

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thu 27 Mar
2008
7.00 pm

Committee Room Two
Town Hall
Redditch



www.redditchbc.gov.uk

Access to Information - Your Rights

The Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 widened the rights of press and public to attend Local Authority meetings and to see certain documents. Recently the Freedom of Information Act 2000, has further broadened these rights, and limited exemptions under the 1985 Act.

Your main rights are set out below:-

- Automatic right to attend all Council and Committee meetings unless the business would disclose confidential or “exempt” information.
- Automatic right to inspect agenda and public reports at least five days before the date of the meeting.
- Automatic right to inspect minutes of the Council and its Committees (or summaries of business undertaken in private) for up to six years following a meeting.
- Automatic right to inspect lists of background papers used in the preparation of public reports.
- Access, upon request, to the background papers on which reports are based for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting.
- Access to a public register stating the names and addresses and electoral areas of all Councillors with details of the membership of all Committees etc.
- A reasonable number of copies of agenda and reports relating to items to be considered in public must be made available to the public attending meetings of the Council and its Committees etc.
- Access to a list specifying those powers which the Council has delegated to its Officers indicating also the titles of the Officers concerned.
- Access to a summary of the rights of the public to attend meetings of the Council and its Committees etc. and to inspect and copy documents.
- In addition, the public now has a right to be present when the Council determines “Key Decisions” unless the business would disclose confidential or “exempt” information.
- Unless otherwise stated, all items of business before the Executive Committee are Key Decisions.
- (Copies of Agenda Lists are published in advance of the meetings on the Council’s Website:
www.redditchbc.gov.uk

**If you have any queries on this Agenda or any of the decisions taken or wish to exercise any of the above rights of access to information, please contact
Jess Bayley and Helen Saunders
Overview and Scrutiny Support Officers**

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Welcome to today's meeting.

Guidance for the Public

Agenda Papers

The **Agenda List** at the front of the Agenda summarises the issues to be discussed and is followed by the Officers' full supporting **Reports**.

Chair

The Chair is responsible for the proper conduct of the meeting. Generally to one side of the Chair is the Committee Support Officer who gives advice on the proper conduct of the meeting and ensures that the debate and the decisions are properly recorded. On the Chair's other side are the relevant Council Officers. The Councillors ("Members") of the Committee occupy the remaining seats around the table.

Running Order

Items will normally be taken in the order printed but, in particular circumstances, the Chair may agree to vary the order.

Refreshments : tea, coffee and water are normally available at meetings - please serve yourself.

Decisions

Decisions at the meeting will be taken by the **Councillors** who are the democratically elected representatives. They are advised by **Officers** who are paid professionals and do not have a vote.

Members of the Public

Members of the public may, by prior arrangement, speak at meetings of the Council or its Committees. Specific procedures exist for Appeals Hearings or for meetings involving Licence or Planning Applications. For further information on this point, please speak to the Committee Support Officer.

Special Arrangements

If you have any particular needs, please contact the Committee Support Officer.

Infra-red devices for the hearing impaired are available on request at the meeting. Other facilities may require prior arrangement.

Further Information

If you require any further information, please contact the Committee Support Officer (see foot of page opposite).

Fire/ Emergency instructions

If the alarm is sounded, please leave the building by the nearest available exit – these are clearly indicated within all the Committee Rooms.

If you discover a fire, inform a member of staff or operate the nearest alarm call point (wall mounted red rectangular box). In the event of the fire alarm sounding, leave the building immediately following the fire exit signs. Officers have been appointed with responsibility to ensure that all visitors are escorted from the building.

Do Not stop to collect personal belongings.

Do Not use lifts.

Do Not re-enter the building until told to do so.

The emergency Assembly Area is on the Ringway Car Park.

Declaration of Interests: Guidance for Councillors

DO I HAVE A "PERSONAL INTEREST" ?

- Where the item relates or is likely to affect your **registered interests** (what you have declared on the formal Register of Interests)

OR

- Where a decision in relation to the item might reasonably be regarded as affecting **your own** well-being or financial position, or that of your **family**, or your **close associates** more than most other people affected by the issue,

you have a personal interest.

WHAT MUST I DO? **Declare the existence, and nature, of your interest and stay**

- The declaration must relate to specific business being decided - a general scattergun approach is not needed
- **Exception** - where interest arises only because of your membership of another **public body**, there is no need to declare unless you **speak** on the matter.
- You **can vote** on the matter.

IS IT A "PREJUDICIAL INTEREST" ?

In general only if:-

- It is a personal interest **and**
 - The item affects your **financial position** (or conveys other benefits), or the position of your **family, close associates** or bodies through which you have a **registered interest** (or relates to the exercise of **regulatory functions** in relation to these groups)
- and**
- A member of public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably believe the interest was likely to **prejudice** your judgement of the public interest.

WHAT MUST I DO? **Declare and Withdraw**

BUT you may make representations to the meeting before withdrawing, **if** the public have similar rights (such as the right to speak at Planning Committee).



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 27 March 2008

7.00 pm

Committee Room 2 Town Hall

Agenda

Membership:

Cllrs: K Banks B Passingham
 D Taylor J Brunner
 D Thomas J Cookson
 C MacMillan A Fry

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| <p>1. Apologies and named substitutes</p> | <p>To receive apologies for absence and details of any Councillor (or co-optee substitute) nominated to attend this meeting in place of a member of this Committee.</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p> |
| <p>2. Declarations of interest and of Party Whip</p> | <p>To invite Councillors to declare any interest they may have in items on the Agenda and any Party Whip.</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p> |
| <p>3. Minutes</p> | <p>To confirm the minutes of the most recent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as a correct record.</p> <p>(Minutes to follow)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p> |
| <p>4. Actions List (Pages 1 - 4)</p> | <p>To note the contents of the Overview and Scrutiny Actions List.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>All Wards</p> |
| <p>5. Gypsies and Travellers - Joint Policy on Unauthorised Encampments (Pages 5 - 10)</p> | <p>To receive an oral report from Officers to enable Members to develop a common understanding of the roles and responsibilities of local bodies in response to unauthorised traveller encampments. Also, to consider the contents of the Worcestershire joint policy on unauthorised encampments and the implications for Redditch.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p> |

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| <p>6. Economic Development - Member Discussion</p> | <p>To receive a report from Officers to enable Members to develop a common understanding of the roles and responsibilities of local bodies in relation to promoting economic development in Redditch.</p> <p>(Report to follow)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p> |
| <p>7. Task & Finish Groups - Progress Reports</p> | <p>To consider progress to date on current scrutiny reviews against the terms set by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>The current reviews in progress are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Communications Task and Finish Group (Stage One), Chair - Councillor J. Brunner.2. District Centres Task and Finish Group, Chair - Councillor A. Fry.3. Fees and Charges Task and Finish Group, Chair - Councillor C. MacMillan. <p>(Oral reports and / or reports to follow)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p> |
| <p>8. Joint Scrutiny Exercise on Flooding</p> <p>(Pages 11 - 12)</p> | <p>To consider further developments in the joint scrutiny exercise on flooding.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p> |
| <p>9. Referrals</p> | <p>To consider any referrals to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee direct, or arising from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Executive Committee or full Council• Other sources. <p>(No separate report).</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p> |

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10. Work Programme

(Pages 13 - 16)

To consider the Committee's current Work Programme, and potential items for addition to the list arising from:

- The Forward Plan / Committee agendas
- External publications
- Other sources.

(Report attached)

(No Specific Ward Relevance)

11. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Should it be necessary, in the opinion of the Borough Director, during the course of the meeting to consider excluding the public from the meeting on the grounds that exempt information is likely to be divulged, it may be necessary to move the following resolution:

"That, under S.100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matter(s) on the grounds that it/they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs (to be specified) of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act".