

Council

Monday, 15 April 2019

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Juliet Brunner (Mayor), Councillor Roger Bennett (Deputy Mayor) and Councillors Salman Akbar, Joe Baker, Tom Baker-Price, Joanne Beecham, David Bush, Debbie Chance, Greg Chance, Anita Clayton, Brandon Clayton, Matthew Dormer, Andrew Fry, Julian Grubb, Bill Hartnett, Pattie Hill, Wanda King, Anthony Lovell, Gareth Prosser, Antonia Pulsford, Mike Rouse, Mark Shurmer, Yvonne Smith, Craig Warhurst, Jennifer Wheeler and Pat Witherspoon

Also Present:

Gethin Farnes, Mr and Mrs Farnes and Mr Gerry Marsden

Officers:

Kevin Dicks, Clare Flanagan, Chris Forrester and Sue Hanley

Senior Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley

89. WELCOME

The Mayor welcomed all those present to the meeting.

90. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Michael Chalk, John Fisher and Gemma Monaco.

91. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

92. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

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Chair

the minutes of the meeting of Council held on Monday 25th February 2019 be held as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

93. ANNOUNCEMENTS

a) Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor advised that she had attended a number of civic engagements since the previous meeting of Council. This had included her civic dinner which had been held at Kohima House in March. Members were all invited to attend a service of thanks giving for the 37 Signals Regiment on Sunday 19th May.

Gethin Farnes, an 11-year old boy who had helped to raised £50,000 in the recent Poppy Appeal, was welcomed to the meeting. Gethin was presented with a certificate in recognition of his contribution. Mr Gerry Marsden a local Redditch organiser of the Poppy Appeal explained that Gethin had helped to raise over £200,000 for the Poppy Appeal since 2015. This money would help families of those who had previously served in the armed forces.

The Mayor paid tribute to the four Councillors who would be standing down at the local elections in May 2019: Councillors David Bush, Anita Clayton, Antonia Pulsford and Pat Witherspoon. It was noted that all of these Councillors had worked hard during their tenure as elected Members. The Mayor also took the opportunity to congratulate Councillor Gemma Monaco and her husband on the recent birth of their baby son, who had been born weighing 9lb 13oz. Members were advised that both mother and baby were doing well.

b) The Leader's Announcements

The Leader advised Members that he had recently attended an event at the Redditch mosque, alongside other Members, to express solidarity with the Muslim community following the attacks at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand in March.

Members were advised that the review of the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) was continuing. A decision would need to be made with regard to membership by late May 2019.

c) Chief Executive's Announcements

The Chief Executive advised Members that public seating had been placed around the room, behind the Councillors of both political parties, for that meeting. This arrangement was in

place because the other Committee Rooms in the civic suite had been booked for elections purposes and therefore public seating could not be provided outside the Council Chamber.

94. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Arrow Valley Countryside Centre

Members paid tribute to Richard Fellows, the young man who had lost his life in 2014 at the Arrow Valley Country Park and to his family. It was noted that his family had worked hard to raise awareness of water safety matters and had raised funds for this. The Council had worked since the incident to address water safety issues in the park and the measures proposed in the report would help to make the weirs in the park safer as well as enhance the ecological vitality of the waterways.

Finance System

Members noted that the Council's existing finance system had been in place since 2007. The new system would make the Council's budget management procedures more efficient and enable the local authority to take advantage of opportunities to work with robotics and artificial intelligence. The cost of the system was considerably more than had been anticipated and the Portfolio Holder provided some explanation as to why this was the case to Members. It was confirmed that Bromsgrove District Council had already approved the proposals detailed within the report.

The Budget Scrutiny Working Group had scrutinised the proposals to introduce the new finance system in detail and had welcomed the new system. A briefing had also been provided in March 2019, to which all Members had been invited, which had provided an opportunity for Members to observe a demonstration of the system.

Financial Monitoring Report - Quarter 3 2018/19

Members noted that the report detailed the Council's budget position as of December 2018. At this time there had been an overspend of over £200,000. Officers had worked hard to address this budget gap and it was anticipated that the position would be more positive at the end of the financial year. This gap had in part been due to the inclusion of unidentified savings in the budget for 2018/19. Members were asked to note that the same problem was unlikely to occur in 2019/20 as no unidentified savings had been included in the budget for that year.

Executive Minutes – 26th March 2019

During consideration of the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 26th March Councillor Pattie Hill questioned

whether an update should have been provided by the Council's representative on the Worcestershire Corporate Parenting Board. Specifically, it was noted that a co-ordinated pilot scheme for children and young people had been referred to at a recent meeting of the Board and questions were raised about the extent to which Redditch residents would benefit from this scheme. Councillor Gareth Prosser, the Council's representative on the Board, undertook to investigate the matter further and confirmed that he would write to Councillor Hill about the matter.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Tuesday 26th March 2019 be received and all recommendations adopted.

95. REGULATORY COMMITTEES

The recommendation arising from the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 4th March 2019 in respect of the Licensing Act 2003 and Review of the Statement of Licensing Policy was discussed by Members. In response to a point of clarification Officers confirmed that this item did not relate in any way to taxi services.

RESOLVED that

- 1) subject to the inclusion of the additional wording to paragraph 6.42, the Revised statement of licensing Policy at Appendix 1 be approved and published to take effect on 1st June 2019;**
- 2) the Capital Strategy (Appendix A) as an appropriate overarching strategy for the Council be recommended to Council for approval and the flexible use of capital receipts policy as per Appendix E; and**
- 3) Council approve the Treasury Management Strategy for 2019/20 (Appendix B) and the associated limits, MRP policy and treasury management policy (appendences C and D) and specific indicators included in this report.**

96. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

Councillor Joe Baker, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, presented the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Annual Report for the 2018/19 municipal year.

In presenting the report Councillor Baker highlighted that, whilst there had only been one Task Group review, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had undertaken a lot of work at meetings

during the year. In particular, Members had worked well together on pre-scrutiny of Committee reports as well as on reviewing subjects of interest to the public. Councillor Baker also welcomed the cross-party nature of the approach adopted by the Committee to agreeing recommendations. This had helped to enhance the role of the Overview and Scrutiny process as a critical friend to both Council and external services. Councillor Baker thanked the Executive Committee for approving some of the Committee's recommendations but noted his disappointment that not all had been approved. He concluded by thanking the Democratic Services team for their support as well as the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive for the advice that they had provided during the year.

The Leader thanked the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for his report and for the work that the Committee had undertaken during the year. Wherever possible the Executive Committee had been minded to support the recommendations received from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and it was hoped that the positive working relationship between the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny would continue into the new municipal year.

RESOLVED that

the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2018/29 be noted.

97. URGENT BUSINESS - RECORD OF DECISIONS

The Leader explained that there had been one urgent decision taken since the previous meeting of Council. This decision had been taken in respect of the Council Tax resolutions as one of the preceptors had been incorrectly named in the report considered at the meeting of Council held on 25th February. The decision had had to be taken before the meeting as Council Tax had to be set before the 11th March in the financial year preceding that for which it was set, as per Section 30(6) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, to enable the bills to be sent out to residents.

98. URGENT BUSINESS - GENERAL (IF ANY)

There was no general urgent business for consideration on this occasion.