

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

THURSDAY, 2ND SEPTEMBER 2010 (6.00PM)

Present:

Councillors: H E Dyke (Chairman), J Phillips (Vice-Chairman), J Baker, R Bishop, J Greener, I Hardiman, M A W Hazlewood, J Holden, D J Millis, M Price, K H Prosser, J A Shaw, D R Sheppard and S J Williams.

Observers:

There were no members present as observers.

C&R.19 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

C&R.20 Appointment of Substitutes

No substitutes were appointed.

C&R.21 Declaration of Interests

Councillor H E Dyke declared a personal interest in agenda item number 13 as her husband is an employee of the Community Housing Group.
Councillor J Greener declared a personal interest in agenda item number 13 as she is a Board member of the Community Housing Group.

C&R.22 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 15th July 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

C&R.23 Expression of Thanks

Before the consideration of the report on the Worcestershire Local Transport Plan the Chairmen drew Members' attention to the fact that the Principal Forward Planning Officer was leaving the authority and she wished to thank her for all the work she had undertaken for the Committee.

C&R.24 Worcestershire Local Transport Plan 3

A report was considered from the Principal Forward Planning Officer that updated members on the third Worcestershire Local Transport Plan. Members were advised that consultation would take place during October and November 2010 on the third Transport Plan.

Agenda Item No. 4

Members' attention was drawn to the fact that the Plan recognised that many of the transport issues within the County would not be resolved due to budget constraints but the Plan aimed to put in place the right conditions to meet the needs of the county.

The Principal Forward Planning Officer went through her report in detail and the following points were highlighted:

- The new Transport Plan had increased flexibility as it was no longer a plan for 5 years it would now have a lifespan of 15 years.
- The Department for Transport would no longer assess Transport Plans or set mandatory targets thus the emphasis for local transport planning shifted to local areas.
- Local authorities were required to consider the importance of 5 key national goals which reflected local circumstances.
- The Transport Plan highlighted the importance of linking in with other strategies and emphasised the need for closer engagement with the Local Strategic Partnership.
- Local Transport Plan 3 would cover the period 2011 to 2026 and set out how Worcestershire County Council would maintain and enhance its transport assets. It was a requirement for the new Transport Plan to be in place before the current plan ran out in March 2011.
- The Transport Plan drew on a number of policies some of which reflected mandatory requirements and others for locally defined needs.
- Appendix 1 of the Plan set out a summary of the key draft sub policies and these were intended to be considered as part of the initial stakeholder feedback.
- Key aspects of the Local Transport Plan were traffic management and parking policies as well as asset management plans which would build on work that Worcestershire County Council had already undertaken.
- There was also a focus on improving accessibility to transport and the effects of climate change on transport and air quality was also a key aspect.
- County Council colleagues would also be consulting with Planning Officers on the emerging Local Development Framework and had included the need for developers to make financial contributions towards transport.
- The Rights of Way Improvement Plan placed a strong emphasis on the availability of funding.
- Freight movement and identifying the use of water and rail movement of freight had been included in the Local Transport Plan.
- There was also a key theme to involve local elected Members when there was any consultation on transport projects and proposals within the District.
- Local Transport Plan 3 would include a Wyre Forest transport package in recognition of the fact that Wyre Forest had the most significant socio economic issues and needed to focus on regeneration.
- Several public events had been planned including one at Kidderminster College, The Co-Op in Stourport and a venue in Bewdley.

The Principal Forward Planning Manager stated that there would be a wider consultation on the Transport Plan in October 2010 and the results of the consultation would inform the final version which had to be adopted by March

Agenda Item No. 4

2011. Members were advised that County colleagues would be available to attend the Committee's November 2010 meeting to provide more details on the consultation with stakeholders.

In response to a Member's comment concerning the lack of consideration of transport problems in Stourport, Members were advised that the County Council appeared to have the intention to develop transport strategies for Stourport through the Local Transport Plan 3. It was noted that closer working was taking place regarding the emerging Local Enterprise Partnership and work on the Local Development Framework. Members were advised that a formal report would be submitted to Cabinet in November 2010.

One Member suggested that the Local Development Framework Review Panel should hold a special meeting to consider a detailed report to demonstrate the wider links with the Local Development Framework.

Agreed:

- 1. The content of the report and the summary of the Draft LTP3 Policies outlined at Appendix 1 of the report as context to the wider public consultation that will take place on LTP3 in October 2010 be noted.**
- 2. Members to feedback to the Principal Committee Officer any items which they would specifically like to raise with County Officers at the Committee's meeting in November 2010.**

C&R.25 Scoping Form – Illegal Gypsy Encampments

A scoping form was considered from Councillor M Hazlewood that requested the establishment of a Review Panel on illegal gypsy encampments.

The Chairman informed Members that the form had been scored and met the criteria for a review panel to be established.

A short debate on the membership of the Review Panel ensued and it was agreed that the following members would be included on the membership of the Review Panel:

Councillors: Baker, Greener, Hazlewood, Millis, Shaw and Williams.

Councillor Hazlewood stated that one issue he would like the Review to consider was the need to interview some travellers as he perceived it was necessary to gain their point of view on the issues they faced.

Agreed:

- 1. A Review Panel on Illegal Gypsy Encampments be established.**
- 2. The Principal Committee Officer to contact Members and arrange a meeting.**

C&R.26 Co-Opted Members and Review Panel Protocol and Proposal Form

A report was considered from the Principal Committee Officer that apprised Members of proposed changes to scrutiny procedures regarding the appointment of co-opted members and the review panel protocol and proposal form.

The Principal Committee Officer advised Members that the changes that had been made reflected good practice.

With regard to the Co-Option of Members, the previous protocol had not included any mention of the procedure for removing a co-opted member and this had been addressed. The changes to the Review Panel Protocol had also been amended to cover all scenarios for the establishment of Review Panels and the scoring system had been changed from the previous traffic light system to a more simplified user-friendly system.

The Principal Committee Officer advised Members that it was intended that both scrutiny committees would consider the revised protocols with a view to adopting them.

Agreed:

- 1. The Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee adopt the revised arrangements for the co-option of members onto scrutiny committees.**
- 2. The Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee adopts the revised Review Panel Protocol and Proposal form.**

C&R.27 Feedback from Cabinet

The Committee considered the Cabinet Action List from the 20th July 2010 which outlined the recommendations regarding the Wyre Forest Parking Review.

Agreed: The contents of the Cabinet Action List be noted.

C&R.28 Work Programme

The Chairman advised Members that the Work Programme would need to be reviewed in the light of the impending spending review as it contained items that were no longer likely to exist. An amended version of the Work Programme would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

Agreed: The Work Programme be noted and a revised version be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

C&R.29 Press Involvement

Agreed: There were no items requiring press involvement.

Exempt Information

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.

C&R.30 Annual Report of the Community Housing Group Homeless Contract Performance

A report was considered from the Strategic Housing Services Manager that outlined the performance of The Community Housing Group in relation to the Housing Register, housing advice and Homelessness Contract.

Yvonne Leishman, Tim Powell and David Haman were welcomed to the meeting.

The Strategic Housing Services Manager advised members that the Council had agreed the transfer of its housing stock to The Community Housing Group and that the contract had been renegotiated twice, most recently in 2009.

The report outlined the performance for 2009/2010 and looked at targets as contained within the Service Level Agreement and also outlined national requirements and made comparisons to family groups that were similar to Wyre Forest.

It was noted that performance had been strong in certain areas – particularly the Housing Register. There had also been improvements in the number of households that had been prevented from being homeless. However, There were some areas which required improvement and these were discussed including length of time people spent in temporary accommodation and bed and breakfast and overall numbers in temporary accommodation.

The possibility of Yvonne Leishman and colleagues attending the Quarterly Scrutiny Briefing for Members on 21st October was also discussed.

Agreed:

- 1. The report and the issues and concerns raised be noted.**
- 2. It be agreed to consider a similar process on an annual basis to oversee the delivery of homelessness services.**
- 3. The Committee considers in the future further evaluation of benchmarking between homeless services within the family group.**

The meeting ended at 7.15 pm.