

EXECUTIVE

Committee

8th September 2015

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Bill Hartnett (Chair) and Councillors Juliet Brunner, Brandon Clayton, John Fisher, Mark Shurmer, Yvonne Smith and Pat Witherspoon (during Minute No.'s 25 to 33)

Officers:

Emma Baker, Rebecca Dunne, Clare Flanagan, Sue Hanley, Mark Hanwell, Sam Morgan, Jayne Pickering, Dean Piper and Judith Willis

Committee Officers:

Debbie Parker-Jones

25. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Greg Chance and Debbie Taylor.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

27. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Additional Papers

One set of Additional Papers had been circulated; Response to Stratford-on-Avon District Council Core Strategy Proposed Modifications. Consideration of this was required in order to meet the 25th September 2015 deadline for submission of representations on the proposed modifications.

Work Programme

It was noted that the following reports which were due to be considered at the meeting had been deferred to a later date:

- Reorganisation and Change Policy; and
- Housing Business Case.

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Chair

28. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 14th July 2015 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

29. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 7th July 2015.

It was noted that there were no recommendations to consider as the recommendations at Minute No.'s 19, 20 and 21, relating to the LGBT Task Group, Redditch Outdoor Market and Review of Leisure Services respectively, 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 7th July 2015 be received and noted.

30. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY

Members were asked to consider, for recommendation to full Council, a draft Equal Opportunity Policy. This report had previously been delayed at full Council in order for some minor alterations to be made.

It was noted that the Policy applied to all staff who worked for the Council, including those employed on a temporary or part-time basis, or on work experience. Appendix 2 had been added to the Policy which clarified the position in relation to Local Authority Members. Specific exemptions applied for agency and contract workers and Appendix 4 detailed some of the legislation which worked in conjunction with the Policy, including the Agency Worker Regulations 2010. Section 4 of the Policy had also been expanded to set out the position for workers under 18 years of age.

The policy would be reviewed at least every two years or sooner to comply with changes to the law or policy and practice. Union representatives had been consulted on the Policy and amendments had been made as a result.

RECOMMENDED that

the Equal Opportunity Policy, as appended to the report, be approved and adopted.

31. STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING - CHARGES

Members were asked to consider, for recommendation to full Council, a report which sought to introduce charges for the discretionary elements of the street naming and numbering service. The report also detailed the relevant legislation to be adopted by full Council as part of the process for introducing charges.

It was noted that the charges would not apply to individual residents but to developers and house builders. A number of other local authorities had recently introduced such charges and if approved by Council the income generated would cover the cost of providing the street naming and numbering post within ICT Services.

Officers were currently in discussion over which department would be best placed to notify developers of the proposed charges, ICT or Planning, and Members requested that they be informed once a decision had been made on this.

In response to Member questions, Officers clarified the need to adopt the relevant legislation detailed in the report, together with the position in relation to previous charges which had been made.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) Sections 64 and 65 of the Town Improvement Clauses Act 1847 and Sections 17, 18 and 19 of the Public Health Act 1925 be adopted by the Council;
- 2) charging for the discretionary element of Street Naming and Numbering be introduced from April 2016 and the fees set out at Appendix 1 to the report be adopted; and
- 3) authority be delegated to the Head of Transformation and Organisational Development to make the necessary amendments to the Street Naming and Numbering Policy resulting from the decisions at 1) and 2) above.

32. ECONOMIC PRIORITIES FOR REDDITCH

The Committee received a report which detailed a new set of economic themes, priorities, Action Plan and associated deliverables for Redditch.

Members heard that the economic priorities had been developed in close consultation with the Redditch Economic Development Theme Group, which included a number of business representatives and partner organisations. It was proposed that the Theme Group would continue to act in an advisory capacity to the Council in the delivery of the Action Plan, which would provide some external support and insight. Monthly briefings and updates would be provided to the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for economic development, to ensure that effective progress was being made in delivering the plan.

A request was made by one Member to amend recommendations 2 and 3 of the report to extend the remit for the management and monitoring of the Action Plan to specifically include the Portfolio Holder, and for a 6-monthly progress report to be taken to the Executive Committee. The amendments were not seconded and were therefore not considered or voted on.

A discussion took place on the 'Skilled Redditch' economic theme and the Heart of Worcestershire College's role in this regard. Officers advised that the College was a member of the Theme Group and had therefore assisted in the development of the Action Plan and would continue to be involved with this. There were additional providers of education who Officers and the Council needed to work with. These included the Employment and Skills Board and Local Enterprise Partnerships, with business pool funding being available for the districts to assist with skills growth. North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration was looking to be proactive in terms of apprenticeships with local employers in order to support the town's young people into sustainable employment by equipping them with the relevant skills and expertise required by employers.

Members queried the current position in relation to The Anchorage property in Redditch, which had been considered by the Executive some years previously and on which confirmation was awaited from the College. Officers agreed to check the position with this and to report back to Members.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the economic themes, priorities and Action Plan for Redditch and the associated deliverables set out at Appendix 1 to the report be endorsed;**

- 2) the management and monitoring of the Action Plan be delegated to the Head of Economic Development & Regeneration; and
- 3) a report setting out progress against delivery of the priorities and Action Plan be brought to the Executive Committee on an annual basis.

33. VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR GRANTS PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a report, for recommendation to full Council, on the funding split and themes for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) grants process 2016/17. The report also recommended changes to update and improve the scoring matrix and Grants Policy.

Whilst the overall budget of £241k for the grants process remained the same as for 2015/16 (£4k of which would facilitate the delivery of training to the Voluntary and Community Sector on external funding workshops/events), the themes and proposed funding for 2016/17 had been updated to reflect the Council's Strategic Purposes and customer demand.

Officers advised that it had been recommended that the scoring matrix at Appendix 2 to the report be trialled at the next Grants Panel meeting, and that this continue to be used moving forward if this were found to be successful. Members supported this proposal.

Officers responded to Member questions on current staffing issues and confirmed that whilst a member of staff had been on long-term sick leave this had not affected the grants progress to date, nor would it affect it moving forward.

Whilst the majority of Members felt that any underspend in the grants at the end of the year should be put back into balances some did not support this approach.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the themes and percentages of funding be allocated for the 2016/17 voluntary and community sector grants process as set out in Appendix 1 to the report;
- 2) the scoring matrix and Grants Policy be updated as set out in Appendices 2 (subject to a satisfactory trial of the

scoring matrix at the next Grants Panel meeting) and 3 to the report; and

- 3) any underspend in the grants at the end of the year be put back into balances.

34. STRATFORD ON AVON CORE STRATEGY PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS - RESPONSE

Members received, for recommendation to full Council, the Council's draft response to Stratford-on-Avon's 'Core Strategy Proposed Modifications in response to the Inspector's Interim Conclusions'. This report had been issued under cover of Additional Papers in order to meet the 25th September deadline for the submission of representations.

Officers advised that the response, which raised a possible concern in relation to the supply of labour force, reflected the debate which had taken place at the Planning Advisory Panel meeting.

RECOMMENDED that

the Council's response to Stratford-on-Avon's Core Strategy Proposed Modifications, as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report, be endorsed.

35. CONSOLIDATED REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN AND FINANCIAL RESERVES STATEMENT

The Committee received a report which detailed the Council's final financial position for 2014/15 for both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account. It was noted that this report was originally scheduled for consideration at the July meeting but had been delayed owing to the late submission of the accounts to the external auditors.

Officers highlighted the key elements of the report. The final position showed that in addition to the unidentified savings of £635k being delivered, a further £103k of savings had been achieved on general services, together with an additional £716k of savings on other funding and financial budgets, therefore generating an overall underspend of £819k. The £819k of savings had been transferred to balances to increase the balances level to £1.985m. This was significantly in excess of the £750k reserves level agreed by Council as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan. Following the savings a full review was underway to ensure the reduced cost base was captured for future years' budget reductions.

Members were pleased to note the current financial position and expressed their thanks to staff for their work on the savings. Balances had not been at the £2m mark since 2009 and cuts in government grants in recent years had totalled 49%, with a total of £2.2m savings having been delivered by the Council. The Council was continually reviewing its services and making improvements and front line services had not been cut.

Officers provided clarification on a number of questions raised by Members. A Member questioned how much money had been saved by not having filled vacant posts. Officers advised that they did not have this information to hand and agreed to check the position with this and report back to Members outside of the meeting. Officers added that some posts were retained to allow for re-deployment opportunities.

RESOLVED that

the financial position on Revenue and Capital for the financial year 2014/15, as detailed in the report, and the transfer to balances of £819k to increase the balances level to £1.985m 31st March 2015 be noted; and

RECOMMENDED that

the movement in reserves as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

36. FINANCE MONITORING - QUARTER 1, APRIL - JUNE 2015

Members considered a report which detailed the Council's financial position across the Strategic Purposes for the period April to June 2015 (Quarter 1 2015/16), which enabled Members to be aware of the level of funding attributed to these areas.

The report focussed on the position with the Revenue Budget and Officers advised that they would be looking to enhance the report over the following quarters, with capital details to be included in the next report.

In line with a commitment previously given by Members, Officers were in the process of reviewing the costs associated with enabling services. Officers were also due to meet with Wychavon District Council and Worcestershire County Council to discuss financial issues related to civil parking enforcement.

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A Member queried the variation for Lifeline and whether there was any trend in the reduction of Lifeline users. Officers agreed to look into this and to report back to Members on the position.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

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

There were no additional referrals for the Committee to consider.

38. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

39. ACTION MONITORING

Members noted the update provided in the report in relation to the LGBT Community Task Group's findings.

Councillor Hartnett advised that the response which he had received from Adrian Hardman, Leader of Worcestershire County Council, had been positive, details of which Councillor Hartnett had fed back to the Task Group Chair and Officers.

RESOLVED that

the update be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.25 pm

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Chair