

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER**

**THURSDAY, 6TH DECEMBER 2012 (6.00PM)**

---

**Present:**

Councillors: H E Dyke (Chairman), T Ingham (Vice-Chairman), R Bishop, C Brewer, L Davies, N Gale, J Greener, P B Harrison, J A Hart, V Higgs, H J Martin, D C H McCann, B McFarland, J Phillips, M Rayner, C Rogers, A M Sewell, D R Sheppard and S J Williams.

**Observers**

Councillors: G W Ballinger, I Hardiman, M J Hart, P V Hayward and J A Shaw.

**OS.62 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor G C Yarranton.

**OS.63 Appointment of Substitutes**

Councillor J Phillips was appointed as a substitute for Councillor G C Yarranton.

**OS.64 Declarations of Interests by Members**

No declarations of interest were made.

**OS.65 Minutes**

**Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 8th November 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**OS.66 Wyre Forest District Infrastructure Plan**

The Committee considered a report from the Principal Planning Policy Officer on the production of a District wide Infrastructure Plan. Recommendations from the Local Development Framework Review Panel were also considered. Members held a full debate and were informed that the plan accompanied the submission of the District Council's Development Plan Documents (DPD's) and would also be used to help inform the work being undertaken on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Members were led through the report and a full debate ensued. Members were informed that it was important to note that the Infrastructure Plan was a 'live' document and only a snapshot of the current situation. Regular updates would be required as the process was gone through.

## Agenda Item No. 4

Following the Autumn statement, it had been announced that £5 billion would be available for Local Enterprise Partnerships which could benefit local areas.

The main points raised were as follows:

- a. Speed controls on the A449 and A456 needed to be looked into, especially as the A456 had been detrunked and one significant company had left the area because of this. Speed cameras were very active on the A449 and it was felt that this led to huge bunching and it was thought that this could lead to a major accident happening.
- b. As the British Sugar site was to be regenerated, a rail link should be provided between Kidderminster and Bewdley. A report by Jacobs Consultants had been commissioned many years ago to look at the potential use of a Parry People Mover on the line and Members asked if the report could be available to Members of the Committee. It was confirmed that this would be circulated.
- c. Concerns were raised about the comments made to alter the provision from West Midlands Ambulance services, as it was felt that this could increase risks to service users. It was perceived that if the number of ambulances on the road were to be reduced, more motorbikes could be used as quick response. There was a suggestion that community stations become operational in the area but it was not known where these would be located. In response, it was confirmed that the District Council would continue to feed comments to West Midlands Ambulance Service and raise concern about the proposals.
- d. Police stations continued to be downgraded and this needed to be investigated further especially as it was perceived crime was increasing. Members were informed that a document with detailed proposals in relation to planned new Police Infrastructure within the District was available and this would be circulated.
- e. In response to a Members question, it was confirmed that Birchen Coppice School and St Marys School should be included and this had been an oversight when preparing the plan. In terms of pressure on numbers for local schools, guidance came from Worcestershire County Council and future consideration for education provision is generally covered when considering planning applications.
- f. With the Kidderminster Academy now open, Members noted with disappointment that there was no courses for engineering. In light of the Severn Valley Railway being active in the area and with the possible involvement they would have with the link via the British Sugar Site, a relevant course would have been beneficial.
- g. Efforts needed to be taken to ensure Stourport Leisure Centre taken over therefore ensure the town did not lose their leisure facilities.
- h. It was suggested there an increased mobile library service could be more operational in the Wyre Forest area and it was agreed that this could be included in the plan. There were concerns that library services were not

overly reduced. It was agreed that the Infrastructure Plan would make reference to the Mobile Library service that exists within the District.

Councillor N Gale left the meeting at this point, (6.47pm) and came back at 6.48pm.

In agreeing a recommendation to Cabinet, Members stressed that they were happy to note and endorse majority of the report with the exception of the emergency services and library services where further information was to be obtained due to the concerns of the Committee.

**Agreed:**

**Recommend to Cabinet**

**The contents of the briefing paper to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2012 be noted and the Infrastructure Plan as a suitable evidence base document be endorsed to support the delivery of the Development Plans and to provide the background information required for implementing Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) with the exception on the section on emergency services where the comments are only noted pending further information and request that clarity be sought regarding police and ambulance services as soon as possible. Members also express concerns about library services and request that clarity be sought on these proposals as soon as possible.**

**OS.67 Health and Wellbeing in Wyre Forest**

The Committee considered a report from the Strategic Housing Services Manager which provided an update on work to improve Health and Wellbeing in Wyre Forest.

Members were taken through the report and asked for clarification on what books were available on prescription and details of the membership of Strategic Health and Inequalities Partnership (SHIP).

Members also asked if SHIP could be promoted as they had seen nothing on this.

**Agreed:**

**The Strategic Housing Services Manager to obtain information on books available on prescription and details of the SHIP membership.**

**Recommend to Cabinet: The Wyre Forest District Council Health Action Plan 2012/13 be endorsed.**

**OS.68 Crime and Disorder Update**

The Committee received a presentation from the Community Safety and Partnership Officer on crime and disorder issues and received an update regarding progress made against the Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership's (WFCSP) priorities for 2012/13.

Members received a powerpoint presentation which included information that had been requested following the previous annual report.

In response to a Members question, it was confirmed that a report could be produced to show the current problems with car burglaries. It was acknowledged that the statistics would never be accurate but gave a general consensus of what was being reported.

Councillor M J Hart left the meeting at this point, (7.50pm).

Members were concerned that they had not had the time to digest the information and asked for the item to be represented to the next Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting where it could be fully scrutinised.

It was confirmed that the WFCSP did not attend PACT meetings but did receive all the necessary information from police officers

**Agreed: The Community Safety and Partnership Officer would present a report to the next meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee where Members could scrutinise the report.**

Councillor J A Shaw left the meeting at this point, (8.00pm).

**OS.69 Budget Review Panel**

The Committee considered a paper, which was tabled at the meeting, from the Director of Resources which sought agreement for the Terms of Reference for the Budget Review Panel.

Members were taken through the report and three dates for meetings were proposed, these being 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 24<sup>th</sup> January 2013 with a commencement time of 4pm.

**Agreed:**

- **The membership for the Budget Review Panel consist of 4 Members (one from each political Group).**
- **The Committee/Scrutiny Officer to contact Group Leaders asking for nominations for the Panel.**

**OS.70 Feedback from Cabinet**

**Agreed: The content of the Cabinet decision list, following considered of the recommendations from the meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2012.**

**OS.71 Work Programme**

The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee reminded Members of the procedure for adding items to the Work Programme. In response to a Members question, it was confirmed that partners could be scrutinised.

Members were also reminded that the Members Forum on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2012 would focus on systems thinking.

**Agreed: The work programme be noted.**

**OS.72 Press Involvement**

There were no future items that might require scrutiny.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 8.12 pm.