

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 6 June 2017

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Bill Hartnett (Chair), Councillor Greg Chance (Vice-Chair – during Minute No's 3 to 17) and Councillors Joe Baker, Juliet Brunner, Debbie Chance, Brandon Clayton and Pat Witherspoon

Officers:

Ray Cooke, Clare Flanagan, John Godwin, Sue Hanley, Julie Heyes, Jayne Pickering, Deb Poole and Becky Talbot

Democratic Services Officer:

Debbie Parker-Jones

1. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mark Shurmer.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Joe Baker

The Leader welcomed Councillor Baker to his first meeting of the Executive Committee following his appointment, at the Annual Meeting, as Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Regulatory Services. Congratulations were also expressed to Councillor Baker on his recent marriage.

Additional Papers

It was noted that there were no Additional Papers for consideration, and that the 1st June 2017 Overview and Scrutiny Committee's pre-scrutiny of the Community Engagement Strategy at Agenda Item 6

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had not resulted in any urgent Minute extract and/or opposing recommendation for Members' consideration.

Work Programme

The following reports which were due to be considered, or possibly considered, at the meeting had been deferred to a later date:

- Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy;
- Council Procedure Rules;
- Financial Regulations;
- Leisure Intervention Update (this report would combine with the previously listed separate 'Options for a Leisure Trust' report, to form a single report);
- Planning Fees;
- Planning Policy Review Business Case;
- Policy for HRA Gas Maintenance Service and Review of Service Delivery Options – HRA Gas Maintenance Service (these two reports would combine to form a single 'Service Delivery Options – HRA Gas Maintenance' report);
- Review of Saturday Opening Hours; and
- Write Offs April 2016 to March 2017 Annual Report.

The following reports had been removed from the Work Programme:

- Housing Business Case (removed pending work on Housing Locality Strategic Intervention); and
- Partnership with a Licensed Energy Company for the Provision of Energy (put on hold as a consequence of changes in national policy).

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON 4TH APRIL 2017

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 4th April 2017 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES - STATUTORY INSPECTION, DRIVING AT WORK AND CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY

Members considered three Health and Safety policies (the Policies), all of which had been updated in accordance with recent changes in legislation, with only minor changes being required to these.

It was noted that, as an employer, the Council had a legal duty to have these policies in place for its employees, and that whilst the Corporate Health and Safety Policy was an overarching policy, there was a requirement to also have specific (additional) policies in place.

Members supported the Policies and thanked Officers for their work on these, which set out the Council's commitment to its staff and the public. It was noted that all three Policies had been approved by the Council's Health and Safety Committee and trade unions.

RECOMMENDED that

the Statutory Inspection Policy and Table, Driving/Riding at Work Policy and Corporate Health and Safety Policy and Procedures Manual, as appended to the report, be approved.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Members considered a new (updated) Community Engagement Strategy (the Strategy) for 2017-2020. It was noted that the Strategy had been considered and supported by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 1st June 2017.

Officers advised that the Strategy addressed the legal standards surrounding consultation and would be reviewed every 4 years or sooner to comply with changes to the law or policy and practice. The Strategy would enable the community to be informed, involved and influential in the Council's decision-making process. The Strategy also supported the Council's approach to equality and diversity and would form overarching principles for how the Council engaged with all members of the community. Housing Services had been involved in the development of the Strategy, which had also been considered by the Housing Strategy Group. Officers advised that, in relation to Tenant Involvement and Engagement, the first survey would be going out to tenants shortly.

Members supported the Strategy and thanked all who had been involved with this. It was noted that this was a high level strategy which would be underpinned by an accompanying Action Plan, which Officers advised the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had asked to see. Members highlighted the importance of the Council continually seeking to find new ways of engaging with the community, particularly with hard to reach groups.

RECOMMENDED that

the Community Engagement Strategy, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved and adopted.

7. EQUALITY STRATEGY

Members considered a new (updated) Equality Strategy (the Strategy) for 2017-2020.

Officers advised that the Strategy worked closely with the Community Engagement Strategy detailed under the previous agenda item. The Strategy contributed to how the Council met the Public Sector Equality Duty established under the Equality Act 2010, and also tied in with the current Council Plan. Officers highlighted an amendment under section 4 (The Protected Characteristics) of the updated draft Equal Opportunity Policy May 2017, as appended to the report, which related to a change in current trans/transgender accepted terminology.

Members supported the Strategy and thanked all who had been involved with this. It was noted that this was a high level strategy which would be underpinned by an accompanying Action Plan. Members requested that in light of recent events reference be made within the appropriate documentation to hate crimes, which it was agreed would be included in the resulting detail of the Strategy.

RECOMMENDED that

the Equality Strategy, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved and adopted.

8. FINANCE MONITORING OUTTURN 2016/17

Members considered a report which detailed the Council's draft final financial position for 2016/17, for both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Officers advised that the figures before Members were draft as they were subject to external audit, with the draft accounts due to be issued to Grant Thornton (the Council's external auditors) later that week. Officers were pleased to report that the draft accounts had been produced a month earlier than usual, in anticipation of the earlier statutory deadline for submission of accounts which was due to be introduced from 2017/18.

Officers proceeded to highlight the key elements of the report, which included:

- additional income generated on the back of the Council's commercialisation agenda;

- as a result of the savings made, additional 1 year reserves which had been set aside (if required) for specific projects to improve the services and community infrastructure; and
- a financial accounting error which had occurred in relation to the recharge calculation for the HRA. Members were advised that the error had been made, identified and reported/acted on by Officers. New processes had since been put in place by Officers to ensure that there would not be any repeat of this issue in the future. Officers had spoken with Grant Thornton on the error and Grant Thornton had stated that this had not impacted on the Council's general accounts. The related shortfall had been met by other savings in 2016/17 and Officers were currently addressing the impact of this for 2017/18, and would report back to Members on this in due course.

Officers acknowledged that certain of the variances were quite significant and that there had been some issues in predicting budgets. The online system for Managers to monitor their budgets direct was due to be rolled out later in the year which should help to address this issue. The loss of income in dwelling rents as a result of the Government's rent reduction and increased right to buys was noted, as were the measures which the Council was putting place to try and offset this.

Officers responded to Members' questions and in doing so agreed to provide further details to Members outside of the meeting on:

- the community safety underspend in relation to anti-social behaviour (a HRA saving); and
- the significant variation for the Repairs and Maintenance service, including the high demand for ad-hoc property repairs and unpaid past repair works on void properties – including numbers of properties involved, types of repairs undertaken and separate breakdown of costs for ad-hoc and void properties, set against the context of the overall budget.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the financial position on Revenue and Capital for the financial year 2016/17 as detailed in the report, and the transfer to balances of £348k as at 31st March 2017, be noted;**
- 2) the movements of £170k in existing General Fund Reserves as included in Appendix 4 which reflects the approval required for April 2016 to March 2017 be approved;**

- 3) the addition of new General Fund Reserves of £557k as included in Appendix 4 which reflects the approval required for April 2016 to March 2017 be approved; and
- 4) the movements of £540k in existing HRA Reserves as included in Appendix 2 which reflects the approval required for April 2016 to March 2017 be approved.

9. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 28TH MARCH 2017**

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 28th March 2017.

It was noted that there were no recommendations to consider as the recommendations from the Mental Health Services for Young People Task Group had been dealt with at the 4th April 2017 Executive Committee.

10. **MINUTES / REFERRALS - TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER ANY OUTSTANDING MINUTES OR REFERRALS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, EXECUTIVE PANELS ETC.**

There were no outstanding referrals to consider.

11. **CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD - VERBAL UPDATE FROM PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY AND REGULATORY SERVICES**

It was noted that as Councillor Baker had only been appointed as the new Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Regulatory Services at the Annual Meeting of the Council in May, he had not, at that point, attended any meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board and therefore had no update to give on this. Councillor Baker commented that he had met with Officers to discuss the various different bodies to which he had been appointed in his capacity as Portfolio Holder, and that he and Councillor Smith had also met for a handover briefing.

Members took this opportunity of expressing their thanks to Councillor Yvonne Smith for all of her hard work in carrying out the role of Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Regulatory Services, which was much appreciated.

RESOLVED that

the position be noted.

12. **ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT**

Members received the regular update report on the work of the Executive Committee's Advisory Panels and similar bodies which reported via the Executive Committee.

A Member noted that the last meeting of the Constitutional Review Working Party (the Party) had taken place on 27th January 2015 and queried when the next meeting of this was due to take place. Officers confirmed their understanding that no future meeting date was currently planned. The Member responded that two items of business within the Party's remit currently remained outstanding, namely:

- the change of day on which the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee met; and
- an issue which had arisen some two years previously in relation to Members of the Council speaking during the pre-election period/'purdah'.

In relation to the change of O&S meeting day, Officers advised that it was their understanding that following the Notice of Motion which had been submitted to full Council in this regard earlier in this year – and which was duly declared lost at Council – the O&S Committee had subsequently re-considered this matter and had decided to change the day of the meetings where this was feasible, with the 2017/18 Calendar of Meetings having been amended by Officers accordingly. No comments were forthcoming in relation to the pre-election/purdah issue and Officers agreed to check the position in both regards and to report back to Members on this.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the report be noted; and**
- 2) **Officers check the position in relation to the queries raised regarding possible outstanding business of the Constitutional Review Working Party, and report back to Members on the position with this.**

13. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED that

under S.100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matters on the grounds that they involve the likely

disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act, as amended:

- (i) Item 14 – Minutes of the meeting of the Shared Services Board (private meeting – relating to Items 16 and 17);**
- (ii) Item 15 – Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services Review Business Case;**
- (iii) Item 16 – Facility Management and Cleaning Services Review Business Case; and**
- (iv) Item 17 – Parks and Green Space Stewardship Services Review Business Case.**

14. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES / REFERRALS - TO INCLUDE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SHARED SERVICES BOARD HELD ON 15TH MAY 2017

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Shared Services Board held on 15th May 2017, which were considered with the Facility Management and Cleaning Services and Parks and Green Space Stewardship Services Business Cases at agenda items 16 and 17 respectively.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Shared Services Board held on 15th May 2017 be received and noted.

15. LEGAL, EQUALITIES AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES REVIEW - BUSINESS CASE

The Committee received a confidential report on the Business Case for the Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services (the Service) Service Review, which contained details of a proposed restructure within the Service in response to changed demands from within the organisation and the wider challenges facing the public sector. It was noted that the Business Case had not been referred to the Shared Services Board on 15th May 2017 as the Service was already shared between Redditch Borough Council and Bromsgrove District Council, with the Business Case relating to a restructure of the current shared service.

Officers advised that the Head of Service had met with all members of staff to show them the Business Case, and that informal discussions had taken place with staff in this regard. It was noted that the Council's trade unions had also been consulted on this. Formal consultation with staff would commence once the Business

Case had been considered by both Councils. Members sought confirmation that any responses received as part of the consultation would be fed back to them, which Officers confirmed would be the case. Members commented that full meaningful consultation was required with staff as part of the process.

Officers outlined the proposed changes detailed within the Business Case and the rationale behind these. Officers responded to Members' questions, in particular in relation to proposed staff changes within the Democratic Services Team and the future capacity within that team. Members also assumed that the Departmental Structure chart should include Redditch Borough Council in the title to make clear that this covered both authorities.

A Member raised a query in relation to the current stance on Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) joint working across the two authorities, which another Member commented had previously been considered and voted out by the Redditch O&S Committee. Officers advised that occasional cross authority working groups had been established. A request was made for Officers to provide clarity on the position with this outside of the meeting.

RECOMMENDED that

the Business Case for the Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services Service Review be approved.

16. FACILITY MANAGEMENT AND CLEANING SERVICES REVIEW - BUSINESS CASE

The Committee received a confidential report on the Business Case for a proposed shared Facility Management (Caretaking) and Cleaning service for Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council. It was noted that the Business Case had been considered by the Shared Services Board at its meeting on 15th May 2017, the minutes of which Members considered along with the Business Case.

Officers provided an overview of the principles behind the Business Case and proposed structure. Officers felt that the proposed structure would deliver a more flexible, resilient and efficient service, provide for more effective use of resources and result in improved service standards. Officers proceeded to detail the timeline and process involved with implementation of the proposed Business Case.

Members supported the Business Case and commented that they looked forward to the formal staff consultation on this.

RECOMMENDED that

the Business Case for the Facility Management and Cleaning Service Shared Service be approved.

17. PARKS AND GREEN SPACE STEWARDSHIP SERVICES REVIEW - BUSINESS CASE

The Committee received a confidential report on the Business Case for a proposed shared Parks and Green Space Stewardship service for Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council. It was noted that the Business Case had been considered by the Shared Services Board at its meeting on 15th May 2017, the minutes of which Members considered along with the Business Case.

Officers advised that the Business Case had been trialed for approximately two years with Environmental Services. Officers proceeded to give an overview of the principles behind the Business Case and proposed structure, and the aims and objectives of the working trials and the main drivers for change within the existing services. Officers felt that the proposed format would provide for a completely flexible system which could be slotted into a variety of management operating models without negatively impacting on the customer or other service areas, and which aimed to future-proof service delivery as far ahead as practically possible. Officers detailed the timeline and process involved with implementation of the proposed Business Case, and gave an update on the current staffing element of this.

Members supported the Business Case and commented that they looked forward to the formal staff consultation on this.

RECOMMENDED that

the Business Case for the Parks and Green Space Stewardship Services Shared Service be approved.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.20 pm

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