

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 27TH JUNE 2013 AT 5.40 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs. B. Behan, R. Berry, A. N. Blagg (during Minute No's 1/13 to part of 8/13), M. A. Bullivant, B. Clayton, R. Davis, Mrs. L. Denham, P. Harrison, Mrs. L. Hodgson, D. Hughes, K. Jennings, P. Mould (substituting for J. Fisher), C. B. Taylor and S. Williams (substituting for M. Hart)

Observers: Councillor J. Fisher, Redditch Borough Council and Mr. I. Pumfrey, Head of Customer Services, Malvern Hills District Council

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Mr. S. Jorden, Ms. C. Flanagan, Mr. M. Kay, Mr. S. Wilkes and Mrs. P. Ross

1/13 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs. L. Hodgson, Worcestershire County Council be elected as Chairman of the Joint Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

The Chairman took the opportunity to welcome new Members to the Joint Committee.

2/13 **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED that Councillor M. Bullivant, Bromsgrove District Council be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Joint Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

3/13 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Fisher, Redditch Borough Council and Councillor M. Hart, Wyre Forest District Council.

4/13 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

5/13 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee held on 21st February 2013 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

**WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BUDGET MONITORING
APRIL 2012 - MARCH 2013**

The Committee considered a report which detailed the financial position for the period April 2012 to March 2013.

The Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Resources, Bromsgrove District Council introduced the report and in doing so informed the Committee that, as highlighted in 2011/2012, Worcestershire Regulatory Services Joint Committee had been classified as a small relevant body by the Audit Commission as its income was less than £6.5 million. As a result of this classification the requirement of the formal accounting statements for 2012/2013 was limited to the return as detailed at Appendix 2 to the report.

The Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Resources, Bromsgrove District Council informed Members that the final position of savings in relation to revenue costs was £349,000. Due to the level of underspend, as detailed on page 10 of the report, together with the financial cuts that each of the participating Councils were faced with in the future; officers had proposed that the Joint Committee approve the refund of the 2012/2013 savings of £349,000 back to each of the participating Councils in 2013/2014. The total refund figure for each participating Council for 2013/2014 was detailed on page 11 of the report.

The Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Resources, Bromsgrove District Council informed Members that following the appointment of IDOX for the new ICT system a review of the costs included within the original business case had been undertaken to ensure that the relevant expenditure was allocated to the project. Appendix 5 to the report detailed the anticipated expenditure for the one off costs associated with the implementation of the project. As previously reported there was a saving of £282,000 from the costs originally included in the business case.

The Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Resources, Bromsgrove District Council drew Members attention to page 13 of the report, 'Cost Apportionment'. For the reasons, as detailed on page 13 of the report, it was proposed that the two elements, cost apportionment and revised budget, would be presented to the next meeting of the Joint Committee.

The Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) responded to Councillor Mrs. L. Denham with regard to the savings made in respect of staff vacancies and the senior level post that had not been filled during the year. The Head of WRS explained that the service was still going through transformation so had not recruited permanently; also it had proved difficult to backfill as the vacancies were quite specialist vacancies. The Head of WRS highlighted to the Committee that WRS were still maintaining performance levels and that savings had not been made at the cost of service delivery.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the financial position for the period April 2012 to March 2013, be noted;

- (b) that the refund of the 2012/2013 underspend of £349,000 to the participating Councils, to be allocated on the percentage basis as detailed in the Business Case 2010/2011. The total of £349,000 to be repaid in 2013/2014, as set out below, be approved:

Council	% Share	Refund of savings £'000
Bromsgrove	11.05%	39
Malvern Hills	9.58%	33
Redditch	11.31%	39
City of Worcester	11.11%	39
Wychavon	16.55%	58
Wyre Forest	10.82%	38
Worcestershire	29.58%	103
		349

- (c) that the Annual Return to include the Accounting Statements for the Joint Committee for the period 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013, be approved; and
- (d) that the Internal Audit Manager's assurance statement for the financial year 2012/2013, as set out in Appendix 4 to the report, be noted.

7/13 **WORCESTER CITY PILOT FOR REVISED SERVICE DELIVERY**

The Committee considered a report which detailed the pilot of amended service delivery for Worcester City Council.

Members were reminded that at the Joint Committee meeting held on 22nd November 2012, Members had agreed to sanction a pilot of amended service delivery for Worcester City Council with the objective of saving £40,000 during the financial year 2013/2014.

Mr. M. Kay, Business Manager, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) introduced the report and in doing so informed the Committee that work had started in order to determine which areas of work would be suitable for such a pilot. A meeting had been held on 30th January 2013 with officers from Worcester City Council (WCC) where a suite of costed alternatives was suggested. It was made clear during the meeting that certain areas of work would not be suitable for the pilot and that nothing within the pilot should result in additional work for WCC.

Further work was carried out and WCC were offered a 'menu' of alternatives which resulted in an additional meeting on 8th March 2013, where it was agreed to use planning consultations and some areas of nuisance (air pollution and accumulations) as a basis for the pilot. The aim was to reduce the number of planning applications WCC referred to Worcestershire Regulatory Services and to promote self-help to reduce the level of nuisance

complaints dealt with. On 22nd March 2013 written confirmation of these proposals was sent to WCC. On 19th April 2013 WCC reported that they could not proceed with the current proposal to reduce the level of planning consultations and that an alternative had to be found. On 29th May 2013 final agreement was reached and amounted to a three month pilot to:-

- a) Reduce the number of planning consultations, currently 150-200 per year, by planning officers at Worcester City Council screening referrals.
- b) The three areas of nuisance, (air pollution, drainage and accumulations of rubbish) not to be dealt with at first contact but complainants be referred to Worcester City Council website and encouraged to self-help.

It was proposed that with respect to nuisance complaints falling into the above category, complainants would be directed to Worcester City Council (WCC) website and encouraged to self-help, i.e. approach the persons causing the nuisance and ask them to desist. To help with this a template of letters etc. would be placed on WCC website and the hope was that this would reduce the number of investigations WRS would have to carry out. Monthly meetings to assess progress would be held and the pilot would be assessed after three months in order to see if it had achieved the purpose of reducing WCC costs, and if so, by how much.

The Business Manager, WRS responded to Members questions with regard to elderly and vulnerable residents and highlighted that elderly and vulnerable residents would not be asked to self-help, duty officers would ascertain if residents were elderly or vulnerable. Duty officers would also refer to any historical data.

The Business Manager, WRS further responded to Members questions with regard to planning consultations, planning officers would not have the expertise to deal with some applications, e.g. air pollution. The Business Manager, WRS agreed, but informed Members that planning officers would be issued with self-help tools and guidance to deal with other planning applications, thus reducing the number of planning consultations forwarded to WRS.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Worcester City Council pilot for revised service delivery, be noted: and
- (b) that a further report at the completion of the three month pilot, detailing projected cost savings (if any) and any other associated issues raised by the introduction on the changes, be brought back to the Joint Committee.

8/13 **WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2013 / 2014**

The Committee considered the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Annual Report for the period 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013.

The Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) informed the Committee that under the Worcestershire Shared Services Partner Agreement the Joint Committee was required to receive the annual report at its annual meeting. The report covered the performance of the service for the period 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013, however individual Councils captured and reported on different performance measures; therefore it had proved difficult to make comparisons across the service.

The Head of WRS informed Members that the report covered the performance of the service. 2012/2013 had been very much one of embedding the results from earlier work on transforming the service and continuing to explore options to reduce future financial pressures on the budget. The savings indicated in the original business case, of 17.5%, had been exceeded with 23% savings achieved. WRS had continued to redesign services to drive out waste from the system. The application of the 'Systems Thinking' approach to service redesign had been an on-going theme during the year. Focus would remain on contributing to the three strategic priorities, developed from partners own priorities:

- Supporting the local economy
- Improving Health and Well Being
- Tackling and Preventing Crime and Disorder

The Head of WRS drew Members attention to 'Performance', as detailed on pages 38 and 39 of the Annual Report and provided Members with the previous year's figures for comparison. He then responded to a number of questions from Members with regard to:-

- Staff sickness
- Noise complaints
- % of vehicles found to be defective whilst in service
- % of food premises visited and the number of times visited before enforcement powers were used.

The Head of WRS also drew Members attention to 'Other Highlights' as detailed on pages 42 to 47 of the Annual Report. Specifically the Horsemeat Scandal and that as a result of work carried out WRS was invited to appear before the Parliamentary Select Committee to provide evidence on the Local Authorities response to the scandal.

The Head of WRS responded to Members' questions with regard to public burials as detailed on page 65 of the report. Members were informed that, The Public Health (Control of Diseases) Act 1984 placed a statutory duty on District Councils for registering the death and arranging the funeral of any person who had died within their District in cases where there were no known relatives or friends able to make the necessary arrangements. Councils only dealt with those that died at home, or on the street, where it appeared that no other agency or persons were making suitable arrangements for the disposal of the body. A person, who died in hospital, or in an ambulance on the way to hospital, became the responsibility of the health authority.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Annual Report 2012/2013 be agreed; and
- (b) that a copy of the Worcestershire Shared Services Annual Report 2012/2013 be forwarded to the Chief Executive / Managing Director of each member authority.

9/13 **WORCESTERSHIRE LEP/WRS CHARTER ACTION PLAN**

The Committee considered a report which detailed the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP) / Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Charter Action Plan and the actions to be taken to deliver the aims contained within the Charter.

Mr. M. Kay, Business Manager, Worcestershire Regulatory Services introduced the report and in doing so informed the Committee that, The Regulatory and Business Charter was launched in November 2012 and set out a number of aims which local authorities and national regulators would deliver to local businesses.

The Charter covered eight main aims which covered areas such as business support and creating an environment within which businesses could flourish whilst the public were still protected.

To assist with delivering the necessary outcomes a funding bid was made to the Better Regulation Delivery Office (BRDO) and a grant of £15,000 had been made available to assist with delivering both the action plan and the actions contained therein.

RESOLVED that the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership / Worcestershire Regulatory Services Charter Action Plan and the aims contained within the Charter, be approved.

10/13 **WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES CONTRIBUTION TO WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH AND WELL BEING STRATEGY**

The Committee considered a report which detailed the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Contribution to Health and Wellbeing.

The Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) introduced the report and in doing so informed the Committee that, public health returned to local government in April 2013 under changes brought about by the Health and Social Care Act 2012. This legislation placed a statutory duty on upper tier authorities through the Health and Wellbeing Board to 'take steps to improve the health of their local population'. This would require collaboration with the Districts and other partners, including WRS by aligning priorities, services, resources and activities with the Worcestershire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

WRS had a vision that Worcestershire was a healthy, safe and fair place to live, where businesses could thrive and had prioritised health and wellbeing as one of its key priorities.

With public sector resources shrinking, demand growing and health inequalities widening, the Health and Wellbeing Board, District and County partners would want to acknowledge the multifaceted contribution that WRS played in the preventative public health agenda when considering, integrating and commissioning against local priorities in this area.

WRS currently contributed in two ways:-

- 1) through the statutory duties it performed.
- 2) through commissioned work in the field of health improvement.

To date WRS had received in excess of £100,000 in grants from Public Health and from the Redditch and Bromsgrove Clinical Commissioning Group to carry out work which aligned with its core competencies to support businesses and their workforces.

WRS, the new delivery arm of the six Worcestershire District Councils and County Council provided a huge range of regulatory services in relation to Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Licensing functions. From environmental protection to food safety, consumer protection to business support. WRS activities impacted significantly on the wider determinants of health, in addition to the public health domains of health improvement and health protection.

The Head of WRS responded to Members' questions with regard to why only Redditch and Bromsgrove Clinical Commissioning Group had engaged with WRS. The Head of WRS informed Members that WRS had struggled to engage and involve Wyre Forest and South Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Groups. A report would be going to the Health and Well Being Board.

Further discussion followed on the report with regard to:

- Healthy eating and planning applications received for hot food takeaways
- Air Quality
- Scrap Metal Merchants and the recent fires at waste reclamation yards
- Illegal money lenders

RESOLVED that the report detailing the contribution made to Health and Wellbeing of Worcestershire, by Worcestershire Regulatory Services, be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.15 p.m.

Chairman

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