

Open

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda

6.00pm
Thursday, 2nd June 2011
The Earl Baldwin Suite
Duke House
Clensmore Street
Kidderminster



Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Members of Committee:

	Chairman: Councillor H E Dyke
	Vice-Chairman: Councillor T Ingham
Councillor J Baker	Councillor A J Buckley
Councillor N Gale	Councillor J Greener
Councillor I Hardiman	Councillor J A Hart
Councillor V Higgs	Councillor J Holden
Councillor D J McCann	Councillor J W Parish
Councillor A M Sewell	Councillor D R Sheppard
Councillor S J Williams	

Would Members please note that, to ensure continuity in scrutiny, substitutes should only be appointed for the Scrutiny Committee in exceptional circumstances.

Information for Members of the Public:

Part I of the Agenda includes items for discussion in public. You have the right to inspect copies of Minutes and reports on this Agenda as well as the background documents used in the preparation of these reports.

Part II of the Agenda (if applicable) deals with items of "Exempt Information" for which it is anticipated that the public may be excluded from the meeting and neither reports nor background papers are open to public inspection.

Declarations of Interest – Guidance Note

Code of Conduct

Members are reminded that under the Code of Conduct, it is the responsibility of individual Members to declare any personal or personal and prejudicial interest in any item on this agenda if appropriate. A Member who declares a personal interest may take part in the meeting and vote, unless the interest is also prejudicial. If the interest is prejudicial, as defined in the Code, the Member must leave the room. However, Members with a prejudicial interest can still participate if a prescribed exception applies or a dispensation has been granted.

Co-opted Members

Scrutiny Committees may wish to appoint Co-Opted Members to sit on their meetings in order to add value to the scrutiny process. To appoint a Co-Opted Member, a Committee must first agree to appoint either a specific person or to approach a relevant organisation to request that they put forward a suitable representative (e.g. the local Police Authority). Co-Optees are non voting by default but Committees can decide to appoint voting rights to a Co-Optee. The Co-Option of the Member will last no longer than the remainder of the municipal year.

Scrutiny Committees can at any meeting agree to terminate the Co-Option of a Co-Opted Member with immediate effect. Where an organisation is appointed to put forward a Co-Opted Member, they are able to send a substitute in exceptional circumstances, provided that they notify Democratic Services in advance. Co-Opted Members must sign up to the Members Code of Conduct before attending their first meeting, failure to sign will mean that they are unable to participate. This also applies to substitute Co-Opted Members, who will need to allow sufficient time before a meeting in order to sign the Code of Conduct.

The following will apply:

- i) The total number of voting co-opted members on any Scrutiny Committee will not exceed 25% at any one time.
- ii) The total number of voting Co-opted Members on any Review Panel will not be limited.
- iii) Those Co-opted Members with voting rights will exercise their rights in accordance with the principles of decision making set out in the constitution.

For Further information:

**If you have any queries about this Agenda or require any details of background papers, further documents or information, you should contact Sue Saunders, Committee/Scrutiny Officer, Civic Centre, Stourport-on-Severn.
Telephone: 01562-7327363 or email susan.saunders@wyreforestdc.gov.uk**

Wyre Forest District Council
Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 2nd June 2011

The Earl Baldwin Suite, Duke House, Clensmore Street, Kidderminster

Part 1

Open to the press and public

Agenda item	Subject	Page Number
1.	Apologies for Absence	
2.	Appointment of Substitute Members To receive the name of any Councillor who is to act as a substitute, notice of which has been given to the Director of Legal & Corporate Services, together with the name of the Councillor for whom he/she is acting.	
3.	Declarations of Interest In accordance with the Code of Conduct, to invite Members to declare the existence and nature of any personal or personal and prejudicial interests in the following agenda items. Members should indicate the action they will be taking when the item is considered. Members are also invited to make any declaration in relation to Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. (See guidance note on cover.)	
4.	Minutes To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Community & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 7 th April 2011 and the Corporate Resources Scrutiny Committee held on 14 th April 2011.	5
5.	Introductions To receive an introduction to the Committee from the Chairman and to welcome new Members.	-
6.	Recommendations from Sports & Leisure Centre Review Panel To receive a report from the Cultural Services Manager which summarises the work of the review panel which was established to undertake a strategic options appraisal for the future management of sports and leisure centre provision for the District and to produce a series of affordable and sustainable recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet in June 2011.	17
7.	Directorate Business Plans To consider assigning Directorate Business Plans to Members of the Committee for monitoring purposes.	-

8.	Treasury Management Review Panel To agree the membership of the Treasury Management Review Panel for the current municipal year.	-
9.	Quarterly Scrutiny Briefings To consider the format and topics for the Quarterly Scrutiny Briefings.	-
10.	Feedback from Cabinet To note the content of the Cabinet action list, following consideration of the recommendations from the meeting of the 19 th April 2011.	25
11.	New Council Headquarters To receive a verbal update from the Director of Legal & Corporate Services on the New Council Headquarters.	-
12.	Work Programme To agree the work programme for the current municipal year.	27
13.	To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Director of Legal and Corporate Services before the commencement of the meeting, which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.	
14.	Exclusion of the Press and Public To consider passing the following resolution: "That 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 item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of "exempt information" as defined in the paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act".	

Part 2

Not open to the Press and Public

15.	To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Director of Legal and Corporate Services before the commencement of the meeting, which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.	
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WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

THURSDAY, 7TH APRIL 2011 (6.00PM)

Present:

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

Observers: There were no members present as observers.

C&R.97 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K H Prosser and J A Salter.

Appointment of Substitutes

C&R.98 Councillor A J Buckley was appointed as a substitute for Councillor J A Salter. Councillor M A Salter was appointed as a substitute for Councillor K H Prosser.

C&R.99 Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

C&R.100 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd March 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

C&R.101 Update: Unauthorised Traveller Sites Enforcement Scrutiny

The Chairman reminded Members that it had been proposed to hold a scrutiny exercise into unauthorised traveller sites but this was put on hold in view of the fact that at that time details of the contents of the Localism Bill were due to be published and it had been anticipated that the Bill would contain some relevant legislation in this respect.

The Principal Solicitor advised Members that when the Localism Bill was published it did not contain legislation regarding unauthorised gypsy encampments and enforcement of such encampments. However the Bill did allow the Council to refuse retrospective permission and serve an Enforcement Notice and no Appeal could be lodged under Human Rights that planning permission be granted for the development.

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Currently in some districts travellers were Appealing then submitting a retrospective application for planning permission, they were then served an Enforcement notice and Appealed against this. It now appeared that under the Localism Bill it only allowed for one Appeal either an Appeal against the planning decision or an Appeal against the Enforcement Notice. The Principal Solicitor stated however that it was necessary to be careful with regard to compliance with an Enforcement Notice as it is possible to for the applicant to Appeal if they felt that the Council had acted unreasonably.

Members were advised that currently Magistrates could impose a fine for non-compliance with a Stop or Breach of Condition Notice and there was a proposal to raise the fine from £1,000 to £2,500 for each offence. It would be possible to increase the fees for retrospective planning applications. However, it was noted that the Council had looked at this once but felt it might discourage people to submit applications where they had carried out unauthorised work. There was nothing else contained within the Localism Bill to deal with unauthorised developments and thus the Council would have to fall back on the system it used already. It did not help that travellers tended to arrive overnight or over a weekend and thus the Council had an informal arrangement between the Solicitors and Planning Enforcement Officers that if they heard on the grapevine that there might be an unauthorised traveller site that they would serve a Stop Notice. Members were advised that there were insufficient staff resources to provide cover every weekend in case an illegal encampment was set up.

A debate ensued on the provisions within the Localism Bill and the problems associated with unauthorised traveller sites. It was noted that under the Local Development Framework that consultants had been appointed to look at identifying possible sites to locate travellers and a consultation on this would be conducted.

The Principal Solicitor offered to write a briefing note that outlined the current position with regard to enforcement of illegal traveller sites and the proposed changes that were contained in the Localism Bill.

Agreed:

- 1. The information be noted.**
- 2. The Principal Solicitor to write a briefing note for all Members that outlined the current position with regard to enforcement of illegal traveller sites and the proposed changes that are contained in the Localism Bill.**

C&R.102 Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan

A briefing paper was considered from the Principal Health and Sustainability Officer that provided a progress update on the Wyre Forest Climate Change Action Plan 2010/11 and sought endorsement of the Wyre Forest Climate Change Action Plan 2011/2012.

Members were advised that the Climate Change Strategy was aligned to the Worcestershire Climate Change Strategy and there were three main areas around which the strategy and action plan were based:

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- Raising awareness about the issue of climate change.
- Reducing climate change gas emissions in Wyre Forest.
- Adapting to the impacts of climate change in Wyre Forest.

Moreover there were capacity issues within the team, initially due to a team member taking maternity leave and then the reduction of a post. This had impacted on the work of the Team and thus the team would focus their work on fuel poverty and the low carbon economy programme.

The Principal Health and Sustainability Officer explained the rationale behind the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. Members learnt that normally the Strategy would be planned to last 3 years but this Strategy covered only one year. The main reason for this was that the new Government had introduced a number of changes in policy and legislation around climate change and further changes were proposed. Thus the one year strategy reflected changes that the Council were aware of. It may therefore be necessary to revise the Strategy in order to take account of the initiatives that were introduced this year. Members' attention was drawn to 'Green Deal' which had not been finalised and this would be key to the Council's Strategy.

The Affordable Warmth Strategy had been rewritten and would cover the period 2011/2012. This strategy had also been written to cover one year as there were a number of changes anticipated to Government policy.

The initiatives that the Team would be participating in were outlined as follows:

- Establishing a Carbon Management system for the Council.
- Drawing up a Carbon Management Plan which will be approved by the Carbon Trust.
- Working with Sustainability West Midlands to develop a low carbon economy.

An outline of the achievements of the Council was given to Members and these included:

- Raising awareness about climate change through attendance at carnivals.
- Taking part in national initiatives e.g. Energy Saving Week.
- Participating in the 10:10 Campaign.
- Producing a leaflet on climate change issues for the public which has also been included on the Council's website.
- The Council's website content on the climate change has been updated.
- Work had been undertaken with schools raising awareness on climate change.
- The Council had initiated an energy monitoring scheme for home energy efficiency.
- Building on the success of previous initiatives and using data from Warmer Worcestershire/cavity wall insulation.
- Meeting energy efficiencies in businesses.
- Promoting green business.

Recommended to Cabinet:

The Wyre Forest Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2011/2012 and its associated Affordable Warmth Strategy and Action Plan 2011/2012 be endorsed.

C&R.103 Health and Wellbeing in Wyre Forest

A briefing paper was considered from the Strategic Housing Services Manager that updated Members on work to improve health and wellbeing in Wyre Forest and included progress on the Wyre Forest District Council Health Action Plan 2010/2011.

Members were advised that the work that had been proposed had been downscaled due to the loss of a post within the Health and Sustainability Team and potential cuts to the Primary Care Trust HIC role. The team would therefore focus on taking forward work on the overall targets on heart disease, older people and reducing health inequalities and work on breast feeding, smoking in pregnancy and obesity. It was noted that Wyre Forest district did not compare too unfavourably with other districts apart from its statistics on obesity and life expectancy in the more deprived areas of the district.

With regard to the initiative on obesity it was noted that the Council was working with a private contractor and this had proved to be successful and would be continued for the next 12 months. Other initiatives included combining healthy eating and physical activity.

It was noted that 50% of the health co-ordinator's role concentrated on working with older people and an initiative that had been instigated last year on the prevention of falls would continue.

With regard to smoking an initiative had commenced whereby a tariff was paid to businesses that did not allow smoking on their premises.

Members were advised that as a considerable amount of changes were proposed within the NHS. A great deal of programmes had been undertaken last year and some would continue but the Council would focus on its priority areas.

A Member queried who currently enforced no smoking in pubs. It was agreed that this would be ascertained and members would be advised accordingly.

Recommended to Cabinet:

- 1. The Wyre Forest District Council Health Action Plan be endorsed.**
- 2. The Strategic Housing Services Manager to ascertain who currently enforced no smoking in pubs and to advise Members accordingly.**

C&R.104 Worcestershire Housing Strategy

A briefing paper was considered from the Strategic Housing Services Manager that explained why a Countywide Strategy had been developed to replace the former District Housing Strategy.

The Strategic Housing Services Manager informed Members that the Strategy would cover all areas of housing. Further, local authorities were required to produce a Housing Strategy and a view had been taken in 2001 by local authority Leaders and the Chief Executives' Panel that a Countywide Strategy should be produced. It was intended that the Housing Strategy would be used in tandem with the Worcestershire Homelessness Strategy and the existing Supporting People Strategy. Moreover, the Housing Strategy intended that citizens would have the right home at the right time in the right place.

Members noted that although there was a Countywide Action Plan, the Council had also produced its own Action Plan. Further it was highlighted that a consultation was taking place on the Housing Strategy which would conclude on 11th April and all 42 members of the Council would be consulted accordingly.

Recommended to Cabinet to Recommend to Council:

The Worcestershire Housing Strategy and associated action plans be adopted.

C&R.105 Wyre Forest District Local Development Framework Site Allocations and Policies and Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan DPDs: Preferred Options Consultation

A briefing paper was considered from the Policy and Regeneration Manager that sought members' views on the consultation papers which represented the next stages in the Local Development Framework's preparation. It was noted that this followed on from the Core Strategy that had been adopted in 2010. Further it was noted that this authority was one of the first planning authorities to adopt the Core Strategy in the West Midlands. Members also noted that the appendices to the report had been thoroughly scrutinised by the Local Development Framework Review Panel and site visits had been made accordingly.

Members were advised that consultations had been held on both DPD documents in 2009 and the current consultation looked specifically at sites. Members noted that 4 exhibitions had been planned: 2 in Kidderminster, 1 in Stourport and 1 in Bewdley.

Members' attention was drawn to section 3 of the report regarding the site allocations and policies DPD. More detailed development policies had been prepared to guide the future development for the district. The policies covered areas such as:

- Residential development and locations.
- Employment development and locations.
- Transport.
- Sustainable development.
- Safeguarding the Green Belt.
- Providing a Green Infrastructure Network.
- Safeguarding and Enhancing the Natural Environment.
- Safeguarding the Historic Environment.

Appendix 2 of the report contained details regarding the Kidderminster Central

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Area Action Plan. Appendix 3 set out the consultation plan and how the community would be consulted.

Members were advised that a considerable amount of work had gone into the documentation and the LDF Review Panel had suggested a few amendments which included being more specific about the number of homes and removal of some very specific targets to ensure flexibility. In terms of specifics examples had been included of the potential for commercial services on the Severn Valley Railway line which made reference regarding the need to explore parking options on the eastern side of Bewdley. Further, with regard to the Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan (KCAAP) the boundary had been amended for Churchfields and small changes had been made regarding the Comberton Hill boundary. It was also noted that the range of uses for the former Sladen Middle School site had been extended.

A debate ensued where it was concluded that the production of a glossary of terms would prove useful for members.

Recommended to Cabinet:

- 1. The following Local Development Framework Development Plan Documents be approved for the purposes of consultation in accordance with Regulation 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, as amended by the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008:**
 - **Site Allocations and Policies DPD: Preferred Options, (attached at Appendix 1 of the report to the Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee)**
 - **Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan DPD: Preferred Options, (attached at Appendix 2 of the report to the Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee);**
- 2. The Director of Planning and Regulatory Services be given delegated authority to determine the final format and presentation of the papers;**
- 3. The public consultation on the Development Plan Documents be undertaken in accordance with the Consultation Plan attached at Appendix 3 of the report to the Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.**

Agreed: A Glossary of Terms would be produced for Members.

C&R.106 Recommendation Tracking

The Committee considered the recommendations that had been made by the Committee during the municipal year. Members found it positive that the recommendations they had made had been implemented.

With regard to the car parking recommendation it was queried whether free car parking had been brought forward. The Principal Solicitor agreed to check this out and agreed to send an email to all members of the committee.

Agreed:

- 1. The information be noted.**
- 2. The Principal Solicitor to ascertain whether free parking had been brought forward and to email the answer to all members of the committee.**

C&R.107 Press Involvement

There were no items requiring press involvement.

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CORPORATE RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

THURSDAY, 14TH APRIL 2011 (6.00PM)

Present:

Councillors: G W Ballinger (Chairman), P B Harrison (Vice-Chairman), H E Dyke, N Gale, D R Godwin, J Greener, P V Hayward, T Ingham, H J Martin, D J McCann, J W Parish, M A Salter, J Thomas, and S J Williams.

Co-opted Member: Tavis Pitt

Observer: Councillor J-P Campion.

CR.133 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: J Aston, and A J Buckley.

CR.134 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor D R Godwin was appointed as a substitute for Councillor J Aston.
Councillor S J Williams was appointed as a substitute for Councillor A J Buckley.

CR.135 Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

CR.136 Minutes

Councillor J Greener stated that she was present at the previous meeting of the Committee but that this was not stated in the minutes.

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 10th March 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CR.137 Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

CR.138 Single Site

The Chairman advised the Committee that this item had been brought forward on the agenda.

The Director of Legal and Corporate Services updated Members on the progress of the project and a summary of the key points is provided below:

- Thomas Vale Ltd had been appointed as construction contractors for the project.
- The 'post award' period was underway and the successful bid was being considered in great detail to identify any amendments that might be required.
- Work on site was expected to begin in the summer of 2011, and completion was expected in the summer of 2012.
- The contract for the construction was on schedule to be signed on the 3rd June 2011. Prior to this letters of intent and other documents would be issued so that materials such as steel could be ordered which would have a long lead-in time.
- Reserved Planning Permission had been granted for the site and it would not need to go back to the Planning Committee for approval.
- The successful tenderers had offered different options for the building and this included different versions of Ground Sourced Heat Pumps, which could potentially save £500,000.

Agreed: To note the developments outlined in the report.

CR.139 Forward Plan

There were no items for Scrutiny identified within the Forward Plan.

CR.140 Financial Update

The Committee received a presentation from the Director of Resources regarding the situation of the Council's Icelandic investments.

A summary of the key points raised is provided below:

- Over 50% of the money deposited with Heritable had been recovered, and it was expected that 85% of the total money would be recovered.
- Over 50% of the money deposited with KSF had been recovered and it was expected that 78% of the total money would be recovered.
- None of the money deposited with Landsbanki had been recovered. This was because the Icelandic Government had imposed a moratorium on selling its assets so that they could realise the best price. The Council had been awarded priority creditor status. It was expected that 95% of the total money would be recovered.
- A recent Icelandic referendum was in relation to Icesave – an online bank operating in the UK and the Netherlands, which was a separate issue and had no impact on the recovery of the Council's funds.
- The Council had spent £15,000 to date on legal costs as part of the Local Government Association's joint legal action. Sharing the costs with other affected authorities had meant that this was relatively inexpensive for the Council.

Agreed: To note the contents of the presentation.

CR.140 Recommendations of the Corporate Performance Clinic Review Panel

A Member of the Corporate Performance Clinic Review Panel outlined to the Committee the recommendations of the Corporate Performance Clinic Review Panel and a summary of the key points raised is provided below:

- The review panel had been reconvened to reassess its original recommendations and had conducted a survey of Officers who had attended the Clinic, the Corporate Management Team, and Members. The survey had had a low response rate from Members.
- The recommendations of the review focused on communication; both communication of the purpose of the review, and also communication of the outcomes of the review. It was felt that it was necessary to improve the communication of the purpose of the review so that all Members were aware of the purpose of the Clinic, and that they were welcome to attend its meetings.
- It was felt that more could be done to promote the successes of the Clinic and to embed the lessons learnt from the Clinic amongst the Council's workforce.

Agreed: Members reiterated the original recommendations of the review panel and made the following recommendations to the Cabinet:

- 1) A summary of Clinic news be included in the main body of Wyred Weekly.**
- 2) To ask Group Leaders to urge all Members to read Wyred Weekly.**
- 3) To ask Group Leaders to encourage Members to attend and ensure representation of each Group at the Clinics.**
- 4) The agenda cover for the Clinic be amended to state that all Members are welcome to attend and that their attendance is encouraged, in addition to a similar note in the accompanying email.**
- 5) Managers be encouraged to discuss the outcomes of items from the Clinic with their staff, where relevant, in order to spread good practice.**
- 6) A means be provided for Members to request items of concern to be considered by the Clinic, possibly through Directorate Business Plan Shadowing by Scrutiny Members.**
- 7) Further performance management training be provided for all Members, possibly in a meeting of the Quarterly Scrutiny Briefing.**
- 8) Publicity be given to success stories by issuing press releases, where appropriate, for good news stories that are considered by the Clinic.**

CR.141 Directorate Business Plans

The Committee considered an update from Members who were shadowing Directorate Business Plans.

A summary of the key points raised is provided below:

Community and Partnership Services

- Some targets relating to performance management were no longer required by the Government.
- The ICASEWORK system had not been implemented as this was pending the outcome of the Administration Review.
- The Museum Forecourt project was on hold whilst consideration was given to the inclusion of the Worcestershire Hub.

Legal and Corporate Services

- All of the targets in this Directorate were on target. At the time of printing the Directorate Business Plan Exception Report stated that the 'Property Rationalisation Strategy' was only at 80% but this had since been completed.

Resources

- 'Payment of Invoices' was not on target but the Government target in this area had been rescinded.
- 'Value Added Tax Training for Officers' was not on target and had been deferred due to budget cutbacks.
- 'ICT Strategy - Assist with the Implementation of Self & Assisted Service in Revenues and Benefits' was not on target but was expected to be completed by the end of April 2011.

Planning and Regulatory Services

- Most the targets for this Directorate were either on target or had been completed.
- 'Electronic Consultation with Statutory Consultees' – there had been some problems with back office software compatibility and resistance from some Statutory Consultees regarding this.
- 'Health Action and Climate Change Action Plan' – This had been delayed whilst maternity cover was arranged.
- The Regional Spatial Strategy had been abolished.

Agreed:

1) To note the comments made.

2) Clarification be provided regarding Directorate Business Plan Item RES BP10 AC07D, Value Added Tax Training.

CR.142 Recommendation Tracking

The Committee considered an update report which outlined the outcomes of recommendations made by the Committee during the current municipal year.

Agreed: To note the contents of the update.

CR.143 End of Year Conclusions

The Chairman asked Members to comment on the work of the Committee in the

past municipal year including its successes, areas for improvement, and topics for inclusion in the Annual Scrutiny Report.

A summary of the key points raised is provided below:

- The Chairman felt that Directorate Business Plan Shadowing and the Budget Review Panel were both very successful.
- Several Members commented that the Treasury Management Review Panel and the related training provided had broadened their understanding of Treasury Management issues.
- The Chairman thanked Tavis Pitt for his efforts as the Committee's first Co-opted Member.
- A Member commented that Cabinet Members had more frequently attended the Corporate Resources Scrutiny Committee than the Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, and a discussion subsequently ensued regarding whether Cabinet Members should attend Scrutiny meetings.
- The Chairman stated that he was disappointed that there had not been more public and press interest in the work of the Committee.

Agreed: To note the comments made.

CR.144 Feedback from Cabinet

A discussion ensued regarding the proposal to introduce of charges for advice on planning applications. A Member felt that charging for advice could discourage development. The Leader of the Council commented that the policy was intended to allow the Council to recoup more of the cost of planning applications, and that he did not feel it would discourage development.

Agreed: To note the contents of the report.

CR.145 Press Involvement

There were no items identified for press involvement.

The meeting ended at 19:28.



Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Briefing Paper

Report of: Kay Higman, Cultural Services Manager
Date: Thursday, 2nd June 2011
Open

Recommendations of the Sports and Leisure Centres Review Panel

1. Summary

1.1 This report summarises the work of the review panel which was established to undertake a strategic options appraisal for the future management of sports and leisure centre provision for the District and to produce a series of affordable and sustainable recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet in June 2011.

2. Background

2.1 Wyre Forest District Council owns three Leisure Centres, situated in Bewdley, Kidderminster and Stourport, managed by DC Leisure on behalf of the Council. They have provided high quality leisure centres to the community over many years and have been developed during that time to keep pace with changing sport and leisure requirements. The contract with DC Leisure finishes in March 2013 and therefore it is important to investigate all available options prior to contract end.

2.2 The Council is facing extremely challenging times and all services provided by the Council, including sports and leisure centres are undergoing review to ensure they are operated to maximum efficiency.

2.3 As part of the Wyre Forest Forward programme it was decided that the sport and leisure centre provision was to be reviewed to address a range of issues including:-

- The Leisure Centre buildings and the facilities within them are coming towards the end of their useful life.
- The current leisure management contract ends in March 2013; options are being considered now, as a matter of urgency, to allow sufficient transition time to any new arrangement.
- An extension of the existing contract will increase costs both through the management fee (one factor has been the increase in fuel prices) and also with increased maintenance costs.

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- The unprecedented pressure on current budgets makes such ongoing increases unaffordable to the Council. The aim of the Council would be to operate the centres at as near to a zero subsidy as possible, payable to any third party provider.
 - Maximising income from the sports and leisure centres.
- 2.4 It was agreed at Cabinet on 25th January 2011, that a full strategic options appraisal for the future management of sports and leisure centres be prepared by the Director of Community and Partnership Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community and Partnership Services, Director of Resources, Director of Legal and Corporate Services and Director of Planning and Regulatory Services and reports be presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to Cabinet in Summer 2011. A Members review panel was established with the first meeting on 16th March 2011; this group has made recommendations to this Scrutiny meeting and are detailed below.
- 2.5 A sum of £35,000 was allocated from General Reserves to the Community and Partnerships budget to carry out any associated work with carrying out the options appraisals.
- 2.6 The options put forward through Cabinet were as follows:-
1. Status Quo, keep all 3 leisure centres, there would be increased management contract costs and necessary refurbishment costs to improve usage and would require an additional budget to be identified.
 2.
 - a) Transfer some or all of the leisure centres to community groups or similar organisations. If appropriate organisations could not be identified, potentially close any of the centres and source private provision to provide the service (should the latter be considered it should be noted that private provision does not cater for children and young people or ensure access for deprived communities or provide health and well-being programmes and sports development)
 - b) If unable to transfer 1 or more of the leisure centres, consider closure on an individual basis.
 3. Invest in a new leisure centre utilising the proceeds of sale of assets and prudential borrowing (minimum time scale from identification of site to opening of centre is 3 years.)
- 2.7 Sports and Leisure Centre review panel meetings:-
There have been five panel meetings, plus the visit to Elmbridge on 9th May 2011.

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2.8 The meetings have covered the following issues:

- 16th March – background, scope of review
- 23rd March – status quo and refurbishment, Stourport Forward Facility project, Community Asset transfer (CAT), potential closure of facilities. Invitees were Liz Sheerin from Stourport Forward Facility project group and Peter Barnett from Wyre Forest Swimming Club.
- 13th April – new build option (potential sites, facilities, capital costs and procurement) financial analysis and report. Tracey Southall and David Tirebuck were invitees.
- 27th April – Facility Planning model strategic analysis, financial review, review of scope of group, communications plan. Invitee was Ian Silvera from Sport England
- 9th May – visit to Elmbridge, Xcel leisure centre to view facilities.
- 17th May – presentation of photos and information from visit to Elmbridge, review options and formulate recommendations.

2.9 In addition to the meetings outlined above, the members of the review panel have received the following information:-

- Customer comments and complaints from the sites
- Demographic information for the District
- Sport England Toolkit for Community Asset Transfer
- Paper from Wyre Forest Swimming Club
- Copy of lease for Stourport Sports Association
- Information regarding site programming from Wolverhampton and Cardiff leisure facilities
- Summary of discussions from Stourport Facilities Group Leisure sub group
- Summary of Facility Planning Model Analysis from Sport England
- Financial analysis and costings including:-
- Capital investment and management fee options

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- Legal guidance on contract termination/extension and redundancy
- Procurement advice on options for procuring new facilities
- Site clearance/management costs/sales receipts
- New site indicative size and cost
- Repair and maintenance options reviewed with DC Leisure
- Staff profile at Glades and Stourport

3. Key Issues

3.1 The key issues for the review group have centred on:

- Affordability
- Strategic leisure need
- Community Asset Transfer (CAT)
- Consultation plan

4. Options

Recommendations from Review Panel

4.1 The review panel identified the broad principles of a way forward and at the meeting on 17th May made the following recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to recommend to Cabinet:

- 1) No leisure provision within the District is not considered to be an option.
- 2) Refurbishment of the Glades is not considered to be an option.
- 3) A new build leisure facility within Kidderminster is the preferred option, but at this stage it is not possible to comment on a preferred site or the facilities to be provided within the Leisure Centre.
- 4) A Community Asset Transfer for the wet and dry facilities at Stourport Sports Centre should be progressed.
- 5) A Community Asset Transfer for Bewdley Leisure Centre should be progressed with any willing partners.

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- 6) That extension to existing management contracts, as previously approved by Cabinet, with DC leisure take place, if necessary whilst recommendations 1 to 5 are being progressed.
 - 7) That the communications/consultation plan be endorsed.
- 4.2 The review panel concluded that the options for consultation by the public should all relate to a new build option for the District and a number of options need to be further investigated.
 - 4.3 All of the new build options include for a six court sports hall, fitness and studios, 25 m 6 lane pool, leisure water, teaching pool, café, 5-a-side synthetic pitches to achieve as near as possible a zero subsidy, apart from one of the options which is for a dryside facility only and to build a pool if finance becomes available.
 - 4.4 All of the new build options would meet the Council's economic objective to free up Bromsgrove Street for future development of the Eastern Gateway.
 - 4.5 Sport and leisure impact – with the exception of the dryside only option all of the new build options would best meet the strategic sport and leisure needs of the district.
- 1a) If Stourport Sports Centre (SSC) successful Community Asset Transfer (CAT), new build in Kidderminster, with contract extension at Wyre Forest Glades Leisure Centre (WFGLC) until new build.
 - b) If close both (and no CAT) new build between Kidderminster and Stourport, with contract extension at both centres until new build.
 - c) If CAT at SSC successful, new build in Kidderminster, close WFGLC at March 2013 or earlier (if no CAT at SSC revert to 1b or 1e).
 - d) As c) above but dry side facility only, no pool with the desire to build a pool at a later date, if funding becomes available.
 - e) If close both and no CAT, new build in between Kidderminster and Stourport, extend contract for SSC and shut Glades.
- 4.6 Given the further work required and detailed financial analysis and site options appraisal, it is recommended that full Council consider the final Cabinet recommendations in the autumn.
- ## **5. Consultation**
- 5.1 A communication/consultation plan was tabled and approved at the review panel meeting on 27th April. The plan stresses the importance of seeking views from residents and key stakeholders whilst keeping

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employees and members informed about future leisure options. This plan takes account of up to 3 options to be agreed at June Cabinet going out to the public to ascertain their views before a final decision by Cabinet. The communication plan is attached at Appendix 2. Further work on developing the options for this public consultation exercise is required, subject to progressing work on financial affordability and site options.

6. Related Decisions

6.1 None.

7. Relevant Council Policies/Strategies

7.1 Financial Strategy 2011-14

7.2 Cultural Strategy

8. Implications

8.1 A financial appraisal of the options identified within Section 4.2 has been undertaken and High level indicative costings are shown in Appendix 1. These costings will continue to be developed and refined as this work progresses and more information becomes available.

9. Equality Impact Needs Assessment

9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out prior to the Cabinet meeting.

10. Wards affected

10.1 All wards.

11. Appendices

11.1 Appendix 1 – High Level Financial Appraisal – Indicative costings

11.2 Appendix 2 – Consultation/Communication Plan

12. Background Papers

Cabinet Report – 25th January 2011

Officer Contact Details:

Name: Kay Higman

Title: Cultural Services Manager

Contact Number: 01562 732902

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Appendix 1

High Level Financial Appraisal - Indicative Costing

		Revenue					Total Cost			Capital		
							Total	Net Unfunded	On going	Total Current	Net Cost pa On Average	Net
		2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2013/18	2013/18	Revenue p.a	Over Life		
	£,000s	£,000s	£,000s	£,000s	£,000s	£,000s	£,000s	£,000s	£,000s	£,000s	£,000s	£,000s
	Controllable Budget	873	873	873	873	873	4,365		873		873	0
Option 1a	Extend Glades 2 years, transfer Stourport, New Build	863	1,288	1,279	1,099	1,099	5,628	1,263	1,037	33,124	162	11,646
Option 1b	Extend both, New Build	1,027	1,532	1,303	1,037	1,037	5,935	1,570	1,037	33,432	172	11,646
Option 1c	Transfer Stourport, Close Glades, and New Build	887	1,099	1,099	1,099	1,099	5,282	917	1,037	31,742	119	11,646
Option 1d	Transfer Stourport, Close Glades, and New Build dryside only.	510	333	333	333	333	1,841	(2,524)	271	8,756	(599)	2,968
Option 1e	Extend Stourport Contract, close Glades and New Build	605	810	1,123	1,037	1,037	4,612	247	1,037	32,109	130	11,646

Note: For every £71K increase in revenue costs Council tax would need to increase by 1% representing a £2.03 increase on Band D Council Tax.

Assumptions:

1. Controllable budget is for Glades and Stourport. Currently management fee, repairs and maintenance, and plant replacement.
2. Current cost basis, with no inflation or budget uplift.
3. New build life of 30 years, funded by maturity loan at 5.34%.
4. For new build assumes nil cost management fee, and contractor premises repairing lease.
5. Options for Community Asset Transfer assume the Council will make a pump priming Grant of 30% of current Management Fee for SSC, for 5 years from 2013/14

Proposed communications and consultation plan for Sports and Leisure Centres Options

- Develop maximum of 3 options for public consultation at final Review Panel meeting, to go to Scrutiny Panel and Cabinet (June)
- Options then to be consulted upon, approximately one month/6 week period:
 1. On line voting
 2. Editorials in Shuttle
 3. Radio coverage
 4. At sports and leisure centres forms to enable public to give opinion
 5. Hubs, forms available
 6. Newsletters, eg Housing Co, WFDC July Wyred In
 7. User groups, letters or focus groups
 8. Communication with DC Leisure staff

- Back to Cabinet for final decision in Sept and Council in October 2011

**CABINET FEEDBACK
19th APRIL 2011**

1) Feedback on items recommended by the meeting of the Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee of the 7th April 2011.

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DECISION

8.1 Worcestershire Housing Strategy 2011-16

Recommended to Council:

Decision: The Worcestershire Housing Strategy and associated Action Plan 2011/12 be adopted by Council.

8.2 Local Investment Plan (LIP)

Decision: The Worcestershire Local Investment Plan be endorsed.

9.1 Wyre Forest District Local Development Framework Development Plan Documents and Churchfields Master Plan: Preferred Options Consultation.

Recommended to Council:

1. The following Local Development Framework Development Plan Documents be approved for the purposes of consultation in accordance with Regulation 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, as amended by the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008:
 - Site Allocations and Policies DPD: Preferred Options, (attached at Appendix 1 of the report to Cabinet).
 - Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan DPD: Preferred Options, (attached at Appendix 2 of the report to Cabinet).
 - The public consultation on the Development Plan Documents be undertaken in accordance with the Consultation Plan attached at Appendix 3 of the report to Cabinet.
2. The Consultation Draft Churchfields Master Plan, set out at Appendix 4 of the report to Cabinet, be approved for the purposes of public consultation and that it be given due weight as a material consideration in determining planning applications falling within its boundaries.
3. The Director of Planning & Regulatory Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning & Economic Regeneration, be given delegated power to determine the final format and presentation of all of the papers referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 above.

10.1 Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan

Decision: The Wyre Forest Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2011/2012 and its associated Affordable Warmth Strategy and Action Plan 2011/2012 be endorsed.

Health and Wellbeing in Wyre Forest

Decision: The Wyre Forest District Council Health Action Plan be endorsed.

2) Feedback on items recommended by the meeting of the Corporate Resources Scrutiny Committee of the 14th April 2011.

10.2 Recommendations of the Corporate Performance Clinic Review Panel

Decision: The recommendations listed below be noted:

1. A summary of Clinic news be included in the main body of Wyred Weekly.
2. Group Leaders be asked to urge all Members to read Wyred Weekly.
3. Group Leaders be asked to encourage Members to attend and ensure representation of each Group at the Clinics.
4. The agenda cover for the Clinic be amended to state that all Members are welcome to attend and that their attendance is encouraged, in addition to a similar note in the accompanying email.
5. Managers be encouraged to discuss the outcomes of items from the Clinic with their staff, where relevant, in order to spread good practice.
6. A means be provided for Members to request items of concern to be considered by the Clinic, possibly through Directorate Business Plan Shadowing by Scrutiny Members.
7. Further performance management training be provided for all Members, possibly in a meeting of the Quarterly Scrutiny Briefing.
8. Publicity be given to success stories by issuing press releases, where appropriate, for good news stories that are considered by the Clinic.

**Overview & Scrutiny Committee 2011/2012
Work Programme**

June

Recommendations from Sports & Leisure Review Panel
Set up Treasury Management Review Panel
New Council HQ - update
Directorate Business Plans – Allocate
Quarterly Scrutiny Briefings

July

Recommendations from Recording Equipment, Blogging and Social Media Review
Finance update to incorporate progress report on Wyre Forest Forward
Community Housing Contract - Performance Review

September

New Council HQ - update
Set up Waste Review Panel
Finance update to incorporate progress report on Wyre Forest Forward
Responses to current LDF framework consultation
Gypsy/traveller site allocation
Areley Kings appraisal
Qtr exception reporting incorporate directorate business plans

October

Flooding & watercourse re shared service
Empty Housing Strategy
Homelessness Review

November

Universal credits replacing housing benefit.
Backward looking - 2010 performance
Finance update to incorporate progress report on WF Forward
Qtr exception reporting incorporate directorate business plans

December

New Council HQ - update
Budget Review Panel – Terms of Reference
Recommendations from Waste Review Panel
Asset Transfer – To be confirmed

January

Recommendations from Treasury Review Panel (TM strategy statement for 2012/13)
County Homelessness Strategy
Enforced Sale Policy

February

Budget Review Panel Recommendations
Finance update to incorporate progress report on WF Forward
LDF Publication document
Qtr exception reporting incorporate directorate business plans

March

New Council HQ - update
Climate Change/Affordable Warmth

April

Finance update to incorporate progress report on WF Forward
Qtr exception reporting incorporate directorate business plans
Tracking Recommendations