

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 5th January, 2016

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Jane Potter (Chair), Councillor Gay Hopkins (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Joe Baker, Roger Bennett, Andrew Fry and Gareth Prosser

Officers:

Jayne Pickering, Liz Tompkin and Sam Morgan and Jess Bayley

Democratic Services Officers:

Amanda Scarce

61. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David Bush, Paul Swansborough, Jennifer Wheeler and Nina Wood-Ford. Councillor Roger Bennett was present as a substitute for Councillor Bush.

62. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

Councillor Andrew Fry declared an other disclosable interest under Minute No 65, as in his capacity as a Worcestershire County Councillor he had contributed, from his divisional funds, to the production costs of the LGBT leaflet.

63. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the Minutes of the meeting held on 8th December 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

64. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT, RENT AND CAPITAL 2016/17- PRE-SCRUTINY

The Chair reminded Members that this report was being presented for pre-scrutiny and the recommendations within the report would

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Chair

be considered by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 12th January 2016.

Officers proceeded to present the report and during this presentation the following areas were highlighted:

- The draft 2016/17 budget for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) taking account of the new Welfare Reform legislation – the main issue being that rents within the social housing sector were to be decreased by one per cent each year for the next four years with effect from 1st April 2016.
- The knock-on effects of this decrease and the negative impact on the HRA Business Plan.
- The actual decrease in rent which would apply for 2016/17 compared to those for 2015/16 and the cumulative impact of the decrease.
- Details of the Right to Buy (RTB) Scheme and the number of sales anticipated and the rent loss arising from those sales.
- The proposals for new housing stock and the options which officers would be putting before the Housing Advisory Panel (HAP) for its consideration.

Following presentation of the report, Members discussed a number of points in detail:

- A breakdown of the Council's income from capital receipts (from Council house sales) and further information about how this money had been used was requested.
- For future years Members requested that this information be included in the HRA report if possible.
- Members asked for further information about the level of rent increases for Council properties over the last three years.
- The borrowings and the potential to repay these within the timescales indicated.
- The number of current Council properties and details of the number and type of properties which needed to be built in the coming years, together with the options open to the Council.
- The restrictions imposed on the Council from the legislation in respect of the HRA.
- The impact on those Councils which had chosen to transfer their stock to other providers and the challenges arising from such transfers.

After further discussion it was

RESOLVED that

the Housing Revenue Account Initial Budget 2016/17 report be noted.

65. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION TRACKER

Officers highlighted that this quarterly report provided an update on the actions which had been taken in order to implement recommendations which had been made by the Committee. A number of further updates were provided:

- Voluntary and Community Sector – the Grants Officer post was currently being reviewed and once this review had been completed then it was anticipated that the recommendations would be implemented.
- LGBT Task Group – Councillor Baker, as former Chair of the Task Group, confirmed that LGBT Support Services Redditch was making good progress with producing the leaflet proposed by the Task Group. Legal Services had offered to review the leaflet's content prior to sending it to be printed. Councillor Baker shared his gratitude and thanks with Worcestershire County Councillors from across the County who had contributed from their divisional funds towards the cost of producing this leaflet.
- The recommendations made at the last meeting in respect of fees and charges had not been included within the tracker as final decisions remained to be made by Council.

Following presentation of the report, Members commented on a number of items, in particular there was disappointment in the lack of movement in respect of the Access for Disabled People Task Group's recommendation for the installation of a canopy over the ramp access to the Shopmobility area. Officers were requested to contact the Kingfisher Centre one final time to establish whether this action would be completed in the foreseeable future.

(During consideration of this item Councillor Andrew Fry declared an other disclosable interest in respect of the LGBT Support Services Redditch group's leaflet as he had contributed divisional funding, in his capacity as a County Councillor, to support the development of this document).

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

Members' attention was drawn to Minute Nos. 59, 61 and 62 of the Executive Committee's meeting held on 15th December 2015 and which referred to the recommendations put forward by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which highlighted that those recommendations had been endorsed, a number of which would also go forward to Council for its consideration.

An additional, more up to date, copy of the Executive Committee's Work Programme had been tabled and Officers highlighted the changes which had been made to this:

- The inclusion of the Winyates Centre Consultation.
- A number of Health and Safety policies, previously recorded on the plan as separate items, had been incorporated into a combined item within the Work Programme.
- The Leisure Intervention update would now be provided to the Executive Committee at its April 2016 meeting.

During consideration of the Work Programme Members discussed the timing of the report from the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) and questioned whether it was possible to consider this at a later date. It was commented that at Worcestershire County Council a similar report was brought before the September/October meeting, which Members felt was timelier and would allow for it to be given appropriate consideration outside of the pre-election period.

Members raised concerns in respect of the Matchborough and Winyates Centre consultations and discussed the lessons learned from the re-development which had taken place at Church Hill District Centre. The Committee concurred that it was important that the relevant Ward Members were involved in the process and agreed that it would be prudent for the Committee to also play a role at all stages, including pre-scrutiny of any suggested re-developments.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **Officers pass on the Committee's comments, as detailed in the preamble above, in respect of the IRP Report for consideration;**

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- 2) the Committee be given the opportunity to pre-scrutinise and monitor any future developments at Matchborough and Winyates Centre;
- 3) the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 15th December 2015 be noted; and
- 4) the content of the 1st February to 31st May 2016 edition of the Executive committee Work Programme be noted.

67. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

In presenting the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme Officers reminded Members that, with their agreement, an extra meeting had been arranged for Wednesday 20th January, which would be dedicated to the scrutiny of the Council's budget.

RESOLVED that

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

68. TASK GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

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

Councillor Prosser confirmed that there had not been a meeting since early December and it was therefore unlikely that the final report would meet its deadline of January 2016. He believed that it would now be ready in March 2015. Members agreed that the Chair of the Task Group, accompanied by Councillor Prosser, should be asked to present the final report to the Committee.

RESOLVED that

Officers contact Officers supporting the Joint Worcestershire Increasing Physical Activity Task Group to request that the Chair of the group present the final report to the Committee.

69. HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

In the absence of Councillor Nina Wood-Ford, the Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC), Officers provided Members with a copy of the Minutes of the Committee's latest meeting. Attention was drawn to

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minute No. 770 which referred to an urgent item which had been considered in respect of the Quality of Acute Hospital Services following the Care Quality Commission's decision to place the Trust in special measures as a result of an inspection which had taken place in July 2015.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.03 pm