

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CORPORATE RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

THURSDAY, 8TH JULY 2010 (6.00PM)

Present:

Councillors: G W Ballinger (Chairman), P B Harrison (Vice-Chairman), H E Dyke, T Ingham, M B Kelly, D J McCann, J W Parish, J Phillips, M A Salter, J Thomas, N J Thomas, S J Williams, and G C Yarranton.

Observers:

Councillors: N J Desmond, D R Godwin, and F M Oborski.

CR.15 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: J Aston, A J Buckley, N Gale, and P V Hayward.

CR.16 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor J Phillips was appointed as a substitute for Councillor J Aston.
Councillor S J Williams was appointed as a substitute for Councillor P V Hayward.
Councillor G C Yarranton was appointed as a substitute for Councillor N Gale.

CR.17 Declaration of Interests

Councillors M B Kelly and G C Yarranton declared personal interests in item CR.24 Review of Mortgage Review Panel Findings as they are Board Members of the Community Housing Group.

CR.18 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd June 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CR.19 Agenda Running Order

The Chairman advised the Committee that the running order of the agenda had been amended in order to allow the Cabinet Member for Resources and the Chairman of the Renewable Energy and Efficiency Review Panel to address the Committee on two separate items, as they both wished to leave the meeting early in order to fulfil other commitments.

CR.20 Matters Arising

In response to minute CR.13 "Recommendation from the Transformation Board" a

Member advised that Member Workshops regarding the development of a new Corporate Plan would be held at 6pm on the 4th and 25th August 2010 in the Earl Baldwin Suite.

CR.21 New Waste Collection Arrangements

The Committee received a presentation from the Environmental Services Manager regarding the Council's new Waste Collection Arrangements.

The Environmental Services Manager advised Members that the New Waste Collection Arrangements had achieved a 98% coverage of the District.

The Council was operating within a County-wide Waste Strategy, and as part of this the County Council had opened a Materials Recycling Facility (MRF).

A paid garden waste scheme had been recently implemented, which operated over a 9 month period costing a household £30. Once enrolled in the service householders would not have to re-enrol and could renew through a continuation of the direct debit. This meant that the system required less administration than other systems and was easier for the public. Currently there were over 1,000 participants.

Commingled waste collections had been implemented after external funding had been secured from Waste and Resources Action Plan (WRAP). Green recycling bins had been delivered to 43,000 households across the District in July 2010.

The outcome of the new arrangements was a much improved recycling service, complemented by a garden waste service and a reduced operational revenue cost of over £300,000.

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

- A Member requested an electronic copy of the presentation.
- In response to a query from a Member the Environmental Services Manager advised that the Garden Waste Scheme was initially being limited to 5,000 customers, but that coverage extended to around 90% of areas of the District.
- A Member perceived there to be problems with the delivery of new green bins in Areley Kings, Stourport. In response, the Environmental Services Manager assured he would resolve these issues.
- The Environmental Services Manager advised Members that the number of problems with delivering bins was relatively small considering the scale of the operation.
- A Member commented that in some areas with terraced housing, residents tended to leave bins outside all day, and that the extra green bin could cause an obstruction on the pavement. In response, the Environmental Services Manager advised that following a bedding in period action would be taken against problem cases.
- A Member praised the response of the Environmental Services Team to delivering bins to streets which had originally been missed.
- A Member commented that the service was a considerable improvement on previous arrangements, and in particular that the refuse collection vehicles now collected double the weight of recycling than previously.
- The previous recycling boxes which were no longer in use could be taken to

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local refuse sites, and an arrangement with a private contractor to collect and recycle them was being explored.

- A public speaker asked how garden waste was processed at the site at Pershore. In response, the Environmental Services Manager advised that it was composted and sold as soil treatment.
- If residents wanted a second green bin, the Council was willing to provide them.
- The Cabinet Member for Resources thanked the Environmental Services Team for their success in implementing the new recycling arrangements within 6 months, whereas other Districts across the County had done so within 12.

Agreed:

- 1) **To note the contents of the presentation and the considerable improvement of the Recycling Service.**
- 2) **To write to the Refuse Collection Team to express the Committee's thanks and satisfaction with the new Waste Collection Arrangements.**
- 3) **To circulate the presentation to Members electronically.**

CR.22 Single Site Update

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Executive which provided an update on the progress and forthcoming critical dates of the Single Site Project.

The Chairman welcomed the Chairman of the Renewable Energy and Efficiency Review Panel who wished to address Members regarding the sustainability aspects of the Single Site.

The Chairman of the Review Panel advised the Committee that it was important for the Single Site to make use of the best available ecological design, energy preservation and renewable energy technologies. Ground Sourced Heat Pumps could be used which could simultaneously be used to heat and chill the building.

Several factors were key to this, firstly the increasing cost and perceived volatility of the supply of gas, the design lifetime of the new building, and the ability to set a good example to homes and businesses across the District.

A Member suggested that it be recommended to the Transformation Board to consider Ground Sourced Heating as part of the possible design features of the Single Site.

The Director of Legal and Corporate Services advised Members that sustainability was a high priority for the design of the Single Site, and invited Members to attend a seminar regarding the design brief to be held at 6pm on the 29th July 2010 in the Earl Baldwin Suite.

18:45 Councillor G C Yarranton left the meeting at this point.

Agreed:

- 1) **To note the current proposals for the finalisation of the design brief as set out in this report.**
- 2) **To recommend to the Transformation Board to include Ground Sourced Heating as one of the possible sustainability features as outlined at 2.6 in the report.**

CR.23 Financial Update

The Committee received a presentation from the Director of Resources regarding the financial implications to the Council of changes in Central Government funding.

Members were advised of the following key points:

- The Government was planning 25% cuts to most budgets, but the breakdowns for individual departments would not be available until completion of the Government's spending review in October 2010.
- The implications for the Council would not become clear until the publication of the spending review.
- The Government were planning a pay freeze except for Officers earning under £21,000 which would represent an increase to the Council's pay bill of around £60-70,000.
- Regional Development Agencies were to be abolished and replaced with Local Enterprise Partnerships - the specifics of which were yet to be announced.
- The increase in Value Added Tax also applied to car parking charges, and the Council would have to decide whether to include the VAT rise in the Council's parking charges.
- Increases in Landfill Tax would be addressed through the Council's Waste Management Strategy, as an £8 a year increase in the tax was expected.

Agreed: To note the contents of the presentation.

CR.24 Review of Mortgage Review Panel Findings

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Resources which provided an update on the recommendations made by the Mortgage Review Panel.

The Director of Resources advised Members that the Council would currently need to borrow in order to fund such a scheme, and that due to an improvement in the mortgage market and the financial uncertainty for local authorities, it was recommended not to proceed with providing shared ownership mortgages for Registered Social Landlord properties at this time.

A Member of the Mortgage Review Panel commented that the Panel had not been consulted with regard to this update, and requested that in future Review Panels be consulted on updates or reviews of their recommendations.

Agreed: To recommend to Cabinet that the Council does not proceed at this time to offer shared ownership mortgages in respect of Registered Social Landlord Properties.

19:08 Councillor F M Oborski left the meeting at this point.

CR.25 Equality and Diversity Update July 2010

The Committee received a report from the Equality and Diversity Officer which updated Members on the Council's Equality and Diversity work taking place following the end of the Being Different Together project.

Members were informed of a Wyre Forest food event which was taking place on the 23rd August 2010.

Equality and Diversity Training had been provided to both Officers and Members and it was available to any Members who wished to access it.

Members were advised that the Equality and Diversity Officer had taken a secondment position and was now the Wyre Forest Matters Partnership Manager, and that point 8.1 of the report was now inaccurate - as the Equality and Diversity Officer vacancy would no longer be filled. However, the Officer would continue to support Equality and Diversity for one day a week and would prioritise key areas including the Mike Oborski No Barriers Awards Ceremony, and Equality Impact Assessments.

Agreed:

- 1) **To continue to work on previously identified projects as a priority and to, as far as possible, ensure continuation of other projects through alternative means.**
- 2) **To note the progress which has been made.**

CR.26 Corporate Plan Priorities 2010/11 - Progress up to May 2010

The Committee considered a report from the Policy and Performance Officer which informed Members of the Corporate Plan Priority actions for 2010/11 and progress made against them up until 31 May 2010.

Members were advised that there were a number of targets in place to support the completion of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities.

Seven of the actions had been completed, one had missed the due date and fourteen were in progress but had not yet reached their due date.

Members were advised that one action relating to updating Affordable Housing Guidance and Policy was not on target.

Agreed: To note the progress of the Corporate Plan Priorities up to May 2010.

CR.27 Directorate Business Plan 2010/2011 Progress Report

The Committee considered a report from the Policy and Performance Officer which informed Members of the progress made against the Directorate Business Plans for 2010/11 up to 31st May 2010.

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The Policy and Performance Officer advised Members that they had individually been circulated a copy of the Directorate Business Plan for the Directorate they chose to shadow.

The purpose of the progress report was to highlight Business Plan actions and whether they had missed their due date, not reached their due date and were not on target, or had been completed.

The Chairman advised Members that where they had chosen to shadow a particular Directorate, they should familiarise themselves with the Business Plan for that Directorate, and new Members might wish to discuss this with the other Members shadowing their chosen Directorate.

The Corporate Development and Improvement Manager advised Members that the "Comprehensive Area Assessment" item listed in the report had been changed to "completed" as it had now been abolished by Central Government.

The Chairman reiterated that where items were completed or amended they should remain on the report for consistency.

Agreed: To note the progress of the Directorate Business Plans.

CR.28 Wyre Forest District Council performance towards the Worcestershire Local Area Agreement 2008/11

The Committee considered a report from the Policy and Performance Officer which updated Members on the overall progress of the Worcestershire Local Area Agreement (LAA) with focus on Wyre Forest District Council's contribution towards the LAA priorities.

Members were advised that the LAA contained six themes which were similar to the aims and priorities of the other Councils across the District, so that they could be coordinated.

The themes were underpinned by 45 targets, 10 of which were mandatory Department for Children, Schools and Families indicators, 32 were National Indicators (NI) and 3 were locally set.

Members were advised that 19 of the targets had not yet been met, but that these were County wide and not solely the responsibility of Wyre Forest District Council.

A Member commented that the target relating to the Building Schools for the Future Programme required amendment, in the light of the cancellation of the scheme.

Agreed: To note the Council's contribution towards the LAA.

CR.29 Work Programme

Agreed: To note the contents of the Work Programme.

The meeting ended at 19:24.