

minute book 1



Council

Mon 25 Jul
2016
7.00 pm

Council Chamber
Town Hall
Redditch

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

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CONTENTS

8. Executive Committee (Pages 1 - 24)

8th March 2016

7th June 2016

12th July 2016

9. Regulatory Committees (Pages 25 - 46)

Planning Committee – 13th April 2016

Audit, Governance and Standards Committee – 21st April 2016

Planning Committee – 8th June 2016

Audit, Governance and Standards Committee – 7th July 2016 (copy to follow)



Executive

Committee

Tuesday, 8 March 2016

MINUTES

Present:

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

Officers:

Clare Flanagan, John Godwin, Sue Hanley, Jayne Pickering, Amanda Singleton and Lindsey Wood

Committee Services Officer:

Debbie Parker-Jones

98. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Yvonne Smith.

99. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Witherspoon declared an Other Disclosable Interest in Agenda Item 6 (Redditch United Football Club) as detailed at Minute No. 103 below.

Jayne Pickering, Director of Finance and Resources, advised that she would be withdrawing from the meeting during consideration of the Redditch United Football Club item as her son played football for the Club's first team.

100. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Work Programme

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

- Housing Business Case; and
- Applying Article 4 Directions to the Council's Schedule of Locally Listed Buildings.

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Chair

Treasury Management Strategy, Investment Strategy and Prudential Indicators report

It was noted that the Treasury Management Strategy, Investment Strategy and Prudential Indicators report, which had originally been scheduled for Executive that evening, had instead been referred to the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee on 28th January 2016 as approval of these was required before the new financial year. The resulting recommendations had been considered by full Council on 22nd February.

Agenda Item 6 – Redditch United Football Club

Members were advised that this was a Key Decision which had not appeared on the published Executive Work Programme as the Club had been seeking external finance towards the scheme and it had not been known if this would be successful. As progress had been made with this a decision was needed quickly in order to secure the funds. The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been informed of the position.

101. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 22nd February 2016 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

102. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 16th February 2016.

It was noted that there were no recommendations to consider.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 16th February 2016 be received and noted.

103. REDDITCH UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB - VALLEY STADIUM CONCESSIONARY RENT

Members were asked to agree to the surrender of the existing Redditch United Football Club lease and the granting of a new 30-year lease at a concessionary rent, to support the Club in its project to provide facilities to the wider community of Redditch, including

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 8 March 2016

the provision of a third generation (3G) Astro Turf Pitch (ATP) at the Valley Stadium.

As detailed under Leader's Announcements (Minute No. 100 refers), this was a Key Decision which had not appeared on the published Executive Work Programme as the Club had been seeking external finance towards the scheme and it had not been known if this would be successful. As progress had been made with this a decision was needed quickly in order to secure the funds. The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been informed of the position.

Members noted the key areas for community benefit detailed in paragraph 3.6 of the report. It was agreed that the surrender of the existing lease and grant of the new lease at a concessionary rent was justifiable on the basis of the resulting benefits to the community and well-being of the Borough. The Heads of Terms for the new lease, as appended to the report and which also set out the terms of future rent reviews, were noted. Without the concessionary rent being agreed the business case prepared by the Club would not be seen as realistic and achievable by the funding bodies as it would prevent the Club from borrowing the amount of capital required to finance the match-funding element of the project.

Members expressed their thanks to all those at the Club and to Chris Swan, owner and Chairman, for their continuing hard work to improve the Club and its facilities. Best wishes were also sent to Mr Swan's wife Sallie, Vice-Chairman of the Club, who was currently unwell. Thanks were also expressed to the Football Association in supporting the Club's efforts and to Officers for their continuing endeavours in working with the Club, and Members looked forward to seeing the benefits that the new facilities would bring to the town. This included the launch of a full-time academy at the Valley Stadium, which was being run in partnership with Bournville College.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the existing Redditch United Football Club Limited lease be surrendered and a new 30-year lease be granted to the Club; and**
- 2) within the terms of the new lease for the Valley Stadium there be no increase of rent applied over and above the current rent of the site, and the rent of £2,000 per annum be reviewed in line with section 3.4 of the report until the expiry of the new lease in 2046.**

(Prior to consideration of this item, Councillor Pat Witherspoon declared an Other Disclosable Interest in this matter in view of the

fact that her grandson played football for one of Redditch United's junior teams. Councillor Witherspoon remained in the room and participated in the consideration of, and voting on, this matter.

Jayne Pickering (Director of Finance and Resources) withdrew from the meeting for this item and took no part in the consideration/discussion of this, as her son played football for the Club's first team.)

104. PROPOSED FEASIBILITY STUDY INTO THE POSSIBLE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE WINYATES DISTRICT CENTRE

Members received a report which sought approval to undertake a feasibility study into the redevelopment of the Winyates District Centre.

It was noted that the former New Town district centres of Church Hill, Matchborough, Winyates and Woodrow had previously been identified as areas for redevelopment. Following Members' approval to undertake a feasibility study into the possible redevelopment of the Matchborough Centre, there was also an interest to possibly redevelop the Winyates District Centre.

Members stated that the proposed feasibility study had briefly been touched upon at the Planning Advisory Planning meeting which had taken place immediately prior to Executive. It was noted that this was the initial feasibility study only and that the outcome of this would be reported back to Members in due course, together with suggestions from Officers about the next stages of the process of possible redevelopment.

Officers explained the process which would now take place. In response to Member questions Officers advised that there was deemed to be sufficient staff capacity to progress both the Matchborough and Winyates feasibility studies at the same time, and that the Winyates study would neither take priority over, nor have any detrimental effect on, the Matchborough study. Members wished to play a key part in the process and Officers advised that Members, particularly the relevant Portfolio Holders and Ward Members, would be sent a timescale for the future stages. Officers would also keep Members fully apprised and involved with developments throughout the process. The terms of existing leasehold agreements and the status of properties sold under right-to-buy were noted as legal issues which would be considered as part of the process.

RESOLVED that

a feasibility study be undertaken as to the merits of the redevelopment of the Winyates District Centre.

105. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2017/18

The Committee received a report which set out a broad range of options for consultation in order to inform the development of the Council's Council Tax Support Scheme (CTSS) 2017/18.

In April 2013 council tax benefit had been replaced by a new local council tax support scheme. Local councils were required to design their own CTSS and to carry out consultation on the options being considered for inclusion in the Scheme. From April 2014 changes were made to the Council's CTSS which resulted in support being capped at 80% of Council Tax liability for all working age claimants. The Council had implemented a Hardship Fund to support the most vulnerable, with £13,066 of the fund having been awarded for 2015/16 as at 31st January 2016. Changes to the Scheme in April 2014 had offset an estimated funding gap for 2014/15 of £91k for the Council.

It was no longer possible to know how much funding was received towards the Scheme via the Government's Revenue Support Grant and by 2019/20 there would be no government funding for the Scheme. The total cost of the Scheme in Redditch was in the region of £6.5m. The proposals being considered for consultation were not intended to reduce the overall cost of support provided to residents, but to reduce the administrative burden to the Council where possible and to bring the Scheme in line with national changes to welfare support.

Officers explained both the process and different consultation phases involved, which would culminate in adoption of the final Scheme by 31st January 2017 at the latest. All possible options which might ultimately be included in the Scheme had to be consulted on as no changes which had not previously been consulted on could be included at a later stage. All options were purely options for consideration, with no decisions needing to be made as to what might be included in the draft Scheme at this stage. A range of consultation documentation had been prepared and all relevant frontline staff would be briefed on the position so that they were able to assist residents with any enquiries. All current claimants would also be written to by the Council and directed to the website and Officers for information and assistance.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the options as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be put to public consultation in order to inform potential changes to the Council's Council Tax Support Scheme for 2017/18 and/or later years;**
- 2) the Head of Customer Access and Financial Support be authorised to consult on the options set out in Appendix 1;**
- 3) the Head of Customer Access and Financial Support report back to the Executive on the outcome of that consultation and any proposals for changes to the Scheme, for further consideration and resolution by the Executive, to consult on a draft Scheme;**
- 4) further to the outcome of the Executive's decision on the draft regulations, the Head of Customer Access and Financial Support be authorised to carry out the statutory consultation required on the draft Scheme; and**
- 5) the final Scheme be presented to the Executive to make recommendations to Council to allow for the necessary regulations to be published by 31st January 2017.**

106. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

Members were asked to consider, for recommendation to full Council, the following health and safety policies which were either new policies or existing policies which had been revised to incorporate recent changes in legislation:

- Fire Safety Policy and Procedures;
- Manual Handling Policy and Procedures;
- Accident Incident Reporting and Investigation Policy and Procedures;
- Display Screen Equipment Policy and Procedures;
- Contractor Safety Policy and Procedures;
- Lone Working Policy and Procedures; and
- Substance Misuse (Drugs, Alcohol & Other Substances) at Work Policy.

Officers confirmed that all of the policies had been approved by the Council's Joint Corporate Health, Safety and Welfare Committee and the trade unions. As an employer the Council had a legal duty to have the policies in place. Whilst the Corporate Health and Safety Policy was an overarching policy, there was a requirement to also have specific policies. Officers advised that, whilst not

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 8 March 2016

explicitly stating this, all of the policies were intended to apply to councillors as well as members of staff, and that the same advice and procedures therefore applied to Members.

Members raised concerns in relation to the possible risks and practical issues which they faced with lone working, for example when visiting residents' homes. As Members were not specifically addressed in the Lone Working Policy and Procedures it was agreed that Officers would undertake an additional piece of work on this. The matter would be raised at the next meeting of the Joint Corporate Health, Safety and Welfare Committee on 18th March 2016, and as Councillor Yvonne Smith was a member of the Committee Officers would seek her input into this. Member awareness in considering the safety implications when carrying out their duties was deemed to be key. The importance of attending relevant training offered by the Council was highlighted by one Member, with previous training in this area having been poorly attended. Officers highlighted that the Lone Working Policy included use of the Lifeline facility, which not all Members were aware of.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the Fire Safety Policy and Procedures at Appendix 1 to the report be approved;**
- 2) the Manual Handling Policy and Procedures at Appendix 2 to the report be approved;**
- 3) the Accident Incident Reporting and Investigation Policy and Procedures at Appendix 3 to the report be approved;**
- 4) the Display Screen Equipment Policy and Procedures at Appendix 4 to the report be approved;**
- 5) the Contractor Safety Policy and Procedures at Appendix 5 to the report be approved;**
- 6) the Lone Working Policy and Procedures at Appendix 6 to the report be approved; and**
- 7) the Substance Misuse (Drugs, Alcohol & Other Substances) at Work Policy at Appendix 7 to the report approved; and**

RESOLVED that

- 8) further consideration be given by Officers and the Joint Corporate Health, Safety and Welfare Committee in**

respect of elected Members and the Lone Working Policy and Procedures.**107. FINANCE MONITORING QUARTER 3 2015/16**

The Committee received a report which detailed the Council's final financial position for both General Fund and Revenue for the period April to December 2015 (Quarter 3 15/16).

There was an overall underspend of £303k for the period, which was forecast to be a significant saving by the end of the financial year. This related in part to essential spend only across the Council following announcement of the financial settlement, together with vacancies and additional income generated in a number of service areas. These savings had not been made at a loss to the Council's frontline services. In addition to the £303k underspend it was anticipated that there would be a saving on the Council's borrowing costs of £124k, due to slippage in the capital programme. In relation to the £1k variation currently showing for Landscape and Ground Maintenance under 'Keep my place safe and looking good', Officers stated that a great deal of work was being undertaken with reallocating the costs for the Place Teams' work, which might result in a final underspend variance.

The capital expenditure in the third quarter showed that most projects were currently work in progress, with there being an anticipated £1.081m underspend by the end of 2015/16. Requests would be made to carry over budgets to the next financial year within the strategic purpose 'Keep my place safe and looking good' on the Crematorium Enhancements and the town landscape scheme, due to works not being able to take place in the winter months.

A Member queried whether all vacant posts had now been deleted. Officers advised that they were currently carrying out an exercise with Heads of Service to ascertain whether all vacant posts had been filled, and if not whether the posts had been given up. Heads of Service had been given until 18th March by which to confirm the position. Accordingly, if vacancies remained then the cost of these were currently included in the projected year-end figures.

It was noted that the General Fund Balance as at 31st March 2015 had been £2.005m, and that should the projected savings be made in the current financial year the revised balance for 31st March 2016 would be £2.432m. Whilst there was no room for complacency the Council was felt to be in as good a financial position as possible in light of the latest funding settlement, with both Officers and Members continuing to look at savings wherever possible.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital budget for 2016/17 is increased by £60k to £160k for a Demand Case Management IT system, funded by HRA reserves; and

RESOLVED that

- 2) the current financial position for Revenue and Capital, as detailed in the report, be noted.

108. VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR GRANTS 2016-17

Members considered a report which made recommendations from a meeting of the Grants Panel on 24th February, for allocation of the remainder of the budget for major grants for 2016/17.

At its meeting in January the Executive Committee had considered recommendations for the allocation of major grants for 2016/17. The full amount was not allocated at that time and it was agreed that the unallocated sums be retained and their availability be readvertised in parallel with the Stronger Communities Grant applications.

RESOLVED that

the following major grants be awarded for 2016/17:

| Theme | Organisation | Project name | Amount |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--------|
| Help me to be financially independent | What's Your Point | Young People - plan for financial independence | £1,569 |
| Help me to be financially independent | Compass Community and Education Group | Money Matters | £3,325 |
| Help me to live my life independently | What's Your Point | Introduction to mindful relaxation | £850 |
| Keep my place safe and looking good | Redditch Community Amateur Boxing Club | Young Peoples Projects | £2,000 |

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 8 March 2016

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

There were no outstanding referrals to consider.

110. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

It was noted that the meeting of the Planning Advisory Panel scheduled for earlier that evening had taken place.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.30 pm

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Chair



Executive Committee

Tuesday, 7 June 2016

MINUTES

Present:

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

Officers:

Clare Flanagan, Jayne Pickering and Amanda Singleton

Democratic Services Officer:

Amanda Scarce

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Work Programme

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

- Housing Business Case
- Borough of Redditch Plan No. 4 – Modifications, Revised Local Development Scheme and Statement of Community Involvement; and
- Applying Article 4 directions to the Council's schedule of locally listed buildings.

The Reorganisation and Change Policy had been removed from the Work Programme until further notice.

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Chair

4. MINUTES**RESOLVED that**

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 19th April 2016 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 12th April 2016.

It was noted that there were no recommendations to consider.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 12th April 2016 be received and noted.

6. REDUCTION OF OPENING HOURS - CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE

Officers presented the report in respect of the reduction of opening hours for the Customer Service Centre. The Committee was informed that the report set out a request to reduce the hours for the Customer Service Centre on a Saturday. The intention was not merely to make savings, although there would be a small saving in the salaries budget, but also to re-focus resources.

The report detailed the work which had been carried out in order to assess the reduction in opening hours. From the data gathered it was clear that the first Saturday in the month was the most popular date together with payments in cash. It was noted that since the Centre first commenced opening on a Saturday there had been a considerable change in the way services were delivered, the number of services provided and to customer behaviour. The majority of enquiries were dealt with by specialist Officers and therefore those making enquiries on a Saturday were returning to the Centre on a week day to receive the support needed. Changes had been made to the way that Worcestershire County Council enquiries were dealt with together with a move to using automated systems. This had led Officers to consider whether it remained useful to continue to open on a Saturday and whether those resources could be redirected to other times when the Customer Service Centre was most busy.

Officers highlighted the data which had been collated in respect of the percentage of enquiries relating to Council Tax, Benefits or

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 7 June 2016

Housing together with comparative data on customer volumes, with demand on a Saturday morning being 75% less than that on an average morning in the week. The data also showed that 40% of the customers making payments on a Saturday used credit or debit cards or paid by cheque. This was a growing trend with a 90% increase in the number of card transactions since 2012/13 with 70% of customers paying by card in April 2016.

Details were provided in respect of the staff and it was confirmed that although there were a reduced number of customers using the service, there was always a minimum of three staff on duty for the three hours of opening; the rota allowed for those who worked the Saturday to take the time back during the week. However, due to the transformation work and changes which had been carried out together with the reduction in funding and increased demand, this had proved increasingly difficult.

It was stressed that prior to the implementation of the reduced service in September 2016, consultative work would be carried out with those customers affected in order to ensure that they were not disadvantaged by the changes. Members noted that the changes would be reviewed after a six month period had elapsed and a report would be brought back to Committee with its findings.

Following consideration of the report, Members discussed how circumstances had changed since the inception of Saturday opening and sought confirmation that there would not be a reduction in staff, but staff would be utilised where most needed. Clarity was given in respect of vacant posts which had not been included within the previous budget setting process. Whilst Members had been concerned at the potential impact on customers they were reassured that work was being carried out to support those that would be affected and the new arrangements would be monitored. It was acknowledged that the report showed that there was no evidence to suggest that any group of customers would be unfairly disadvantaged and that monitoring of those customers using the service suggested that no specific group was more likely to use the service on a Saturday.

After further discussion it was

RESOLVED that

- a) **the Customer Service Centre reduce Saturday opening hours to the first Saturday of each month, with effect from September 2016 in light of the low levels of customer demand, and to enable resources to be utilised more effectively at times when demand is highest; and**

b) demand be reviewed and reported after 6 months to enable the Executive to consider future opening arrangements.

7. WRITE-OFFS APRIL 2015 - MARCH 2016

Officers presented the Write Offs report for the period April 2015 to March 2016. The report set out data in respect of the write off of irrecoverable debts in 2015/16 together with a revised Write Off Policy which took account of changes to best practice and streamlined the administrative procedures.

Details of written off debts during the period for Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rates, tenant arrears and overpaid housing benefit were detailed within the report, with a total of £452k being written off during the financial year. Officers explained that there was an element of fluctuation in the value of write offs due to the timing of action being taken. A debt was only written off as a last resort and officers were confident that there was no further action that could be taken to recover it. It was also explained that due to the introduction of a new finance system there had been no write off of sundry debts during the period. These were being reviewed by Officers as a number of them were old. It was likely therefore that this would show an increase in sundry debtors for the current financial year. It was also highlighted that Officers were able to “write back” debts where information later came to light that enabled further recovery action to take place.

In respect of the Write Off Policy it was highlighted that the amendments were merely to ensure best practice was followed and to streamline the administrative procedures. In future it was proposed that formal write offs would be agreed by the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management. Members were also provided with details of a debt matching agreement which, although not used frequently, could be put in place if required. The policy allowed Officers to check debts across all Council systems to ensure that customers could be offered the correct level of support and to streamline the process of debt recovery.

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management reassured Members that he would work closely with Officers. The aim would be to ensure that decisions were made as quickly and efficiently as possible to enable the Council to recover as much as possible.

Members questioned the lack of a set timetable for debt recovery and Officers explained that at the early stages there was indeed a timetable which was adhered to. However at the later stages of recovery, it was often more difficult to do this as each case was

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 7 June 2016

judged on its own merits and the circumstances of each customer varied greatly.

The reference within the policy to a debtor's circumstances and in particular the reference to the debtor's mental or physical health was questioned as to whether it was necessary or appropriate. Officers assured Members that this was simply added in order to provide some context as to how customers' circumstances were taken into account when making decisions.

RESOLVED that

the revised Write Off Policy be adopted and the contents of the report in respect of the level of write offs be noted.

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

There were no outstanding referrals to consider.

9. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

There had been a meeting of the Planning Advisory Panel prior to this meeting and a further meeting would be arranged for the near future.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 7.43 pm



Executive Committee

Tuesday, 12 July 2016

MINUTES

Present:

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

Officers:

Ruth Bamford, Mike Dunphy, Sue Hanley and Jayne Pickering

Committee Services Officer:

Debbie Parker-Jones

10. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Pat Witherspoon.

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

12. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Work Programme

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

- Applying Article 4 directions to the Council's schedule of locally listed buildings;
- Health and Safety Policies; and
- Finance Monitoring Quarter 1, April – June 2016/17.

Leisure Intervention Update

It was noted that the Leisure Intervention Update was currently included in the Executive Work Programme for presentation no earlier than 13th September. As the Council Plan was currently being developed it was proposed that the work around leisure

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Chair

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 12 July 2016

interventions to deliver the strategic purpose be addressed within the Council Plan for Members' consideration in September/October.

13. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 7th June 2016 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

14. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 2nd June 2016.

It was noted that there were no recommendations to consider.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 2nd June 2016 be received and noted.

15. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2017/18

Members considered a report which set out proposals for the Authority's Council Tax Support Scheme for 2017/18 following the outcome of public consultation on options for changes to this. If the current proposals were approved there would be further public consultation prior to submission of the final scheme to Executive, in time for the final scheme to be published by 31st January 2017.

Officers explained the outcome of the consultation and Members noted, with disappointment, the very low response to this. Only 19 responses had been received despite all current 4,900 claimants having been directly contacted by the Council, and with press and social media publicity also taking place on this. The technical elements of the assessment process, eligibility and income taken into account had not helped with people's ability to answer some of the questions, however Officers felt that they had done everything possible to make the questions as clear as possible in light of the complexities involved.

It was noted that the proposals were not intended to reduce the overall cost of support provided to residents but to streamline the system, ensure there was consistency for claimants in the calculations between Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support, reduce the administrative burden wherever possible, and bring the Scheme in line with national changes to welfare support.

Any changes introduced would apply in respect of new claimants only and Officers would continue to provide support to residents on their personal finances and debt management. Discussions took place on the Family Premium element and questions were raised in relation to the Council's Hardship Fund, which Officers agreed to check and provide further information to Members on outside of the meeting.

The consultation on the draft scheme would be published and key stakeholders, including existing working age claimants, would be directly contacted in writing. Feedback would be used to inform any changes to the draft scheme before the final scheme was considered by Members.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the outcome of the initial statutory consultation on options for changes to the Local Council Tax Scheme be noted;**
- 2) the current Scheme be changed as follows, with effect from April 2017/18:**
 - 2.1) reduce backdating of Council Tax Support to 4 weeks in line with the changes in Housing Benefit announced by Central Government;**
 - 2.2) enable claims to be processed based on information provided by the DWP without the need for further information; and**
 - 2.3) removal of the Family Premium for new claims to bring the Council Tax Support Scheme in line with the changes in Housing Benefit announced by Central Government,**

and that the amended version shall become the proposed Draft Scheme for 2017/18;
- 3) authority be delegated to the Head of Customer Access and Financial Support to carry out the next phase of consultation on the Draft Scheme; and**
- 4) the final Scheme be presented to the Executive to make recommendations to Council to allow for the necessary regulations to be published by 31st January 2017.**

16. BOROUGH OF REDDITCH LOCAL PLAN NO.4 - PROPOSED MAIN MODIFICATIONS

The Committee considered a report which identified the Main Modifications proposed by the Planning Inspector and explained the required public consultation process on these. Members were reminded of the stages which the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 4 had already been through, which had included a lengthy Examination in Public, as part of the adoption process.

Members had already been made aware, in detail, of the Main Modifications. Officers reminded them that, at this stage, the Executive was only being asked to approve the public consultation on the Modifications. An extended consultation period running between 27th July and 21st September was being proposed given that this would be taking place over the summer holiday period.

Officers responded to questions/issues raised by Members on the Inspector's Modifications. It was noted that all consultation responses would be sent to the Inspector and that the Council would not comment on, or respond to, representations received as it was for the Inspector to consider these.

RECOMMENDED that

the recommended Main Modifications of the Inspector, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be noted, and that Officers be authorised to proceed with an 8-week consultation on the Main Modifications, to run from 27th July 2016 to 21st September 2016. Details of the method of consultation are set out in paragraphs 3.19 to 3.22 of the report.

17. REDDITCH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME JULY 2016 AND DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT 2016

The Committee considered a report which outlined the proposed revision of the Local Development Scheme (LDS) and the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), both of which formed part of the suite of documents that the Development Plans Team were required to publish and maintain. Both of the documents were updated versions of the versions which had previously been approved.

It was noted that the LDS set out the key Development Planning Documents which would be produced by the Council. The main changes to the LDS were amendment of the timetable for the Local Plan No.4 and the Allocations Plan to reflect the ongoing process of the Examination in Public. Whilst authority to start working on a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) had been approved in June

2014, the timetable for development of the CIL had been removed from the latest LDS whilst the Local Plan remained unadopted, for the reasons detailed in the report.

The SCI set out how the Council would engage with communities and other consultees in the planning process, in both plan-making and development control. A number of the changes made to the SCI related to out-of-date references to Local Development Framework processes, and included a section on neighbourhood planning.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the revised Redditch Local Development Scheme (LDS), as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be adopted as the Council's current LDS;**
- 2) delegated authority be granted to the Head of Planning and Regeneration Services, in conjunction with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to review and publish amended LDS timetables for the publication of the Development Plan Documents;**
- 3) the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) 2016, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved for publication as part of a 6-week period of public consultation in September – October 2016; and**
- 4) delegated authority be granted to the Head of Planning and Regeneration Services, in conjunction with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to consider the response to the public consultation and, subject to no significant issues arising, to amend and adopt the SCI.**

18. CONSOLIDATED REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN AND FINANCIAL RESERVES STATEMENT 2015/16

Members considered the Council's final financial position for 2015/16 for both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account. Officers advised of an amendment to recommendation 2.1 of the report in that the transfer to balances of £40k would be a recommendation to full Council and not a matter for noting by the Executive.

Officers advised that the draft Statement of Accounts had been submitted to the external auditors on 30th June 2016 and that the auditing of these was due to commence towards the end of July. No issues had been raised by the external auditors during their draft audit work.

The £1.031m underspend on the revenue budget was noted, together with the required adjustments to this as detailed in the report, which resulted in a net underspend of £150k. There was an expectation that £110k would be drawn down from balances in 2015/16. As this transfer had not been required it was intended that a further £40k would be allocated to balances, which would give a resulting final position for 2015/16 of £2.024m; £1.3m higher than the minimum level for reserves. The Senior Management Team would now be challenging Heads of Service to see if they could base their 2016/17 budgets on the 2015/16 budgets to maintain savings.

The £3.967m underspend on the capital budget was noted, which Officers explained the reasons for as detailed in the report. This was in part due to a large underspend on the vehicle replacement programme, which had been delayed until the Place Team implementation was stabilised.

The Financial Reserves Statement at Appendix 2 to the report was noted and Officers stated that it would be helpful if future quarterly reports could advise which reserves were being drawn down on. The £300k Housing Revenue Account (HRA) reserves for Job Evaluation (JE), which were separate to the £755k General Fund JE reserves, were noted and questions raised on this, particularly the separate HRA element which some Members had been unaware of. The £572k underspend on the HRA was also noted. Officers advised that work was being undertaken on the HRA underspend and JE element and that further information on these elements would be provided to Members. The new terms and conditions under JE were due to be implemented in September, together with any applicable back-pay. Officers undertook to confirm to Members how many staff had not signed up to the new terms and conditions, in which case dismissal and re-engagement would apply.

In relation to the Housing Support element of the Reserves Statement, and reference to a Government Specific Grant, Officers clarified that this should have stated £243k Government Grant and £180k RBC. A query was also raised on the Income element of the HRA and increase in tenants' charges and variance in dwelling rents, which Officers agreed to look into and to report back to Members on.

A Member queried the position in relation to vacant posts and a review which Officers had previously confirmed they would be undertaking on this. Officers apologised that this piece of work had not yet been completed as the accounts had taken priority. Members were advised that Heads of Service reviewed all

**Executive
Committee**Tuesday, 12 July 2016

vacancies to ascertain, on an individual basis, if these were required and that only those that were deemed business-critical were filled. Officers had spoken with Human Resources the previous week and work was due to be undertaken, across both Redditch and Bromsgrove Councils as some of the vacant posts impacted on both authorities, which Members would be receive details of.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the financial position on Revenue and Capital for the financial year 2015/16, as detailed in the report, be noted; and**

RECOMMENDED that

- 2) **the transfer to balances of £40k be approved; and**
- 3) **the movement in reserves, as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.**

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

There were no outstanding referrals to consider.

20. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

It was noted that the meeting of the Planning Advisory Panel scheduled to take place earlier in the evening had been cancelled as the Local Plan No. 4 Proposed Main Modifications were being considered by the Executive that evening.

The Member Support Steering Group, which had been due meet the previous evening, had also been cancelled in view of a clash with a Local Transport Plan Briefing for Members the same evening. A further date for the Group was to be arranged.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.15 pm

.....
Chair



Planning Committee

13th April 2016

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Andrew Fry (Chair), Councillor Yvonne Smith (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Joe Baker, Roger Bennett, Michael Chalk, Matthew Dormer, David Thain and Nina Wood-Ford

Officers:

Steve Edden, Amar Hussain, Simon Jones and Helena Plant

Democratic Services Officer:

Jan Smyth

69. APOLOGIES

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

70. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Andrew Fry declared an Other Disclosable Interest in Agenda Item 6 (Planning Application 2016/070/FUL – Land rear of 144 to 164 Easemore Road, Riverside, Redditch) as detailed in Minute 74 below.

71. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED that, the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13th April 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

72. UPDATE REPORTS

The published Update Reports relating to the various Planning Applications were noted.

.....
Chair

Planning Committee

13th April 2016

73. **APPLICATION 2016/037/FUL –
VALLEY STADIUM, BROMSGROVE ROAD, BATCHLEY,
REDDITCH, WORCESTERSHIRE B97 4RN**

Addition of single storey Entrance Lobby

Applicant: Mr Chris Swan

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 4 and 5 of the main agenda report.

74. **APPLICATION 2016/070 –
LAND REAR OF 144-164 EASEMORE ROAD, RIVERSIDE,
REDDITCH, WORCESTERSHIRE**

Erection of 4 new dwellings and associated parking

Applicant: Central and Country Developments Ltd

RESOLVED that

having regard to the Development Plan and to all other material considerations, Planning Permission be **GRANTED**, subject to Conditions 1 to 8 and Informative 1 as set out on pages 14 to 16 of the main agenda report and the following additional Conditions and Informatives:

Conditions

- “9) **Prior to commencement of the development hereby approved, a scheme for the provision of bat roost and bird nesting opportunities within the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be implemented by suitably qualified personnel to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority prior to the first use of the development approved.**

Reason: In the interests of biodiversity and in accordance with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Planning Committee

13th April 2016

- 10) Details of any external lighting proposed to illuminate the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the development is occupied. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the first occupation of the development and there shall be no other external illumination of the development.

Reason: In the interests of biodiversity and to safeguard local amenities, in accordance with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 11) The proposed private pathways and parking areas shall be finished in a permeable surface and retained as such thereafter.

Reason: To ensure adequate surfacing for the parking area and driveway that enables permeable drainage to prevent potential flood risk and in accordance with Policy B(BE).19 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3.

- 12) Prior to first occupation of any dwelling hereby approved, the construction of the vehicular access shall be carried out in accordance with a specification to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 13) The Development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the access, turning area and parking facilities shown on the approved plan have been properly consolidated, surfaced, drained and otherwise constructed in accordance with details to be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority and these areas shall thereafter be retained and kept available for those uses at all times.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, to ensure the free flow of traffic using the adjoining highway and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. “

Informatives

- “2) This permission does not grant consent to divert, extinguish or obstruct Public Bridleway No. RD-518. The applicant is advised to contact Richard Jones, Countryside Access Team Leader (Mapping and Enforcement), The Countryside Centre, Worcester Woods Country Park, Wildwood Drive, Worcester WR5 2LG: 01905 843441: rjones@worcestershire.gov.uk for further advice before commencing any works.
- 3) This permission does not authorise the laying of private apparatus within the confines of the public highway. The Applicant should apply to Worcestershire County Council for consent under the New Roads and Streetworks Act 1991 to install private apparatus within the confines of the public highway. Precise details of all works within the public highway must be agreed on site with the Highway Authority.
- 4) This permission does not authorise the Applicant to carry out works within the publicly maintained highway.

Dropped kerbs to enable access onto properties for vehicles must only be constructed by Ringway Infrastructure Services, Worcestershire County Councils approved Contractor. The Applicant is solely responsible for all costs associated with construction of the access. For further information, please contact Ringway direct on 01905 761160 or email worcestershirevehicle.crossing@ringway.co.uk.”

(Officers reported on Consultation responses received from Highways Network Control and the Council’s Ecology Officer and two late public letters of objection, received after publication of the Agenda, together with Officer comments, including the need to impose further planning conditions and informatives, in light of the Consultation comments received, all as detailed in the published Update Report, copies of which were provided to Committee Members and the public gallery prior to commencement of the meeting.)

(Prior to consideration of this matter, Councillor Andrew Fry (Chair of the Planning Committee) had declared an Other Disclosable Interest in that his place of employment was in proximity to the Application site and also that a family member lived in close proximity to the site. Councillor Fry withdrew from the meeting for the duration of the Committee’s consideration of the matter and voting thereon..)

Planning Committee

13th April 2016

Councillor Yvonne Smith, the Committee's Vice-Chair, was in the Chair for this matter.)

**75. APPLICATION 2016/041/FUL –
18 THROCKMORTON ROAD, GREENLANDS, REDDITCH**

Two storey side extension

Applicant: Fairbourne Consultants Ltd

RESOLVED that

having regard to the Development Plan and to all other material considerations, Planning Permission be GRANTED, subject to the Conditions and Informative as set out on pages 3 and 4 of the published Additional Papers Agenda.

This item of Urgent Business had been accepted by the Chair in view of the fact that a Committee decision was required due to objections being received after publication of the Agenda and that as the Committee was not due to meet again until the new Municipal Year it was considered unreasonable to ask the Applicant to wait.

76. APPEALS OUTCOMES - INFORMATION REPORT

The Committee received information in relation to the outcomes of recent planning appeal decisions and were pleased to note that eight of the ten appeals had been dismissed. The Chair expressed particular disappointment at the Inspectorate's decision to allow an appeal against the Committee's refusal of Planning Application 2014/192/FUL – Land at Wirehill Drive.

RESOLVED that

the items of information be NOTED.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 7.38 pm

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CHAIR



Audit, Governance & Standards

Thursday, 21 April 2016

Committee

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor David Thain (Chair), Councillor Jane Potter (Vice-Chair – during Minute No's 48 to 64) and Councillors Natalie Brookes, Michael Chalk, John Fisher (during Minute No's 46 to part of 52 and part of 55 to 64), Gareth Prosser and Pat Witherspoon (during Minute No's 46 to 56)

Dave Jones – Independent Member for Audit and Governance (non-voting co-opted member of the Committee)

Also Present:

Richard Percival – Grant Thornton (External Auditors)

Officers:

Andy Bromage, Sam Morgan and Jayne Pickering

Committee Services Officer:

Debbie Parker-Jones

46. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Borough Councillors Andrew Fry and Rachael Smith.

Feckenham Parish Councillors Alan Smith and Slade Arthur also tendered their apologies owing to a Parish Council meeting which was taking place the same evening.

47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

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Chair

Audit, Governance & Standards

Committee

Thursday, 21 April 2016

48. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee held on 28th January 2016 were submitted.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee held on 28th January 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

49. MONITORING OFFICER'S REPORT - STANDARDS REGIME

Members received a report of the Monitoring Officer outlining the current position in relation to Standards regime matters.

It was noted that no complaints against Members had been received since the last meeting of the Committee in January, and that dates had been arranged for a number of induction and training events after the local elections in May. Councillor Chalk requested that Officers provide him with a hard copy of any upcoming training information.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

50. FECKENHAM PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT - STANDARDS REGIME

As advised under Apologies, the Parish Council Representatives were not present owing to a Parish Council meeting which was taking place the same evening.

Officers advised that they had contacted the Parish Representatives to query whether there was anything that they wished to have reported at the meeting, which they had confirmed there was not.

RESOLVED that

the position be noted.

Audit, Governance & Standards

Committee

Thursday, 21 April 2016

**51. GRANT THORNTON - PROGRESS REPORT AND UPDATE
2015-16**

Members received an update report from Grant Thornton on progress they had made in delivering their responsibilities as the Council's external auditors. The report also provided an insight into emerging national issues and developments which might be of relevance to, and impact on, the Council in the future.

Richard Percival stated that good progress had been made with audit work since the last meeting of the Committee, details of which were set out in Grant Thornton's report along with planned dates for upcoming work.

The emerging national issues were noted. These included a newly introduced IFRS 13 'Fair Value Measurement' and a requirement for local authorities to estimate provision for unlodged non-domestic rate appeals. Mr Percival responded to Members' questions on these issues.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

52. GRANT THORNTON - AUDIT PLAN 2015/16

Members were presented with the Grant Thornton Audit Plan 2015/16. The external auditors were required to give an opinion on the Council's financial statements and to satisfy themselves that the Council had made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Richard Percival provided an overview of the planned scope and timing of the audit, the key elements considered in identifying the Plan, and the developments and requirements that informed and shaped the audit. He also explained the reasoning behind the £983k materiality and £49k trivial misstatements levels and the workings of these.

The significant risks of material misstatement which the external auditors had identified were outlined. Two of these – The revenue cycle includes fraudulent transactions and Management over-ride of controls – were presumed risks applicable to all audits under national auditing standards. The third and fourth risks – Production of the 2015/16 financial statements and Accounting for recharged income and expenditure – were specific to the Council and based on issues encountered during the previous year's audit. The

Audit, Governance & Standards Committee

Thursday, 21 April 2016

substantive audit procedures and work planned by Grant Thornton to address these risks were noted. The Value for Money ('VfM') element and new VfM sub-criteria determined by the National Audit Office were noted.

A Member raised concerns regarding a recent issue which had arisen with one of the Council's contractors, which could have led to possible action being taken against the Council by the contractor in question and the Council being held to account. Members felt that this was something which needed to be considered in the future; from both a contractual drafting and partnership working (i.e. how the Council interacted with its contractors and relevant procurement aspects) perspective. Where this issue stood in terms of the Corporate Risk Register and whether the risk management process was to pick up on such issues, together with any impact on the broader process, were all elements to be considered. Later in the meeting Members requested a legal review of all relevant contracts (Minute No. 59 below refers).

The 2015/16 audit and grant certification fees, which were determined by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited, together with the additional fee required for the 2014/15 audit work, were noted. Following the closure of the Audit Commission in March 2015, responsibility for external auditor appointments would devolve to local authorities after the 2017/18 audits. A tendering process for external audit services would take place meaning local authorities could then appoint their chosen auditors.

RESOLVED that

the 2015/16 Grant Thornton Audit Plan be noted and agreed.

53. GRANT THORNTON - AUDIT FEE LETTER 2016/17

Members were presented with the planned audit fee letter for 2016/17 from the Council's external auditors Grant Thornton, and were asked to approve the level of fee.

Richard Percival advised that the fee for the main audit work for 2016/17 had remained the same as for 2015/16, and that the fee for the Grant Certification work had yet to be confirmed. This was the final time that the audit fee letter would be received in its present format, as from 2017/18 external audit work would be subject to tender and it would be for the Council to determine who would carry out this work.

Audit, Governance & Standards Committee

Thursday, 21 April 2016

RESOLVED that

the audit fee for 2016/17 be agreed.

**54. GRANT THORNTON - AUDITING STANDARDS 2015/16 -
COMMUNICATION WITH THE AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND
STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

Members were presented with the Auditing Standards – Communication with the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee report from the Council’s external auditors Grant Thornton. The aim of the report was to ensure that there was effective two way communication between the Committee, who were “Those Charged with Governance”, and the external auditor.

Richard Percival advised that in planning and performing their audit of the Council’s financial statements, Grant Thornton needed to understand how the Committee, supported by the Council’s management, met its responsibilities in the following areas:

- Fraud;
- Law and regulation;
- Going concern;
- Accounting for estimates; and
- Relates Parties.

RESOLVED that

the report and management responses be noted.

55. ACCOUNTING POLICIES 2015/16

The Committee were presented with the Council’s Accounting Policies for 2015/16.

It was noted that the Policies were currently at draft stage and could be subject to change prior to the final Policies being presented to Committee in September along with the Statement of Accounts. Officers advised that some changes were required to the Policies, which they were currently discussing with the external auditors.

Regarding the new IFRS ‘Fair Value Measurement’ and how assets were valued, Officers advised that the Council would have one surplus asset this year; a piece of land at Upper Norgrove House. A note regarding Materiality and the £250k materiality level had been added to the Policies. Notes below this amount had been removed from the accounts statements where they were not

Audit, Governance & Standards Committee

Thursday, 21 April 2016

considered to add value to the Officer statements. Officers added that the Council had one heritage asset valued at less than £50k, namely the needles at the Forge Mill Museum. Officers and Mr Percival also provided further clarification in relation to depreciation, as detailed in the Policies.

RESOLVED that

the draft Accounting Policies attached at Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

56. INTERNAL AUDIT - PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee considered the Internal Audit Progress Report, which presented Members with progress on internal audit work for 2015/16.

Officers presented the report and stated that at the previous meeting Members had requested that details of the percentage of critical review audits, as opposed to programmed (formal) audit work, be included in future progress reports. These details had been included in the report, with 37% of the eight finalised reviews having been critical reviews. Officers advised that this figure would fluctuate over the year and that updated details would be included in future reports. Delivery against the Internal Audit Plan was noted, together with the Performance Indicators data.

Regarding the Planned Follow Ups information detailed in the report, the following issues arose:

- i) DFGs and HRA grants – a typographical error on the move to the Parkside office;
- ii) Rent Arrears – it was queried whether the workings of Universal Credit had impacted on rent arrears. Officers advised that only a small number of new claims were assessed under Universal Credit but they would aim to review the link between the two issues and update Members on any impact identified;
- iii) Delays in follow up action – concerns were expressed on delays with some follow up actions, some of which were significant and resulted in three follow up dates which it was felt introduced waste into the process. Officers agreed that there was potential waste and that whilst there could be legitimate circumstances which might lead to delays, implementation could, on occasion, be more swift. Officers added that it was for the Committee, as part of its monitoring role, to determine when and if there was justification with

Audit, Governance & Standards

Committee

Thursday, 21 April 2016

delays, which was the reason for bringing the progress updates back to Members. It was agreed that Officers would take the Planned Follow Ups report to the next Corporate Management Team meeting and to Heads of Service to see where outstanding actions should be closed down. Any outstanding second and third follow ups would be taken to CMT and then to the Committee if the required actions were not completed; and

- iv) Measures Dashboard – following a request from Members, Officers agreed to include Measures Dashboard information in future reports as the strategic and operational measures' information was deemed key for monitoring purposes. It was also noted that the Measures Dashboard information might extend to data for external agencies data in the future.

A Member stated that at the previous meeting a request had been made for audit work to be carried out on the budget. Officers responded that on the back of the external auditor Section 11 Recommendations, it had been agreed that there would be an audit of the budget for this year and that time for this would be included in the Audit Plan.

Regarding the Stores Intervention Critical Review, it was noted that Dave Jones, the Independent Member and Lead Risk Member for the Committee, was due to meeting with relevant Officers the following week to discuss the outstanding issues in relation to inventories (Action List Ref 1 at Minute No. 62 below refers). It was agreed that Mr Jones would report back to the Committee at the next meeting on his discussions in this regard.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **subject to the required follow up actions as detailed in the preamble above, the report be noted; and**
- 2) **the Committee request that the Section 151 Officer take the Planned Follow Ups report appendix to the next Corporate Management Team meeting and report back to the Committee on the outcome of this.**

57. INTERNAL AUDIT - AUDIT PLAN 2016/17

Further to referral of the draft Internal Audit Operational Plan for 2016/17 at the previous meeting, Members received the final Plan for approval.

Audit, Governance & Standards

Committee

Thursday, 21 April 2016

Officers reminded Members of the increased number of days in the Plan for the Main Ledger, Budgetary Control and Bank Reconciliation audit work for 2016/17. The reasons for any increase or reduction in days were now detailed in a justification column which had been added to the report. The total number of audit days for 2016/17 remained the same as for 2015/16. As agreed at the previous meeting, the final Plan would also include audit time associated with the external auditor Section 11 budgetary recommendations.

Regarding the Performance Indicators (PIs) for 2016/17, it was noted that Mr Jones, Independent Member on the Committee, had met with the Internal Audit Manager earlier in the evening to discuss some areas where there might be a possibility of bringing forward more meaningful information to Members. Further discussions were due to take place with the S151 Officer in this regard, details of which would be brought to the Committee over the coming months. Officers would continue to work with the same PIs for the time being whilst developments were being considered.

RESOLVED that

subject to the Officer updates detailed in the preamble above, the Internal Audit Operational Plan 2016/17 be approved.

58. SECTION 11 RECOMMENDATIONS UPDATE

Members were presented with an update on progress against the external auditor Section 11 (S11) recommendations, as noted by the Committee at its January meeting. Officers advised that one meeting of the cross-party monitoring group which had been established in January to monitor the S11 Action Plan had taken place, which had proven to be successful.

Officers updated Members on progress against the S11 recommendations. At this stage the Action Plan was mostly on target. The only outstanding action related to the second recommendation – the need for the Council to develop a comprehensive project plan for the preparation of the accounts – as Officers were currently awaiting a full set of working paper requirements from Grant Thornton in order for the required templates to be compiled. A meeting with the external auditors was to be arranged shortly, the aim of which was to agree the working paper templates. Members requested that where actions were listed on the Action Plan as ongoing an anticipated completion date be given, which Officers agreed to include from the next update report.

Audit, Governance & Standards Committee

Thursday, 21 April 2016

A day's staff training had taken place with a Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) consultant to ensure that any issues in the software were eliminated, with another day's training planned for May. Officers were further forward with the accounting arrangements this year. Heads of Service and budget holders had updated Pressures/Savings/Bids forms and budget monitoring processes were being reviewed. A new Financial Planning module was also due to be implemented which would give managers more control and flexibility of their budgets. The detailed Memorandum to Officers setting out the process and requirements for completion of the 2015/16 accounts, as appended to the report, was noted.

Officers provided an explanation of the Risk Log appended to the report, the shaded entries for which had been completed. Since the Log had been produced on 7th April a further four entries had been completed, namely:

- Place Partnership – R&M/Capital invoice;
- Place Partnership – pensions figures;
- System – Aged Debt on AR system; and
- Reconciliations – Stores system.

Officers added that the remaining entries were due for completion within the following 1-2 weeks and that the Finance Team was working extremely hard to ensure that all deadlines within the Action Plan were met. Members expressed their thanks to staff for their hard work.

RESOLVED that

the Section 11 Recommendations Action Plan as appended to the report be noted.

59. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND RISK

Members received a report which presented for consideration the draft Corporate Risk Register for 2016/17, and which also updated Members on the Annual Governance Statement 2015/16 and other current Governance issues. The management team had reviewed the draft Register earlier that week and Members were asked to make any proposed changes to this. The Register would then be reviewed by the Committee on a 6-monthly basis.

Officers presented the Risk Register. Members were advised that the first six risks listed had been carried over from the 2015/16

Audit, Governance & Standards Committee

Thursday, 21 April 2016

Register. Additional risks had been included for 2016/17 in relation to the Financial Management arrangements and the potential risk of non-adherence with statutory inspections policies. Also, a risk associated with non-compliance with statutory requirements on health and safety replaced the previous risk of fatalities within provision service. Officers advised that the second Risk – Snap / poorly informed decisions made on savings / cuts – required some slight re-wording to make clear that this related to decisions being made where there was a lack of data/evidence to support such decisions.

Regarding the Non-adherence with Statutory Inspection Policy risk, Officers advised that they had spoken with the Head of Legal Services on this and that risks could arise from a number of issues in relation to the drawing-up of contracts and associated clauses within them. Councillors felt that existing contracts might be an issue and requested that there be a legal review of all relevant contracts, which Officers agreed to update the wording on the Risk Register for. This tied in with the contractor issue raised earlier in the agenda (Minute No. 52 refers).

A Member queried whether the lack of robust financial accounting and monitoring arrangements risk, which was scored a 9 medium Inherent and Residual Risk, should now be scored lower given the work which was being carried out in this area following the Section 11 Recommendations Action Plan and monitoring of progress against the Plan. Officers undertook to review the risk ratings as currently shown on the report to ensure they reflected the position following the controls being in place.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the draft Risk Register be updated in accordance with the comments/actions detailed in the preamble above; and**
- 2) the Annual Governance Statement and other Governance issues detailed in the report be noted.**

60. PORTFOLIO HOLDER UPDATE - QUARTERLY BUDGET MONITORING

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management began by reiterating his support for the Section 11 (S11) Recommendations Action Plan following the issued raised by the external auditors, and thanked staff for their efforts in this regard.

Audit, Governance & Standards Committee

Thursday, 21 April 2016

The latest Finance Monitoring report for Quarter 3 of 2015/16 (April to December 2015) had been referred to Executive Committee in March. The position was reassuring with projected savings having been achieved. There was an overall underspend for the period of £303k and further projected savings by the end of the financial year. It was hoped that by the end of the financial year General Fund balances would stand at approximately £2.4m; an increase of £400k on previously budgeted figures.

In light of the Grant Thornton S11 recommendations it was clear that there were some improvements to be made in the budget monitoring processes and arrangements, which Officers were duly addressing in order to ensure that the Council was more resilient in the future. There was a balanced budget for 2016/17 and both Officers and Members would continue to work hard on driving out any system waste.

RESOLVED that

the update be noted.

61. PROPOSED SAVINGS REPORT 2016/17

Members were asked to approve the format of a future report to the Committee for monitoring approved financial savings for 2016/17, which had been recommended as part of the external auditor Section 11 Recommendations.

Officers advised that it was important to capture savings and to start updating Members on these. A draft report template to reflect the revenue savings was appended to the report for Members to consider. Any agreed report template would be taken to each meeting of the Committee from July onwards. Officers explained the process for how the table would be populated and updated throughout the year. For comparison purposes, a request was made for the equivalent overall Strategic Purpose savings for 2015/16 to be included in the report, which Officers agreed to.

RESOLVED that

subject to the addition of a column setting out the 2015/16 savings as detailed in the preamble above, the format of the savings report be approved.

Audit, Governance & Standards Committee

Thursday, 21 April 2016

62. COMMITTEE ACTION LIST AND WORK PROGRAMME

Action List

i) Ref 1 – Statement of Accounts 2014/15 – Inventories

It was noted that Mr Jones, Independent Member, was due to meet with the relevant service managers the following week to discuss inventories.

Action: item to remain on Action List as Mr Jones to report back to Committee at July meeting.

ii) Ref 2 – Treasury Management – Liquidity Risk

Mr Jones stated that he could only see details of borrowing in the response provided by Officers, when he had also requested details of both cash flow forecast and cash flow output, as detailed in the Action List. Officers stated that they had been unsure as to exactly what was required in this regard and agreed to provide the relevant information.

Action: item to remain on Action List until Officers have provided all required information.

iii) Ref 2 – Benchmark borrowing yield

Mr Jones commented that he felt it was a good idea for a benchmark to be provided against other clients and requested that this information be presented to Members, together with the criteria to be met in this regard. Officers advised that they were working with Arlingclose Limited on this and that the Council did not have any investments as at 31st March. There would hopefully be some investments during the next quarter. Officers stated that the requested benchmark data could be reported to Members and that this information would need to be confidential.

Action: item to remain on Action List until Officers have referred benchmark data to Committee.

iv) Ref 4 – Internal Audit – Draft Audit Plan 2016-17

Action: remove from Action List as required action completed.

Audit, Governance & Standards Committee

Thursday, 21 April 2016

v) Ref 5 – Debt Recovery Update – Quarters 1 and 2 2015/16

Whilst it was noted that Officers had emailed Members with the requested write-off data immediately after the last meeting, Mr Jones requested that some context be given to the figures provided. This information should possibly include details of the whole of the Council's debt (for debts over 30 days where no prior agreement/arrangement was in place), together with debt comparisons against similar sized authorities.

Action: item to remain on Action List until Officers have provided additional information.

vi) Ref 6 – Future Reports to Committee / Work Programme updates

Action: remove from Action List as for information only.

Work Programme

Members noted the Statement of Accounts information detailed on the first page of the Work Programme and that, as in recent years, details of the draft accounts would be sent to Committee members once these had been lodged with the external auditors. It was anticipated that Members would receive this information on 3rd July 2016. This would allow Members time to look at these and to raise any queries with Officers prior to approval of the final Statement at the 22nd September meeting. An Officer Briefing on the Statement of Accounts was also scheduled to take place on 8th September to assist with any Member queries in this regard.

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.

63. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE OPERATION OF THE COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE AND PROCEDURE RULES

Members were asked to review the operation of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee during the 2015/16 Municipal Year to date, and to review the Committee's Terms of Reference and Procedure Rules.

Audit, Governance & Standards

Committee

Thursday, 21 April 2016

The Chair thanked Members and Officers for their input into the Committee, in particular Finance Officers for their hard work over the preceding year. Thanks was also expressed to Mr Jones, Independent Members and Lead Risk Member on the Committee, for his proactiveness in role.

No comments or suggestions were made by the Committee in relation to the workings of the Committee, the Committee's Terms of Reference or the Committee's Procedure Rules.

RESOLVED that

the position be noted.

64. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2016/17

Members noted the agreed meeting dates for the 2016/17 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED that

the meeting dates be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.45 pm

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Chair



Planning Committee

8th June 2016

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Andrew Fry (Chair), Councillor Yvonne Smith (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Roger Bennett, Michael Chalk, Matthew Dormer, Gareth Prosser, Jennifer Wheeler, Pat Witherspoon and Nina Wood-Ford

Officers:

Steve Edden and Amar Hussain

Democratic Services Officer:

Jan Smyth

1. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Wanda King. Councillor Pat Witherspoon was confirmed as Councillor King's substitute for the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13th April 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. UPDATE REPORTS

The Committee noted that no update on the application to be considered had been published for the meeting.

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Chair

**Planning
Committee**

8th June 2016

5. **APPLICATION 2016/127/FUL –
UNIT 3, SOUTH EAST QUADRANT, 60 GROVE STREET,
TOWN CENTRE, REDDITCH B98 8DL**

Installation of an internal mezzanine floor and external alterations, including installation of rooflights and fire escape doors and relocation of roller shutter.

Applicant: Dunelm Soft Furnishings Ltd

RESOLVED that

having regard to the Development Plan and to all other material considerations, Planning Permission be GRANTED, subject to the Conditions and Informatives set out on pages 10 and 11 of the main agenda report.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 7.17 pm

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CHAIR