropriate stage of the Local Development Framework Process to review the Design Supplementary Planning Guidance and introduce additional validation requirements for planning applications, requiring details of plans for renewable energy and efficiency measures to be provided to enable an application to be validated. Failure to provide the requisite information would prevent the application from being considered.**
- 9. To hold a promotional seminar (or series of), at an appropriate stage in the LDF process in order to outline to developers and architects the high energy efficiency and renewable energy standards which are encouraged within the district, and the required changes for lower carbon developments contained within national Building Regulations.**

#### **Landlord Accreditation Scheme**

- 10. To include the following guidance for accreditation within the forthcoming Landlord Accreditation Scheme:**
  - i) Properties must be of a decent standard of thermal efficiency.**
  - ii) Tenants are given advice upon request, or signposted to an appropriate advisory agency, on how best to heat their accommodation and use hot water in an energy efficient way using the facilities provided, together with details of any available funding. The Scheme Operator will assist with the provision of such information.**

**Single Site**

11. **The Committee recommend the following to the Transformation Board:**
12. **That the Single Site of Office Accommodation achieves the very best standards of energy efficiency and uses the most appropriate and effective renewable energy technologies as can be afforded.**
13. **Details of progress in achieving the above aim to be provided on an ongoing basis to the relevant Scrutiny Committee.**

**Single Site**

14. **The Committee is requested to recommend the following to the Transformation Board:**
  - i) **That the Single Site of Office Accommodation achieves the very best standards of energy efficiency and uses the most appropriate and effective renewable energy technologies as can be afforded.**
  - ii) **Details of progress in achieving the above aim to be provided on an ongoing basis to the relevant Scrutiny Committee.**

**C&R.14 Kidderminster Town Centre Strategy – Consultation Feedback**

A report was considered from the Policy and Regeneration Manager that sought Members' views on the Kidderminster Town Centre Strategy consultation feedback.

Members were advised that 51 businesses and 17 residents had responded to the Consultation. It was noted however that the feedback from residents was not ready in time for this meeting but would be forwarded to committee members.

The responses from businesses showed that 78% felt that there was no sense of community within the town centre. To address this comment an event had been held and retailers had been asked to partnership meetings. Businesses had also been sent details of PACT (Partners and Communities Together) meetings. It was acknowledged that the current Town Centre Partnership was not working and it was hoped that there would ultimately be one Partnership that represented the various issues. There appeared to be support for the initiatives that were planned.

Parking was still identified as an issue and it was considered that there needed to be a parking initiative for the town. The top three priorities that were identified from the survey by businesses were parking issues, tackling anti social behaviour and making the town centre more attractive. Residents had responded that they wanted a better police presence in the town, better appearance of the town and better green spaces.

It was proposed that the Town Centre Strategy would be revised to reflect the feedback that had been received and it would then be presented to the Town Centre Partnership at a special meeting in October 2010.

The Chairman commented that she was concerned that there were currently a

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

number of individual initiatives for the town centre and there was no process to draw these together. The Policy and Regeneration Manager noted the point made about revamping the Town Centre Partnership and commented that this was an ongoing issue. Members recognised the need to reconsider the membership of the Town Centre Partnership and reinstate it with a membership that was drawn from people who were actively involved in the commercial aspects of the town.

Members discussed the fact that the town centre had not fared as badly with empty shops as other towns in the vicinity but they were concerned that the town centre had been cut in half as a result of the Weavers Wharf development. Members queried what was likely to happen to the development of Kidderminster Railway Station as they were believed from the transportation statement that Bromsgrove Railway Station improvements may not go ahead.

**Decision: To endorse and recommend to Cabinet the proposed next steps as set out in paragraphs 3.14 and 3.15 of the report to the Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.**

#### **C&R.15 Work Programme**

Members considered the contents of the Committee's Work Programme for the municipal year. It was noted that the Director of Planning and Regulatory Services wished to include an item on the Work Programme relating to Sections 90 and 93 of the Environmental Protection Act (Litter Control Areas and Street Litter Control Notices). This item had originally been scheduled for the meeting in September but owing to there being a large number of items for that meeting it had been moved with the agreement of the Director and the Chairman to the Committee's October 2010 meeting.

The Chairman also referred to two scoping forms which had been received from Councillors Hazlewood and Shaw which had been received too late to be included on this agenda. The scoring of these forms would be notified to the September meeting of the committee.

**Decision: The contents of the Work Programme be noted.**

#### **C&R.16 Press Involvement**

**Agreed : There were no items requiring press involvement.**

#### **C&R.17 Exclusion of the press and Public**

**Decision: That 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 paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.**

*Councillor G C Yarranton left the meeting before consideration of the item below.*

**C&R.18 Funding for Affordable Housing**

A report was considered from the Strategic Housing Services Manager that asked the Committee to consider a bid for affordable housing through the Capital Strategy.

**Recommended: The Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services approve the grant of funding for the purchase of four Existing Satisfactory Dwellings by the Community Housing Group.**

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm.