

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

THURSDAY, 4TH OCTOBER 2018 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: H E Dyke (Chairman), M Rayner (Vice-Chairman), A Coleman, N Harris, K Henderson, N Knowles, D Little, S Miah, H S Williams and S J Williams.

Observers

Councillors: P Dyke, I Hardiman and T L Onslow.

OS.42 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S J Walker.

OS.43 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor A Coleman was a substitute for Councillor S J Walker.

OS.44 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

OS.45 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 6th September 2018 and the minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting held on 5th September 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

OS.46 Wyre Forest Health and Wellbeing Plan Update

Councillor T L Onslow entered the meeting at 6:03pm

The Committee received a report from the Principal Health and Sustainability Officer which provided an update on the work undertaken to improve health and wellbeing in Wyre Forest.

The Principal Health and Sustainability Officer led members through the report and advised that the Council worked closely with the Public Health team at Worcestershire County Council to ensure that it made a positive contribution towards improving the health of the residents within the Wyre Forest district.

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She advised that the latest Public Health England profile (2018) for Wyre Forest showed that there were some indicators that were significantly worse than the national or regional average including smoking in pregnancy, breastfeeding rate and dementia diagnosis (a new indicator for 2018). Whilst indicators for Obese Children and Excess Weight in Adults were currently not significantly different to England average, local values were still concerning. In Wyre Forest 20% of Year 6 children (10-11 year olds) are obese and 60.3% of adults are carrying excess weight.

She advised that the Wyre Forest Health and Wellbeing Plan aimed to tackle these issues as well as the Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board's current priorities to keep everyone physically active, prevent alcohol harm and maintain good mental health and wellbeing.

The Principal Health and Sustainability Officer led members through an update showing examples of projects undertaken as part of the 2017/18 Health Action Plan. These included Five Ways to Wellbeing, Dementia Action, Health Walks, Social Prescribing and Starting Well.

Members considered the report and expressed the view that more detail about direction and outcome would be helpful in future.

The Principal Health and Sustainability Officer noted the detailed views and suggestions put forward by members in respect of the projects, measures and updates.

Concern was expressed that while the Dementia Action Alliance had provided helpful training to organisations, there had been no regular information since or access to retraining which would be very valuable. It was requested that further Dementia Friends training be provided.

In respect of Social Prescribing, members made the point that extending referral to more hubs could alleviate travel distance for those accessing the services.

Members asked for information on whether budget cuts were affecting resources and making initiatives difficult to undertake regarding reducing harm from alcohol at all ages.

Councillor P Dyke entered the meeting at 6:17pm

In the Reducing respiratory illness through raising thermal comfort initiative, members requested figures on the amount spent per property.

The Principal Health and Sustainability Officer led members through the updated Wyre Forest Health Action Plan 2018-21, which reflected the priorities of the Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Strategy of improving mental health and well-being, increasing physical activity and reducing the harm caused by alcohol. It also reflected the key principles of partnership, empowerment, local action, rigour, involvement, transparency and accountability.

When considering the section of the Health Action Plan 2018-2021 on good mental

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health and wellbeing throughout life, members felt it would be useful to be able to make more detailed comparisons. The Principal Health and Sustainability Officer offered to circulate the link to the Public Health Outcomes Framework which she suggested could support that.

Members requested further particulars about the Dementia Friendly Communities grants awarded, whether artificial intelligence was used and how many grants had been awarded to people living alone, independently.

Concerns were expressed about social isolation and suicide prevention and members urged that this section should be expanded specifically to support young people in Wyre Forest, in relation to mental health awareness issues.

Members welcomed the initiatives in respect of reducing overweight and obese adults but expressed the view that this should be extended to a childhood obesity initiative, with a focus on healthy eating in children.

Members noted the progress in respect of Local Priorities. There was a suggestion that a form of wording be included that moves away from making non-breastfeeding mothers feeling guilty about this.

The Committee reviewed the projects undertaken over the past year and welcomed the progress made.

They endorsed the new plan for 2018-21, with suggested amendments.

Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet:

1.1 The following be included in the Plan:

- **More detailed information setting out specific direction and what has been achieved to be included in the next update**
- **Dementia Friends refresher training to be made available.**
- **Mental health awareness issues promoting initiatives specifically to help young people.**
- **A childhood obesity initiative with a focus on encouraging healthier eating in children.**

1.2 The Wyre Forest Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Health Action Plan 2018/21 as attached at Appendix 1 and 2 of the report, as amended, be approved.

OS.47 Climate Change Update

The Committee received a report from the Principal Health and Sustainability Officer which provided an update on the implementation of the Wyre Forest Climate Change Action Plan 2017/18, and sought endorsement of the updated plan for 2018/19.

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The Principal Health and Sustainability Officer outlined the background to the Wyre Forest Climate Change Strategy and the key areas of focus that could have most impact in the district with current resources. These had four themes of warmer, healthier homes, building a low carbon economy, transport and infrastructure, and healthy resilient communities.

Members commented and requested clarification about the case studies in the report. In respect of Heating and Insulation, the amount of the funding for the project was sought.

It was noted that local residents had contacted a committee member expressing concerns about the Winter Warmth scheme. As residents had not seen any publicity about the scheme and were unaware of it, they had suspicions about its legitimacy. The Committee felt that the existing publicity for these schemes could be increased to alleviate this.

Members considered that the carbon emission reduction figures looked acceptable but questioned whether on balance the 34% should have been greater to meet UK targets. The Principal Health and Sustainability Officer advised that so far low-cost schemes had been covered and that going forward meeting the targets could prove more costly. She advised that there is reason to be optimistic and with the development and improvements in technology it should be possible to meet them.

A discussion ensued regarding the Big Energy Switch and how the initiative worked. It was noted that there was no cost to the consumer but a small incentive for referrals was made to local authorities. Revenue to the Council went back into the funds. The Principal Health and Sustainability Officer confirmed that the tariff offered was for one year only with the idea that households would then review their tariff and consider switching again.

Concern was expressed over air quality issues in relation to the increasing local popularity of wood burning stoves. The Principal Health and Sustainability Officer advised that under the scheme for renewable heat incentives, there were criteria to be met. Members felt it was important that information about this be more widely available.

The issue of insulation in properties in rural and conservation areas was raised and concern was expressed about the planning permissions needed. The Principal Health and Sustainability Officer acknowledged this and advised that insulation was not the only consideration in respect of this initiative as a focus on energy use behaviours was also relevant.

Members considered the report and noted the progress on implementation of the Climate Change Action Plan 2017/18.

Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet:

1.1 The following be included in the Climate Change Action Plan 2018/19

- **Greater publicity for Winter Warmth schemes that are offered to**

residents through WFDC to give reassurance that they are legitimate.

- Provide information on air quality control criteria for wood burning stoves in the home.
- Provide information about energy efficiency measures that can be carried out in properties in Conservation Areas

1.2 The Climate Change Action Plan 2018/19 as attached at Appendix 2 of the report, as amended, be approved.

OS.48 Feedback from Cabinet

Agreed: The content of the Cabinet action list, following consideration of the recommendations from its meeting on 19th September 2018 be noted.

Councillor T L Onslow left the meeting at 6:56pm.

OS.49 Work Programme

The Committee reviewed the work programme for the current municipal year with regard to the Corporate Plan Priority, Annual Priorities and the Forward Plan.

The Chairman advised that the Highways Maintenance Review Panel were scheduled to meet one more time before reporting their findings and recommendation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. She added that the Review of Civil enforcement Issues would commence once the Highways Management Review Panel had concluded their work. Members were advised that the Affordable Housing Review Panel would be reconvened to discuss the work done by the Association for Public Service Excellence.

Agreed: The Work Programme be noted.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 6:58pm.