

Executive Committee

8th April 2014

MINUTES

Present:

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

Also Present:

Councillors David Bush, Carole Gandy and Gay Hopkins

Officers:

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

Committee Services Officer:

Ivor Westmore

160. APOLOGIES

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

161. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

162. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

.....
Chair

163. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

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

164. LANDSCAPING TASK GROUP FINAL REPORT

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

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

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

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

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

RESOLVED that

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

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

165. FOOTBALL TASK GROUP - INTERIM REPORT

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

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

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

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

RESOLVED that

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

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

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

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

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

RECOMMENDED that

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

167. WORCESTERSHIRE SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE

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

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

RESOLVED that

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

168. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

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

RESOLVED that

4th March 2014

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

1st April 2014

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

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

There were no minutes or referrals under this item.

170. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

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

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

171. ACTION MONITORING

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

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.31 pm

.....
Chair