

**WORCESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS AND COUNTY COUNCIL**

**WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES**

**MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE**

**27TH NOVEMBER 2014 AT 4.30 P.M.**

PRESENT: Councillors M. A. Bullivant (Chairman), Mrs. B. Behan (Vice-Chairman), R. L. Dent, D. Hughes, B. Clayton, P. Mould (Substituting for Councillor J. Fisher), A. Roberts, Mrs. L. Hodgson, A. N. Blagg, R. Davis, K. Jennings, M. Hart and P. Harrison

Observers: Apologies were received from Mrs. R. Mullen, Corporate Director, Service Delivery, Worcester City Council

Invitees: Mr. I. Pumfrey, Chairman, Worcestershire Regulatory Services Management Board

Officers: Mr. S. Jordan, Ms. C. Flanagan, Mr. V. Allison, Deputy Managing Director, Wychavon District Council and Mrs. P. Ross

23/14 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Fisher, Redditch Borough Council and D. Wilkinson, Worcester City Council.

24/14 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following Members declared a Disclosable Interest, having a close connection with the matter under discussion, in Agenda Item Number 5, proposed change of accommodation for Worcestershire Regulatory Services; as Members for Wychavon District Council and Wyre Forest District Council, who had submitted bids to provide alternative accommodation for Worcestershire Regulatory Services:-

Councillors R. Davis and K. Jennings, Wychavon District Council and Councillors M. Hart and P. Harrison, Wyre Forest District Council.

25/14 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee held on 2nd October 2014 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

26/14 **STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP PROCUREMENT - PROGRESS REPORT**

The Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) informed the Committee that Capita had now withdrawn from the process and would therefore not be submitting its final solution in January 2015. The considerable progress made in developing the company's understanding of WRS had highlighted to Capita how far WRS had come, the level of service provided and the high reputation WRS had achieved. WRS officers would now determine the shape of the service to be delivered and have an outline of that service in January / February 2015.

Members expressed their disappointment that Capita had withdrawn. In response Councillor D. Hughes said it was sad news for Members to hear. He asked all partners to show their support to the Head of WRS and his team, in his opinion it was now essential that all partners gave their support to WRS.

27/14 **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

"**RESOLVED** that under Section 100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the 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 Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act, as amended, the relevant paragraph of that part, being as set out below, and that it is in the public interest to do so:-

| <u>Minute No.</u> | <u>Paragraphs</u> |   |
|-------------------|-------------------|---|
| 28/14             | 3                 | " |

28/14 **ACCOMMODATION RELOCATION REPORT**

The Committee were asked to consider a report which detailed the proposed change of accommodation for Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS), additional background papers and a revised recommendation from the WRS Management Board.

The Chairman reminded Members that they were being asked to consider and approve revised Recommendation 1, as detailed below and provided to all Joint Committee Members, with the confidential background papers:-

Joint Committee Members are asked to note the revised Recommendation, from the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Management Board, relating to agenda item five:-

Accommodation Relocation Report

**Recommendation 1** – That the service relocates its main operating base to Wyre Forest House.

The Head of WRS introduced the report and highlighted that senior officers had had angst over making the right decision for the service. Further detailed information had been received by the Management Board from Wychavon

District Council with regard to their bid. The Head of WRS had met WRS Management Board representatives, Mr. I. Pumfrey, Chairman, WRS Management Board and Ms. J. Pickering, Executive Director, Finance and Resources, Bromsgrove District Council to determine the very best option for WRS.

Councillor K. Jennings proposed that Members considered and approved the original recommendation, as detailed in the report.

Councillor M. Hart responded that he was not pleased to hear this. In his opinion there was now a firm revised recommendation, from the WRS Management Board, which had resulted from the lengthy work of the Management Board and the proposals put forward by both potential bidders; Wychavon District Council and Wyre Forest District Council. A comprehensive scoring system had been followed with a clear distinction between each bid. He did not agree with Councillor K. Jennings that Joint Committee Members should consider and approve the original recommendation.

Councillor K. Jennings stated that in his opinion, which ever bidder was the clear winner and succeeded in securing the bid, he was concerned that the background papers provided, namely the scoring matrix, had been flawed. Councillor K. Jennings then highlighted to the Joint Committee the specific areas of the matrix that had caused him some concern.

Councillor P. Harrison raised the point that the decision, with regard to WRS moving its main operating base, should be taken by Joint Committee Members and not, as detailed in the original recommendation, be delegated to officers.

An in depth discussion followed with regard to the lateness of the background papers provided and information detailed in the matrix and the scoring awarded. Members questioned, that due to the lateness of the background papers being received, the additional information received by the WRS Management Board with regard to Wychavon District Council's bid, should officers be tasked to look further at the additional information provided by Wychavon District Council, the matrix information detailed and the scoring awarded, plus an indication of staff preference; which had not been included anywhere in the report, be provided and brought back to the next meeting of the Joint Committee. This would enable Members to make a valid decision taking into account all of the information as suggested in the pre-amble above.

The Chairman, WRS Management Board informed the Committee that it was imperative that Members agreed as a minimum the relocation arrangements in order that WRS could exit their current premises taking into account the timescales to be met by the University. The matrix, as detailed in the background papers and agreed by the WRS, Management Board had been as a result of the information provided to the Board. The original agenda papers issued to the Joint Committee had been as a result of that information. The Board acknowledged that they had not received the required information fast enough, hence the original recommendation in the report being revised by the WRS Management Board.

The Head of WRS reiterated that Members should consider the best solution for WRS at the earliest opportunity. Staff already had to face potential redundancies and it was important that staff felt settled with regard to the required move to new premises.

Members were in agreement that they considered the best solution for WRS. They had taken on board the comments made by the Head of WRS with regard to staff already facing uncertainties and were in agreement that it was important that a decision be made with regard to the proposed change of accommodation for WRS staff. Councillor K. Jennings having heard the Head of WRS speak in favour of an early decision being made in the interest of WRS staff; reiterated Members earlier comments in respect of the best solution for WRS and informed the Committee that he was now in support of revised recommendation one.

The Head of WRS expressed his thanks to Wychavon District Council Members.

The Chairman sought clarification that Members felt in a position to vote on recommendation one, as revised, and recommendation two and three, as detailed in the original report. The Chairman further informed the Committee that the decision would have to be a unanimous decision, as detailed in the Worcestershire Shared Services Partnership agreement.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that Worcestershire Regulatory Services relocate its main operating base to Wyre Forest House;
- (b) that authority be delegated to the Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services, and the Executive Director, Finance and Resources, Section 151 Officer for Bromsgrove District Council, to enter into the required contractual and financial arrangements necessary to facilitate the relocation; and
- (c) that the one-off costs of relocation be shared between partner authorities in the following proportions:-
  - 50% to be borne by Worcestershire County Council
  - 50% to be borne by the District Council partners, divided equally amongst them.

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**OVERHEAD ALLOCATION AND PARTNER FUNDING 2015-2016**

The Committee considered the Overhead Allocation and Partner Funding 2015/2016 report.

The Chairman welcomed Mr. V. Allison, Deputy Managing Director, Wychavon District Council to the meeting. The Chairman informed Members that Mr. V. Allison would present the report in the absence of the Executive Director, Finance and Resources, Bromsgrove District Council.

Mr. V. Allison presented the report and informed Members of the work that had been undertaken in relation to the reduction of the fixed costs / overheads

to be implemented from 2015/2016 and the revised percentages that had been identified as a result of that work. As a result of the fixed cost meetings an exercise was undertaken to establish the true costs (fixed/variable) attributed to Worcestershire County Council (WCC) as a result of the reduction in staffing numbers. Appendix 2 to the report detailed the revised allocation and the impact on the Districts. It was proposed that savings identified from the change of accommodation location and the IT associated cost could be used to fund the £158,000 of reduced overhead costs to WCC. This would ensure that the other partner authorities did not bear any additional costs.

**RESOLVED:**

(a) that the revised partner shares to address the allocation of overheads to ensure that all partners receive a fair allocation for the services provided, as detailed below be approved;

|                                |        |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| Bromsgrove District Council    | 11.53% |
| Redditch Borough Council       | 13.65% |
| Worcestershire County Council  | 21.31% |
| Wyre Forest District Council   | 12.69% |
| Worcester City Council         | 13.37% |
| Wychavon District Council      | 17.71% |
| Malvern Hills District Council | 9.74%  |

(b) that approval be given to the revised percentage shares to be implemented from 2015/16 for any allocation of costs associated with the service excluding the base budget allocations.

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**WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES 2015/2016 BUDGET REPORT & 3 YEAR ROLLING FINANCIAL PLAN**

The Committee considered a report which detailed the Worcestershire Regulatory Service Budget (WRS) for 2015/2016 and 2017/2018.

Mr. V. Allison, Deputy Managing Director, Wychavon District Council presented the report and in doing so informed the Committee that the revenue budget for WRS had to be approved in November to enable partner authorities to include the allocation in their financial planning for future financial years.

The budget for 2015/2016 and 2017/2018 had been prepared to include the change in the overhead allocation to Worcestershire County Council, the savings delivered from the move of accommodation and the new IT arrangements. The WRS Management Board was aware that at present the costs associated with the delivery of the service exceeded the budgets from the participating authorities and therefore significant savings would be required. Members' attention was drawn to pension costs. There had been a number of discussions over the last few months in relation to the significant increase in the pension funding requirements. The forward funding rate of 14.8% was included in the revised budget which was an increase from the original 12.5%. This had increased the cost by approximately £66,000. This was primarily due to the impact of the significantly fall in gilt yields since the

date of admission which had increased the value placed on the liabilities. This impact was outside the Fund / employers control and affected all employers.

**RESOLVED:**

(a) that the Revenue Budget allocations for 2015/2016 be approved as detailed below:-

|                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| Bromsgrove       | £489k          |
| Malvern          | £413k          |
| Redditch         | £579k          |
| Worcester City   | £537k          |
| Wychavon         | £751k          |
| Wyre Forest      | £500k          |
| Worcester County | £812k          |
|                  | <b>£4,081k</b> |

(b) that the budgets for 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 as detailed below, be approved:-

- 2016/2017 £3.475 million
- 2017/2018 £3.475 million

31/14

**WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BUDGET MONITORING**  
**APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2014**

The Committee was asked to consider and note the financial position for the period April 2014 to September 2014.

Mr. V. Allison, Deputy Managing Director, Wychavon District Council presented the report and in doing so informed the Committee there were projected final outturns overspend of £73,000. This overspend was made up of overspends within the main service amounting to £42,000, together with the pension deficit of £114,000, as detailed on page 35 of the report, that was liable to be paid for in 2014/2015; this was recently confirmed with the actuary.

Mr. V. Allison responded to the concerns raised by Members with regard to the pension deficit increasing year on year. Mr. V. Allison agreed that this was a worry and the figure would increase, therefore the service would need to make compensated savings each year. As detailed on page 30 of the report, officers had discussed the opportunities available to spread the associated costs and a recovery period of twenty one years had been put in place with payback figures for the next six years. In addition the forward pension rate had been increased from 12.5% to 14.8% from 1st April 2014, with the rate being further revised from 1st April 2017 onwards following the next valuation of the pension fund on 31st March 2016.

**RESOLVED:**

(a) that the financial position for the period April 2014 to September 2014 be noted.

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## **ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE DATA - QUARTER 1 AND 2**

The Committee considered a report which detailed the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Activity Data for Quarters 1 and 2, 2014/2015.

The Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) introduced the report, which covered both district and county functionalities. The report, as requested by Joint Committee Members, provided data on activity levels to help reassure local Members that WRS continued to tackle issues broadly across the county. The report also highlighted two recent court cases brought about by WRS Trading Standards Team.

The Head of WRS responded to Councillor B. Clayton in respect of the increased figure for loose straying dogs and agreed to provide Councillor B. Clayton with more detailed information. Councillor R. L. Dent sought clarification with regard to the information, as detailed on page 53 of the report, Noise Cases by Ward (top twenty), was St. Johns Ward in Worcester City or Bromsgrove? The Head of WRS responded and clarified that it referred to St. Johns Ward, Worcester City. Having taken the comment on board, the Head of WRS agreed to take the comment raised back to WRS officers to note for future activity reports.

The Head of WRS responded to Councillor L. Hodgson with regard to the Ebola crisis and informed the Committee that a multi-agency training session was taking place and that WRS were well prepared. The risk to the general public in the United Kingdom remained very low.

Councillor M. Hart expressed his thanks to the Head of WRS and his team for the comprehensive reports produced and he would ensure that the information was cascaded to Wyre Forest District Council Members. The Chairman endorsed the thanks expressed by Councillor M. Hart.

The Head of WRS briefly updated the Committee with regard to the closure of the C-block main kitchen at Kidderminster Hospital after a routine food hygiene inspection carried out by WRS officers. WRS officers had found contraventions during their inspection and the trust voluntarily closed the C-block main kitchen, which was used mainly to re-heat food. There was no risk to the public. Following on from that inspection, WRS officers were working closely with the trust, who were willingly carrying out the remedial work required. WRS officers would re-inspect the kitchen before it was reopened.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the Activity Data for Quarters 1 and 2, 2014/2015 be noted; and
- (b) that Members use relevant forums within their respective authorities to share this information with all elected Members.

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## **SPECIAL MEETING - STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP PROCUREMENT**

Following on from the update received from the Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services, with regard to the Strategic Partnership, as detailed at Minute Number 26/14 it was agreed that the proposed special meeting of the

Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee  
27th November 2014

Joint Committee scheduled for Tuesday 3rd February 2015 was no longer required.

The meeting closed at 5.32 p.m.

Chairman