



# Executive

## Committee

Tuesday, 20th January 2015

### MINUTES

**Present:**

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

**Officers:**

Ruth Bamford, Kevin Dicks, Clare Flanagan, Sam Morgan and Judith Willis

**Committee Services Officer:**

Debbie Parker-Jones

**81. APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence.

**82. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**83. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Additional Papers

Members were advised that two sets of Additional Papers had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Additional Papers 1 contained a minute from the 13th January 2015 Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Medium Term Financial Plan 2015/16 to 2017/18 – Pre-Scrutiny. As such, this would be considered with the Medium Term Financial Plan which appeared at agenda item 12 of the main agenda pack.

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Chair

Additional Papers 2 detailed a revised paragraph 3.11 (grant applications scoring) to the Voluntary & Community Sector Grant Programme 2015/16 – Funding Recommendations report, as three applications had been omitted from the list of organisations recommended for grants in error.

### Work Programme

Owing to the timings of the upcoming Audit, Governance & Standards Committee meetings, the Treasury Management Strategy, Prudential Indicators and Minimum Reserve Provision Policy 2015/16 report would need to be considered by the Executive Committee on 10th March 2015.

The Leader explained that Officers were unable to prepare the report for this until they had the required budget information, but that there was also a statutory duty for this to be approved by April.

### Action Monitoring

The Leader reminded Members that Officers had emailed them the previous day with the outstanding Finance Monitoring Report 2014/15 Quarter 1 information which had been requested by the Executive at the September 2014 meeting. Agenda Item 15 of the main agenda pack referred.

## **84. MINUTES**

### **RESOLVED that**

**the minutes of the meeting for the Executive Committee held on 16th December 2014 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.**

## **85. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 24th November 2014.

It was noted that there were no recommendations to consider as the recommendation at Minute No. 55 1) relating to the Tudor Grange Academy review had been dealt with by the Executive at its last meeting.

### **RESOLVED that**

**the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 24th November 2014 be received and noted.**

**86. DESIGNATION OF A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA - FECKENHAM**

Further to Minute 44 of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 28th October 2014, the Committee considered a report setting out the results of consultation on the designation of Feckenham as a Neighbourhood Plan Area under decentralisation measures introduced through the Localism Act 2011.

It was noted that two responses had been received to the public consultation, neither of which had raised any objection in relation to the proposed boundary. The responses had included useful information which would be taken into consideration and inform the Neighbourhood Plan as it progressed, and which would also be forwarded to the Feckenham Neighbourhood Plan Working Party.

**RESOLVED that**

**having considered the Feckenham Neighbourhood Plan Area Application and the outcome of the consultation period, the Feckenham Neighbourhood Plan Area as identified at Appendix 1 of the report, be formally designated as it provides a 'sound' basis for developing a neighbourhood plan in accordance with the regulations.**

**87. REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL'S VOLUNTARY & COMMUNITY SECTOR GRANT PROGRAMME 2015/16 - FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members considered the recommendations from the Grants Assessment Panel in awarding grants to voluntary sector organisations for 2015/16.

Officers highlighted the revised paragraph 3.11 to the report, which had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting under Additional Papers Pack 2. Three applications, namely Two Pennies Serving Redditch, Redditch Play Council and Work and Skills Club, had been omitted from the list of organisations recommended for funding detailed in the main report in error. However the recommended funding amount of £182,060 quoted in the report remained correct as this included the proposed grants for the additional organisations.

Whilst some concerns were expressed in relation to the £39,940 grant funding underspend it was noted that the same application process as in previous years had been followed, and the same level of publicity given to this. In response to a Member query, Officers confirmed that whilst a member of staff who was normally involved in the grants process had been absent from work this had not

impacted on the process. The grants process timetable had been brought forward by a month or so at the voluntary and community sector's request. Officers had spoken with some organisations who normally applied for grant funding from the Council but from whom applications had not been received on this occasion. The organisations in question advised that they had opted to seek funding from elsewhere.

Members welcomed the valuable work of the town's voluntary sector and were pleased that all of the organisations recommended for funding by the Grants Assessment Panel could be funded in their entirety. As the full grants process had been followed it was not deemed necessary for the grants programme to be re-run in February 2015 to seek bids for the themes which were currently underspent. The underspend of £39,940 would therefore be identified as a saving for the current year only and put into balances.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) the following grants be awarded:

Name of Project	Organisation	Amount awarded
<b>Help me to be Financially Independent - £75k</b>		
<b>Redditch CAB Vulnerable People Experiencing Debt &amp; Related Problems with Resolutions Through Working Together</b>	<b>CAB</b>	<b>£75,000</b>
<b>Help me to be Financially Independent - £50k</b>		
<b>Carers Telephone Support Service</b>	<b>Carers Careline</b>	<b>£3,095</b>
<b>Achieving Wellbeing</b>	<b>IDC Sewing Café</b>	<b>£10,000</b>
<b>Where Next Association</b>	<b>Where Next Association</b>	<b>£10,000</b>
<b>Young Mums "Get Creative" Group</b>	<b>IDC Sewing Café</b>	<b>£5,120</b>
<b>Help me to be Financially Independent - £20k</b>		
<b>Two Pennies Serving Redditch</b>	<b>Two Pennies Money Advice</b>	<b>£20,000</b>
<b>Help me to Live My Life Independently - £35k</b>		
<b>Redditch Play</b>	<b>Redditch Play</b>	<b>£35,000</b>

Council	Council	
<b>Help me to Live My Life Independently - £18k</b>		
<b>Work and Skills Club</b>	<b>What's Your Point?</b>	<b>£2,250</b>
<b>Food Friends and Family Project</b>	<b>Yum Tub Club</b>	<b>£3,000</b>
<b>Adult Mentoring Project</b>	<b>Mentor Link</b>	<b>£3,000</b>
<b>Where Next Hub</b>	<b>Where Next Association</b>	<b>£3,000</b>
<b>Well being Jigsaw Project</b>	<b>Mental Health Action Group / Yum Tum Club</b>	<b>£3,000</b>
<b>Provide Me With Good Things to Do, See and Visit - £9K</b>		
<b>Arts, crafts and cookery for families</b>	<b>What's Your Point?</b>	<b>£2,785</b>
<b>Inspire ADHD Positive Activities Club</b>	<b>Inspire</b>	<b>£3,000</b>
<b>Keep My Place Safe and Looking Good - £15k</b>		
<b>The Ditch Youth Project</b>	<b>The Ditch Youth Project</b>	<b>£3,000</b>

and

- 2) the underspend of £39,940 be identified as a saving and be put into balances.

**88. LAND AT EASEMORE ROAD - DISPOSAL**

The Committee considered a report which sought Member approval to amend a previous decision of the Executive Committee in relation to the disposal of land at Easemore Road.

Officers explained the background to the previously agreed terms of the disposal of the land, as detailed in the report.

Members agreed that in view of the problems which had previously been encountered in relation to the sale of the land it was prudent for the land to be disposed of at market value. A Member queried the potential current value of the land compared to what they understood to have been the historical valuation for this, which Officers agreed to look into outside of the meeting and to report back to Members separately for information.

Officers explained that there was a statutory obligation for the Council to obtain the best possible value for the land, and that the figure in question met this requirement. If this were not the case then a separate report would be required to Members seeking approval to sell at less than best value, which did not apply in this case. Officers would, in any event, always seek to negotiate the highest possible receipts from the sale of land. The land at Easemore Road was now under direct sale and was therefore subject to a totally different scheme to that which had previously applied.

**RESOLVED that**

**the land at Easemore Road, Redditch be disposed of at market value.**

**89. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2015/16**

The Committee considered the report and recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) for the level of Members allowances for 2015/16.

Whilst the IRP had not proposed an increase in the level of allowances compared to the previous year, the Council continued to pay less than the Panel recommended in both basic and special responsibility allowances. Members felt that in the current times of austerity it would not be morally right for these allowances to be increased and that these should therefore continue at the same level set for 2014/15.

**RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) the Council has regard to the report and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for 2015/16;**
- 2) the Council does not accept the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, set out in appendix 1 to its report, for the following allowances:**

**Basic  
Leader  
Deputy Leader  
Portfolio holders  
Executive members without portfolio  
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Task groups**

Chair of Planning Committee  
Chair of Licensing Committee  
Chair of Audit, Governance and Standards Committee  
Political Group Leaders  
Local Government Association and West Midlands  
Employers;

- 3) the Council accepts the Panel's recommendations for travel, subsistence and dependent carers' allowances;
- 4) for 2015/16, the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances in the Council's Allowances scheme continue at the level set for 2014/15, as set out in the final column of appendix 1 to the Independent Remuneration Panel's report; and
- 5) the Panel's recommendation relating to the Parish Council be noted.

## 90. COUNCIL TAX BASE

A report enabling Members to set the Council Tax Base for 2015/16 was considered.

### RESOLVED that

- 1) the calculation of the Council's Tax Base for the whole and part of the area for 2015/16 be approved; and
- 2) in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992, the figures calculated by the Redditch Borough Council as its tax base for the whole area for the year 2015/16 be 24,846.71 and for the parts of the area listed below be:

Parish of Feckenham	363.06
Rest of Redditch	<u>24,483.64</u>
	<u>24,846.71</u>

## 91. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT INITIAL ESTIMATES 2015/16

Members received a report which presented the Initial Estimates for the Housing Revenue Account and proposed dwelling rents for 2015/16.

Officers explained the financial implications of the report and it was noted that rents were based on a 48-week year, with tenants receiving 4 rent-free weeks each year.

## RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **the draft 2015/2016 Estimates for the Housing Revenue Account attached to the report at Appendix A be approved;**
- 2) **the actual average rent increase for 2015/2016 be 2.2% (1.2% CPI plus 1% as per government guidelines); and**
- 3) **£3m be transferred to a reserve as a Revenue Contribution to Capital to fund the future Capital Programme and repay borrowing.**

## 92. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2015/16 TO 2017/18

Members received a report which set out the current financial position for the revenue budget 2015/16 to 2017/18. Members also considered with the report the minute and recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's meeting on 13th January 2015, which had been circulated as Additional Papers 2, in relation to the pre-scrutiny of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Officers explained the background to the report and the report appendices which outlined the unavoidable pressures (including income shortfalls) and proposed strategic purpose savings, and responded to Member questions in this regard.

In relation to the current financial position, Officers stated that the table detailed at paragraph 3.21 of the report, which showed an overall shortfall for 2015/16 of £205k, was correct at the time of the report going to print. However the position with this was changing daily and by the first week of February a balanced budget would be presented to Members.

Significantly, a plot of Council land had that week been sold, the revenue from which would be utilised to fund any equal pay claims under Job Evaluation. The provisional settlement received by the Council for 2015/16 was £3,580. This confirmed a £647k reduction in the grant allocation for 2014/15 and there had been a 52% cut in local government funding since 2010/11.

Heads of Service were continuing to identify all possible savings which would not affect front-line services and details of specific service review outcomes would follow. The final business rates figures were also currently being worked on. The Chair thanked Officers for the great deal of hard work which had gone into the budget process so far.



Members supported the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendation that Officers approach the Kingfisher Shopping Centre in respect of contributing further funding for the Shopmobility scheme. The Chair commented that he was unsure as to whether Officers would be making direct contact in this regard, or whether this would be done via the Town Centre Partnership, but that he was happy for Officers to proceed with this via whichever mechanism they deemed most appropriate.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) **the current position for 2015/16 to 2027/18 be noted and Officers be requested to review the savings that can be delivered to achieve a balanced budget; and**
- 2) **the recommendation from the 13th January 2015 Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting that Officers approach the Kingfisher Shopping Centre in respect of contributing further funding for the Shopmobility scheme be supported.**

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

The Committee received the minute and recommendation of the 13th January 2015 Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to the Committee's pre-scrutiny of the Medium Term Financial Plan 2015/16 to 2017/18. This was considered under the previous agenda item – Medium Term Financial Plan (Minute No. 92 refers).

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) **the minute and recommendation of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 13th January 2015 be received and noted; and**
- 2) **Officers approach the Kingfisher Shopping Centre in respect of contributing further funding for the Shopmobility scheme.**

**94. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT**

It was noted that the Planning Advisory Panel due to take place that evening had been cancelled due to lack of business and that the Housing Advisory Panel was due to meet in February.

**RESOLVED that**

**the report be noted.**

**95. ACTION MONITORING**

As mentioned under Leader's Announcements, the Chair reminded Members that Officers had emailed them the previous day with the outstanding information requested by the Committee at the September 2014 meeting arising from the Quarter 1 Finance Monitoring Report 2014/15.

**RESOLVED that**

**the position be noted.**

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm  
and closed at 8.10 pm

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Chair