

Council

Monday, 23 September
2019

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Roger Bennett (Mayor), Councillor Gareth Prosser (Deputy Mayor) and Councillors Salman Akbar, Joe Baker, Tom Baker-Price, Joanne Beecham, Juliet Brunner, Michael Chalk, Greg Chance, Brandon Clayton, Matthew Dormer, Peter Fleming, Julian Grubb, Bill Hartnett, Pattie Hill, Ann Isherwood, Wanda King, Anthony Lovell, Nyear Nazir, Mike Rouse, Mark Shurmer, Yvonne Smith, David Thain, Craig Warhurst and Jennifer Wheeler

Officers:

Kevin Dicks, Claire Felton and Sue Hanley

Senior Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley

38. WELCOME

The Mayor welcomed all present to the meeting.

39. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Debbie Chance, John Fisher, Andrew Fry and Gemma Monaco.

40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

41. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday 22nd July 2019 be held as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

42. ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Chair

a) The Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor announced that sadly since the previous meeting of Council former Councillor and Deputy Mayor, Steve Baird, had passed away. In addition a former member of staff who had worked for many years for the Council, Mr Harold Bagley, had also passed away. The Mayor led Members in observing a minute's silence in recognition of their public service.

A list of the civic engagements that had been attended by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor since the previous meeting of Council was tabled at the meeting (Appendix 1). Members were advised that the civic service would be taking place on 6th September 2019 at St Stephen's Church. There would be a procession to the church and all Members were invited to participate.

Since the previous meeting of Council the Mayor had met with Mrs Veronica Allen. Mrs Allen had been instrumental in helping to establish the twin town links between Redditch and St Elizabeth town in Jamaica. She had presented a plaque and book to the Mayor in recognition of these twinning links and had expressed the hope that a student exchange as well as enhanced civic links between the local authorities of each town would take place in the future.

Finally, the Mayor congratulated the Astwood Bank Cricket Club on winning the Worcestershire League Premier Division.

b) The Leader's Announcements

The Leader announced that Councillor Juliet Brunner had stood down from the Executive Committee. There was no plan to replace her on the Executive Committee and the services that had been within the remit of her Portfolio would be incorporated into the responsibilities of the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management.

Members were advised that the review of the Local Enterprise Partnerships had not yet been resolved. However, it was likely that issues in respect of LEP membership would be determined by the end of the recess period.

The Council would have an opportunity to bid for support for the town centre redevelopment work from the government's Towns Fund. A total of up to £25,000 could be applied for as part of this process.

The Leader explained that he had recently attended a meeting with representatives of the West Midlands Combined Authority

(WMCA) to discuss the 5G network. This had revealed that there might be some opportunities available for Redditch.

c) The Chief Executive's Announcements

The Chief Executive confirmed that he did not have any announcements on this occasion.

43. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE (PROCEDURE RULE 9)

There were no Questions on Notice for consideration.

44. MOTIONS ON NOTICE (PROCEDURE RULE 11)

There were no Motions on Notice for consideration.

45. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Climate Change Cross-Party Working Group

Members considered the proposals for the Council to establish a Climate Change Cross-Party Working Group as an Executive Advisory Panel. A list of Members who had been nominated to sit on the group was tabled at the meeting (attached at Appendix 2).

In presenting the recommendations the Leader of the Council requested an alteration. This alteration proposed, in addition to establishing the Climate Change Cross-Party Working Group and approving the group's membership, that the Council should also declare a climate emergency and take immediate action to address this. This alteration was accepted.

During consideration of this item an amendment was proposed by Councillor Bill Hartnett. This amendment was seconded by Councillor Greg Chance. The amendment called for the meetings of the Climate Change Cross-Party Working Group to be open to the public.

In proposing the amendment Councillor Hartnett explained that he felt that the terms of reference for the group should be altered to permit all meetings of the group to be held in public, except in cases where the meetings were required to go into private session to consider exempt matters. The decision to establish a Climate Change Cross-Party Working Group had been taken in part in response to a question that had been received by the Leader from a member of the public and this, together with recent protests by climate change activists in the town, demonstrated that there was public interest in the matter.

In seconding the amendment Councillor Chance commented that it was important to hold the meetings in public in order to demonstrate

that the Council was taking action to address climate change. There were targets in respect of climate change and energy efficiency to meet by 2050, though action could be taken prior to this date.

Members subsequently discussed the amendment in detail and in doing so noted the following:

- The level of public interest in climate change, particularly amongst young people, and the potential to involve them in the local democratic process.
- The standard arrangements for Executive Advisory Panels and scrutiny Task Groups which generally met in private.
- The potential for some of the group's meetings to be held in public in cases where consultation might be taking place.
- The option for interested parties to be invited to attend meeting of the group to provide information.
- The role of the group to provide Members with an opportunity to review relevant matters in detail before a decision was taken by the Executive Committee.
- The Access to Information rules that applied to public meetings.

On being put to the vote the amendment was lost.

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy

The Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Enforcement Policy had been considered already by the WRS Board. All constituent authorities needed to approve the policy prior to implementation. The policy set out how Officers would undertake enforcement action. Wherever possible Officers would seek to work with individuals and prosecution would only be undertaken as a last resort.

Disposal of an HRA Asset and Removal of a Former Railway Bridge - Green Lane, Studley

Members considered proposals to dispose of an asset in the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and a former railway bridge located at Green Lane, Studley. Concerns were raised about the safety of the bridge structure as well as the financial costs arising from the Council's responsibility for maintaining this structure, should the bridge continue to exist. Once the bridge was removed the site could be made safe and the Sustrans 5 route for pedestrians and cyclists would remain in place. The report had been pre-scrutinised and had received the full support of members of both the Overview and Scrutiny and Executive Committees.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Tuesday 10th September 2019 be received and all recommendations adopted, subject to including the following additional resolution in respect of minute Item No. 33 Climate Change Cross Party Working Group:

the Council formally declares a climate emergency that requires urgent action.

46. URGENT BUSINESS - RECORD OF DECISIONS

There were no urgent decisions to note at this meeting.

47. URGENT BUSINESS - GENERAL (IF ANY)

There was no urgent business for consideration at this meeting.

The Meeting commenced at 7.03 pm
and closed at 7.50 pm

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MAYORS ATTENDANCES.

- 1, 23RD July – Royal Enfield opening new extention.
- 2, 10th August – Redditch Band Stand Event.
- 3, 15th August – VJ Day Service St Stephens.
- 4, 17th/18th August – Moreton Stanley Festival.
- 5, 20th August – Bowood Court – 100th Birthday celebration for resident.
- 6, 25th August – Mayor of Worcester EID Celebrations.
- 7, 1st September –Opening the Worcestershire Model Boat Club at Arrow Valley Park.
- 8, 11th September – Chairman of Bromsgrove Council Charity Boat Trip.

DEPUTY MAYORS ATTENDANCES.

- 1, 30th August – Bright Kids Nursery 18th Birthday Party.
- 2, 10th September – Chairman of Bromsgrove Council Charity Boat Trip.
- 3, 22nd September – Alcester Mayors Civic Service.

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Item 11: Nominations to the Climate Change Cross-Party Working Group

Committee / Sub-Committee etc.	Size (Members)	Conservative	Labour
Climate Change Cross-Party Working Group	5	3 Cllr Clayton (Chair) Cllr Isherwood Cllr Lovell	2 Cllr D Chance (Vice Chair) Cllr G Chance

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