

Council

Monday, 22 June 2020

MINUTES

Present:

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

Officers:

Kevin Dicks, Claire Felton, Clare Flanagan and Sue Hanley

Senior Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley

1. WELCOME

The outgoing Mayor, Councillor Michael Chalk, welcomed all those present to the meeting and explained how the virtual Council meeting would proceed. Members were advised that the meeting was being live streamed to the public on the Council's website.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. MAYOR'S OPENING REMARKS

The outgoing Mayor, Councillor Chalk, commented that it had been an honour and a privilege to serve as Mayor of the Borough of Redditch during the latter part of the 2019/20 municipal year. He thanked his consort, his wife Mrs Jean Chalk, for her

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Chair

support. Thanks were also extended to the Mayor's Secretary, for her support and for organising his civic appointments.

During his opening remarks the retiring Mayor thanked all NHS staff and other frontline workers who had put their own lives at risk to save others. He extended this thanks to the numerous charities and individuals who had and continued to work to reduce the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Councillor Chalk commented that on behalf of the town he was passing on condolences to those who had lost loved ones during the coronavirus outbreak.

During the lockdown it had been necessary to cancel a number of activities, though all the groups and individuals who had been involved in raising funding for the Mayor's charities during the year were thanked for their support. The total raised remained to be confirmed on the date of the meeting, but Members were advised that the funds would be distributed equally between the Mayor's charities.

During consideration of this item Councillor Roger Bennett, who had also served as Mayor during the 2019/20 municipal year, passed on his thanks to the people who had raised money for the Mayor's charities in 2019/20. He also thanked the Mayor's Secretary and the Chief Executive's PA for their support during the year.

5. ELECTION OF MAYOR FOR 2020/21

Councillor Gareth Prosser was elected Mayor of the Borough for the forthcoming year. He made the statutory declaration of acceptance of office verbally and then was invested with the Chain of Office. Councillor Prosser thanked the outgoing Mayor and, on behalf of the Council, expressed gratitude for the work he had carried out as an ambassador for the town.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Councillor Gareth Prosser be elected Mayor of the Borough of Redditch to serve until the next Annual Meeting of the Council; and**
- 2) the Council formally express, and record, its gratitude to Councillor Michael Chalk for his excellent service to the town as Mayor in the 2019/20 municipal year.**

6. ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR FOR 2020/21

Councillor Julian Grubb was elected Deputy Mayor of the Borough of Redditch for the forthcoming year. He made the statutory declaration of acceptance of office verbally and was then invested with the Deputy Mayor's Badge of Office.

RESOLVED that

Councillor Julian Grubb be appointed Deputy Mayor of the Borough of Redditch to serve until the next Annual Meeting of the Council.

7. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting Council held on Monday 24th February 2020 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Mayor.

8. ANNOUNCEMENTS

a) Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor announced that his consort during the 2020/21 municipal year would be his wife, Mrs Lynn Prosser. Members were advised that Councillor Prosser and his wife had lived in the Borough for 33 years and had raised a family in Redditch. Councillor Prosser had also served in the West Mercia Police Force and during this time had been based in Redditch. Members were advised that despite the challenges posed by the Covid-19 outbreak, Councillor Prosser would participate in as many civic engagements as possible.

Members were informed that Reverend Paul Lawlor had been asked to continue to serve as the Mayor's Chaplain in the 2020/21 municipal year. The Mayor's charities would be Redditch Association for the Blind and the Disability Support Project Redditch.

b) The Leader's Announcements

The Leader confirmed that he had no announcements to make on this occasion.

c) The Chief Executive's Announcements

The Chief Executive confirmed that he had no announcements to make on this occasion.

9. THE LEADER'S APPOINTMENTS

The Leader announced that he had appointed seven Portfolio Holders to the Executive Committee and the remit of each portfolio was outlined in papers that had been provided in a supplementary pack for Members' consideration in advance of the meeting. The Leader had also, following the practice in previous years at the

Council, offered two places on the Executive Committee to the Labour Group, which had been accepted.

RESOLVED that

the appointment by the Leader of the Deputy Leader, of Members to the Executive Committee and to the individual Portfolios be noted.

10. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES, PANELS ETC. AND THEIR CHAIRS AND VICE CHAIRS

The Council considered the report setting out the proposed political balance of the Council's Committees and lists of nominations to Committees, Sub-Committees and other bodies, which were circulated in a supplementary pack prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the Political balance of the Committees of the Council be agreed as set out in paragraph 3.5 of the report;**
- 2) the arrangement where the seats on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are not allocated in accordance with the political balance requirements be continued;**
- 3) the arrangement where the seats on the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel are not allocated in accordance with the political balance requirements be continued;**
- 4) the Conservative Group do not take up two seats they are entitled to, arising from the suspension of the political balance for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel;**
- 5) appointments by political group leaders to the places on each Committee etc. be noted;**
- 6) the Council appoints Chairs and Vice-Chairs to the Committees and other bodies as set out in Appendix 1;**
- 7) appointments to Working Groups and other bodies listed in the appendix be agreed; and**
- 8) the terms of reference for the Committees as set out at Appendix 2 be confirmed.**

11. OUTSIDE BODIES

Members considered a report setting out proposed appointments to various outside bodies.

RESOLVED that

the Council makes appointments to the bodies listed in the appendix to the report.

12. CONSTITUTION UPDATES - INCLUDING THE SCHEME OF DELEGATION

Members considered a report detailing proposed updates to the Council's constitution.

During consideration of this item an amendment was proposed by Councillor Bill Hartnett to the first recommendation in the report. This amendment was seconded by Councillor Greg Chance.

The amendment proposed the following:

“That updates made to the scheme of delegation, in line with the Monitoring Officer's authority to reflect changes to job titles, legislation and reallocation of functions, be approved.”

In proposing the amendment Councillor Hartnett explained that his group was in favour of supporting updates made to the Scheme of Delegation in accordance with the Monitoring Officer's delegated authority to reflect changes to job titles, legislation and the reallocation of functions. However, there was some opposition to the two additional delegations that had been proposed in the second and third recommendations in the report. This was due to concerns that there should be continuing Member involvement in the development of engagement, equalities and performance strategies as well as in the Council's process for organising contracts. As the wording for these two proposed additional delegations had been highlighted in the Scheme of Delegations, approval of the first recommendation in the report could be viewed as endorsing those two recommendations. The wording proposed in the amendment helped to provide a useful distinction about the parts of the Scheme of Delegation that could be supported by some Councillors.

Members discussed the proposed amendment in detail and in so doing commented on the following:

- The purpose of the amendment.
- The fact that the Monitoring Officer already had delegated authority to update the Scheme of Delegations to reflect changes to job titles, legislation and the reallocation of functions.

On being put to the vote the amendment was lost.

The recommendations detailed in the report were subsequently discussed. On the one hand, Members noted that the proposed changes to the scheme of delegations would help the Council to operate more like a business and would facilitate faster decision making in respect of equalities, engagement and performance policies as well as Council contracts. On the other hand, some Members noted that the proposed delegations would delegate more authority to officers and would reduce the involvement of Members.

RESOLVED that

- 1) that the Officer Scheme of Delegations be agreed;**
- 2) that the proposed change to the Officer Scheme of Delegations for the Business Transformation and Organisational Development Department, in respect of delegating authority to Officers to determine all the Council's policies and strategies relating to Equalities, Engagement and Performance, be approved;**
- 3) to extend the delegation in the Council's Scheme of Delegations to the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services or Principal Solicitor to sign or seal any document, Order or Notice on behalf of the Council and to serve or receive any documents on behalf of the Council to include contracts falling under the Contract Procedure Rules; and**
- 4) that, for a period of three months commencing 28th June 2020, the delegation to the Head of Regulatory Services (Worcestershire Regulatory Services) shall be to determine all matters in relation to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Operators, Vehicles and Drivers; and**
- 5) that the updated Redditch Borough Council constitution be approved.**

13. URGENT BUSINESS - RECORD OF DECISIONS

Members noted the details of six urgent decisions that had been taken in respect of the following matters since the previous meeting of Council:

- a) Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) – Council Membership
- b) Delegations in respect of Licensing, Council Contracts and Rubicon Leisure Business Plan
- c) Delegations for Planning and Regeneration Services
- d) Public Participation in Virtual Planning Committee meetings
- e) Virtual Committee Meetings Protocol
- f) Discretionary Business Grants Policy

During consideration of this item reference was made to the decision that had been taken with respect to the Rubicon Leisure Business Plan. In urgent decision 20/2020 a decision had been taken to suspend the requirement for a business plan from the company, but this had only been applied for three months, ending 27th June 2020. Members noted that due to the lockdown and social distancing measures that were in place it was not possible for Rubicon Leisure services to be delivered as they would normally. With this in mind, there was general consensus that the company should not be required to draft a business plan until service delivery could return to normal.

RESOLVED that

the Council acknowledges that Rubicon Leisure will not have an approved Business Plan at the start of the 2020/2021 financial year. The Council resolves not to take any action in respect of any breaches of the Articles of Association or the Leisure Operating Contract (including the Services Specification) resulting from the failure for an approved Business Plan to be in place, provided that Rubicon Leisure will continue to operate as far as current circumstances allow in accordance with the previously approved (2018/2020) Business Plan and will present a revised Business Plan taking account of the operational changes necessitated by Covid-19 to the Shareholder Committee as soon as reasonably practicable.

14. URGENT BUSINESS - GENERAL (IF ANY)

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

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.19 pm