

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

THURSDAY, 19TH DECEMBER 2013 (6.00PM)

Present:

Councillors: H E Dyke (Chairman), T Ingham (Vice-Chairman), G W Ballinger, C Brewer, N Gale, V Higgs, D C H McCann, T L Onslow, J Phillips, M Rayner, C Rogers and A M Sewell.

Observers

There were no members present as observers.

OS.69 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

OS.70 Appointment of Substitutes

No substitutes were appointed.

OS.71 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

OS.72 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 5th December 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Councillor T L Onslow entered the meeting at this point, (6.02pm).

OS.73 Worcestershire County Council Subsidised Bus Services Review 2013

The Committee received a report from the Policy and Monitoring Officer on Worcestershire County Council's (WCC) proposed withdrawal of subsidy from a number of bus services currently operating in Wyre Forest District.

Members were led through the report and advised that WCC were consulting on the proposals until 17th January 2014. The results from the consultation would be reported to the County Council's Cabinet in February 2014. It was noted there were no user number figures available for inclusion in the report.

Members thanked the Officer for a very comprehensive and informative report.

The Committee considered the report and a detailed discussion regarding the

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implications surrounding the proposals ensued. Members provided a number of comments and amendments for inclusion in the draft consultation response, as attached at appendix 3 of the Committee report, these included:

- The impact on the elderly and those living in areas of multiple deprivation who have no other forms of transport
- The Council's duty of care in respect of safer routes to school
- People wishing to access education
- The adverse effect on the District's tourism and night time economy, and the lack of regard to the Council's adopted development plans

The Committee discussed the consultation process and material produced. Members felt the service user numbers should be made available to enable the consultees to make informed judgements about the services at risk, it was agreed this was a major flaw in the consultation material. It was also noted that the consultation material provided no contact number for those people wishing to contact WCC with specific queries, this would disadvantage people who do not have access to email.

The Committee agreed the wording in the conclusion at bullet point 7 of the draft response be changed from 'concern' to 'outrage', to reflect the strong feelings of the Committee.

Agreed: The additional comments and amendments made by the Committee be incorporated into the draft consultation response for Cabinet Member approval prior to its submission to Worcestershire County Council by 17th January 2014.

OS.74 Press Involvement

There were no future items for scrutiny that might require publicity.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 6.48pm.