

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 7 September 2021

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Matthew Dormer (Chair), Councillor Gemma Monaco (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Brandon Clayton, Peter Fleming, Anthony Lovell, Nyear Nazir, Mike Rouse, David Thain and Craig Warhurst

Also Present:

Councillor Michael Chalk (Chair, Dementia Task Group)

Officers:

Claire Felton, Sue Hanley, James Howse, Steve Shammon and Judith Willis

Senior Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley-Hill

14. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

16. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader advised that during the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday 2nd September 2021, Members had endorsed the recommendations in the Dementia Task Group's report and added an additional recommendation. This additional recommendation had been listed in an extract from the minutes of that meeting which had been provided for the consideration of the Executive Committee in a supplementary pack.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had also agreed recommendations on the subject of St David's House, which corresponded with the recommendations in the report for this item. An extract from the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in respect of this item had also therefore been included

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Chair

in a supplementary pack for the consideration of the Executive Committee.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had also pre-scrutinised the Homes England Asset Transfer report. However, no recommendations had been made by the Committee on this subject.

17. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Tuesday 13th July 2021 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

18. DEMENTIA TASK GROUP - FINAL REPORT

Councillor Michael Chalk, in his capacity as Chair of the Dementia Task Group, attended the meeting to present the group's final report.

The Committee was informed that the Task Group's investigation had taken 12 months to complete. During the review Members had gathered evidence from a range of expert witnesses. The review had taken slightly longer than originally anticipated due to delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown.

There were various forms of dementia and it was estimated that, by the date of the meeting, up to 1.6 million people had a form of dementia in the UK and people in a range of age groups could develop dementia. The group had concluded that it was important to raise awareness of dementia, including both the symptoms and the impact that the illness could have on both patients and their families.

The group had proposed three recommendations. The first proposed that a Dementia Awareness Event should take place at the Town Hall. This type of event had taken place in previous years, prior to the pandemic, and provided a useful opportunity to share information about both dementia and the support services that were available locally to patients and families.

The second recommendation called for the Older People's Services Booklet to be updated. Members were advised that there was a booklet already, though the content needed to be refreshed. This proposal would have implications, in terms of the officer time that would be required to work on updating the booklet.

The third recommendation suggested that there should be a Member training session focusing on dementia awareness. This would enable Members to identify the symptoms of dementia and potentially enable Members to work effectively with residents and families impacted by dementia, as part of their ward work activities.

The fourth recommendation had been added at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 2nd September. This recommendation called for the Council's Chief Executive, as part of work on the Integrated Care System, to work alongside partner agencies to provide Members with information about dementia services in the Borough. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had concluded that this was a particularly important addition as it would help to ensure that Members were kept apprised of changing circumstances.

The Executive Committee subsequently discussed the proposals in detail. The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Regulatory Services, in her capacity as the lead Portfolio Holder for health, commented that producing an insightful report such as this during a pandemic was commendable. Members were advised that the recommendations appeared to be achievable and would help to raise awareness of a condition that could have devastating impacts on both patients and their families. The reality of caring for a person with dementia was that it could be challenging, and carers could experience grief, loneliness, isolation, embarrassment and discrimination and these were all implications that needed to be taken into account. The Council would always try to address such issues and to provide communities with the information and support they required. The Dementia Awareness Event would be key to achieving this. The report had also helpfully noted that there were many people who had not yet received a diagnosis, though were already exhibiting symptoms and this could make it difficult for those individuals to receive the support they required.

Reference was made to the proposed Member training and it was suggested that this would also potentially be beneficial for Parish Councillors. For this reason, Members agreed that the third recommendation from the group should be amended slightly to enable Parish Councillors to be invited to participate in the dementia training that would in future be provided to elected Members. The Committee also suggested that it would be important to ensure that information about the early signs and symptoms of dementia was included in this training, as it would help Members to work with residents at an early stage of the illness, including those who might not yet have received a diagnosis. There was general consensus that ideally all Members should aim to achieve the status of Dementia Friends, and it was possible that the training would assist with this process.

The Committee also discussed the involvement of the Council's Armed Forces Champion, Councillor Julian Grubb, in the review. Members were advised that during the investigation, the Task Group had discovered that there were higher rates of early onset dementia amongst armed forces veterans compared to the general population. The interview with Councillor Grubb had provided a useful opportunity to explore the matter further. It was suggested that it would be helpful for further information about the Armed Forces Champion to be provided for the public's consideration on the Council's website.

During consideration of this item, questions were raised about whether the booklet referred to in recommendation 2 would be available as a physical object or would be electronic. The Committee was advised that this would need to be clarified by officers outside the meeting. However, it was envisaged that a paper copy could be made available, though there would be financial implications attached.

Councillor Chalk concluded his remarks by thanking the other Members who had served on the review, the officers who had provided support to the exercise and the expert witnesses from a range of organisations who had submitted evidence for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED that

- 1) officers work with local agencies including the Older People's Forum, Age UK to hold a Dementia Awareness Event in the Town Hall and promote the event on the Council's website;**
- 2) officers undertake a refresh of the Older People Services Booklet which is currently available on the Redditch Borough Council website and include a specific section regarding Dementia Services available in the Borough.;**
- 3) Dementia Training be provided to all Elected Members and Parish Councillors in order for them to better understand the changing needs of the residents in the Borough; and**
- 4) as part of the work in respect of Integrated Care System, the Chief Executive of Redditch Borough Council to work alongside partner agencies to provide Members with further information on Dementia services in the Borough and potential services for the future.**

19. ELECTRICAL SAFETY STANDARDS IN THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2020

The Private Sector Housing Manager presented a report on the subject of the Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020.

These regulations had been in force for new tenancies in the private rented sector for some time. However, the regulations also now applied to existing tenancies. The regulations ensured that landlords for properties in the private rented sector had to make sure that electrical safety checks were carried out for each property, as they were for gas safety inspections. Assessments needed to be completed every five years. Landlords were obliged to inform local authorities of any issues that were identified during the checks and were required to address these problems within 28 days.

The report proposed penalties that would be imposed on landlords for non-compliance, in terms of undertaking remedial works to address any issues that were identified. Should landlords fail to act, the Council could take the action on the landlord's behalf and recharge for the works. The penalties represented an additional fee that landlords would be obliged to pay for non-compliance. In considering the level at which to set the penalty fee, the Council had taken into account the approach that was being adopted at other local authorities in Worcestershire. The proposed penalty fees were:

- £1,000 for a first offence
- £3,000 for any subsequent offences.

Following the presentation of the report, the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Procurement explained that Officers had worked hard to ensure that the proposed penalties were set at an appropriate level. Nationally, there was evidence to suggest that if penalties were too punitive landlords would prefer to take their case to court, which could result in considerable costs for all parties. The proposed penalties were considered to be a sufficient deterrent without being likely to encourage many landlords to resort to the legal process. Members were asked to note that there were many good landlords in the Borough. It was likely that good landlords would welcome the requirements set out in the legislation, as it would help to address the actions of rogue landlords and would encourage fair competition.

During consideration of this item, Members expressed concerns that there might be tenants living in the private rented sector who were not aware of their rights. Officers were therefore urged to

publish communications on the Council's website which helped to clarify tenants' rights.

RECOMMENDED that

the proposed financial penalty charges for non-compliance are adopted and the respective enforcement powers of the Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 are delegated to the Head of Community and Housing Services.

20. HOMES ENGLAND ASSET TRANSFER

The Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services presented a report detailing arrangements for the transfer of assets from Homes England to Redditch Borough Council. Members were advised that this was a housekeeping matter and the Council would manage the assets that were received moving forward.

RESOLVED that

Approval is given to the transfer of the following assets from Homes England to the Council.

- 1) Land at Auxerre Avenue;
- 2) The Anchorage;
- 3) Land adjacent to Crossgates Depot, Crossgates Road, Park Farm; and
- 4) Matchborough West Meeting Rooms

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

The Chair confirmed that there were no referrals from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or other Committees on this occasion.

22. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORTS

The following updates were provided with respect to the Executive Advisory Panels and other bodies:

- a) Climate Change Cross Party Working Group – Chair, Councillor Anthony Lovell

Councillor Lovell confirmed that a meeting of the Climate Change Cross Party Working Group had recently taken place. During this meeting on-street electric charging points had been discussed. Members were advised that Councillor Lovell had subsequently raised this issue with Worcestershire

County Council's Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways and Transport.

The group had also discussed action that could be taken to improve the carbon efficiency of Council houses. There were various options available which had been adopted in other parts of the country.

b) Constitutional Review Working Group – Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer

Councillor Dormer explained that a meeting of the Constitutional Review Working Group was scheduled to take place on 14th October 2021.

c) Corporate Parenting Board – Council Representative, Councillor Nyear Nazir

Councillor Nazir advised that a meeting of the Board that had been scheduled to take place in May had been cancelled. A meeting of the Board had taken place though on 8th July 2021. During this meeting, the Annual Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Report had been considered, which focused on the performance of the Independent Reviewing Service for Children's Social Services. Reference had also been made at this meeting to the Worcestershire Children's First Sufficiency Strategy 2021, which related to a process for ensuring that there were adequate placements for children and to avoiding placing children unnecessarily into care.

Due to the interruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated lockdown, the Board did not have a Work Programme. Therefore, there were plans to discuss the appropriate content for the work programme at the following meeting of the Board.

d) Member Support Steering Group – Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer

The Committee was informed that a meeting of the Member Support Steering Group was scheduled to take place on 5th October 2021.

e) Planning Advisory Panel – Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer

Councillor Dormer explained that there were no meetings of the Planning Advisory Panel scheduled to take place.

23. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday 8th July 2021 be noted.

24. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Under S100 A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matters on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 of the said act, as amended.

Minute Item No. 25 – St David’s House Extra Care Scheme – Business Case

25. ST DAVID'S HOUSE EXTRA CARE SCHEME - BUSINESS CASE

The Head of Community and Housing Services presented a report outlining the proposals detailed in a business case for the future delivery of the St David’s House Extra Care Scheme.

The Committee was informed that the Extra Care Scheme enabled residents to live independently whilst receiving support. St David’s House and the Queen’s Cottages were located in Batchley and consisted of 54 units. Many of the tenants living in this accommodation had previously been Council tenants.

Redditch Borough Council had a contract with Worcestershire County Council to provide a range of services at St David’s House and the Queen’s Cottages, including domiciliary care, personal care packages and kitchen services for tenants and their visitors. The Extra Care Scheme at St David’s House was not a statutory service. Many stockholding Councils had chosen to outsource provision of such services to specialist care providers.

In previous years, Redditch Borough Council had received £200,000 from Worcestershire County Council in Supporting People Funding, which had helped to cover many of the costs of delivering the service. Unfortunately, this funding had been withdrawn some years ago and the Council subsequently received a much-reduced sum of £58,000 from the County Council, meaning that the service was heavily subsidised by Redditch Borough Council.

The report proposed that the Extra Care Scheme should be procured in future for St David's House and the Queen's Cottages. Any procured provider would be robustly monitored and would need to be on Worcestershire County Council's preferred provider list. In order for service providers to be included on this list, they needed to demonstrate that they met particular conditions in service delivery.

Following the presentation of the report, the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Procurement commented that Members were being asked to make a difficult decision. However, unfortunately the Council had been subsidising the Extra Care Service delivered at St David's House and the Queen's Cottages for a number of years and the financial position was not considered to be sustainable. There were a number of specialist care providers operating in the region that could provide excellent care to tenants and monitoring would help to ensure that service quality did not suffer. The Council would retain ownership of St David's House and the Queen's Cottages and consequently the authority could continue to ensure that an Extra Care Service remained available at the site. Should the Council have chosen to sell the site, there would have been a risk that the new owners might have sold the land for development and a valuable service could have been lost in the Borough.

During consideration of this item, reference was made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's debate in respect of this item. The Executive Committee was informed that some Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had raised concerns that they were uncomfortable with the proposal that had been made. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had also suggested that the proposal needed to be discussed with representatives of the Trades Unions and that action needed to be taken to ensure that staff were protected through the TUPE transfer process.

Following the presentation of the report, the Committee discussed the proposals in some detail. Members noted that communications had already been issued on the subject of the proposals and this would help to keep the public informed about the situation. Questions had been raised by some members of the public with elected Members prior to the meeting concerning the implications for these proposals of the Government's recent announcement of an increase in National Insurance (NI) contributions to help cover the costs of adult social care. Members commented that further information on the Government's proposals was needed moving forward.

RESOLVED that

the delivery of the Personal Domiciliary Care, Core Services and Kitchen services at St David's House Extra Care Scheme be procured in accordance with the Business Case attached to the report.

(During the consideration of this item, Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to move to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed which related to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and which related to consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matters arising between the authority or Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.)

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 7.29 pm