



Council

Mon 17 Sep
2018
7.00 pm

Council Chamber
Town Hall
Redditch

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Council

Monday, 17th September, 2018

7.00 pm

Council Chamber Town Hall

Agenda

Membership:

Cllrs:	Juliet Brunner (Mayor)	Julian Grubb
	Roger Bennett (Deputy Mayor)	Bill Hartnett
	Salman Akbar	Pattie Hill
	Joe Baker	Wanda King
	Tom Baker-Price	Anthony Lovell
	Joanne Beecham	Gemma Monaco
	David Bush	Gareth Prosser
	Michael Chalk	Antonia Pulsford
	Debbie Chance	Mike Rouse
	Greg Chance	Mark Shurmer
	Anita Clayton	Yvonne Smith
	Brandon Clayton	Craig Warhurst
	Matthew Dormer	Jennifer Wheeler
	John Fisher	Pat Witherspoon
	Andrew Fry	

Executive Committee Minutes 11th September 2018

These minutes will be published on Friday 14th September 2018 and will therefore be circulated for Members' consideration in an additional papers pack.

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Executive Committee

Tuesday, 11 September
2018

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Matthew Dormer (Chair), Councillor David Bush (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Tom Baker-Price, Greg Chance, Brandon Clayton, Bill Hartnett, Gareth Prosser, Mike Rouse and Craig Warhurst

Also Present:

Roger Bennett, Michael Chalk and Anthony Lovell

Officers:

Kevin Dicks, Clare Flanagan, John Godwin, Sue Hanley, Mark Hanwell, Rachel Hines, Bev Houghton, Karen Jones, Jayne Pickering, Guy Revans, David Riley and Judith Willis

Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley

25. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

27. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader circulated a list of his announcements for Members' consideration.

28. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Tuesday 14th August be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

.....
Chair

29. REDDITCH LOCAL LOTTERY

The ICT Transformation Manager presented the Redditch Local Lottery report together with Mr Nigel Ashton from Aylesbury Vale District Council. During the presentation of the report the following points were highlighted for Members' consideration:

- Aylesbury Vale District Council had been the first local authority to establish a local lottery scheme three years previously.
- The lottery scheme had been very successful in Aylesbury and the officers from that authority had provided support to Redditch Borough Council in developing the business case for a Redditch local lottery scheme.
- Under the proposed scheme anybody could buy a lottery ticket on the website.
- Lottery tickets would cost £1 and 50 per cent of that would be contributed to supporting good causes.
- The Council would need to spend £10,000 on set up costs and a further £2,500 per year on running costs.
- There was the potential that the Council could secure £60,000 per annum from the scheme.
- The odds of winning the £25,000 jackpot were one million to one.
- All lottery funds would be managed by an external company on behalf of the Council.
- There would be no roll over but if more than one person had the winning numbers they would all receive £25,000.
- There was a risk that people might choose not to participate in the lottery which would impact on income. The Council could then choose to end the service.

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

- The Council lottery scheme could provide consistent funding to local charities on a monthly basis. This might help voluntary and community sector (VCS) groups to secure more sustainable funding.
- The potential to raise £60,000 for the Council from a local lottery could have a positive impact on the Council's finances.
- Local lottery schemes had been delivered successfully in other parts of the country when following the model of delivery detailed in the report.
- Concerns were raised about potential moral and ethical issues arising from the introduction of a local lottery scheme which could potentially encourage gambling. Officers suggested that as the scheme involved payments online of small sums

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participants would not have the instant gratification that might come from playing on fruit machines.

- Members were advised that participants would be restricted to purchasing up to £5 of tickets only.
- Concerns were raised about funds raised from gambling being used to provide financial support to public services.
- Questions were raised about the number of people who would need to buy a ticket in order to generate £60,000 for the Council. Officers explained that 2,046 players would need to participate per week to achieve this figure.
- Members also asked about the amount of local market testing that had been undertaken in Redditch to test demand for the service. Whilst there was little information available about this Members were advised that Redditch was not very different to the 57 other places in the country where a local lottery scheme had been introduced.
- There had been no complaints in Aylesbury in the three years that their lottery scheme had been in place.
- Concerns were raised about the potential for the local lottery to encourage young people to gamble. Members were advised that the lottery would not be open to those aged under 16 and participants would be required to have a bank account.
- Whilst some people would participate in the local lottery in order to make money many would be taking part to raise funding for local good causes and in other parts of the country some had returned their prize and asked for it to be given to charity.
- Participants could choose the charity that received the funding, though 30 per cent of participants did not make a selection.
- It would take time to raise awareness of the local lottery and this would require effective marketing.
- Local charities would need to promote the scheme to residents as this would be in their interests.
- Members noted that the Grants Panel already provided grants to local VCS organisations and this ensured that services were provided in the community that the Council might not otherwise be in a position to support.
- Concerns were raised that vulnerable people on low incomes might spend their limited resources on lottery tickets. Members were advised that the company managing the lottery would do their best to make sure that people in this position did not use up their finances on the lottery.
- Members questioned how the management company had been selected and whether this had involved a proper procurement process. Members were advised that there were very few suppliers of this service and this was the most frequently used company across the country.

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- The arrangements in place at local authorities in other parts of the country, in terms of management of these schemes, were briefly discussed. Members were informed that the schemes tended to fail where Councils opted to manage the lottery.
- Questions were also raised about what happened to funds when there was no jackpot winner as there was no rollover. Members were advised that over the past three years the jackpot had only been won twice. There was the potential to offer bonus prizes where funds built up.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the associated business case and the establishment of a local lottery be approved;**
- 2) the preferred option to appoint an External Lottery Management (ELM) is approved and the appointment of Gatherwell Ltd is progressed;**
- 3) two officers are appointed to be responsible for holding the license and submit the necessary application to the Gambling commission.**

30. ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR CRIME AND POLICING ACT 2014 - IMPLEMENTATION OF PROVISIONS

The Community Safety Manager presented a report in respect of implementing the provisions of the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014. The guidance in relation to this legislation had been issued in 2017 and the report detailed the implications for the Council, including a requirement to change the list of officer delegations for anti-social behaviour.

One of the key issues that had been addressed in both the legislation and the guidance was the previously inconsistent approach that had been adopted by Councils across the country to establishing protection orders against anti-social behaviour. The government had concluded that there needed to be a similar approach in all areas and the Government guidance recommended that the Executive Committee and Council to consider and agree any future requests for Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs). Members were advised that there were five PSPOs in Redditch on the date of the meeting which mainly related to alcohol consumption and anti-social behaviour. All of these would need to be reviewed.

Following the presentation of the report Members discussed the proposals in detail. Questions were raised about the new Closure Power in the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 and Officers confirmed that Closure Notices could only be request

by a police officer in the position of an Inspector or in a higher position and any follow up action could be only be undertaken by a Chief Inspector or someone more senior.

Members noted that many of the powers detailed in the report would be delegated to Officers and they suggested that the use of these powers needed to be monitored. An additional proposal was therefore brought forward for a monitoring update to be undertaken which would be reported to the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel. Some discussion was held about how frequently this monitoring should take with some suggesting that this could occur on an annual basis. However, Members concluded that this should instead take place every six months.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the powers available to the Council under the Anti Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, as amended in December 2017 be noted;**

RECOMMENDED that

- 2) **the Council's Scheme of Delegation is amended, in accordance with the recommendations outlined in Section 3.6 of this report, to allow relevant officers to apply these tools and powers; and**
- 3) **a monitoring update report, detailing action taken in relation to the powers provided in the scheme of delegations to officers (as outlined in recommendation 2 above), should be delivered to the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel on a biannual basis.**

31. DRAFT COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND WIDER SUPPORT FRAMEWORK

The Financial Support Manager presented the draft Council Tax Support Scheme and Wider Support Framework for Members' consideration. Members were advised that there were a number of drivers for change including the proposed changes to the scheme that had been made following the Care Leavers Scrutiny Task Group's review of arrangements. The roll out of Universal Credit across the Borough had also been taken into account. People in receipt of Universal Credit were entitled to receive a review of their finances on a monthly basis which had implications for Council Tax. The existing scheme required significant administration to enable staff to manage the demand arising through Universal Credit. The new arrangements proposed in the draft Council Tax Support scheme would place a less onerous administrative burden on staff.

Members noted that the introduction of Universal Credit had impacted on both residents and Council Services. Universal Credit could be quite complex, with some recipients receiving different assessments multiple times in a year. The proposed changes to the scheme could help to address these problems. Members also praised the Council's Hardship Fund, noting that this could provide a lifeline for residents experiencing difficult circumstances.

During consideration of this item the Chair noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had pre-scrutinised the report and had supported the proposal detailed in the report from officers.

RESOLVED that

to undertake a formal consultation with the major preceptors and the public on the proposed design of a revised scheme to take place for 8 weeks from 1st October. The results of the consultation will be presented to Overview and Scrutiny and Executive in January when it will consider any recommendations that will go to full Council in February.

32. WRITE OFFS APRIL 2017 TO MARCH 2018 - ANNUAL REPORT

The Financial Support Manager presented the annual report in respect of write offs in the period 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018. Members were advised that the main reason for writing off debts was insolvency.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

33. FINANCE MONITORING QUARTER 1 2018/19

The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources presented the financial monitoring update for the first quarter of 2018/19. In preparing the report Officers had attempted to link figures to strategic purposes. The figures recorded for Enabling Services listed a shortfall of £169,000. This related to the unidentified savings that had been built into the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the year.

The Budget Scrutiny Working Group had an important role to play in monitoring the authority's financial position and would be informed about any variances over £25,000. Further monitoring update reports would also be reported to the Executive Committee and officers would aim to provide assurance that the Council would deliver the unidentified savings.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was listed as having a surplus of £171,000. However, there were a number of areas where expenditure would be required from the HRA and therefore this continued to be in a financially challenging position.

Heads of Service were in the process of reviewing reserves listed in the budget. Where these were found to no longer be required they would be drawn down into balances.

Members noted that the Council needed to achieve £1.6 in savings over the course of the MTFP's four-year plan. Difficult decisions would be required to ensure that the authority's budget continued to be balanced moving forward.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) Council approve an increase in the 2018-19 Capital Programme of £10k, to be funded from reserves, towards the existing capital scheme for the new Haven online booking system; and**
- 2) Council approve an increase in the 2018-19 Capital Programme of £25k s106 monies for various public realm improvements in the vicinity of Elvington Close, Matchborough.**

34. PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the performance report which focussed on the strategic purpose 'help me live my life independently'. A number of measures had been included in the report for Members' consideration, both those relating to the strategic purpose and some corporate measures.

Members were advised that the Council was doing a lot of work with partner organisations to tackle low to medium mental health problems within the community. Reference was also made to sickness absence levels at the Council which in some cases were considered to be concerning. A new sickness absence policy was in the process of being developed to address some of these issues.

During consideration of this item the need for training to be provided to Members in respect of the dashboard was discussed. This had been requested at a meeting of the Executive Committee in the previous municipal year. In response to that a session focusing on the dashboard had been built into the new Member induction programme, a copy of which had been sent to every Member, and that training had been delivered in June. However, the Member

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Support Steering Group would be asked at their next meeting to consider holding another training session.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

35. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Officers confirmed that there were no outstanding recommendations from the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 9th August 2018.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday 9th August be noted.

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

The Chair noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had pre-scrutinised the draft Council Tax Support Scheme, the Leisure Business Plan, the Leisure Services Restructure and the Housing / HRA Overview and Recovery Plan during a meeting on 6th September. The recommendations in respect of each of these would be considered accordingly when discussing the relevant items. Members were asked to note that in each case the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had endorsed the proposals in the reports that had been produced by Officers.

37. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORTS

Members provided verbal updates in respect of the following bodies:

- a) Constitutional Review Working Party – Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer

Councillor Dormer advised that the Constitutional Review Working Party had met in August and had proposed a number of recommendations. These would be considered by Council on 17th September 2018.

- b) Corporate Parenting Board – Council Representative, Councillor Gareth Prosser

Councillor Prosser advised that a training session for members of the board would be taking place shortly.

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c) Grants Panel – Chair, Councillor Greg Chance

Members were advised that there was no update.

d) Member Support Steering Group – Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer

Councillor Dormer advised that the following meeting of the group would take place in October.

e) Planning Advisory Panel (PAP) – Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer

Councillor Dormer advised that the latest meeting of PAP had been cancelled due to lack of business.

38. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**RESOLVED that**

under S.100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matters on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act, as amended:

- a) **Leisure Services Business Plan**
- b) **Leisure and Cultural Services – Proposed Service Restructure**
- c) **Housing / HRA Overview and Recovery Plan**

39. LEISURE SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN

The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources presented the Leisure Services Business Plan for Members' consideration.

The Committee was advised that the business plan provided further detail about the arrangements for the Local Authority Trading Company (LATC) that would be established to provide a number of leisure services on behalf of the Council. The same services had been included in the business plan, as they had in March, with the exception of the allotments service, and the Council wanted the company to operate on a not-for-profit basis. A number of new activities, to be provided at locations such as Forge Mill Needle Museum, had been identified and included within the Business Plan which were designed to attract more customers and to enhance

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services. The company would be expected to maintain an effective working relationship with the Council and a suite of strategic measures had been developed to enable the authority to monitor performance.

The Council had already placed an advert in the national press inviting people to apply to become the Managing Director of the company. Formal consultation with existing staff affected by TUPE arrangements was due to begin on 24th October 2018, though the Council would aim to start informal engagement in respect of this matter at an earlier stage. Relevant staff would subsequently be transferred to the company in December.

Members were advised that the Council was considering naming the company Forge Leisure. There were some legal implications in relation to naming the organisation and therefore Officers were keen to alter one of the proposals in the report to provide the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources and the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism with the power to name the company after investigating these issues further.

After the report had been presented Members raised the following matters:

- The hard work that had been undertaken in relation to the LATC over the last 18 months. Councillor Mike Rouse thanked his predecessors as Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism, Councillors Roger Bennett and Pat Witherspoon, for their work.
- The key assumptions and the changes that had been made to these. Officers advised that these were largely the same as they had been in March 2018.
- The identity of the project sponsors. Members were advised that this was the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources.
- The potential for redundancies to occur following the introduction of the LATC and how the redundancy payments would be funded. Officer explained that any redundancy payments would be provided from balances.
- The potential for the LATC to charge people to attend events and the implications for Morton Stanley Festival. The Committee was informed that there were no plans to charge for attending the festival.
- The need for the LATC to report any changes in respect of charging for to the Shareholders Committee for approval.
- The potential for ticket sales to generate more income that could be reinvested in services.

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- The foreword to the business plan and who would sign it. Officers explained that the Council would expect the Managing Director to sign this once s/he had been appointed.
- The potential to include a measure that demonstrated the Council's commitment to work with people who volunteered to help with providing services at venues like the Palace Theatre. Members were advised that an operational measure focusing on volunteers could be developed.
- The need for the Council to provide the company with the flexibility it required to deliver good quality services that met the needs of residents whilst operating as an effective business.

During consideration of this item Councillor Bill Hartnett proposed an amendment to the proposals detailed in the report. This amendment was seconded by Councillor Greg Chance.

The amendment proposed that the final recommendation listed in the report should be changed to the following:

“The Council arrange a local competition with a normal prize asking the public to suggest a company name and logo for the proposed new company”.

In proposing the amendment Councillor Hartnett suggested that it would be good to engage with the public as part of the introduction of the company. The competition could last for two to three weeks and might be appreciated by local residents.

Members subsequently discussed the proposed amendment and concerns were raised that this type of competition could follow the national campaign in 2016 to name a polar research ship, where the most popular name had been Boaty McBoatface. Concerns were also raised about the timeframes available and it was suggested that there may not be sufficient time available to run a competition.

On being put to the vote the amendment was lost.

During consideration of this matter a further amendment was proposed by Councillor Tom Baker-Price. This was seconded by Councillor David Bush.

The amendment proposed that the final recommendation listed in the report should be changed to the following:

“The naming of the company is delegated to the Executive Director Finance and Resources after consultation with the Portfolio Holder

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for Leisure and Tourism and the Head of Service for Leisure and Cultural Services.”

During consideration of the amendment Members questioned whether the choice of name for the company should be postponed until the Managing Director of the LATC had been recruited. However, Officers noted that this could delay progress with the introduction of the company. As an alternative the potential for the Managing Director to rename the company once s/he had been appointed was discussed. However, Officers advised that the company could be renamed various times at Companies House after it had been registered but there would be a need for consistency in terms of the trading name and branding of the LATC communicated to the public, in order to build awareness amongst potential customers.

On being put to the vote the amendment was agreed.

RECOMMENDED

- 1) **approval of the Business Plan at Appendix 5 to include the key assumptions at Section 8 and confirmation of a date of transfer as from 1st December 2018 for the following services:**
 - **Abbey Stadium Sports Centre**
 - **Palace Theatre and Palace Youth Theatre**
 - **Forge Mill Needle Museum and Bordesley Abbey Visitors Centre Inc. access to Bordesley Abbey Ruins**
 - **Community Centres at Windmill Drive, Oakenshaw, Batchley and Winyates Green.**
 - **Pitcheroak Golf Course**
- 2) **approval of the establishment of a member panel to undertake the recruitment of the Managing Director and Non Executive Directors. It is proposed that this panel comprises the Leader, relevant Portfolio Holder and the leader of the opposition, or their nominees. This panel will be supported by 2 senior officers of the Council;**
- 3) **approval of, in principle, the investment opportunities as detailed in Appendix 6 and request officers bring detailed business cases to the Board of Directors for final approval;**
- 4) **approval of the funding of £55k from balances to fund an Electronic Point of Sale (EPOS) system to ensure the NewCo has the functionality to enable marketing,**

income generation and customer insight to be at its most effective

- 5) approval of a transfer from balances of £74k to cover the period of the initially agreed transfer date of 1st September 2018 to the revised date of 1st December 2018;**
- 6) approval of the measures framework as included in Appendix 3 of the report; and**
- 7) the naming of the company is delegated to the Executive Director Finance and Resources after consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism and the Head of Service for Leisure and Cultural Services.**

[During consideration of this item Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to exclude the press and public during the course of the debate on the grounds that information would be revealed which relates to the financial and business affairs of the local authority and information relating to consultations or negotiations, including contemplated consultations or negotiations in relation to labour relations matters].

40. LEISURE AND CULTURAL SERVICES - PROPOSED SERVICE RESTRUCTURE

The Head of Leisure and Cultural Services presented the Leisure and Cultural Services Proposed Restructure and explained that this report focussed on the staff who would not be joining the new leisure company. These staff would be working in shared services across Redditch Borough and Bromsgrove District Councils. The restructure would follow similar timelines to the leisure company to ensure a smooth transition. Should Members approve the restructure it would result in a small financial saving for both Councils.

The restructure of the remaining posts had impacted on the grades of some positions due to a change to responsibilities. Some posts would be made redundant, though staff would have an opportunity to apply for the new posts and this would help to reduce potential redundancies. The costs of any redundancies would be met from reserves.

During consideration of this item questions were raised about why this report had not been considered by the Shared Services Board. Officers advised that the report did not need to be considered by Shared Services Board as the proposals did not result in any

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changes for Bromsgrove District Council. The report would however bring the two Councils closer together in terms of the ways in which they delivered Leisure and Cultural services as Bromsgrove District Council commissioned many of their services.

The Chair highlighted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had pre-scrutinised the item and had supported the recommendation in the report.

Members were advised that an additional recommendation had been tabled for the Committee's consideration. This was endorsed.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the proposed management structure, timeline and associated costs contained within this report are approved; and**
- 2) if there is a redeployment from Newco back into Leisure & Cultural Services within Redditch Borough Council within the 3 month period that employee's continuity of service and pension rights will be protected.**

[During consideration of this item Members noted that there were appendices to the report that, if discussed, necessitated the disclosure of exempt information that could reveal the identity of an individual and information relating to consultations or negotiations, including contemplated consultations or negotiations in relation to labour relations matters. However, Members did not discuss any exempt matters during consideration of this item and there is nothing exempt in this minute].

41. HOUSING / HRA - OVERVIEW AND RECOVERY PLAN

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the Housing / HRA Overview and Recovery Plan. Whilst presenting the report she highlighted the following matters for Members' consideration:

- As a result of audits carried out in 2016/17, which had identified issues with non-compliance with contractual matters, a Contracts Manager had been appointed by the Council.
- A number of problems with compliance had subsequently been identified within Housing Capital and eight members of staff had been suspended and had then left the organisation.
- The Council had undertaken a wholesale review of the Housing Department and during this time all work had been suspended except in relation to essential health and safety matters.

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- The Chief Executive had delegated the task of reviewing and managing Housing Services to the Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Environmental Services and Head of Community Services.
- All contractual issues and how these had been addressed would be the subject of a report to the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee in October 2018.
- Nationally there were challenges in relation to housing and the proposals in the report also aimed to address these. The government had described the national housing market as being broken.
- Key issues nationally with housing included a lack of available social housing, limited affordable housing and the need for the right advice to be provided.
- The requirements within the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 also created challenges for all Councils.
- There continued to be pressures on the HRA. This was largely due to the reduction in rents for Council housing of one per cent per annum that had been imposed by the government over a four year period since 2016/17. This had led to a loss of £130 million from the HRA compared to the income that had been envisaged.
- There had also been an issue with delays in turning around voids which had had a negative impact on the Council's finances as well as causing delays in terms of housing people in need.
- The Council had published a business plan in 2012 which had been based on previous assumptions regarding the HRA.
- In February 2018 the Council had agreed a one year budget for the HRA and funding had had to be drawn down from balances to achieve a balanced budget for 2018/19.
- Officers had started a five year review of the budget for Housing Services and there were various options available to the Council moving forward.
- There were cultural issues within Housing Services that needed to be addressed. This had been one of the most controversial issues that had been raised but it was felt that honesty in relation to this matter was needed.
- Problems had been identified in relation to the performance management of staff which needed to be addressed.
- Senior officers recognised the need to take staff with them in changing the service's culture and working practices. There was also a need to enable staff to feel confident and comfortable enough to report any concerns about services to senior officers.
- To date there had been issues with staff taking a lack of ownership of the issues.
- Some staff had a lack of understanding of the legal issues relevant to Housing.

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- Health, safety and welfare issues needed to be given greater priority than had been the case in the past.
- Tenants needed to be placed at the centre of service delivery.
- Housing management needed to be refocused.
- Locality working was important but services needed to be delivered to all tenants, not to a small number.
- The Housing department was using the oldest IT system in the country which was not fit for purpose and this needed to be replaced.
- The problems that had been identified in the Housing department had built up over many years and would take time to change.
- Over the next two years there were a number of policies that would need to be reviewed including the Housing Allocations Policy and the Tenancy Engagement Strategy and then staff needed to act on those policies.
- A data suite needed to be developed for Housing Services and better governance needed to be introduced to provide Members and tenants with assurance.

During consideration of this matter Members were advised that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had pre-scrutinised this matter at a meeting on 6th September 2018. The Committee had debated the matter in detail and had concluded by supporting the recommendations detailed in the report.

Following the presentation of the report Members discuss a number of issues in detail:

- The need to be positive and to look forward by making constructive changes to Housing Services.
- The safety of residents was paramount and this needed to be recognised in service delivery.
- The complex legal issues that had had to be addressed during the investigation in relation to the compliance issues within housing and the hard work of the Investigating Committee and Employment Appeals Committee.
- The need to learn lessons from the issues that had been identified to ensure that services met the needs of residents.
- The potential to use the situation as an opportunity to review the strategic purposes that applied to Housing Services. This would involve staff reframing what they did.
- The progress that had been made recently in terms of managing voids and the current number of void properties. Officers advised that there were 130 void properties at the time of the suspensions and now that number had fallen to approximately 70.
- The need to bring the whole of the Housing Service together so that staff and services operated in a holistic manner.

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- The need to review why many void properties were returned to the Council in a poor condition.
- The potential to increase the speed of bringing void properties back into a habitable state so that they could be leased to tenants.
- The impact of the backlog in the turnaround of voids on the Council's finances; over the past five years. Members were informed that this had cost the Council £300,000.
- The need for practical measures in the action plan.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the strategic action plan detailed at Appendix A be endorse;**
- 2) the Executive Committee support the financial actions undertaken in respect of the Housing Revenue Account and note the proposed actions subject to formal budget and rent setting processes as detailed in the strategic improvement/action plan.**
- 3) the Executive Committee support the Director / Heads of Service service remits and authorise the Chief Executive/Corporate Management Team Officers to proceed to recruit to the proposed senior managers for the service (subject to service review) with support for phased service reviews for the whole of the services detailed, over the following 12 – 18 months;**
- 4) the Executive Committee endorse that the governance and reporting of progress on the strategic action plan be through Executive Committee.**

RECOMMENDED that

- 5) a sum of £350,000 (capital staffing costs) be built into the capital budget (HRA) for 2018/19 to resource the immediate review of Housing Capital/Property and Compliance team(s).**

[During consideration of this item Members agreed an exempt recommendation which could not be revealed on the grounds that information would be revealed which relates to the financial and business affairs of the local authority].

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 2, 3, 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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