

Executive Committee

11th March 2014

MINUTES

Present:

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

Also Present:

Councillor Andy Fry

Jim Stobie, Head of Estates Services, Warwickshire and West Mercia Police

Officers:

C Flanagan, S Hanley, J Pickering and A de Warr

Committee Services Officer:

I Westmore

145. APOLOGIES

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

146. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

147. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader advised that there were two matters which had appeared on the Executive Work Programme but which were not included on the agenda for consideration at this meeting as it had subsequently become apparent that Officers had the necessary authority to act in each case.

These were the approval of the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel Budget, where authority had been previously delegated to Officers by Council, and the Nomination of an Asset of Community

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Chair

Value, where Officers had applied statutory tests to the nomination, in accordance with the Council's agreed policy, which demonstrated that the application could not proceed.

148. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 24th February 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

149. JOINT PROPERTY VEHICLE

Jim Stobie, Head of Estates Services for Warwickshire and West Mercia Police, attended the meeting to provide Members with a brief explanation of the proposed Joint Property Vehicle (JPV) which was being put forward as a property management solution for public sector organisations in Worcestershire and the surrounding area. At the outset it was reported that the County Council had recently agreed to move towards a Full Business Case. Should the Borough Council decide to progress the initiative, the Full Business Case would be presented for approval in approximately 12 months time.

Jim Stobie explained that the JPV represented a unique proposition, an arms-length company limited by shares, wholly owned and governed by the participating public sector partners. Those partners who were in at the outset would have control of the function of the JPV and each partner would possess an equal vote and voice on the shareholder group. There would be scope for other public sector organisations to come on board over time but this would be with the agreement of the existing partners.

The most obvious benefit of this approach would be efficiency savings together with those realised from the rationalisation of management structures. Property portfolio costs could be reduced in all areas other than for Non-Domestic Rates. The JPV would contribute to the local environment and economy through the contracting of services from local suppliers, would lead to revenue savings and would also contribute towards regeneration through the Worcestershire LEP. The one town approach was a further benefit of the proposal.

Members were generally supportive of the proposal and sought assurances and clarification on a number of areas. It was made clear that only public sector partners would be able to collaborate as part of the JPV in order to be Teckal compliant. It was also explained that it was up to each authority who was appointed to the

Shareholder group but that the current proposal was for this to be a Director of the public body in question.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the Worcestershire Capital and Asset Partnership Outline Business Case for a Joint Property Initiative for the development of a joint Estates function across public sector organisations across the Worcestershire region, attached at Appendix 1, be noted;**
- 2) the development of a Full Business Case, to be brought back to Members in due course, be agreed; and**
- 3) the Executive Director for Finance and Resources and Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management be delegated to work with partners to support the development of the Full Business Case for a Joint Property Vehicle, to include exploring hosting and proposed governance arrangements.**

150. GRANTS PROGRAMME 2014/15

The Committee considered a report setting out the recommendations of the Grants Assessment Panel in awarding grants to voluntary sector organisations for 2014/15. An update report was considered which provided the outcomes of a meeting of the Grants Assessment Panel following dispatch of the original agenda.

In view of the fact that two applications had not even reached what was considered an acceptable standard, it was recommended that all future applications meet a minimum level before they might go forward for consideration by the Panel.

Members expressed their admiration for the work carried out by the voluntary sector in the Borough and thanked those involved for enhancing the lives of those within Redditch.

RESOLVED that

- 1) grants be awarded to voluntary sector organisations as detailed in Section 4.6 of the report submitted; and**
- 2) a minimum score of 50% of the available points be approved for all applications submitted to Redditch**

Borough Council's Voluntary and Community Grants Programme.

151. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY, PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS AND MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY

Members received a report which enabled them to scrutinise the Treasury Management Strategy, Prudential Indicators and the Minimum Revenue Provision and consider a number of Capital Bids.

The Committee was informed that there was a statutory obligation upon Officers to produce this report on an annual basis. There was little change in the information contained within the report year on year but it did provide Members with reassurance that the Council was managing its borrowing, investment and cash-flow effectively. Members' attention was drawn to the Council's investment strategy which demonstrated that an appropriate balance was being struck between risk and return.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the Treasury Management Strategy, Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy for 2014/15 be approved; and**
- 2) the Capital Bids detailed in Appendix A to the report be approved.**

152. PAY POLICY 2014/15

Members considered the Council's Pay Policy for 2014/15. This report was a requirement of the Localism Act 2011.

It was noted that around 100 staff were receiving below the Living Wage at present, but this situation would be remedied once Job Evaluation had been concluded and implemented and Officers hoped to achieve this within the next few months.

RECOMMENDED that

the Pay Policy as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

153. FINANCE MONITORING REPORT 2013/14 - APRIL - DECEMBER (QUARTER 3)

Officers presented what was a new-style Finance Monitoring Report which provided considerably more detail around departmental spending than had been the case previously.

The Leader commented that Members were taking a greater role in actively monitoring their relevant budgets of late and this was increasingly being evidenced.

Staff were thanked for achieving the savings to date which had resulted in a projected outturn for 2013/14 in line with the budget for the current year.

It was noted that there was still a small amount of ongoing expenditure in respect of Hewell Road Pool Works. Officers reported that they had raised this with the Housing Strategy Team and a position statement was expected within the current week. This position statement would be forwarded on to all Executive Committee members.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the current financial position on Revenue and Capital, as detailed in the report, be noted; and**
- 2) identified savings be used to offset the savings requirement that has not been fully identified, where available in discussion with Heads of Service.**

154. QUARTERLY MONITORING OF WRITE-OFFS - THIRD QUARTER 2013/14

The Committee considered a report which detailed the action taken by Officers with respect to the write off of debts during the first nine months of 2013/14 and which set out the profile and levels of outstanding debt.

Officers advised that much of the information contained within the report could only usefully be reported on an annual basis as in-year reporting only served to provide a misleading impression of the levels of outstanding debt. To this end it was proposed that the Executive Committee move to annual rather than quarterly reporting of this information henceforward.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the contents of the report be noted; and**

- 2) **an amendment be made to the Write Off Policy to allow for annual reporting of the write offs rather than quarterly.**

155. CUSTOMER SERVICES - 3RD QUARTER MONITORING REPORT

Members considered details of customer feedback data for the third quarter of 2013/14, along with transactional data relating to the Customer Service Centre.

One of the headline figures for the third quarter was a reduction in complaints which was linked to the bedding in of new waste collection arrangements and a reduction in the complaints about that particular service change. Only one complaint that quarter had been escalated to the Head of Service and no complaints had been forwarded to the Local Government Ombudsman. There had, however, been a considerable number of compliments.

Customer Services staff were complimented on the report, which demonstrated the benefits flowing through from transformation, and also on the changes to the arrangement in the Town Hall Reception area which had resulted in much reduced queuing in that space.

RESOLVED that

the contents of the report be noted.

156. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee received the minutes of a recent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 4th February 2014 be received and noted.

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

There were no minutes or referrals under this item.

158. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

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

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

159. ACTION MONITORING

The Committee's Action Monitoring report was considered by Members.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.35 pm

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Chair