

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 8 March 2016

MINUTES

Present:

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

Officers:

Clare Flanagan, John Godwin, Sue Hanley, Jayne Pickering, Amanda Singleton and Lindsey Wood

Committee Services Officer:

Debbie Parker-Jones

98. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Yvonne Smith.

99. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Witherspoon declared an Other Disclosable Interest in Agenda Item 6 (Redditch United Football Club) as detailed at Minute No. 103 below.

Jayne Pickering, Director of Finance and Resources, advised that she would be withdrawing from the meeting during consideration of the Redditch United Football Club item as her son played football for the Club's first team.

100. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Work Programme

The following reports which were due to be considered, or possibly considered, at the meeting had been deferred to a later date:

- Housing Business Case; and
- Applying Article 4 Directions to the Council's Schedule of Locally Listed Buildings.

.....
Chair

Treasury Management Strategy, Investment Strategy and Prudential Indicators report

It was noted that the Treasury Management Strategy, Investment Strategy and Prudential Indicators report, which had originally been scheduled for Executive that evening, had instead been referred to the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee on 28th January 2016 as approval of these was required before the new financial year. The resulting recommendations had been considered by full Council on 22nd February.

Agenda Item 6 – Redditch United Football Club

Members were advised that this was a Key Decision which had not appeared on the published Executive Work Programme as the Club had been seeking external finance towards the scheme and it had not been known if this would be successful. As progress had been made with this a decision was needed quickly in order to secure the funds. The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been informed of the position.

101. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 22nd February 2016 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

102. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 16th February 2016.

It was noted that there were no recommendations to consider.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 16th February 2016 be received and noted.

103. REDDITCH UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB - VALLEY STADIUM CONCESSIONARY RENT

Members were asked to agree to the surrender of the existing Redditch United Football Club lease and the granting of a new 30-year lease at a concessionary rent, to support the Club in its project to provide facilities to the wider community of Redditch, including

the provision of a third generation (3G) Astro Turf Pitch (ATP) at the Valley Stadium.

As detailed under Leader's Announcements (Minute No. 100 refers), this was a Key Decision which had not appeared on the published Executive Work Programme as the Club had been seeking external finance towards the scheme and it had not been known if this would be successful. As progress had been made with this a decision was needed quickly in order to secure the funds. The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been informed of the position.

Members noted the key areas for community benefit detailed in paragraph 3.6 of the report. It was agreed that the surrender of the existing lease and grant of the new lease at a concessionary rent was justifiable on the basis of the resulting benefits to the community and well-being of the Borough. The Heads of Terms for the new lease, as appended to the report and which also set out the terms of future rent reviews, were noted. Without the concessionary rent being agreed the business case prepared by the Club would not be seen as realistic and achievable by the funding bodies as it would prevent the Club from borrowing the amount of capital required to finance the match-funding element of the project.

Members expressed their thanks to all those at the Club and to Chris Swan, owner and Chairman, for their continuing hard work to improve the Club and its facilities. Best wishes were also sent to Mr Swan's wife Sallie, Vice-Chairman of the Club, who was currently unwell. Thanks were also expressed to the Football Association in supporting the Club's efforts and to Officers for their continuing endeavours in working with the Club, and Members looked forward to seeing the benefits that the new facilities would bring to the town. This included the launch of a full-time academy at the Valley Stadium, which was being run in partnership with Bournville College.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the existing Redditch United Football Club Limited lease be surrendered and a new 30-year lease be granted to the Club; and**
- 2) within the terms of the new lease for the Valley Stadium there be no increase of rent applied over and above the current rent of the site, and the rent of £2,000 per annum be reviewed in line with section 3.4 of the report until the expiry of the new lease in 2046.**

(Prior to consideration of this item, Councillor Pat Witherspoon declared an Other Disclosable Interest in this matter in view of the

fact that her grandson played football for one of Redditch United's junior teams. Councillor Witherspoon remained in the room and participated in the consideration of, and voting on, this matter.

Jayne Pickering (Director of Finance and Resources) withdrew from the meeting for this item and took no part in the consideration/discussion of this, as her son played football for the Club's first team.)

104. PROPOSED FEASIBILITY STUDY INTO THE POSSIBLE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE WINYATES DISTRICT CENTRE

Members received a report which sought approval to undertake a feasibility study into the redevelopment of the Winyates District Centre.

It was noted that the former New Town district centres of Church Hill, Matchborough, Winyates and Woodrow had previously been identified as areas for redevelopment. Following Members' approval to undertake a feasibility study into the possible redevelopment of the Matchborough Centre, there was also an interest to possibly redevelop the Winyates District Centre.

Members stated that the proposed feasibility study had briefly been touched upon at the Planning Advisory Planning meeting which had taken place immediately prior to Executive. It was noted that this was the initial feasibility study only and that the outcome of this would be reported back to Members in due course, together with suggestions from Officers about the next stages of the process of possible redevelopment.

Officers explained the process which would now take place. In response to Member questions Officers advised that there was deemed to be sufficient staff capacity to progress both the Matchborough and Winyates feasibility studies at the same time, and that the Winyates study would neither take priority over, nor have any detrimental effect on, the Matchborough study. Members wished to play a key part in the process and Officers advised that Members, particularly the relevant Portfolio Holders and Ward Members, would be sent a timescale for the future stages. Officers would also keep Members fully apprised and involved with developments throughout the process. The terms of existing leasehold agreements and the status of properties sold under right-to-buy were noted as legal issues which would be considered as part of the process.

RESOLVED that

a feasibility study be undertaken as to the merits of the redevelopment of the Winyates District Centre.

105. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2017/18

The Committee received a report which set out a broad range of options for consultation in order to inform the development of the Council's Council Tax Support Scheme (CTSS) 2017/18.

In April 2013 council tax benefit had been replaced by a new local council tax support scheme. Local councils were required to design their own CTSS and to carry out consultation on the options being considered for inclusion in the Scheme. From April 2014 changes were made to the Council's CTSS which resulted in support being capped at 80% of Council Tax liability for all working age claimants. The Council had implemented a Hardship Fund to support the most vulnerable, with £13,066 of the fund having been awarded for 2015/16 as at 31st January 2016. Changes to the Scheme in April 2014 had offset an estimated funding gap for 2014/15 of £91k for the Council.

It was no longer possible to know how much funding was received towards the Scheme via the Government's Revenue Support Grant and by 2019/20 there would be no government funding for the Scheme. The total cost of the Scheme in Redditch was in the region of £6.5m. The proposals being considered for consultation were not intended to reduce the overall cost of support provided to residents, but to reduce the administrative burden to the Council where possible and to bring the Scheme in line with national changes to welfare support.

Officers explained both the process and different consultation phases involved, which would culminate in adoption of the final Scheme by 31st January 2017 at the latest. All possible options which might ultimately be included in the Scheme had to be consulted on as no changes which had not previously been consulted on could be included at a later stage. All options were purely options for consideration, with no decisions needing to be made as to what might be included in the draft Scheme at this stage. A range of consultation documentation had been prepared and all relevant frontline staff would be briefed on the position so that they were able to assist residents with any enquiries. All current claimants would also be written to by the Council and directed to the website and Officers for information and assistance.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the options as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be put to public consultation in order to inform potential changes to the Council's Council Tax Support Scheme for 2017/18 and/or later years;
- 2) the Head of Customer Access and Financial Support be authorised to consult on the options set out in Appendix 1;
- 3) the Head of Customer Access and Financial Support report back to the Executive on the outcome of that consultation and any proposals for changes to the Scheme, for further consideration and resolution by the Executive, to consult on a draft Scheme;
- 4) further to the outcome of the Executive's decision on the draft regulations, the Head of Customer Access and Financial Support be authorised to carry out the statutory consultation required on the draft Scheme; and
- 5) the final Scheme be presented to the Executive to make recommendations to Council to allow for the necessary regulations to be published by 31st January 2017.

106. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

Members were asked to consider, for recommendation to full Council, the following health and safety policies which were either new policies or existing policies which had been revised to incorporate recent changes in legislation:

- Fire Safety Policy and Procedures;
- Manual Handling Policy and Procedures;
- Accident Incident Reporting and Investigation Policy and Procedures;
- Display Screen Equipment Policy and Procedures;
- Contractor Safety Policy and Procedures;
- Lone Working Policy and Procedures; and
- Substance Misuse (Drugs, Alcohol & Other Substances) at Work Policy.

Officers confirmed that all of the policies had been approved by the Council's Joint Corporate Health, Safety and Welfare Committee and the trade unions. As an employer the Council had a legal duty to have the policies in place. Whilst the Corporate Health and Safety Policy was an overarching policy, there was a requirement to also have specific policies. Officers advised that, whilst not

explicitly stating this, all of the policies were intended to apply to councillors as well as members of staff, and that the same advice and procedures therefore applied to Members.

Members raised concerns in relation to the possible risks and practical issues which they faced with lone working, for example when visiting residents' homes. As Members were not specifically addressed in the Lone Working Policy and Procedures it was agreed that Officers would undertake an additional piece of work on this. The matter would be raised at the next meeting of the Joint Corporate Health, Safety and Welfare Committee on 18th March 2016, and as Councillor Yvonne Smith was a member of the Committee Officers would seek her input into this. Member awareness in considering the safety implications when carrying out their duties was deemed to be key. The importance of attending relevant training offered by the Council was highlighted by one Member, with previous training in this area having been poorly attended. Officers highlighted that the Lone Working Policy included use of the Lifeline facility, which not all Members were aware of.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the Fire Safety Policy and Procedures at Appendix 1 to the report be approved;**
- 2) the Manual Handling Policy and Procedures at Appendix 2 to the report be approved;**
- 3) the Accident Incident Reporting and Investigation Policy and Procedures at Appendix 3 to the report be approved;**
- 4) the Display Screen Equipment Policy and Procedures at Appendix 4 to the report be approved;**
- 5) the Contractor Safety Policy and Procedures at Appendix 5 to the report be approved;**
- 6) the Lone Working Policy and Procedures at Appendix 6 to the report be approved; and**
- 7) the Substance Misuse (Drugs, Alcohol & Other Substances) at Work Policy at Appendix 7 to the report approved; and**

RESOLVED that

- 8) further consideration be given by Officers and the Joint Corporate Health, Safety and Welfare Committee in**

respect of elected Members and the Lone Working Policy and Procedures.

107. FINANCE MONITORING QUARTER 3 2015/16

The Committee received a report which detailed the Council's final financial position for both General Fund and Revenue for the period April to December 2015 (Quarter 3 15/16).

There was an overall underspend of £303k for the period, which was forecast to be a significant saving by the end of the financial year. This related in part to essential spend only across the Council following announcement of the financial settlement, together with vacancies and additional income generated in a number of service areas. These savings had not been made at a loss to the Council's frontline services. In addition to the £303k underspend it was anticipated that there would be a saving on the Council's borrowing costs of £124k, due to slippage in the capital programme. In relation to the £1k variation currently showing for Landscape and Ground Maintenance under 'Keep my place safe and looking good', Officers stated that a great deal of work was being undertaken with reallocating the costs for the Place Teams' work, which might result in a final underspend variance.

The capital expenditure in the third quarter showed that most projects were currently work in progress, with there being an anticipated £1.081m underspend by the end of 2015/16. Requests would be made to carry over budgets to the next financial year within the strategic purpose 'Keep my place safe and looking good' on the Crematorium Enhancements and the town landscape scheme, due to works not being able to take place in the winter months.

A Member queried whether all vacant posts had now been deleted. Officers advised that they were currently carrying out an exercise with Heads of Service to ascertain whether all vacant posts had been filled, and if not whether the posts had been given up. Heads of Service had been given until 18th March by which to confirm the position. Accordingly, if vacancies remained then the cost of these were currently included in the projected year-end figures.

It was noted that the General Fund Balance as at 31st March 2015 had been £2.005m, and that should the projected savings be made in the current financial year the revised balance for 31st March 2016 would be £2.432m. Whilst there was no room for complacency the Council was felt to be in as good a financial position as possible in light of the latest funding settlement, with both Officers and Members continuing to look at savings wherever possible.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital budget for 2016/17 is increased by £60k to £160k for a Demand Case Management IT system, funded by HRA reserves; and

RESOLVED that

- 2) the current financial position for Revenue and Capital, as detailed in the report, be noted.

108. VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR GRANTS 2016-17

Members considered a report which made recommendations from a meeting of the Grants Panel on 24th February, for allocation of the remainder of the budget for major grants for 2016/17.

At its meeting in January the Executive Committee had considered recommendations for the allocation of major grants for 2016/17. The full amount was not allocated at that time and it was agreed that the unallocated sums be retained and their availability be readvertised in parallel with the Stronger Communities Grant applications.

RESOLVED that

the following major grants be awarded for 2016/17:

Theme	Organisation	Project name	Amount
Help me to be financially independent	What's Your Point	Young People - plan for financial independence	£1,569
Help me to be financially independent	Compass Community and Education Group	Money Matters	£3,325
Help me to live my life independently	What's Your Point	Introduction to mindful relaxation	£850
Keep my place safe and looking good	Redditch Community Amateur Boxing Club	Young Peoples Projects	£2,000

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

There were no outstanding referrals to consider.

110. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

It was noted that the meeting of the Planning Advisory Panel scheduled for earlier that evening had taken place.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.30 pm

.....
Chair