

Council

3rd September 2012

MINUTES

Present:

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

Also Present:

Reverend Mike Herbert, Mayor's Celebrant

Officers:

A Darroch, K Dicks, C Felton, S Jones and J Pickering

Committee Services Officer:

I Westmore

47. WELCOME

The Mayor opened the meeting and welcomed all present.

48. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Carole Gandy, Adam Griffin and Derek Taylor.

49. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

50. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 23rd July 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

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MAYOR, in the Chair

51. ANNOUNCEMENTS

a) Mayor

The Mayor's communications and announcements were as follows:

i) Mayoral Functions

The Mayor advised that, since the last meeting of the Council, he had attended a number of engagements, including the 37th Signal Regiment Family Day, the Morton Stanley Festival and a Pakistani Independence Day Party.

ii) Forthcoming Engagements

The Mayor advised that forthcoming engagements included a Murder Mystery Evening at Forge Mill from which the proceeds would be going to the Mayor's charities.

iii) Urgent Business

The Mayor advised that he had accepted late circulation of the covering report and additional information in respect of the Local Retention of Business Rates Growth at Item 10 and the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 21st August 2012.

b) Leader

The Leader's announcements were as follows:

i) Save the Alex Rally

The Leader advised the Council of the excellent Save the Alex Rally that had taken place on 4th August and which had attracted up to 1,500 people. The Leader also confirmed that the letter had been despatched from the Leaders of Redditch Borough and Bromsgrove and Stratford-on-Avon District Councils to the Secretary of State for Health following the last meeting of the Council.

ii) Volunteer Assistance at Council events

The Leader took the opportunity to publicly thank not only Council staff who helped to make such a success of events such as the Morton Stanley Festival and the Forge Mill Museum Scarecrow Day but also those who helped out on a voluntary basis such as local Scouts and Guides and Forces Cadets.

iii) Local Paralympians

The Leader conveyed the Council's best wishes and congratulations to local Paralympians, Clare Cashmore, a swimmer, and Katrina Harte, a sprinter, who were both currently competing very successfully in the London 2012 Paralympics.

iv) Redditch Schools Examination Results

With the agreement of the Leader, Councillor Michael Braley expressed his satisfaction at the improved school examination results this summer from Redditch Schools and commended the County Council for the work undertaken to bring this about.

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive had no announcements.

52. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

No questions had been received.

53. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

No motions had been received.

54. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Members received the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 24th July and 21st August 2012.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 24th July 2012 be received and all recommendations adopted; and**
- 2) **the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 21st August 2012 be received and all recommendations adopted, subject to:**

in respect of minute 48 (Access for Disabled People Task Group) it being noted that the Chair of the Access for Disabled People Task Group was to discuss with Officers the outcome of the proposal that Dial-a-Ride clients be advised of the benefits of carrying their blue badges whilst using this service and report the matter back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in due course.

55. REGULATORY COMMITTEES

The Council received the minutes of recent meetings of the Licensing Committee, Planning Committee and Standards Committee.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 11th July 2012 be received and adopted;**
- 2) the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 18th July and 15th August 2012 be received and adopted; and**
- 3) the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 16th July 2012 be received and adopted.**

56. LOCAL RETENTION OF BUSINESS RATES GROWTH

The Council considered a report in respect of proposals for the local retention of Business Rates growth from April 2013 and the options for pooling or remaining independent. Given the recent amendment of a central Government deadline for a decision on the choice of pools and the late provision of information from both prospective Business Rates Pools, Officers tabled additional information on the night.

Officers explained that Redditch sat in the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas of both the Worcestershire LEP and the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP (GBSLEP) and the Council had expressed an interest in participating in the Business Rates Pools of both. The Council was advised of the potential financial outcomes should it decide to follow each of the three possible courses of action, these being joining either the Worcestershire Pool or the GBSLEP Pool or remaining independent of either pool for the purpose of retention of Business Rates. The potential income from being the member of a pool was greater than would be anticipated from remaining independent.

Members were concerned at the limited time during which they had had the opportunity to consider the appraisals but fully appreciated the circumstances that had led to this situation. They were in clear agreement that the Council should follow the course of action that would allow the local economy to grow and prosper. Questions were asked around the risk reserves proposed by both pools, how and why they might be called upon and the use to which unallocated reserves would subsequently be put. The governance arrangements were also discussed, with Members seeking a degree of assurance that the Council's interest would be adequately represented in each of the pools. It was also confirmed that the

representation on either pool would be by a Member rather than an Officer.

The Council favoured the option of joining the GBSLEP Pool as it appeared to offer the greatest potential benefits to the Borough. Members were content at the proposed mechanism for unlocking any funds that were generated through growth on Business Rates, understanding that this would be reliant on the submission of compelling business cases by any of the partners. Officer explained that there was not considered to be a difficulty in the Council partnering with Birmingham, Solihull and others whilst at the same time maintaining a shared economic development function with both Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest District Councils.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the Council participate in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP pool; and**
- 2) **the dependence of the detailed impact of the pooling arrangements on the Local Government Finance Settlement for Redditch which will not be available until December 2012 or January 2013 be noted and that, until this information is received, a final decision will not be made. Recognising this, Members task Officers to work through the detailed financial impact of the pooling arrangements in the context of the financial settlement, when received, and that the final decision in relation to the pooling arrangements be delegated to the Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer, in consultation with Group Leaders.**

57. URGENT BUSINESS - RECORD OF DECISIONS

There were no Urgent Business decisions taken under the Council's urgency procedures for consideration at this meeting.

58. URGENT BUSINESS - GENERAL

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

The Meeting commenced at 7.05 pm
and closed at 8.10 pm

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MAYOR, in the Chair