

additional papers 1



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tue 1 Mar
2016
7.00 pm

Committee Room 2
Town Hall
Redditch



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**If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact
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Overview and Scrutiny

Committee

Tuesday, 1st March, 2016

7.00 pm

Committee Room 2 Town Hall

Agenda

Membership:

Cllrs: Jane Potter (Chair) Gareth Prosser
Gay Hopkins (Vice-Chair) Paul Swansborough
Joe Baker Jennifer Wheeler
David Bush Nina Wood-Ford
Andrew Fry

3. Minutes
(Pages 1 - 6)

To confirm the minutes of the most recent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as a correct record.

(Minutes attached)

(No Specific Ward Relevance)

7. Executive Committee Minutes and Scrutiny of the Executive Committee's Work Programme
(Pages 7 - 10)

To consider the minutes of the latest meeting(s) of the Executive Committee and also to consider whether any items on the Executive Committee's Work Programme are suitable for scrutiny.

(Executive Committee minutes attached – the Executive Work Programme can be found in the main agenda pack).

(No Specific Ward Relevance)



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 16th February, 2016

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Jane Potter (Chair), Councillor Gay Hopkins (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Joe Baker, Tom Baker-Price (substituting for Councillor Gareth Prosser), David Bush, Andrew Fry, Paul Swansborough, Jennifer Wheeler and Nina Wood-Ford

Officers:

J Pickering and S Garratt

Democratic Services Officers:

J Bayley and A Scarce

73. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Gareth Prosser and it was confirmed that Councillor Tom Baker-Price was attending as his substitute.

74. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest nor of any party whip.

75. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meetings held on 5th January 2016 and 1st February 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

76. TASK GROUP REVIEWS - DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENTS

The Chair invited Councillor Tom Baker-Price to present a scoping document containing proposed terms of reference for a review of action that could be taken to increase the number of accessible vehicles available to passengers with disabilities in the Borough. In so doing he highlighted the following areas:

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Chair

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 16th February, 2016

- This was an issue which had been discussed at both the Licensing Committee and a recent Taxi Forum and Councillor Baker-Price had spoken to the Licensing Team.
- Councillor Baker-Price described a particular incident which had highlighted the lack of vehicles with wheelchair access.
- Members were informed that some residents had been advised there was a need to book accessible vehicles some 24-48 hours prior to the required travel time.
- 5.7% of the fleet were adapted for wheelchair access but it was noted that the majority of these were used by Worcestershire County Council under contract and were not therefore available for general use.
- The impact of the availability of accessible transport on the life of a person with disabilities and their ability to live independently.
- The majority of vehicles were private hire and therefore the charging mechanism was not set down by the Council.
- The work of a previous task group which investigated access for disabled people to Redditch town centre using all forms of transport, and the recommendations which had arisen from those investigations.

Following presentation of the topic proposal Officers confirmed that Worcestershire Regulatory Services would be happy to be involved in the investigation. The following points were raised for Members' consideration:

- It was not possible to set a price tariff for private hire vehicles as the contract was made as soon as a person made the phone call to book the vehicle. Therefore the Council was not able to put a price cap on private hire vehicles.
- The change to the licences to operate adopted vehicles for a longer period of time which took place in 2009 had only led to there being an increase of three vehicles over that period.
- The disability training referred to in the previous Task Group's recommendations had been made available.

Councillor Gay Hopkins showed an interest in chairing the review and encouraged those Members that were keen to join her speak to their Group Leaders as soon as possible as it was important that the Review got underway as soon as possible in order to meet the suggested deadline. Members were reminded that such a review would be time consuming; and any Members would need to be committed to completing the investigation within the timescale suggested. In view of the timescale it was suggested that membership be limited to four Members and that Group Leaders' would be asked to respond to Officers as quickly as possible.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 16th February, 2016

RESOLVED that

- 1) a short sharp review be set up in respect of Disabled People's Access to Redditch's Taxi Fleet;
- 2) Councillor Gay Hopkins be appointed Chair of the Short Sharp Review into Disabled People's Access to Redditch's Taxi Fleet; and
- 3) the deadline for completion of the review be set at 12th April 2016.

77. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2016/17 TO 2018/19

The Chair informed Members that the report provided an opportunity to view the proposals made by the Executive Committee in respect of the budget and to make any recommendations to Council on 22nd February 2016. Members were also referred to Minute No. 89 of the Executive Committee minutes from 2nd February during consideration of this item.

Officers gave a detailed summary of both the report within the agenda pack together with the updated information provided in additional papers 1 and 2, covering the changes which had taken place since the Committee had considered the initial report at its meeting held on 1st February 2016. In particular the following areas were highlighted for Members' consideration:

- The change in methodology in respect of funding allocations and the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) changes, leading to a negative grant payment to Government, from 2019/20.
- A cumulative reduction in core funding of -19.2% across local government.
- Central Government encouraging the implementation of a four year financial plan by local authorities.
- The impact of the significant funding reductions over the four year period for Redditch in comparison to other Councils.
- The consultation and proposed changes in respect of New Homes Bonus (NHB) which was due to finish on 10th March 2016 and the impact any changes could have on the Council.
- Formal confirmation being received that the Council would receive a slight increase in its proposed settlement from Central Government and the impact on the overall budget position.
- The impact following the addition of all Shire Districts (and Borough Councils) being given the flexibility to increase Council Tax by £5 per B and D equivalent properties.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 16th February, 2016

- Additional income identified relating to rental revenue from Redditch Town Hall Crèche and Woodrow Library.
- The final recommended balanced budget for 2016/17 taking into account the changes discussed and additional income identified.
- The need to address the additional cuts identified in future years, to ensure that quality of service provision was maintained in the Borough.

Following presentation of the report Members discussed the following areas in detail:

- The value of an additional column to take the budget position up to 2019/20 in line with the suggested four year plan.
- The terms of the lease for the Town Hall Crèche.
- The source of the graph, provided in the main report, in respect of the impact of the significant funding reductions for Redditch compared to other Councils. Officers confirmed that this had been provided by LG Future on behalf of the Local Government Association.

Members thanked Officers for preparing numerous reports on the subject of the Medium Term Financial Plan over proceeding months and for providing a good explanation of a complicated subject.

RESOLVED that

the report Medium Term Financial Plan 2016/17 – 2018/19 be noted.

78. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES AND SCRUTINY OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME

Officers confirmed that there was no update in relation to Overview and Scrutiny within the Executive Committee minutes of 12th January and 2nd February 2016 as no recommendations had been made. In respect of the Work Programme the Committee was given the opportunity to consider whether there were any items suitable for pre-scrutiny.

RESOLVED that

the Executive Committee Minutes of 12th January and 2nd February 2016 together with the latest addition of the Executive Committee's Work Programme be noted.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 16th February, 2016

79. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Officers confirmed that, as requested, a presentation would be received at the Committee's April meeting in respect of S106 funding. The Chair had also agreed for an open invitation to be extended to all Members to attend this presentation.

Members were advised that there was no update in respect of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) as the meeting scheduled for January had been cancelled. There would be no further update until the Committee's April meeting as the next meeting of HOSC was on 10th March 2016.

Councillor Joe Baker took the opportunity to show Members a copy of the LGB&T Support Services Redditch community group's leaflet, which had been created following a recommendation from the Provision of Support Networks for the LGBT Community Task Group. Councillor Baker thanked those Members who had assisted with the Task Group and confirmed that 1,000 copies of the leaflet would be printed each month and be available from 29th February 2016.

RESOLVED that

the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme be noted.

80. TASK GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

Joint Worcestershire Increasing Physical Activity Task Group –
Redditch Borough Council Representative, Councillor Gareth
Prosser

In the absence of Councillor Prosser Officers informed Members that there had not been a meeting of this Group since December 2015. In respect of the Committee's request that the Chair of the Task Group attend to present the final report aided by Councillor Prosser, Members were advised that this had been declined. The Chair, Councillor Richard Udall, did not feel that the investigation was a formal joint task group and was therefore happy for Councillor Prosser to present the Task Group's findings.



Executive Committee

Monday, 22 February 2016

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Bill Hartnett (Chair), Councillor Greg Chance (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Juliet Brunner, Brandon Clayton, John Fisher, Mark Shurmer, Yvonne Smith, Debbie Taylor and Pat Witherspoon

Also Present:

Councillors Joe Baker, Roger Bennett, Natalie Brookes, David Bush (during Minute No.'s 96 and 97), Michael Chalk, Anita Clayton, Matthew Dormer (during Minute No.'s 96 and 97), Andrew Fry, Pattie Hill, Gay Hopkins, Wanda King, Jane Potter, Gareth Prosser, Antonia Pulsford, Rachael Smith, Paul Swansborough, David Thain, Jennifer Wheeler and Nina Wood-Ford

Officers:

Kevin Dicks, Claire Felton, Sue Hanley, Anne-Marie Harley, Sheena Jones and Jayne Pickering

Committee Services Officer:

Debbie Parker-Jones

93. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

94. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

95. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Additional Papers

It was noted that two sets of Additional Papers had been circulated ahead of the meeting, both of which related to the Medium Term Financial Plan 2016/17 – 2018/19 and Council Tax Resolutions at Agenda Item 5, as follows:

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Chair

Executive Committee

Monday, 22 February 2016

Additional Papers 1: Medium Term Financial Plan cover report and report Appendices 1 and 2 (Capital Programme 2016/17 to 2018/19 – General Fund and Pay Policy Statement 2016/17); and

Additional Papers 2: report Appendix 2 (Council Tax Setting 2016/17).

An updated set of recommendations, incorporating the relevant recommendations from both the 2nd February and 22 February 2016 meetings of the Executive Committee, was also tabled for Members' information/assistance. Updates had been required to some of the 2nd February recommendations owing to a change in the grant which the Council was to receive from the Government as part of the final finance settlement, together with additional savings which had been identified by Officers.

96. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 2nd February 2016 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

97. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2016/17 - 2018/19 AND COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTIONS

Members considered revisions to the Medium Term Financial Plan 2016/17 – 2018/19 which had been presented to the 2nd February Executive Committee. The revised report also included the recommended Council Tax Resolutions and Pay Policy Statement for 2016/17. Two sets of Additional Papers had been circulated for this item in advance of the meeting, and an updated set of recommendations incorporating the relevant recommendations from both the 2nd February and 22 February 2016 meetings of the Executive Committees were also tabled for Members' information/assistance.

Updates had been required to some of the 2nd February recommendations in light of changes to the grant which the Council would be receiving from the Government under the final finance settlement. Additional income had also been identified by Officers which altered the position. The Council Tax resolutions had been circulated following receipt of precept levels from other precepting authorities.

Following an appeal by the Leader against the initial proposed finance settlement, the Council had been awarded a transitional grant allocation of £44k for both 2016/17 and 2017/18, to partially

offset the impact of the cut in Revenue Support Grant. As a balanced budget had already been set for 2016/17 Officers were proposing that the additional funding be used to reduce the amount required from balances to support the budget shortfall in 2016/17.

In addition, all shire districts (including borough councils) had been given the flexibility to increase Council Tax by £5 per Band D equivalent property, without the requirement to hold a referendum. This represented an increase to residents of 2.2% and would see an increase of approximately 0.80p (per Band D) above the previously estimated 2% increase. The resulting total charge for the Borough services for 2016/17 would be £222.54p, which was approximately 14% of the total Council Tax charge for the year. The income generated from the £5 charge would be approximately £20k. It was therefore proposed that this opportunity be taken for 2016/17, and that the additional income again be used to reduce the amount required from balances in 2016/17.

Officers were continuing to review budget estimations and additional income had been identified relating to rental revenue from the Town Hall Crèche of £20k and Woodrow Library of £15k. This income was to be added to the budgets for 2016/17 and future years. It was again proposed that the additional income be used to reduce the amount required from balances.

As a consequence of the additional funding and identified income, the proposed transfer from balances for 2016/17 had reduced from £579k to £479k. Officers were currently working on the Quarter 3 Finance Monitoring Report, which at that stage had indicated a favourable position, and which it was envisaged might result in further additional savings by the end of the financial year.

Further details in relation to the Business Rates Retention Scheme were expected in the Summer, which would be taken to Members once published. The Council's response to the New Homes Bonus consultation was due to be submitted to Government by 10th March, a copy of which Officers undertook to forward to all Members prior to the deadline.

In relation to the requirements that the Council's Section 151 Officer had to include in the budget report, Officers wished to add under paragraph 3.12 that there were concerns around the 2017/18 and 2018/19 budgets which were currently being worked on. To this end, Officers were carrying out an exercise to cost up demand for all of the Council's services, the results of which would be considered as part of future years' budgets.

There was a 1-year balanced budget for 2016/17 and whilst Grant Thornton, the Council's external auditors, had raised concerns with

**Executive
Committee**Monday, 22 February 2016

a 1-year balanced budget in the past, Members had before them a context at least of the 2017/18 and 2018/19 budgets moving forward. Whilst the additional interim funding received from the Government following the Leader's appeal against the Council's proposed settlement was appreciated, the significance of the funding cuts and changes overall were noted.

Differing points of view were expressed in relation to how the Council was choosing to spend its finances, with Officers confirming that they were looking, where possible, to carry over previous savings to future budgets. A query was raised in relation to the level of fee which Grant Thornton would be charging for the additional work which they had been required to undertake as part of the 2014/15 audit, which Officers advised had still to be confirmed. It was noted however that the Council would receive a 40% reduction on Grant Thornton's normal fees.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the additional savings of £35k for 2016/17 be approved;**
- 2) the reduction in release from balances of £100k for 2016/17, resulting in a total release from balances of £479k, be approved;**
- 3) the increase in Council tax by £5 (2.2%) per band D equivalent for 2016/17 be approved;**
- 4) the Council Tax resolutions as set out in Additional Papers 2 to Executive Committee on 22 February be approved; and**
- 5) the Pay Policy Statement as set out at appendix 2 to the report to Executive Committee on 22 February be approved.**

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 7.35 pm

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Chair