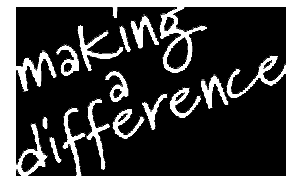


minute book 1

Council

Monday 14th July
2014
7.00 pm

Council Chamber
Town Hall
Redditch



www.redditchbc.gov.uk



Executive Committee

8th April 2014

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Bill Hartnett (Chair), Councillor Greg Chance (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Juliet Brunner, Brandon Clayton, John Fisher, Phil Mould, Mark Shurmer and Debbie Taylor

Also Present:

Councillors David Bush, Carole Gandy and Gay Hopkins

Officers:

Emma Baker, Jess Bayley, Clare Flanagan, Stacey Green, Sue Hanley and Jayne Pickering

Committee Services Officer:

Ivor Westmore

160. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Rebecca Blake.

161. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Jayne Pickering, Executive Director of Finance and Resources, declared an other disclosable interest in Item 6 (Football Task Group – Interim Report) as detailed separately at Minute 165 below.

162. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader advised that the minutes from the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 1st April relating to several items on the Executive Committee agenda had been circulated subsequent to the main agenda pack for this meeting.

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Chair

Executive Committee

8th April 2014

163. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 11th March 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

164. LANDSCAPING TASK GROUP FINAL REPORT

The Committee considered the final report and received a presentation from Councillor Gay Hopkins, Chair of the Landscaping Task Group, on behalf of her Group. She and her fellow Councillors had taken the decision to scrutinise landscaping because it was a key issue for the Council and the residents of the town given the green nature of the Borough and one which prompted many enquiries of elected Members.

The landscaping service was undergoing transformation during the course of the review and Members had the benefit of observing the adoption of new processes being introduced. It was apparent to Members engaged in the review that the introduction of multi-operative working by staff on the ground was having benefits for both the areas in which they were operating and for the staff themselves in that they were achieving a greater level of job satisfaction. The positive effects on the landscape in the Winyates area, where the new way of working was being undertaken, was demonstrated through the presentation. Customer satisfaction and community engagement were both reported to be increasing overall as a result.

The Task Group wished to ensure that Members were made aware of the work of the landscaping service generally and of particular landscaping issues within their local areas through regular updates and annual reporting. A suggestion was also made that the Council should consider the potential to generate revenue to fund the service through bulk planting and the sale of logs.

The Executive Committee welcomed the report and commended the enthusiasm of the Members who had been engaged in the review. The Committee broadly supported the recommendations although there was a degree of concern expressed at staff capacity. This concern was expressed in terms of the provision of updates to local Members and also around the carrying out of a feasibility study into bulk planting. It was explained that information for particular areas could be provided from the existing software relatively easily, although there was a cost implication for providing the same information on a Ward by Ward basis. Members were keen to see the provision of such information carried out on a trial

Executive Committee

8th April 2014

basis initially to establish take-up rates. The proposal to investigate bulk planting was stated to have been supported by Officers although it was conceded that this would be a limited feasibility study given that it was not a core Council activity.

RESOLVED that

- 1) new Members should be invited to visit teams responsible for tree maintenance, landscaping and cleansing services as part of the Member Induction process to provide them with an opportunity to learn about the work of these teams;**
 - a) a short briefing outlining the work of the place intervention, tree intervention and landscaping teams should be provided prior to a Council meeting early in the municipal year to provide those Members who are unable to participate in the member induction visit with an opportunity to learn about the work of these teams;**
- 2) a contact list of key senior and operational Officers, containing the telephone and email details together with the basic information about the Officers' responsibilities, should be provided for the consideration of Members;**
- 3) Members should be provided with updates on progress made addressing landscaping issues that they have referred to Officers at the request of residents including at the point of resolution;**
- 4) data relating to landscaping cases reported for each area be provided for Members' consideration on an annual basis. Every Member should receive data for the areas they cover on a trial basis initially to gauge levels of take-up across the Council and with the option to receive or not according to Members' wishes;**
- 5) one of the Environmental Services Teams' performance measures should be to monitor the number of landscape cases that take longer than six months to resolve. The information obtained through this monitoring process should be reported in the strategic measures for consideration of Senior Officers and elected Members;**

Executive Committee

8th April 2014

- 6) **Officers should undertake a feasibility study, risk assessment and cost benefit analysis to assess the potential for the Council to bulk plant trees in Council open spaces and other appropriate locations. This feasibility study should take into account the following matters:**
- a) **the legal implications, if any, of this action;**
 - b) **the financial costs involved in planting and maintaining these plants;**
 - c) **the availability of grants from the government and other sources to help pay for bulk planting in the Borough;**
 - d) **demand within the market;**
 - e) **where bulk planting would take place in the Borough;**
 - f) **the size of the plots available for bulk planting;**
 - g) **the implications for the Council's Planning Department in relation to the Local Plan;**
 - h) **the potential revenue that could be accrued by the Council; and**
- 7) **Officers should investigate how to dispose of logs in a way that would maximise income for the Council. Part of this investigation should involve a risk assessment. Any revenue from these sales should be reinvested in landscaping services.**

165. FOOTBALL TASK GROUP - INTERIM REPORT

The Committee received an Interim Report from the Football Task Group. The Interim Report outlined the conclusion of the Group's deliberations on just one of the Group's three objectives, that of investigating the sustainability of Redditch United FC for the future. This had been prioritised given the potential financial impact of the outcome on the Football Club.

Councillor David Bush, Chair of the Group, and Carole Gandy, Group Member, outlined the findings of the Review to date. They stated that the Task Group approach had allowed Members to speak to a range of specialist Officers from across a range of Council services which had provided them with a comprehensive picture of the issues to be faced in a possible relocation of the Football Club. These included having to factor in potentially costly flood risk analysis and attenuation measures at the new site, the effect of the Council's policies on affordable housing provision on the viability of the proposed housing development, the constraints on housing development resulting from limited road access to the existing football ground and the potential impact on any relocation

Executive Committee

8th April 2014

proposal of contravention of EU laws on State Aid. The outcome of the initial stage of the review was that the Task Group could not support the proposal to relocate Redditch United Football Club to a new site at Washford. Councillors Bush and Gandy explained that the benefit of the Group's review was in being able to bring such matters to the fore over a period of time and avoid any perception that decisions were being taken in this regard behind the scenes.

A number of Members commented that the outcome of the deliberations of the Task Group vindicated the position taken in November by the Executive Committee. The fact that a considerable portion of the information which had come out during the course of the Task Group's work had not been in the public domain at the time of the Executive Committee meeting was attributed to an unwillingness on the part of the Football Club to allow disclosure at that time. In addition, there was some dispute as to how much information had been provided in support of the previous decision to not support the relocation proposal, although this was tempered by a demonstrable lack of financial viability which rendered other considerations secondary. The convening of the special Executive Committee meeting in November was also discussed and it was suggested that the Council had been pushed in the direction of an early decision by the actions of the Football Club. There was a suggestion that the Club had felt there to be a breakdown in communications with the Council but it was stressed that the Council continued to work with the Club to explore options for the future.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the interim report of the Football Task Group be received and noted: and**
- 2) Redditch United Football Club be encouraged to discuss with Officers how to make the best use of the current football club site and to look at more local options to accommodate its expansion.**

(Prior to consideration of this item Jayne Pickering, Executive Director of Finance and Resources, declared an other disclosable interest, in view of her close relationship to a user of the club's facilities, and withdrew from the meeting.)

166. PLANNING RESPONSE TO STRATFORD-ON-AVON DISTRICT CORE STRATEGY - FOCUSED CONSULTATION: 2011 - 2031 HOUSING REQUIREMENT AND STRATEGIC SITES OPTIONS

The Committee considered a request for retrospective approval of a consultation response from Officers to the Stratford on Avon Draft

Executive Committee

8th April 2014

Focused Consultation – 2011-2031 Housing Requirements and Strategic Site Options. It was noted that the response, which had previously been considered by the Planning Advisory Panel, reiterated the Council's position on the avoidance of coalescence between Redditch, Studley and Mappleborough Green.

RECOMMENDED that

the Redditch Borough Council Officer response (attached at Appendix 1 to the report) to the SOADC Focused Consultation be approved.

167. WORCESTERSHIRE SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee held on 20th February 2014.

It had been recommended that the Council consider introducing a pilot methodology for dealing with planning consultations and noise nuisance complaints which had been trialled in Worcester City. Members were concerned that the methodology might not translate easily to a Redditch context, urged caution and therefore

RESOLVED that

- 1) Officers pilot the changes to planning referrals and report back to Executive Committee after 6 months; and**
- 2) Officers be requested to present a report to the July meeting of the Executive Committee in relation to the proposed changes to the management of noise complaints.**

168. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 4th March 2014 and a recommendation arising from an item considered at the subsequent meeting on 1st April 2014.

In respect of the minutes of the meeting held on 4th March, Members discussed the recommendations in respect of Threadneedle House but confirmed that, as the Executive Committee had previously determined the course of action it wished to pursue, it could not agree those recommendations.

Executive Committee

8th April 2014**RESOLVED that**4th March 2014

- 1) **the recommendations 1) and 2) from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in respect of Threadneedle House not be approved as the Executive Committee had previously determined its position in this regard; and**

1st April 2014

- 2) **the Member Development Steering Group be asked to extend participation in the annual disability awareness session to all members rather than to confine it to new members in the Member Induction process.**

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

There were no minutes or referrals under this item.

170. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

The regular update on the activity of the Council's Advisory Panel's and similar bodies was considered by the Committee.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

171. ACTION MONITORING

The Committee's Action Monitoring report was considered by Members. Officers undertook to report back to Councillor Brunner on the cost of holding the November Executive Committee meeting by the next meeting of this Committee. It was noted that Members had been provided with an update on the likely impact of County Council funding decisions on the Lifeline service at the most recent meeting of the Council.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.31 pm

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Chair



Executive Committee

24th June 2014

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Bill Hartnett (Chair), Councillor Greg Chance (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Juliet Brunner, Brandon Clayton, John Fisher, Phil Mould, Mark Shurmer and Debbie Taylor

Also Present:

Carole Gandy, Alan Mason and Yvonne Smith

Officers:

Emma Baker, Jess Bayley, Clare Flanagan, John Godwin, Sue Hanley, Lynn Jones, David Riley and Amanda de Warr

Committee Services Officer:

Ivor Westmore

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Rebecca Blake.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bill Hartnett declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Item 7 (Non-Domestic Rates – Discretionary Rate Relief Policy) as detailed separately at Minute 7 below.

3. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader advised that the minute extract from the most recent meeting of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee contained within the Additional Papers 1 pack should be read in conjunction with the report relating to item 5 on the agenda (Abbey Stadium Task Group – Final Report) for this evening's meeting.

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Chair

4. MINUTES**RESOLVED that**

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 8th April 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. ABBEY STADIUM TASK GROUP - FINAL REPORT

Councillors Carole Gandy and Alan Mason, representing the Abbey Stadium Task Group, presented the report prepared by their Group to the Executive Committee.

It was reported that the focus of the review was on exploring the options to extend the offer at the Abbey Stadium at minimum cost to the Council. The Group had been made aware early on in its review that a business case for expansion of the gym was in preparation and so had amended its scoping document to explore alternative options for making the Stadium a success.

The context of the review was a proliferation of other health and fitness centres in the town which was contributing to a gradual decline in membership numbers at the Abbey Stadium. The major recommendation of the Group was that alternative models for management of the Abbey Stadium and other leisure facilities within the Borough be explored. The Group had visited leisure centres in Evesham and Stratford and had determined that management by an external trust, such as was the case at these two centres, might lead to a reduction in costs whilst maintaining or improving the quality of services at the Abbey Stadium. In brief, the recommendations were as follows:

- That the option of the Abbey Stadium being managed by a leisure trust be explored;
- That, should the initial recommendation be agreed, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should pre-scrutinise any final business case relating to the future operation of the Abbey Stadium;
- That the provision of therapeutic services be considered;
- That the provision of a sauna/steam room be considered;
- That membership of Abbey Stadium should be promoted to those aged 55 or over; and
- That retail provision of leisure goods at Abbey Stadium be expanded.

A number of other matters, such as provision of car washing and the employment of apprentices, had also been considered during the course of the review.

The Executive welcomed the report and commended the Group on a fine piece of work. There was a general agreement that the Task Group, the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism, other Executive Members and Officers were of a like mind as regards the future management of the Abbey Stadium and the Council's leisure facilities more generally. The Committee was happy to accept the principle of the main recommendation, as expressed in an amended resolution which widened the scope to encompass leisure facilities more generally. Given that the third and fourth recommendations were dependant on the outcome of the exploration of various management options it was agreed that these be deferred. The Committee was content to agree the fifth and sixth recommendations as these could be enacted under the current management regime and were considered to be prudent measures which would assist in maintaining membership levels.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the Council should explore the options for a leisure trust to manage some or all of its facilities, including the Abbey Stadium;**
- 2) the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be given the opportunity to pre-scrutinise any final business case relating to the future operation of some or all of the Council's leisure facilities, including the Abbey Stadium, prior to its submission to the Executive Committee;**
- 3) consideration of the provision of therapeutic services be deferred pending the exploration of options for the future management of the Council's leisure facilities;**
- 4) consideration of the provision of a sauna/steam room be deferred pending the exploration of options for the future management of the Council's leisure facilities;**
- 5) Officers identify appropriate marketing measures to promote membership of the Abbey Stadium to people aged 55 years and over; and**
- 6) there should be expansion of the offer and additional marketing (including displays) of retail provision at the Abbey Stadium.**

6. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME 2014 AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

The Committee considered a report which contained a revised Local Development Scheme and a proposal that Officers be instructed to begin preparation of a Community Infrastructure Levy and Allocations Plan for the Council.

Officers explained that forthcoming meetings of the Planning Advisory Panel would be set aside to consider the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy. Members were informed that it was currently the intention of the Council to operate both Section 106 agreements and the new Community Infrastructure Levy alongside each other. The Committee was also reassured that the involvement of the Planning Advisory Panel would be in the preparation of the overall Community Infrastructure Levy Policy rather than in determining the levels of developer contributions from specific developments.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the contents of the report and the proposed amendments to the Local Development Scheme timetables be noted;**
- 2) Officers be formally instructed to begin preparation of a Community Infrastructure Levy and Allocations Plan for Redditch Borough Council; and**

RECOMMENDED that

- 3) Appendix A to the report, which includes the Council's forthcoming programme for planning policy documents from July 2014, be approved by Members.**

7. NON-DOMESTIC RATES - DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF POLICY

The Committee received a report setting out a new Policy to apply to Non-Domestic Rates discretionary relief awarded under the Local Government Finance Act 1988, and subsequent amending regulations.

The new Policy was aiming to bring consistency and fairness to the system of discretionary relief but there was an acknowledgement that it would have a financial impact on a number of organisations. Those organisations' concerned had been given 12 months notice of the change and there was transitional relief available to ameliorate any adverse financial impact. The criteria by which

organisations eligibility for relief was discussed. With regard to Paragraph 15.6 of the proposed Policy it was suggested that consideration of any appeal against a decision to refuse relief or against the level of the relief should be taken in conjunction with the relevant Portfolio Holder and the Leader of the Opposition. However, the general view was that this was a matter upon which the Portfolio Holder alone should be consulted as part of their role and, therefore, this proposal was not supported.

With respect to Paragraph 7 of the proposed Policy and the criteria of State Aid Declaration, Officers confirmed that the threshold of 200,000 euros was required to be expressed in euros.

RECOMMENDED that

the Non Domestic Rates – Discretionary Rate Relief Policy and Guidance attached as an appendix to the report submitted be adopted.

(Prior to consideration of this item Councillor Bill Hartnett, declared a disclosable pecuniary interest, in view of his position as Chair of Redditch Cooperative Homes and as a Board Member of Accord Housing group, and withdrew from the meeting. Councillor Greg Chance assumed the Chair during consideration of this item.)

8. LAND TO THE REAR OF MIDDLE HOUSE LANE

A report was considered which proposed amendment of a decision taken in relation to the disposal of a piece of land to the rear of Middle House Lane, Redditch.

In 2005 this piece of land had been declared surplus by the Council and it had been agreed to dispose of it in conjunction with a site belonging to Worcestershire County Council which sits adjacent and provides access to it. At the time the Council had specified that the land should be disposed of to a social landlord of the Council's choosing for the development of social housing.

The County Council was now seeking to dispose of its land at market value and, should the Borough Council not openly market its own site, would do so in isolation, leaving the Borough Council with the possibility of having to pay a premium or ransom to access its own site. Members noted that the description of the site was not entirely accurate as it was not bordered by Birmingham Road as specified in paragraph 3.12.

RECOMMENDED that

the land to the rear of Middle House Lane, Redditch be disposed of at market value.

9. REVIEW OF TOWN HALL CONCESSIONARY USE

Officers explained that the report submitted to the Executive Committee attempted to bring consistency and clarity to the system of providing concessionary use of the Civic Suite in Redditch Town Hall.

Members welcomed the clarity which the new Policy would bring. There was a suggestion that, in the event of disputes over the granting of concessionary use, the final decision be taken by the Leader in conjunction with the Leader of the Opposition, but this proposal was not supported.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the proposed booking and administration procedure (Appendix 1 to the report submitted) for Civic Suite Concessionary Room Bookings be approved and adopted; and**
- 2) Officers be directed to commence with the new procedure from Monday 30th June 2014.**

10. MAKING EXPERIENCES COUNT - CUSTOMER SERVICES MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 4, 2013/14

The Committee received the report detailing customer feedback data for the fourth quarter of 2013/14, along with transactional data relating to the Customer Service Centre.

It was stated that the numbers of complaints had fallen significantly in comparison to previous quarters which was seen as evidence of the benefits of the introduction of a systems thinking approach to the provision of services. The time for the resolution of complaints was also falling in line with this reduction in overall numbers of complaints.

Officers provided a brief update on the Worcestershire Hub, noting that the work the Borough Council now did for the County Council was minimal and that the Hub had essentially ceased to exist in a meaningful form. The County Council now relied on online contact with its customers. One impact of this was a reduction in the financial subsidy provided to the Borough Council.

Finally, it was proposed that future Customer Service feedback and transactional data be provided to Members via the Members' Newsletter rather than in a quarterly report to the Executive Committee. Some Members were concerned that this would result in good news about improving customer performance not reaching the public. In support of the proposal, it was noted that Members would receive more regular updates on Customer Services performance and the relevant Portfolio Holder and Officers would ensure that good news was made public as and when appropriate. Officers also undertook to confirm for Councillor Brunner following the meeting the means by which the Members' Newsletter was circulated.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the contents of the report be noted; and**
- 2) **the information contained within the report in future be provided via the Members' Newsletter.**

11. QUARTERLY MONITORING OF WRITE-OFFS - QUARTER 4 2013/14

The Committee considered a report which detailed action taken by Officers with respect to the write-off of debts during the financial year 2013/14 and the profile and level of the Council's outstanding debt.

Officers noted that the total amount of irrecoverable debt written off by Officers during the year was well within the current bad debt provision. The Committee was also requested to use its discretionary powers to write-off three debts considered irrecoverable but for which the present Write-off Policy did not provide the necessary authority for Officers so to do.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the contents of the report be noted; and**
- 2) **the debt owing in relation to the three cases of debt detailed at Appendix 1 to the report submitted be written off as irrecoverable under the Executive Committee's discretionary powers.**

12. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 1st April 2014.

**Executive
Committee**24th June 2014

RESOLVED that**the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 1st April 2014 be received and noted.****13. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT**

The update on the activity of the Council's Advisory Panels and similar bodies was considered by the Committee. Officers undertook to advise Councillor Brandon Clayton of the date of the last meeting of the Housing Advisory Panel following the meeting.

RESOLVED that**the report be noted.****14. ACTION MONITORING**

The Committee's Action Monitoring Report was considered by Members. Officers explained that, although key Members had been updated on the ongoing expenditure for securing the Hewell Road Swimming Baths site, a briefing had not been provided to all Committee Members. Officers also undertook to once again follow up the progress on the cost of holding the November meeting of the Executive Committee for Councillor Brunner.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.48 pm

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Chair



Audit & Governance Committee

Thursday, 24 April 2014

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Derek Taylor (Chair), and Councillors John Fisher, Mark Shurmer, Yvonne Smith and Pat Witherspoon

Dave Jones – Independent Member (non-voting co-opted)

Also Present:

Zoe Thomas (Grant Thornton – External Auditors)

Officers:

S Jones, S Morgan, D Poole, H Tiffney and L Tompkin

Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley

41. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Roger Hill.

42. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

43. MINUTES

Members considered the minutes from the previous meeting of the Committee held on 16th January 2014.

During the consideration of these minutes the following issues were raised:

i) Lead Fraud and Risk Member Training

Councillor Bennett had confirmed at the previous meeting that he would arrange his risk training with Officers. However,

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Chair

Audit & Governance Committee

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Officers advised that they had not yet been contacted to deliver this training. Members therefore agreed that this matter should be added to the Committee's Action List.

ii) The Adequacy of Certain Planning Assumptions under the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

Officers explained that the Council's outturn figures for 2013/14 were being considered. As part of this process Officers would seek to identify potential underspends in budgets as well as to assess budget assumptions. The Council's Corporate Management Team was in the process of developing a six month plan for the organisation which would include considering the role of service transformation in this period as well as budget assumptions for the year ahead.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the Committee held on 16th January 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

44. AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - ACTION LIST AND WORK PROGRAMME

Action List

i) Ref 1 – Invoices for Community Meeting Rooms

Officers advised that the Council had recently introduced a new cash receipting system. This would enable the Council to receive payment for services by card from any location using the internet. This system would be used in future for bookings of the community meeting rooms.

Action: item to be removed from the Action List.

ii) Ref 2 – Valuation of Assets Service Level Agreement (SLA)

It was acknowledged that there had been some problems with valuations of Council assets in previous years, particularly with a valuation of the Abbey Stadium. However, the Council's working relationship with the Property Services team had improved and more comparable work was undertaken to ensure that valuations were reasonable.

Action: item to be removed from the Action List.

Audit & Governance Committee

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iii) Ref 4 – Monthly Rents for Commercial Buildings

Members were advised that the standard practice remained for tenants to pay rents for commercial buildings on a quarterly basis. However, in cases where tenants were struggling to pay on a quarterly basis monthly payments could be negotiated. Members requested that the leases for commercial buildings be discussed further with Property Services in order to assess whether greater flexibility could be applied on the payment of rents.

Action: item to remain on the Action List for future monitoring and reporting.

iv) Ref 5 – Fraud Monitoring and Reporting Figures

Officers explained that fraud trends for 2013/14 would be reported for Members' consideration in a Fraud Monitoring report, due to be presented for the Committee's consideration on 3rd July 2014. This report would be followed by quarterly updates throughout the year.

Based on an initial analysis of figures available for the year it appeared that fraud referrals were reducing rather than increasing. In part the introduction of an automated system providing information from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) had had a significant impact on the reduction in fraud referrals as this had enabled the Council to act at an early stage to resolve problems. In addition, two trials run by the DWP, involving data matching against Experian data and against claims where earnings or tax credits hadn't changed in the previous 13 month period, had skewed fraud referral figures in 2012. Therefore the reduction in fraud referrals was considered to be a positive move in direction rather than a sign that fraud wasn't being reported.

Action: item to be removed from the Action List.

v) Ref 6 – Monitoring Use of Balances to Support Expenditure

Members noted that further updates on the Council's budgetary position would be provided by both Officers and the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management, Councillor Fisher, later in the meeting.

Action: item to remain on the Action List for future monitoring and reporting.

Audit & Governance Committee

Thursday, 24 April 2014

RESOLVED that

subject to the comments detailed in the preamble above, the Committee's Action List and Work Programme be noted and the amendments and updates highlighted be agreed.

45. RISK MONITORING & REPORTING

The Committee received two separate presentations from Heads of Service on the operational risks identified within the following service areas:

- Housing Services
- Business Transformation

Housing Services

The Committee was advised that risk management was a continuous and developing process within Housing Services and subject to on-going review. Twelve key operational risks had been identified as areas of current concern, though it was likely that these would change over time. Each of these risks were addressed to some extent in the performance measures for Housing Services and it was agreed that further information about these measures should be circulated for Members' consideration.

i) Risk of failure to effectively manage and achieve efficiencies through Housing Services Transformation

Housing Services had been working in different ways for some time as a result of trialling transformed ways of working within the community. This trial was due to be extended across the Borough through the work of the Locality teams and would lead to a reduction in risks to the Council as well as efficiency savings. However, Officers were not complacent and risks would continue to be monitored at a corporate level.

Councillor Shurmer, in his capacity as Portfolio Holder for Housing, commended the work of the Housing Locality teams. He urged every Member to visit the teams and to shadow them at work when they had an opportunity to do so.

Audit & Governance Committee

Thursday, 24 April 2014

ii) Risk of failure to effectively manage Housing Repairs and Maintenance

At the start of the service transformation process the Council had employed two managers to manage the Housing Repairs and Housing Maintenance functions separately. Following staff turnover a single manager had been successfully recruited to this post, both securing efficiency savings and minimising the risks that a single manager might not be found who was capable of managing both functions. These services were in the process of being restructured subject to the outcomes of staff consultation.

iii) Risk of failure to manage the impact of welfare reform

A number of changes had already been made to the welfare system, including the introduction of the bedroom tax, and further developments were due to take place, such as the introduction of Universal Credit. This would have an impact on some residents living in the Borough, including Council tenants. The Housing Services team had been doing a lot of work to identify which customers would be affected by these changes and what help they required to remain in their homes. This had included working with tenants to help them manage their finances effectively.

iv) Risk of failure to manage the liability for Council tax on void properties

As of 1st April 2014 Councils were required to pay Council tax for void properties. In previous years there had been greater flexibility over these payments as properties could be left void for up to six months without payments needing to be made. There was the potential for this change to payment rules to have a significant impact on the Council's finances. For this reason Officers had been attempting to re-let void properties more quickly and in a better condition than previously.

v) Risk of failure to manage the impact of increasing homelessness cases

There had been an increase in homelessness cases within the Borough in recent months. In part this was due to the fact that private landlords were increasingly reluctant to accept tenants who were on benefits. Officers were, however, investigating further the root causes of homelessness and actions that could be taken to help prevent future cases of homelessness.

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To address this problem the Council was using 21 properties from its housing stock to use as temporary accommodation for people at risk of becoming homeless. Bed and Breakfast accommodation also continued to be used in emergency situations.

vi) Risk of inability to collect rent

There had been some technical problems in recent months involving processing of rent payments and the transfer of housing benefit payments using Council ICT systems. There had also been some problems with tenants who were not paying rent. As a result of service transformation Officers were, however, confident that these problems had been largely resolved.

Officers confirmed that as a result of service transformation the Council was providing direct support to people who were struggling to pay their rent. This included working with people to identify the reasons that were causing them to default on payments. These reasons could be multiple and complex, including health, mental health, education, and other causes. Where causes could be identified staff worked with partner organisations to attempt to help that customer. This approach had started to pay dividends and rent arrears owed to the Council were falling.

vii) Risk of failure to effectively manage leaseholder properties

There were a number of leaseholders who had purchased flats in blocks where Council properties were also located. The leaseholders were responsible for contributing payments towards the maintenance of communal areas. In the past the Council had not always been particularly proactive when raising bills for payment. There was also greater scope for the Council to interact with leaseholders about the works that they could undertake independently.

viii) Risk of failure to effectively manage capital projects

Housing Officers were working closely with the Council's Procurement team to ensure that contracts for capital projects were appropriate. Officers were attempting to approach expenditure of capital funding in a different way, such as in accordance with the work of the Locality teams.

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ix) Risks with data systems.

Officers recognised that appropriate systems needed to be available to staff to enable them to undertake tasks required for the delivery of Housing Services.

x) Risk of potential for an increase in demand for Right to Buy

There had been an increase in both enquiries about Right to Buy and the number of purchases that had occurred during the previous 12 months; approximately 20 properties had been purchased during this period under Right to Buy rules compared to an average of four in preceding years.

Sales to tenants under Right to Buy rules reduced the housing stock available to accommodate Council tenants. However, the Council can keep 25% of Right to Buy sales money and use up to 30% of the revenue to put towards the purchase of a property. The Council had bought approximately five properties using this funding already, though a further six properties were in the process of being purchased. The Council was specifically seeking to obtain certain types of properties, such as two bedroom houses and bungalows, in order to meet demand in the Council's allocations process. However, once an individual had been a Council tenant or (Registered Social Landlord tenant) for five years they would become eligible to purchase it under Right to Buy rules.

xi) Risk of failure to obtain the contract for Home Support Services from Worcestershire County Council

All of Worcestershire County Council's Supporting People contracts had either already expired or were due to come to an end shortly. As part of this process the Council's current Home Support Service contract with the county Council was due to end in September 2014.

The Home Support Service provided support to vulnerable and elderly people living in sheltered accommodation. Under the Supporting People contract tenants in receipt of housing benefits had received the Home Support Service for free. The Council was seeking to continue to provide some parts of this service, though it was likely to be subject to the payment of a fee. Affected tenants were in the process of being consulted about these changes and those in receipt of a free service would be asked to consider whether they would be prepared to pay for the service.

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The potential for some Home Support Services to be paid for directly through housing benefit payments was briefly discussed. Officers explained that it was not possible for tenants to pay for the Home Support Service directly through housing benefit payments. However, it was possible that a service charge could be introduced which could be paid for using housing benefit.

xii) Risk of failure to obtain payment from St David's House tenants due to changes in contracts

The Council currently had two contracts with Worcestershire County Council with implications for St David's House; the Supporting People contract, and a care contract. The county Council was seeking to procure the care contract in future from a single provider and the Council had submitted a bid to provide this service.

Under the terms of the existing contracts payments were made by tenants to Worcestershire County Council. In future payments would need to be made directly to Redditch Borough Council. Staff at St David's House were receiving training to enable them to support tenants to make payments in ways that best met their needs. This was occurring at a time when the Council was streamlining services provided at St David's House.

Business Transformation

The Business Transformation presentation detailed the operational risks within ICT Services, Human Resources and the Information Management teams. As these were all enabling services it was important to ensure that each of these services continued to transform to ensure that they met the needs of front line services.

In ICT there had been some difficulties recruiting and retaining qualified staff. This was partly as a consequence of an increase in demand for skilled workers at a time when salaries within the private sector were raising whilst they remained fairly static within the public sector. Apprentices were being recruited to fill some of the gap, though the recruitment process was being reviewed as delays in getting an individual into their post had an impacted on capacity within the team.

The ICT team was also careful to maintain and test disaster recovery arrangements to ensure that core data was not lost. In

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previous years back up tapes had been used but it was recognised that these were not particularly secure. Increasingly, therefore, virtual systems were being used to store data securely. As part of this process the Council would retain an entire copy of data for Redditch systems which was stored in Bromsgrove (and vice versa).

Public Sector Network (PSN) requirements meant that the Council needed to apply business server patches more regularly than in previous years. To ensure that the Council could fulfil this requirement effectively a roll out plan and schedule had been developed.

Support was also required within the ICT team for service transformation and system upgrades within the Council, including the introduction of Windows 7 and Word 2008. Again a strategic plan had been developed and staff were adopting a flexible approach to working in order to prioritise workloads.

With regard to Information Management there were a number of risks associated with the potential for the loss of data, storage of data and breach of data protection rules. To address these risks the Council was restricting access to some forms of data or using encryption when appropriate. Data management training was provided consistently to all staff and audits were undertaken to identify the reasons for any data breaches.

The Human Resources team needed to invest sufficient resources to support the needs of the organisation. This included investing in developing the skills of managers and team leaders particularly with regard to people management skills. This would enable the Human Resources team to focus on offering specialist support where required through service transformation.

RESOLVED that

the presentations be noted.

46. FRAUD MONITORING

Officers and Members responsible for fraud monitoring advised that they had no updates for the consideration of the Committee.

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47. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2013/2014 - PROGRESS UPDATE

The Committee was advised that Officers were in the process of reviewing the Council's accounts for the 2013/14. As part of this process the Annual Governance Statement for 2013/2014 would be addressed. However, this had not reached a stage where detailed information could be provided.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

48. GRANT THORNTON PROGRESS UPDATE - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FINANCE AND RESOURCES

The Committee received an update report detailing the action that had been taken to address the issues raised in the External Auditors' Progress Report 2013/14 at the previous meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED that

the Grant Thornton Progress Updates, as detailed in the report, be noted.

49. GRANT THORNTON - CERTIFICATION WORK REPORT 2012/13 AND CERTIFICATION PLAN 2013/14

The Committee considered the Claims Certification Letter for 2012/13 and the Certification Plan for 2013/14 from the Council's External Auditors Grant Thornton.

RESOLVED that

the Grant Thornton Claims Certification Letter for 2012/13 and Certification Plan for 2013/14 be noted.

50. GRANT THORNTON AUDITING STANDARDS 2013/14

The Committee received the Auditing Standards report for 2013/14 from the Council's External Auditors Grant Thornton.

Members were advised that the External Auditors were required to ask representatives of the Council certain questions concerning fraud and governance. The Executive Director for Finance and Corporate Resources had already responded to these questions.

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RESOLVED that

the report and management responses be noted.

51. GRANT THORNTON AUDIT PLAN 2013/14

Members considered the Audit Plan 2013/14 from the Council's External Auditors Grant Thornton.

RESOLVED that

the 2013/14 Audit Opinion Plan be noted and agreed.

52. GRANT THORNTON - AUDIT FEE LETTER 2014/15

The Committee considered the Audit Fee letter for 2014/15 from the Council's External Auditors Grant Thornton. It was confirmed that the proposed fee was the same as the charge for the previous year.

RESOLVED that

the proposed audit fee for 2014/15 of £76,380 be approved.

53. PORTFOLIO HOLDER UPDATE - QUARTERLY BUDGET MONITORING

Councillor Fisher, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management, provided an update on the latest financial monitoring report that had been considered at a meeting of the Executive Committee on 11th April 2014. The content of this report had indicated that the Council was on track to achieve anticipated savings. He suggested that progress had been made and he commended staff for working hard to achieve efficiency savings during this period. Further budget savings would be achieved over the following months as a number of service reviews were due to be completed.

Members noted that at the beginning of the year Officers had notified Members that there would be approximately £500,000 of unidentified savings which would need to be made. Officers confirmed that some of these savings had subsequently been identified, though it was anticipated that further savings would be achieved following service reviews. There was also the likelihood that a number of savings would be identified through the Transformation Plan that was in the process of being reviewed at a corporate level.

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It was important for Members to appreciate how the Council had managed to achieve a balanced budget. For this reason, as well as to ensure that appropriate decisions were made about the budget, Members agreed that this subject should continue to be monitored by the Committee.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

54. INTERNAL AUDIT - MONITORING REPORT

The Committee considered the Internal Audit Monitoring Report as at 31st March 2014.

During consideration of this report the following issues were the subject of more detailed discussions:

i) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 1st April 2013 to 31st March 2014

Some concerns were expressed about the direction of travel in terms of performance in relation to these indicators. However, Officers explained that the figures for performance indicators were not comparable as the Internal Audit Team audited different services each year as part of a three year rolling programme. In cases where problems were identified action would be taken to ensure that the risks to the Council were minimised.

ii) Council Tax - Access and Security

Concerns were expressed that an unknown system user named "Janet" had been provided with high level access to the Council tax system. Officers were asked to review this matter further and to report back for Members' consideration.

iii) Cash Collection – Suspense Account

The Internal Audit team had identified £74,000 in the Suspense Account as at 12th December 2013. Money was often paid into this account on a temporary basis whilst officers sought to identify the appropriate account that it was intended for. Sometimes the Council received large grants but no indication was provided as to the purpose of this money, though equally very small sums could be held in this account whilst attempts were made to identify the right budget.

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iv) Cash Float Management

Members noted that within the report it had been suggested that floats kept by cashiers should be checked by their managers on a “regular basis”, though no clarification had been provided regarding the definition of “regular” in this instance. Officers explained that it had been suggested there should be checks at key moments, such as prior to pay day. However, it was agreed that more specific information about timeframes should be recorded in future copies of these reports.

v) Implementation Dates

In many cases implementation dates had been recorded for the completion of tasks outlined in the report. In every case Internal Audit would check to ensure that tasks were implemented by those deadlines. Generally checks would take place within six months of the deadline unless the issue was considered to be urgent in which case it would be revisited within three months. There was also a separate report produced by Internal Audit which tracked the implementation of recommendations and this was similarly reported for the consideration of the Committee.

vi) VAT

Concerns were expressed that the Financial Services Manager, as a senior Officer, was completing all VAT returns and it was suggested that this would be a more suitable role for a junior member of staff. Officers confirmed that this role would be assumed by other Officers within the Financial Services team. However, due to the fact a number of members of staff were currently on maternity leave creating capacity issues the Manager was currently fulfilling this role on an interim basis.

vii) Cash Collection

Reference was made to the 2012/13 finding regarding the ‘Removal of Network Access for Leavers’ and further clarification was requested about the meaning of this issue. Officers explained that some former members of staff had been retained on internal systems as existing users. Work was being undertaken to resolve this problem.

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viii) Kingsley Sports Centre

Concerns were expressed about the high levels of risk that had been identified concerning the retention of credit card data at Kingsley Sports Centre. Legislative changes that had come into effect as of 1st April 2014 placed the Council at risk of being fined if it retained credit card data. Interim arrangements had been put in place to address this problem whilst internal systems were upgraded. Staff had been provided with training on taking payments, though this had been complicated by the fact that staff worked shifts at the sports centres and it was not therefore possible to train every member of staff at the same time.

Officers had been able to ascertain that problems with the management of payment data were more likely to occur when a single member of staff was working on the system. To prevent this from occurring it was considered best practice to avoid situations where only a single member of staff would be handling money. Due to the high level of risk identified for this matter it was agreed that an update on this situation should be provided for Members' consideration at the following meeting of the Committee.

ix) New Cash Receipting System

Officers explained that there had been a few initial problems with the new cash receipting system. These were in the process of being resolved.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **Members receive an update on the situation regarding credit card payments at Kingsley Sports Centre at the following meeting of the Committee; and**
- 2) **the report be noted.**

55. INTERNAL AUDIT - ANNUAL AUDIT PLAN 2014/2015

The Committee received the 2014/15 Internal Audit Report of the Services Manager of Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Service.

There were a total of 484 audit days planned for the overall audit group for 2014/15 and a balancing figure of 148 for 2013/14. The balancing figure shown against the 2013/14 systems audits was due to the fact that audits within this section were generally

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undertaken on a three year rolling programme. The balancing figure related to audit reviews undertaken in 2013/14 which would not be undertaken in 2014/15.

RESOLVED that

the 2014/15 Audit Plan and Performance Indicators be approved.

56. REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE 2013/14 - CHAIR'S REPORT

The Committee was invited to consider the effectiveness of the Audit and Governance Committee in 2013/14 as part of an end of year report.

Officers explained that in line with the transformation work in the Democratic Services team changes to the future operation of the Audit and Governance Committee were being considered. As part of this process it had been proposed that the Committee should be merged with the Council's Standards Committee. To minimise the risk that this merger could create lengthy meetings Officers would be working with Councillors to ensure that the content of the agenda for each meeting of the Committee was appropriate.

Councillor Witherspoon confirmed that she had also been consulted about this proposal in her capacity as Chair of the Standards Committee. She had been assured that in cases where a significant issue involving a particular Councillor arose they could be addressed during Sub-Committee meetings. However, as 50 per cent of the Standards Committee meetings had been cancelled during the year and the two meetings that had taken place had been relatively short in length it was not anticipated that the merger of the two Committees would have a significant impact on the length of Committee meetings.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

57. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2014/15

Members confirmed the dates of the meetings of the Committee that were scheduled to take place in 2014/15.

The Chair reported that he would be standing down from the Council at the local elections in May 2014. For this reason he

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would not be chairing the meetings of the Committee in the new municipal year. He thanked Members and Officers for their hard work during the two years in which he had been the Chair of the Committee and Members collectively wished him well for the future.

RESOLVED that

the dates of the meetings of the Audit and Governance Committee scheduled to take place in 2014/15 be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 7.03 pm
and closed at 8.40 pm

.....
Chair



Licensing Committee

Monday, 7 April 2014

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Phil Mould (Chair), Councillors Michael Braley, Andrew Fry, Pattie Hill, Gay Hopkins and Wanda King

Officers:

K Barnett and D Etheridge

Committee Services Officer:

P Ross

32. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Joe Baker, Alan Mason and Brenda Quinney.

33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

34. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 11th November 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

35. SCRAP METAL DEALERS ACT 2013 - UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the local implementation of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 which came fully into force on 1st December 2013.

.....
Chair

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The Senior Licensing Practitioner introduced the report and in doing so informed Members that all of the applications received were subject to consultation with West Mercia Police and the Environment Agency. Six site licences had been issued to scrap metal dealers operating sites in the Redditch Borough Council area. 23 licences had been issued to individual mobile collectors allowing them to collect scrap metal within the Borough. All licences had been granted by officers under delegated powers, none of the licences required referral the Licensing Committee. If the suitability of any licence holder was brought into question they would be brought before a Licensing Sub-Committee.

On Tuesday 17th December 2013, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) officers were involved in an operation with officers from West Mercia Police. The operation involved visiting sites where a site licence had been granted. The visits were intended to provide advice on the new legislation and in particular the record keeping requirements. Officers took the opportunity to check the records kept at the sites. Compliance was generally good, although some improvement was required at one or two sites. Advisory letters were issued to those licence holders who required improvements to their record keeping. These sites would be revisited in the near future.

WRS officers had supported other police operations, working with HM Revenue & Customs and Vehicle & Operator Services Agency (VOSA) throughout the County targeting both mobile scrap metal collectors and scrap metal sites.

The Senior Licensing Practitioner responded to Members' questions with regard to the noise nuisance caused by some scrap metal collectors using a loop sound system calling out for 'scrap metal'. Noise nuisance was not covered in the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013. Press releases had been issued to raise awareness amongst the general public of the new licencing requirements. Members and the general public could inform WRS officers of any concerns or issues experienced with mobile collectors in the Redditch Borough Council area.

RESOLVED that

the report in relation to the local implementation of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 be noted.

36. LICENSING ACT 2003 - REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

The Committee considered a report which detailed the draft revised Statement of Licensing Policy for the purpose of consultation with all relevant partners.

The Senior Licensing Practitioner introduced the report and in doing so informed Members that the Council's existing Statement of Licensing Policy had been published on 7th January 2011. Section 5 of the Licensing Act 2003 required licensing authorities to review their Statement of Licensing Policy every five years, therefore a reviewed Statement of Licensing Policy would need to be approved by Council and published no later than 7th January 2016. Whilst the Council were not legally required to review their Statement of Licensing Policy for another two years, officers felt it was desirable to review the Statement of Licensing Policy at this stage as a result of the large number of changes to the legislation and statutory guidance since the existing Statement of Licensing Policy was published in January 2011.

The draft revised Statement of Licensing Policy, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, had been completely redrafted and was based on a template provided by the Local Government Association.

The Senior Licensing Practitioner drew Members' attention to section 3.8 in the report, which detailed the legislative changes reflected within the revised Statement of Licensing Policy and section 3.9 in the report, which detailed all the relevant parties to be consulted with. The consultation would be carried out over a period of twelve weeks with the responses received during the consultation period presented to the next Licensing Committee meeting.

The Senior Licensing Practitioner responded to Members' questions in respect of door supervision in licensed premises. Members were informed that a Security Industry Authority (SIA) licence was required to undertake the licensable activities of a door supervisor. The SIA licence for door supervision required applicants to undergo specific training requirements.

RESOLVED that

the draft revised Statement of Licensing Policy be approved for the purpose of consultation with all relevant parties.

37. HOME OFFICE CONSULTATION ON LOCALLY SET FEES UNDER THE LICENSING ACT 2003

The Committee considered a report which provided details of the Home Office eight week consultation on the implementation of locally set fees under the Licensing Act 2003 and the draft response to the consultation from Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) on behalf of the six licensing authorities in Worcestershire.

The Senior Licensing Practitioner introduced the report and informed Members that the centrally set fees under the Licensing Act 2003 had remained unchanged since 2005. The implementation of locally set fees would enable licensing authorities to achieve full cost recovery in delivering their functions under the Licensing Act 2003. Section 121 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 introduced a power for the Home Secretary to prescribe in regulations that these fee levels should be set by individual licensing authorities. Locally set fees could not be used to raise extra revenue, nor were they tools to tackle crime. Fees must be based on recovering the costs that licensing authorities incurred when carrying out their licensing functions.

The Home Office was now moving towards the implementation of locally set fees and on 13th February 2014 launched an eight week consultation on the issue of locally set fees, as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report. Officers from WRS had drafted a response to the consultation, as detailed at Appendix 2 to the report, to be submitted to the Home Office by 10th April 2014.

RESOLVED that

the responses to the Home Office consultation on fees under the Licensing Act 2003, as detailed at Appendix 2 to the report be noted and the Licensing and Support Services Manager, Worcestershire Regulatory Services be tasked to submit the responses on behalf of Redditch Borough Council.

38. REGULATION OF FACE TO FACE DIRECT DEBIT CHARITABLE STREET COLLECTIONS

The Committee considered a report which provided details of Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) officers who had engaged with representatives of the Public Fundraising Regulatory Association (PFRA) with a view to establishing an agreement to regulate the working days and areas of face to face direct debit charity street fundraisers in Redditch Town Centre.

The Senior Licensing Practitioner introduced the report and drew Members' attention to the findings of the Redditch Market Task Group, who were commissioned to carry out a review by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November 2011. One of the recommendations in the Redditch Market Task Group's final report was that the Council should engage with the Public Fundraising Regulatory Association (PFRA) with a view to reaching an agreement to regulate the working days and areas of face to face direct debit charity street fundraisers in Redditch Town Centre.

The Redditch Market Task Group report highlighted that one of the major concerns raised by those market traders consulted with was the operation of face to face direct debit charity street fundraisers, often termed as 'chuggers', in the very near vicinity of the market. The presence of the charity street fundraisers in Alcester Street and Market Place often had a detrimental impact on trade as this was clearly deterring potential shoppers from entering the market area in the knowledge that they would likely be approached by charity street fundraisers.

The market traders also reported that on a number of occasions the charity street fundraisers had encroached upon the market trading area that was supposedly off-limits. This was believed to have had a damaging impact on trade especially as the adjacent Kingfisher Shopping Centre had already imposed a ban on charity fundraisers.

Members of the Task Group acknowledged that street fundraising was a crucial method for many charities in raising money for very worthwhile causes. The Task Group did not therefore propose that a byelaw, which would require the approval of the Secretary of State, was developed that would ban face to face direct debit charity street fundraisers from operating in the town centre altogether. However, they felt that a fairer balance could and should be reached that would preserve the various charities ability to raise donations in Redditch Town Centre but not at the expense of the market trade.

Given that one of the Task Group's main recommendations was to reduce the number of general retail market operating days to no more than three days a week, Task Group Members felt that this provided sufficient scope for direct debit charity street fundraisers to operate in Redditch Town Centre outside of the market's trading days.

The PFRA are a charity-led membership body that self-regulates all forms of face to face direct debit fundraising. This would be a voluntary arrangement which was not legally binding and could not be upheld through formal enforcement action. However they had been implemented by a number of local authorities throughout the

United Kingdom and had been proven to work well in minimising problems.

The Council's Executive Committee had considered the final report of the Redditch Market Task Group and had agreed with the recommendation that the Council should engage with the PFRA with a view to reaching an agreement to regulate the working days and areas of face to face direct debit charity street fundraisers in Redditch Town Centre.

Officers from WRS, along with Members and officers from Redditch Borough Council had engaged with representatives of the PFRA with a view to establishing such an agreement and a number of meetings had taken place.

In September 2013 a site visit was undertaken by Members, officers and the then Head of Policy at the PFRA in order to establish suitable locations for face to face direct debit charity street fundraisers within Redditch Town Centre. Following this meeting a draft Site Management Agreement was prepared and sent to the Council's Town Centre Coordinator for consideration.

The Council's Town Centre Coordinator met with the Council's Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Regulatory Services and the Licensing Committee Chairman. At the meeting a number of amendments to the draft Site Management Agreement were discussed and agreed. A summary of those amendments were sent to the PFRA to consult with their members on whether they agreed with the Council's amendments. Providing the PFRA agree the final Site Management Agreement would be made available for all parties to sign. The final Site Management Agreement would then be presented to a future meeting of the Licensing Committee.

This final Site Management Agreement would clearly set out the parameters in relation to where, when and how face to face direct debit charity street fundraisers would be able to operate. It was therefore anticipated that it would go some way in relieving the perceived problems associated with the activities of face to face direct debit charity street fundraisers operating in Redditch Town Centre.

The PFRA produce best practice guidance for face to face direct debit charity street fundraisers, comprising of rules and also a fines system. Their compliance team would be responsible for issuing notices to fundraising organisations found to be in breach of those rules. The rules, which will build on the "Institute of Fundraisings code of practice", are contained in the PFRA rule book as detailed at Appendix A to the report.

Licensing Committee

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The Senior Licensing Practitioner responded to Members' questions with regard to what checks would be in place to monitor fundraisers once the final Site Management Agreement was in place. Members' attention was drawn to page 118 in the report, which provided information on penalty points issued by the PFRA in consultation with nominated persons, as listed. Officers could walk the area to monitor the fundraisers activities to ensure compliance and liaise with the market traders to see if they were still experiencing any issues. The Senior Licensing Practitioner informed Members that once the final Site Management Agreement was in place, press releases would be issued in order to inform the general public of the terms of the Site Management Agreement and who to contact should they have any issues or concerns with regard to the activities of face to face direct debit charity street fundraisers in Redditch Town Centre.

The Senior Licensing Officer further responded to Members' questions with regard to door to door collectors and fundraisers. He highlighted that door to door collectors and fundraisers were covered under different legislation.

Members agreed that face to face direct debit charity street fundraisers could be seen as a nuisance to shoppers and felt that control was needed and a Site Management Agreement would provide that level of control.

RESOLVED that

the contents of the update report on the implementation of the Council's Site Management Agreement with the Public Fundraising Regulatory Association, in relation to the control of face to face direct debit charity street fundraisers be noted.

39. LICENSING COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2013/2014

The Committee noted the Licensing Committee Work Programme for the remainder of the current municipal year.

RESOLVED that

the Licensing Committee Work Programme 2013/2014 be noted.



Planning Committee

12th March 2014

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Andrew Fry (Chair), Councillor Alan Mason (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Joe Baker, Roger Bennett, Michael Chalk, Roger Hill, Brenda Quinney, Yvonne Smith and Pat Witherspoon (substituting for Councillor Wanda King)

Officers:

S Edden, A Hussain, A Rutt and S Williams

Committee Services Officer:

J Smyth

87. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Wanda King.

88. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

89. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the 12th February 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

90. UPDATE REPORTS

The Update report relating to Application to be considered were received and noted.

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Chair

**91. PLANNING APPLICATION 2013/179/OUT –
LAND OPPOSITE THE FOXLYDIATE,
BIRCHFIELD ROAD, WEBHEATH, REDDITCH**

Outline residential development for 29 no. dwellings
with associated garaging and parking, access, roads,
drainage and other accommodation works.

Applicant: Mr Jonathan Tomlinson

Mr P Frost, objector, and Mr A Williams, Agent for 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, authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Regeneration Services to GRANT Outline Planning Permission, subject to:

- 1) **the satisfactory completion of a Section 106 Planning Obligation to ensure the following provision:**
 - a) **the on-site provision of affordable housing;**
 - b) **a financial contribution for the provision of highways;**
 - c) **a financial contribution for the provision of education;**
 - d) **a financial contribution for the provision of waste management;**
 - e) **a financial contribution for open space provision;**
 - f) **a financial contribution for playing pitch provision;**
 - g) **a financial contribution for children's play provision;**
 - h) **a landscape management plan for the open space provided on site;**
- 2) **the Conditions and informatives as detailed on pages 16 to 20 of the main report; and**

3) the following additional condition:

“13. Prior to the development hereby approved commencing, full details of the recommended works set out in the Flood Risk Assessment, dated February 2013, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved details before the development is first brought into use.

Reason: To ensure that the development is provided with a satisfactory means of surface water drainage and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.”

(Officers reported on a late consultee response of no objections from Bromsgrove District Council and further information on an agreed highway contribution in respect of the Section 106 Agreement. Members also noted the need for an additional Condition in relation to surface water drainage, all as detailed in the Update Report provided to Members and the public gallery prior to the commencement of the meeting.)

(In accordance with Council’s procedure for Planning Committee, Councillor Yvonne Smith took no part in the debate or voting on this matter as she had arrived for the meeting after the commencement of the Officers presentation.)

**92. PLANNING APPLICATION 2013/289/FUL –
LAND OFF DIXON CLOSE, ENFIELD, REDDITCH****RESOLVED that****a decision on this matter be DEFERRED for the Committee to undertake a Site Visit.**

(Further to the Officers presentation and consideration of the Application, the Committee considered that a Site Visit would be of benefit, in relation to proposed access and traffic matters.)

**Planning
Committee**

12th March 2014

93. **PLANNING APPLICATION 2014/023/FUL –
PARKING AREAS - ECKINGTON CLOSE,
WOODROW, REDDITCH**

RESOLVED that

having regard to the Development Plan and to all other material considerations, authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Regeneration Services to GRANT Planning Permission, subject to the expiry of the consultation period on 24th March 2014 with no new material considerations raised, and subject to the Conditions detailed on Page 41 of the main report.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.00 pm

.....
CHAIR



Planning Committee

9th April 2014

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Andrew Fry (Chair), and Councillors Brandon Clayton (substituting for Councillor Roger Hill), Joe Baker, Roger Bennett, Michael Chalk, Wanda King, Brenda Quinney and Yvonne Smith

Officers:

Steve Edden, Amar Hussain, Ailith Rutt and Sharron Williams

Committee Services Officer:

Jan Smyth

94. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Roger Hill and Alan Mason.

95. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

96. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12th March 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

97. UPDATE REPORTS

The two Update reports relating to the Applications to be considered were received and noted.

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Chair

Planning Committee

9th April 2014

**98. PLANNING APPLICATION 2013/289/FUL –
LAND OFF DIXON CLOSE, ENFIELD, REDDITCH**

Erection of 39 dwellings comprising
37 houses with a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bedrooms,
and 2 no. 2 bedroom bungalows.

Applicant: Mr N Laight

The following individuals addressed the Committee under the Council's Public Speaking rules:

Mr J Lorento – objector
Mrs D Treasure – objector
Mr B Jones – objector
Mr N Laight – applicant

RESOLVED that

having regard to the Development Plan and to all other material considerations, authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Regeneration Services to GRANT Planning Permission, subject to:

- 1) the satisfactory completion of a Section 106 Planning Obligation ensuring that:**
 - a) contributions are paid to the Borough Council in respect to off-site open space, pitches and equipped play in accordance with the Council's adopted SPD;**
 - b) contributions are paid to the Borough Council towards the provision of wheelie bins for the new development;**
 - c) contributions are paid to the County Council towards County education facilities in accordance with the Council's adopted SPD;**
 - d) 12 units on the site be restricted to affordable housing in perpetuity;**
- 2) the Conditions and informatives as detailed on pages 16 to 21 of the main report;**

3) the following additional Conditions:

- “15) During the course of development works and final fitting out, access to and egress from the site for all construction traffic, contractors and deliveries shall be via the Enfield Industrial Estate.**

No development traffic shall access the site via Dixon Close unless first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of nearby residential amenity in accordance with Policy B(BE).13 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3;

- 16) Prior to the Commencement of Development, details of an emergency access to the site via the Enfield Industrial Estate shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The emergency access works approved shall be implemented prior to the completion of development works on the site. This access point shall be kept available for use by emergency vehicles in perpetuity.**

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and in order to provide safe and convenient emergency access to the site in accordance with Policy B(BE).13 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3.

- 17) The approved emergency access shall be kept available as a secondary access / egress for construction traffic, contractors and deliveries during the construction period. Upon completion of development works this access shall be used for emergency vehicles only.**

Reason: To allow a secondary access would allow all construction vehicles to access the site at all times via the Enfield Industrial Estate without having to access via Windsor Road, thereby safeguarding residential amenity in accordance with Policy B(BE).13 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3”;

and

Planning Committee

9th April 2014

-
- 4) a) **In the event that the Section 106 Planning Obligation cannot be completed by the end of May 2014, authority be delegated to Officers to REFUSE the application on the basis that without the planning obligation the proposed development would be contrary to policy and therefore unacceptable due to the resultant detrimental impacts it would cause to community infrastructure by a lack of provision for their improvements, and that none of the dwellings could be restricted to use for affordable housing in line with current policy requirements; and**
- b) **In the event of a refusal on this ground and the Applicant re-submitting the same or a very similar Planning Application with a completed Legal agreement attached, authority be delegated to the Head of Planning & Regeneration to GRANT planning permission, subject to the conditions and informatives as stated in 2) and 3 above.**

(Officers reported on matters relating to vehicular access to and from the development site, additional comments received from the County Highways Engineer and Officer views on the need to impose an additional condition, all as detailed in the two separate Update reports provided for Members and the public gallery prior to the meeting.

Officers also reported on the potential for an emergency vehicle access into the development in perpetuity that would be separate to the proposed access via Dixon Close for residential vehicles. In considering this additional information Members were of the view that an additional access, specifically for emergency vehicles only would alleviate some of the concerns in terms of vehicle access from Dixon Close. A further suggestion that the suggested separate emergency access could potentially be used in addition to the Enfield Industrial Estate access for the duration of the construction period was also supported.

The Committee therefore agreed to impose three additional Conditions relating to access and egress from the Site, as detailed at Resolution 3. 15), 16) and 17) above.)

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9th April 2014

99. **PLANNING APPLICATION 2013/302/FUL –
HAVERSHAM HOUSE, 327 BROMSGROVE ROAD,
WEBHEATH, REDDITCH B97 4NH**

Erection of an 8 bedroom and sitting room
single-storey extension, a single-storey
laundry extension and associated site works.

Applicant Mr B P Sinha

RESOLVED that

**a decision on this matter be DEFERRED for Officers to seek
further information in regard to proposed parking requirements
and the Nursing Home's current classification.**

100. **PLANNING APPLICATION 2013/336/FUL –
120 PLYMOUTH ROAD, SOUTHCREST,
REDDITCH B97 4PA**

Two-storey side extension, rear balconies,
conservatory to the rear, new garage to the
front of the property, and extend existing
tarmac driveway with tarmac or block paving

Applicant: Mr Steven Male

Mr D Moran, objector addressed the Committee under the Council's public speaking rules. Mr Male, the applicant, withdrew his request to speak to the application.

RESOLVED that

**having regard to the Development Plan and to all other material
considerations, Planning Permission be REFUSED for the
following reason:**

**“The overall design of the extension including its height, bulk
and location would result in an overlarge, overbearing and
obtrusive form of development. The cumulative effect of this
extension combined with previous extensions to the property
would result in a development that would be over-intensive
which would be considered inappropriate with its
surroundings. In addition, the extent of the development close
to the side boundary would be overbearing having a
detrimental impact on the amenities of the neighbouring
occupiers. As such, the proposal is considered to be contrary
to policies B(BE).13 and B(BE).14 of the Borough of Redditch**

Planning Committee

9th April 2014

Local Plan No.3, the Borough of Redditch Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on Encouraging Good Design, and good design principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

(In considering the Officer's report and additional information provided in relation to a letter of objection received subsequent to a re-consultation on amended plans and Officers responses, as detailed in the Update report provided to the Committee and the public gallery prior to the meeting, Members expressed a number of concerns in relation to the size and overall design of the proposal which they considered would be overlarge within the context of the residential property and previous extensions to the property and have a detrimental impact on neighbouring occupiers and general surroundings. In view of these concerns, the Committee voted to refuse the application, on which Officers had recommended approval, for the reason detailed in the resolution above.)

**101. PLANNING APPLICATION 2013/341/OUT –
UNIT 81 ARTHUR STREET, LAKESIDE, REDDITCH**

Outline Permission for the demolition of an existing building and erection of new 1700 sq. m. B2 Unit.

Applicant – Samuel Taylor Ltd

RESOLVED that

having regard to the Development Plan and to all other material considerations, Outline Planning Permission be GRANTED, subject to the Conditions and Informatives set out in the main report.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.57 pm

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CHAIR



Planning Committee

14th May 2014

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Andrew Fry (Chair), Councillor Alan Mason (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Joe Baker, Roger Bennett, Michael Chalk, Roger Hill, Brenda Quinney and Yvonne Smith

Officers:

Steve Edden, Amar Hussain and Ailith Rutt

Committee Services Officer:

Jan Smyth

102. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Wanda King.

103. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

104. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 9th April 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

105. UPDATE REPORTS

The Update Reports relating to the Applications to be considered were received and noted.

.....
Chair

Planning Committee

14th May 2014

**106. PLANNING APPLICATION 2013/302/FUL –
HAVERSHAM HOUSE, 327 BROMSGROVE ROAD,
REDDITCH, WORCESTERSHIRE B97 4NH**

Erection of a 6 bedroom and sitting room
single storey extension, a single-storey
laundry extension and associated site works

Applicant: Mr B P Sinha

RESOLVED that

having regard to the Development Plan and to all other material considerations, Planning Permission be GRANTED, subject to the conditions and informatives set out on pages 13 to 15 of the main report.

(Officers reported on new objections received following re-consultation on amended plans submitted and the Applicant's response to those objections. Members were also advised on the home's registered status with the Care Quality Commission, all as detailed in the Update report provided for the Committee and public gallery prior to the commencement of the meeting.)

**107. PLANNING APPLICATION 2013/320/FUL –
LAND ADJACENT FIRST HOUSE,
LADY HARRIETS LANE, REDDITCH,
WORCESTERSHIRE B98 8HD**

Erection of a single detached two-storey
house on land adjacent to First House.

Applicant: Mr Khurshid Ahmed

Mr J Attridge, objector, 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 set out on pages 22 to 24 of the report.

Planning Committee

14th May 2014

**108. PLANNING APPLICATION 2014/011/FUL –
WINDY BANK FARM, ASTWOOD LANE,
ASTWOOD BANK, REDDITCH,
WORCESTERSHIRE B96 6HH**

Proposed on-farm slaughter facility at
Windy Bank Farm through the change
of use of the existing farm buildings and
the construction of a new access from the
South West of the site, off Astwood Lane.

Applicant: Mr Terence Simpson

With the agreement of the Chair, Mr Hussain the Council's Legal Officer for the Committee, read out a number of points raised by Mr R Williams, who had registered to speak in support of the application, but had not, owing to unforeseen circumstances, been able to attend in person.

Dr M Bell, Agent for the Applicant, also 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 set out on pages 30 and 31 of the report.

(Officers reported on a further letter of objection received in relation to traffic issues and slaughter processes, as detailed in the Update report provided for Members and the public gallery prior to the commencement of the meeting.)

**109. PLANNING APPLICATION 2014/013/FUL –
AYNHO, LADY HARRIETS LANE, REDDITCH,
WORCESTERSHIRE B98 8HD**

This matter was WITHDRAWN from the Agenda by Officers and was not discussed.

**Planning
Committee**

14th May 2014

110. APPEAL OUTCOMES - INFORMATION REPORT

RESOLVED that

the various Appeal outcomes listed in the Appendix attached to the report be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 7.50 pm

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CHAIR



Planning Committee

11th June 2014

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Andrew Fry (Chair), Councillor Alan Mason (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Joe Baker, Roger Bennett, Michael Braley, Andrew Brazier, Wanda King, Yvonne Smith and David Thain

Officers:

Amar Hussain, Claire Gilbert, David Kelly and Ailith Rutt

Committee Services Officer:

Jan Smyth

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**RESOLVED that**

the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 14th May 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

.....
Chair

Planning Committee

11th June 2014

4. **PLANNING APPLICATION 2014/078/FUL –
FORMER ANSELL GLOVE CO. LTD,
25 BROAD GROUND ROAD, LAKESIDE,
REDDITCH, WORCESTERSHIRE B98 8YP**

Erection of security lighting

Fly By Nite Conferences Ltd

RESOLVED that

Having regard to the Development Plan and to all other material considerations, Planning Permission be GRANTED, subject to the Conditions detailed on Page 7 of the report

(The Committee noted an oral update in relation to late comments received from the Council's Community Safety Officer who had advised that he was comfortable that the proposed lighting scheme was adequate for security on site and would not result in over-illumination off-site.)

5. **PLANNING APPLICATION 2014/088/FUL –
9 CHESTNUT ROAD, ASTWOOD BANK,
REDDITCH, WORCESTERSHIRE B96 6AF**

Single-storey rear extension and side extension,
porch and loft conversion with gable end and
rear flat roofed dormer.

Applicant: Mr Mitchell Ferris

Mrs N Kift, objector, 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 REFUSED, for the following reason:

“By virtue of the design, the proposed extensions would have a detrimental visual impact on the street scene. As such the development would be contrary to Policies B(BE).13 and B(BE).14 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3, the advice set out in the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance on Encouraging Good Design and the provisions contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).”

Planning Committee

11th June 2014

(In considering the application and information provided by Officers relating to permitted development rights and the public speakers objections, Members considered that the proposed design would be over-large and bulky and would have a cumulative and visual impact on the streetscene. The Committee therefore refused the application for the reason stated in the resolution above.)

**6. PLANNING APPLICATION 2014/103/COU –
16 UNICORN HILL, TOWN CENTRE,
REDDITCH, WORCESTERSHIRE B97 4QU**

Change of Use from Hair Salon (A1)
to Fast Food Takeaway (A5)

Applicant: Mr Cumali Gultekin

RESOLVED that

having regard to the Development Plan and to all other material considerations, Planning Permission be GRANTED, subject to the Conditions set out on pages 15 and 16 of the report, but with Condition 3 being amended to read as follows:

“3) The use hereby approved shall only open to the public between the hours of:

11am to 11pm - Monday to Wednesday

11am to 1am - Thursday to Saturday

11am to 6pm - Sunday.”

(Whilst having no objections to the change of use, Members considered that the proposed opening time to 3am Thursday to Saturday would impact on residents residing in the building, the subject of the application, and that an earlier closing time of 1am would be more appropriate.)

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 7.43 pm

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CHAIR

