

minute book 7

Council

Tuesday 15th January
2013

8.00pm (or following the
ending of the Executive
Committee meeting,
should this be later)

Council Chamber
Town Hall
Redditch



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Council

26th November 2012

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Alan Mason (Mayor), Councillor Wanda King (Deputy Mayor) and Councillors Joe Baker, Roger Bennett, Rebecca Blake, Michael Braley, Andrew Brazier, David Bush, Michael Chalk, Simon Chalk, Greg Chance, Brandon Clayton, John Fisher, Andrew Fry, Carole Gandy, Adam Griffin, Bill Hartnett, Pattie Hill, Roger Hill, Gay Hopkins, Phil Mould, Mark Shurmer, Yvonne Smith, Luke Stephens, Debbie Taylor, Derek Taylor and Pat Witherspoon

Officers:

J Carradine, K Dicks, C Felton, S Hanley, B Houghton and J Cooper

Democratic Services Officer:

I Westmore

71. WELCOME

The Mayor opened the meeting and welcomed all present.

72. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Juliet Brunner and Brenda Quinney.

73. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

74. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 15th October 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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MAYOR, in the Chair

75. ANNOUNCEMENTSa) Mayor

The Mayor's communications and announcements were as follows:

i) White Ribbon Campaign

The Mayor advised Members of the annual White Ribbon Campaign against Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence. The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety was invited to say a few words about the campaign.

The Portfolio Holder drew Members' attention to the scale of domestic abuse and sexual violence in this country. It was suggested that, by publicly confronting this abuse, others could gain the courage to do likewise. The Portfolio Holder added that she had attended an event at Redditch United Football Club at which players, staff and supporters had pledged their support in the lead-up to the campaign and added their handprints and signatures to the Council's campaign banner, entitled 'These Hands are not for Hurting'. It was proposed that the Council meeting be adjourned to allow Members the opportunity to contribute to their own campaign banner.

The Leader of the Council was also invited to speak and added his support to the campaign. Members were informed that a number of other authorities across Worcestershire were following Redditch's lead in respect of the creation of campaign banners and a number of men were to take part in a walk on 30th November to demonstrate their opposition to violence against women. The proposal to adjourn was seconded and it was consequently

RESOLVED that

the meeting be adjourned in order that Members might offer their handprints and signatures in a personal and public commitment to the White Ribbon Campaign.

(The meeting adjourned at 7.08pm and reconvened at 7.26pm)

Other Members then took the opportunity to add their support to the campaign, among their number several who had first-hand experience of abuse of this nature. James Cooper and other members of the Community Safety Team were thanked for their efforts in supporting the promotion of the campaign.

Mayoral Functions

The Mayor advised that, since the last meeting of the Council, he had attended a number of engagements, including Fireworks at Arrow Valley Park, Eid celebrations at St Stephen's School, Terryspring Court's 12th anniversary celebrations, the Remembrance Day Parade & Service, the presentation of swimming medals at Abbey Stadium and the Christmas Lights switch on in Redditch.

ii) Forthcoming Engagements

The mayor advised that forthcoming engagements included the Worcester Christmas Fayre, a function hosted by the Redditch Association for the Blind, the Sunset Club Christmas Party and the Mayor's Charity Quiz.

b) Leader's Announcements

The Leader's Announcements were as follows:

i) Hereford and Worcester Sports Awards

The Leader advised that he had been present at the recent Hereford and Worcester Sports Awards and had been delighted in the success of Redditch Road and Pathways Cycling Club in winning the Junior Team Award.

ii) Remembrance Day

It was reported that the Remembrance Day Parade and Service had been very well attended and had taken place at both the War Memorial on Church Green and that on Plymouth Road. It was noted that the Editor of the Redditch Standard and a number of local schools were researching the histories of the fallen whose names were recorded on these Memorials.

iii) Christmas Light Switch-on

The Leader thanked both Lyndsey Hadley and Louise Jones from the Planning Team for their part in making the switching on of the Town Centre Christmas lights such a success.

iv) Primrose Hospice

Council was made aware of the excellent effort made by Lisa King, daughter of Councillor Wanda King and the late Councillor Robin King, in raising more than £1250 for the Primrose Hospice in memory of her late father.

v) Joint Services Review – Alexandra Hospital

The Leader updated Members on the latest developments on the Joint Service Review (JSR). The Leaders and the Chief Executive of Redditch Borough and Bromsgrove District Councils had met the JSR team following the previous meeting of the Council in October.

The JSR team had stated in October that, although it had not finalised a shortlist, it was focussing on options for services at all three sites being reviewed. Members were informed that the Alexandra Hospital was the site most likely to be affected and the main services being considered were the Accident and Emergency (A & E) Department led by specialist A & E consultants, paediatric inpatient services and consultant-led obstetrics. The majority of urgent and emergency care would still be provided at the Alex.

The Leader made clear the resolve that he and other local Council Leaders had to continue to fight to protect services at the Alex. A very encouraging and positive meeting had been held with the Health Minister, Dan Poulter, at which this message had been pressed home. Indeed, Mr Poulter was due to visit the Alex site in January. Members were informed, however, that any formal consultation on proposals for the provision of Healthcare in Worcestershire would probably not commence until March 2013 at the earliest.

The Leader advised the Council that he had asked for a further briefing on or before 18th December 2012 to ensure that he and others might proactively represent the interests of local people in this regard.

76. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

No questions had been received.

77. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

No motions had been received.

78. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Members received the minutes of the meetings of the Executive Committee held on 16th October and 20th November 2012.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 16th October 2012 be received and all recommendations' adopted; and**

- 2) the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 20th November 2012 be received and all recommendations adopted, subject to:

in respect of minute 96 (Sickness Absence Policy and Disciplinary Policy – Review) it being noted that the A5 laminated guide to the Council’s Sickness Absence Policy be made available to those Councillors who wished to receive one.

79. REGULATORY COMMITTEES

Members received the minutes of the most recent meetings of the Council’s Regulatory Committees.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 26th September 2012 be received and adopted;
- 2) the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 31st October 2012 be received and adopted; and
- 3) the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 22nd October 2012 be received and adopted.

80. REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT - SCHEME OF DELEGATIONS - AND AMENDMENT TO THE PLANNING CODE OF PRACTICE

The Council received a report which updated it on changes considered beneficial to the Scheme of Delegations to Officers following on from amendments made to the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and, secondly, an amendment to the Planning Code of Practice to reflect the Shared Service arrangement beyond the Redditch Borough Council and Bromsgrove District Council agreement.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the changes to how the Council conducts investigations under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) be noted;
- 2) the Head of Legal Services be delegated authority to authorise Officers to appear on the Council’s behalf in Court proceedings, including as required as a result of the changes to RIPA procedures;

- 3) the addition to the Council's Planning Code of Practice as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved; and
- 4) the Head of Legal Services be authorised to make the necessary changes to the Scheme of Delegations and the Planning Code of Practice within the Council's Constitution to reflect the decisions at 2) and 3), above.

81. URGENT BUSINESS - RECORD OF DECISIONS

The Council considered an Urgent Business decision which had been approved in accordance with the Council's urgency procedures, namely:

Greater Birmingham and Solihull Business Rate Pool – Draft Governance Arrangements

The decision was in respect of delegation to the Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer of the approval of the draft Governance Arrangements for the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Business Rate Pool.

In response to a question from a Member, the Leader undertook to have Officers provide a written answer detailing how the charge (£65,000) to the Accountable Body, Birmingham City Council, was apportioned between the members of the Pool. In addition, following a discussion about the responsibility on individual Members to attend meetings of the Local Enterprise Partnership and the Business Rates Pool Executive Body, the Chief Executive made himself available to speak to any Member following the meeting on this matter.

RESOLVED that

the decision be noted.

82. URGENT BUSINESS - GENERAL

There were no separate items of Urgent Business for consideration at this meeting.

The Meeting commenced at 7.01 pm
and closed at 8.10 pm

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MAYOR, in the Chair



Executive Committee

18th December 2012

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Bill Hartnett (Chair), Councillor Greg Chance (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Rebecca Blake, Michael Braley, Carole Gandy, Phil Mould, Mark Shurmer and Debbie Taylor

Also Present:

Councillors Andrew Brazier and Andy Fry

Officers:

D Allen, R Bamford, M Bough, R Cooke, K Dicks, S Garratt, S Hanley, T Kristunas, J Knott and C Flanagan

Committee Services Officer:

I Westmore

107. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Luke Stephens.

108. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

109. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader informed the Committee of two recent, sad losses. It was reported that former Councillor and Mayor of the Borough Mrs Joan Tyers had died during the preceding week. Members were also formally notified of the sudden and unexpected death of Mrs Denise Sunman, Democratic Services Officer a week and a half previously. The meeting observed a minute's silence as a mark of respect to Mrs Tyers and Mrs Sunman.

The Leader advised that the following item of business, scheduled on the Executive Committee Work Programme to be considered at

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Chair

this evening's meeting, has been rescheduled to a later meeting of the Committee:

- Council Tax Support Scheme.

The Leader also advised that he had accepted the following matters as Urgent Business:

- Item 9 – Kickstart Scheme; and
- Item 13 – Matchborough East Community Centre Transfer

as they had not been not on the Committee Work Programme for this evening's meeting.

110. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee meeting held on 20th November 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

111. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2013/14 - 2015/16

Officers reported that the final settlement for the 2012/14 financial year from central Government was expected to be communicated to the Council the following day, 19th December, and that a 5% reduction in grant was anticipated.

The Council was continuing to make efforts to close the funding gap in the current financial year. Savings were being achieved through Transformation, the redesign of certain services and through driving out any residual 'waste' in service provision more generally.

112. GAMBLING ACT 2005 - REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

The Committee received a report advising of the outcome of the recent consultation exercise undertaken with stakeholders in relation to the 2012-2016 Statement of Gambling Principles. It was noted that one response had been received following the formal consultation period and Officers reported that the Council's Licensing Committee had endorsed the Statement as printed.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the outcome of the consultation exercise and the views of the Council's Licensing Committee be noted; and**

RECOMMENDED that

- 2) **the 2012-2016 Statement of Gambling Principles be adopted from 31st January 2013.**

113. TENANCY STRATEGY 2012 - 2014

The Committee was informed that the authority was required under the Localism Act 2011 to prepare and publish a Tenancy Strategy by 15th January 2013. It was reported that a Tenancy Policy for the Borough would follow in due course. The Strategy set out the major considerations to which registered providers of social housing within the Borough were to have regard in formulating their tenancy policies.

Members broadly welcomed the report, whilst recognising that demand for social housing in the Borough and elsewhere significantly exceeded supply. It was hoped that the introduction of non-secure tenancies might provide some scope for more efficient use of the social housing stock in Redditch. Members were keen that communities should continue to be sustainable and did not wish to see a move towards transient populations and there was an expectation that the Council's forthcoming Policy would mitigate against this. In this regard, there was an acceptance that the model for tenure that had existed for a number of decades was changing across the country, not least because of the present financial situation.

RESOLVED that

the Tenancy Strategy, at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

114. WORCESTERSHIRE HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

The Council was required to have a Homelessness Strategy in accordance with the Homelessness Act 2002. The draft Countywide Strategy before Members had been created by a Project Team of Officers from across Worcestershire.

The Strategy had been produced during a period of great change, largely as a consequence of the prevailing economic conditions, and it considered how austerity measures might adversely impact on homelessness and the measures that were needed to mitigate the impact of these. The Committee was pleased to note that the Council had been singled out at various points within the report as an example of best practice within the County group.

There was considerable discussion around the relative provision of temporary accommodation within the different Districts of Worcestershire and surrounding areas and instances of families or individuals from outside the Borough being housed in Redditch accommodation. Officers explained that the Borough had the lowest homeless acceptance rates in the County as a result of the proactive steps taken by Officers to prevent homelessness. There were occasions, however, when Redditch accepted homeless people from outside the Borough in exceptional circumstances and this arrangement was reciprocated across the County and further afield. Officers were in the process of developing a Protocol with other Local Authorities to address this issue and offered to circulate it to members of the Committee following the meeting.

RESOLVED that

the Draft Countywide Joint Homelessness Strategy and action plan attached at Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

115. KICKSTART SCHEME

Members received a report informing them of the closure of the national Kickstart Programme and proposing that the Council take on the management of the existing Kickstart loans made to residents in Redditch. Officers explained that it had taken some considerable time for the scheme to become embedded in the Borough, to the extent that only four loans had been made prior to the closure of the scheme. The Council was in line to receive up to £78,000 in due course as a result of the repayment of these loans, and the income would be returned to the General Fund.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the winding up of the Kickstart scheme be noted and the loans granted to RBC residents (as set out in the Deed of Assignment attached at Appendix 1 to the report) be re-assigned to the Council so that it can deal with enquiries from borrowers, and manage those loans in the future; and**
- 2) authority be delegated to the Head of Legal Services to enter into the Deed of Assignment on behalf of the Council.**

116. TOWN CENTRE LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

The Committee considered a report which provided information on potential landscape improvements that could be undertaken within the Town Centre.

Members were informed that there were five areas that were being considered for improvement and that the area in question on this occasion was the northern edge of Church Green. The bandstand and the fountain were to remain in situ but the work was intended to make the area more attractive, accessible and usable. Capital money had already been set aside to carry out this work. Amended recommendations were tabled which included proposals for a further, final period of consultation on the plans for this part of Church Green.

Members welcomed the proposals and noted the reasons for the additional consultation. It was explained that this consultation would take place in the New Year.

RESOLVED that

the proposed spend of a proportion of the agreed budget and the intended timescales for the phasing of the project be endorsed, subject to;

- i) a 4 week consultation period being undertaken with regard to the Bandstand element of the project (such consultation to make it clear that the Bandstand will remain in current location); and**
- ii) the results of the consultation being discussed with the appropriate Portfolio Holder and Ward Councillors and, if significant, reported back to the Executive Committee.**

117. STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING - REVIEW OF POLICY

The Executive Committee's approval was sought to a small revision to the existing policy on Street Naming and Numbering in Redditch and to the addition of a new street name to be added to the official list.

Members were informed that the revision to the Policy was a result of the previous item on the Town Centre landscape Improvements and related to changed specifications for the Street Name Plates in the Town Centre.

The addition to the official list was in memory of a young engineer who had unfortunately lost his life during construction of a development within Redditch.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the revised policy on Street Naming and Numbering, as attached to the report at Appendices 1 and 2, be approved and adopted; and**
- 2) **'Handford', a young man who was killed during construction of a development within the Redditch area, be added to the list of potential street names.**

118. POLICY FOR LEASES OF COUNCIL LAND AND PROPERTY AT A CONCESSIONARY RENT

A report was considered which detailed a draft policy for the granting of rent relief / concessionary rents to voluntary sector organisations.

The new draft Policy aimed to deal with the lack of consistency which had been applied in the past, owing to there being no criteria against which to judge individual applications for rent relief. In addition, it sought to establish a link between the granting of concessionary rents and the grants process. By so doing, the voluntary sector would have a clearer idea at the outset of how much they might be expected to pay in rent for any Council-owned premises. There was to be a three-year transitional period and a proposed maximum concession of 70 % on the market rent. At present the Council provided in excess of £100,000 in rent relief but this was not reflected in the Council's accounts; the new system would provide much greater transparency

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had established a small Task Group to consider the matter but it had been unable to access the final version of the draft Policy until following the preparation of its report. As a result, its recommendations were not able to address a number of the points in the draft Policy. Given these problems, it was agreed that the Portfolio Holder should give these recommendations further consideration following the meeting, although the Committee did not feel it appropriate to adopt them

Members were keen to have the Grants Panel take responsibility for this matter. There was some discussion as to the proposed length of leases under the new Policy and it was agreed that the wording of the final Policy document be amended to clarify that the three-year period referred to within the report was the period for the granting of a concessionary rent and not for the lease itself. There was also considerable debate over the provision of a final appeal process to the Executive Committee by organisations who did not consider that the maximum 70% concession would allow them to remain viable. It was agreed that it be made clear that organisations

would need to fulfil all the criteria for gaining a 70% discount and that this provision was merely to allow some flexibility to deal with very exceptional cases.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the Draft Policy attached at Appendix 1 to the report be approved, subject to the wording being amended in line with the comments of the Executive Committee, and implemented with immediate effect for new tenancies;**
- 2) transitional arrangements be introduced with effect from 1st April 2013 to allow the policy to be fully implemented over a three year period taking into account the terms of existing leases;**
- 3) authority be delegated to the Head of Finance and Resources in conjunction with the Council's Voluntary Sector Grants Co-ordinator to approve concessionary rents/rent relief in line with the draft policy attached at Appendix 1 to the report; and**
- 4) the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management consider the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and determine whether aspects of its recommendations might be incorporated into the Policy in due course.**

119. MATCHBOROUGH EAST COMMUNITY CENTRE TRANSFER

Officers provided an explanation of the background to this item, explaining that the Matchborough East Community Centre had been declared surplus to requirements in 2009 but had not subsequently been disposed of as the new Shared Service had considered that there were possibilities for making use of the premises.

The Council had subsequently been approached by a Community Interest Company, Your Ideas, to ascertain if the Community Centre would be available for lease. The organisation currently occupied a shop unit at Matchborough Centre.

Redditch Community Amateur Boxing Club had expressed an interest in taking up the potentially vacant unit currently occupied by Your Ideas and an adjacent vacant unit in order to retain grant funding which they had obtained from the Inspired Facilities Fund through Sport England. There were time constraints in that the Boxing Club needed to secure a premises by the end of March 2013 or it would lose its grant funding.

Members were pleased to support the recommended course of action as they recognised the good work that was carried out by both Your Ideas and the Boxing Club. In addition, this proposal would lead to the Council making significant savings.

There was concern at the prospects of the existing users of the Community Centre finding alternative provision, but assurances were given that Officers were making considerable efforts to ensure that a satisfactory outcome might be achieved for all parties. There was, in any event, an acknowledgement that the Council would not be in a position to replace the existing soft play facilities once they had reached the end of their life in around one year's time.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **Property Services be instructed to assist Leisure and Cultural Services to transfer the MECC to Your Ideas on a Full Repairing Lease basis for a period of seven years; and**
- 2) **Property Services be instructed to work with Redditch Community Amateur Boxing Club to explore a lease option for the shop unit vacated as a result of 1), above, on a Full Internal Repairing Lease basis for a minimum period of seven years.**

120. QUARTERLY SICKNESS MONITORING - QUARTER 2 - JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2012

The Committee considered the latest quarterly report setting out performance in relation to sickness absence.

It was reported that performance was improving over time and active steps were being adopted to improve the situation further. The Employee Assistance Programme was in place and the Council was in the process of employing a Well-being Officer.

The most significant cause of sickness absence was stress, depression and related conditions although Officers reported that there was only one work-related case of stress contained within these figures, with other cases being primarily the result of external factors such as bereavement.

RESOLVED that

the data relating to the quarter be noted.

121. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 6th November 2012.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 6th November 2012 be noted.

122. WORCESTERSHIRE SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE

The Committee received the minutes arising from the most recent meeting of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee held on 22nd November 2012 be noted.

123. MINUTES / REFERRALS - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, EXECUTIVE PANELS ETC.

There were no minutes or referrals to consider under this item.

124. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

The Committee received the most recent report on the activity of the Council's Advisory panels and similar bodies.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

125. ACTION MONITORING

The Committee received the latest Action Monitoring report.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.



Audit & Governance

Committee

27th November 2012

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Derek Taylor (Chair), Councillor Roger Hill (Vice-Chair) and Councillors John Fisher (from part way through Minute No. 22), Alan Mason and Yvonne Smith

Also Present:

Phil Jones and Zoe Thomas (Grant Thornton - External Auditors)

Officers:

T Kristunas and J Pickering

Committee Services Officer:

D Parker-Jones

19. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors Joe Baker and Roger Bennett.

20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

21. UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR - AUDITED STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2011/12

The Chair advised Members that subsequent to the meeting of the Committee held on 26th September 2012 at which the Council's Statement of Accounts 2011/12 had been approved and duly signed by the Chair, it was noted that some amendments were required to the general wording of the Statement and that this had therefore been updated accordingly.

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Chair

Audit & Governance

Committee

27th November 2012

22. AUDIT COMMISSION ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REPORT 2011/12 - RESPONSES

Further to Minute No. 16. 4) of the meeting of the Committee held on 26th September 2012, Members considered a report which set out comments provided by the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources in response to recommendations detailed in the Audit Commission's Annual Governance Report (AGR).

A total of 7 recommendations had been proposed by the external auditors, which had been agreed by Officers, as follows:

- review the shared service plans accounting arrangements in order to simplify the process;
- review the Service Agreement in place with the County Council in relation to the valuation of assets;
- review and clarify the position in relation to the ownership and trust arrangements for the Paolazzi Murals;
- improve risk management arrangements and reporting;
- continue to monitor the delivery of the Internal Audit plan;
- review the format of the monitoring of savings as presented to Officers and Members; and
- formally review the Housing Benefit transformation work.

Ms Zoe Thomas, Audit Manager, and Mr Phil Jones, Engagement Lead, formerly of the Audit Commission and now of Grant Thornton (the Council's new External Auditors), were present to respond to any issues raised.

Members considered each of the recommendations and Officer responses. A request was made by the Chair that specific timescales be agreed for the completion of any actions arising from the recommendations. The key outcomes of the Committee's discussions are detailed below.

Recommendation 1 - Review the shared service plans accounting arrangements in order to simplify the process

Officers provided an explanation as to how shared services were currently accounted for and advised that whilst there were no fundamental issues with the accounting outcomes, it was the processes involved in the accounting arrangements which were to be looked at.

The External Auditors explained that the key aim was to simplify the process in order to represent value for money. The external Audit Manager advised that she was due to meet with the Council's finance staff the following day to discuss how this matter could be

Audit & Governance

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taken forward. She added that it would also be worthwhile having an annual review of the shared services accounting arrangements.

Agreed timescale for completion: March 2013.

Recommendation 2 - Review the Service Agreement in place with the County Council in relation to the valuation of assets

Officers advised that a meeting had taken place with the County Council valuer the previous day at which it had been agreed that a senior valuer would now have input into the Borough Council's fixed asset valuations.

Members queried whether it would be possible to utilise the services of an independent valuer for some valuations. Officers advised that as the Council had a Service Level Agreement in place with the County Council this would mean having to pay for both services, which would not be a viable option.

Members further queried whether it would be possible for all properties that were being valued to be visited, which Officers advised would create some issues. However it was agreed that details of any site visits and any comparisons made as part of the valuation process should be included in valuation certificates, as part of the judgement made.

Agreed timescale for completion: December 2012.

Recommendation 3 - Review and clarify the position in relation to the ownership and trust arrangements for the Paolazzi Murals

It was noted that the actions in relation to the clarification of the ownership of the Paolazzi Murals and the associated accounting arrangements for these were ongoing.

Agreed timescale for completion: March 2013.

Recommendation 4 - Improve risk management arrangements and reporting

Officers accepted that in addition to the current risk management arrangements that were in place further arrangements were required to provide for a more robust risk management system, in particular with the reporting element of this.

It was noted from the Officer comments provided that work had already commenced on the development of departmental risk registers, which would be considered by Members at future meetings of the Committee. The registers would be updated on a

Audit & Governance

Committee

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quarterly basis and reported via management teams to ensure that actions were put in place to minimise risk to the authority with the delivery of services. Individual registers and action plans would be reported to the Committee at each meeting, commencing on 24th January 2013.

Risk management meetings had taken place with managers throughout November as part of the process, and as agreed at the September meeting of the Committee Councillors Roger Bennett and Yvonne Smith would periodically examine the Council's risk registers and report back to each meeting of the Committee on these.

Agreed timescale for completion: ongoing, with first risk register information to be reported to the Committee's 24th January 2013 meeting.

Recommendation 5 - Continue to monitor the delivery of the Internal Audit plan

It was noted that this was an ongoing matter with the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources meeting regularly with the Internal Audit Manager to monitor progress on the delivery of the Audit Plan.

The Internal Audit team was now fully staffed and performance reports would continue to be referred to each meeting of the Committee.

Agreed timescale for completion: ongoing.

Recommendation 6 - Review the format of the monitoring of savings as presented to Officers and Members

Officers reported that this recommendation was one where there was possible disagreement with the External Auditors.

Officers explained how savings were currently shown and the External Auditors set out where they felt more transparency of financial reporting was required, in particular with the detail around planned savings across the Council and in year monitoring of the delivery of those savings.

As detailed in the Officer comments, Officers would be reviewing the budget monitoring reports for 2013/14 to ensure that both they and Members could identify savings which were being delivered. The review would include consideration of any revised reports by the External Auditors to ensure that the level of detail was appropriate for future financial planning of the Council.

Audit & Governance

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Officers would shortly be meeting with the External Auditors in this regard and it was noted that any revised reports would need to be in place in time for the 2013/14 financial year. It was agreed that a half-year review report on this be referred to the Committee in March 2013.

Agreed timescale for completion: March 2013.

Recommendation 7 - Formally review the Housing Benefit transformation work

In addition to the Officer comments provided, Officers reported that it was very difficult to bring the transformation review work to a close as this was still ongoing.

Significant government welfare reforms linked to universal credit also impacted on the position. It was unclear at present as to exactly what effect the reforms would have on the service, although it was anticipated that these could see significant 'failure demand' for the Council.

Officers would, in time, be looking at any required changes to service provision, including departmental restructuring, but the effects of the welfare reforms had first to become clear before being in a position to proceed with this.

Agreed timescale for completion: ongoing.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 7.45 pm

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Chair



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LICENSING

Committee

17th December 2012

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Andrew Fry (Chair), and Councillors Joe Baker, Juliet Brunner, Michael Chalk, Pattie Hill, Gay Hopkins, Wanda King, Alan Mason and Yvonne Smith

Officers:

J Bayley, C Flanagan and S Garratt

Committee Officers:

I Westmore

7. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Roger Hill and Luke Stephens.

8. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

9. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the 11th July 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

10. STATEMENT OF GAMBLING PRINCIPLES

The Committee was advised of the outcome of the recent consultation exercise undertaken with stakeholders in relation to the 2013-2016 Statement of Gambling Principles. It was noted that no consultation responses had been received within the prescribed timescales.

Members asked several questions of clarification around the terminology within the draft Statement of Gambling Principles but no changes were recommended.

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Chair

LICENSING

Committee

17th December 2012

RECOMMENDED that

the outcome of the consultation exercise be noted and the 2013-2016 Statement of Gambling Principles be adopted from January 2013.

11. ACCESS FOR DISABLED PEOPLE GROUP - REFERRAL REPORT

Members received a referral report setting out the findings of the review undertaken by the Access for Disabled People Task Group, including two recommendations for the consideration of the Licensing Committee.

The Task Group was concerned that there was a relatively low number of adapted vehicles within the hackney carriage and private hire vehicle fleet within the Borough and considered whether incentives might encourage local taxi firms to increase this number. The primary means of encouraging the expansion of the adapted vehicle fleet was the offering of licences to operate adapted vehicles for a longer period of time than standard vehicles. The Licensing Committee unanimously supported the offering of extended licences to those operating adapted vehicles.

A second recommendation from the Task Group proposed that drivers be offered disability awareness training. The training would be provided by or through the Council and individual taxi drivers or their taxi companies would be expected to meet the cost of the training. For this reason it was proposed that the training not be made mandatory.

Members of the Licensing Committee were generally of the opinion that the disability awareness training should be made mandatory for those drivers who operated adapted vehicles, although it was recognised that there was an issue with multiple drivers using particular vehicles.

Given that both of the recommendations proposed by the Task Group would amend the Borough's existing Taxi Licensing Policy, Officers confirmed that each would be subject to a 12 week consultation period with interested parties. It was further agreed that both should be the subject of a further report from Licensing Officers in order that further detail of the available options might be provided to Members.

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Committee

17th December 2012

RESOLVED that

Officers prepare a further report setting out the options for

- 1) the offering of licences to operate adapted vehicles for a longer period of time than for standards vehicles to incentivise taxi firms operating within the Borough to increase the number of adapted vehicles in their fleets; and**
- 2) offering disability awareness training to hackney carriage and private hire vehicle drivers operating within the Borough;**

to be submitted to the next meeting of the Licensing Committee.

12. FEEDBACK FROM THE UNICORN HILL TAXI RANK CONSULTATION EXERCISE

Members received a report following the 12 week consultation on proposals to amend the arrangements for short stay parking and the hackney carriage rank on Unicorn Hill. The Committee was reminded that this matter had been the subject of previous consideration by the Licensing Committee. Officers added that the taxi rank at the Bus Station would be closed for a limited period this winter.

Mr Laight, representing the interests of the petitioners supporting the reduction of the taxi rank on Unicorn Hill by the removal of four spaces during the day, argued that in the daytime the rank was not usually full. As the rank was only partly used it was contended that the effect of the change would not be significant.

Mr Nadeem Naz, representing the Redditch Taxi Association, noted that there were large numbers of taxis in the town but only limited numbers of spaces in which to wait. Unicorn Hill was reported to be one of the busiest ranks and was usually full. Parking was unavailable on the opposite side of the street. The addition of speed ramps to Unicorn Hill had already served to reduce the number of spaces on the rank.

Members discussed the proposals, some arguing that it was reasonable to remove these four bays during the daytime to assist businesses on Unicorn Hill. By contrast, it was also noted that the existing short-stay parking spaces on Unicorn Hill were under-used, indicating that there was not a clear need for further spaces. The speed ramps were also observed to have effectively removed

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several spaces on the rank already and, linked to the works to the bus station, it was suggested that this was not the time to be reducing the size of the rank.

Following a vote on the matter it was

RESOLVED that

the taxi rank on Unicorn Hill not be reduced by four spaces during the daytime.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.01 pm

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Chair



Planning Committee

28th November 2012

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Andrew Fry (Chair), Councillor Joe Baker (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Michael Chalk, Brandon Clayton, Bill Hartnett, Roger Hill, Wanda King, Brenda Quinney and Yvonne Smith

Officers:

S Edden, A Hussain and A Rutt

Committee Services Officer:

J Smyth

42. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence declared.

43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors A Fry, J Baker, M Chalk, B Hartnett, W King and Y Smith declared other disclosable interests in Planning Application 2012/282/COU (5 Church Green East, Town Centre, Redditch), as detailed at Minute 46 below.

44. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 31st October 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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Chair

**45. PLANNING APPLICATION 2012/251/FUL –
LAND ADJACENT TO THE THATCHERS,
CHURCH ROAD, WEBHEATH**

Erection of a pair of semi-detached dwellings
With new vehicular access

Applicant: A&P Homes Ltd

RESOLVED that

having regard to the Development Plan and to all other material considerations, Planning Permission be GRANTED, subject to the conditions and informatives summarised in the report.

**46. PLANNING APPLICATION 2012/282/COU –
5 CHURCH GREEN EAST, TOWN CENTRE, REDDITCH**

Change of use of ground, first and second floors
from Financial and Professional Services (A2) use to
Drinking establishment and Café / Bistro Use (A4)
on ground and first floors, and to Music Tuition Room (D1)
and Retail (A1) use on second floor

Applicant: Mr S Evans

Mr Evans, the Applicant, addressed the Committee under the Council's public speaking rules.

RESOLVED that

having regard to the Development Plan and to all other material considerations, Planning Permission be GRANTED, subject to the conditions and informatives summarised in the report.

(Prior to consideration of this item, Councillors J Baker, A Fry, B Hartnett, W King and Y Smith all declared an other disclosable interest in view of the fact that they were aware the Applicant was related to Councillor P Witherspoon. They remained in the room and participated and voted on the matter.

Councillor M Chalk also declared an other disclosable interest in view of the fact that the Applicant lived in close proximity to him. Councillor Chalk also remained in the room and participated and voted on the matter.)

**47. TREE PROTECTION ORDER (NO.142) 2012 -
WIREHILL DRIVE, LODGE PARK, REDDITCH –
CONFIRMATION**

The Committee received a report which proposed the long-term protection of a mature Oak tree that was considered to be significant and of positive benefit to public amenity and therefore worthy of retention in the longer term.

RESOLVED that

Tree Preservation Order No. (142) 2012, as detailed in the Schedule attached at Appendix 1 to the report and Plan at Appendix 2 (issued under separate cover in the Application Site Plans pack), be confirmed.

**48. TREE PRESERVATION ORDER (NO.143) 2012 –
SANDYCROFT AND ARDEN, WEST AVENUE, REDDITCH -
CONFIRMATION**

The Committee received a report which proposed the long-term protection of a group of sixteen mature Lime trees that were considered to be significant and of positive benefit to amenity and therefore worthy of retention in the longer term.

RESOLVED that

Tree Preservation Order No. (143) 2012, as detailed in the Schedule attached at Appendix 1 to the report and Plan at Appendix 2 (issued under separate cover in the Application Site Plans pack), be confirmed.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 7.34 pm

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CHAIR

