



Council

Monday, 16th September,
2024

MINUTES

Present:

Councillors Juma Begum (Mayor), Joanna Kane (Deputy Mayor), Joe Baker, Juliet Barker Smith, William Boyd, Claire Davies, Matthew Dormer, James Fardoe, Andrew Fry, Bill Hartnett, Sharon Harvey, Chris Holz, Sid Khan, Wanda King, Sachin Mathur, Gemma Monaco, David Munro, Rita Rogers, Gary Slim, Jen Snape, Jane Spilsbury, Monica Stringfellow, Craig Warhurst, Ian Woodall and Paul Wren

Officers:

Peter Carpenter, Claire Felton and Guy Revans

Democratic Services Officers:

Jess Bayley-Hill

29. WELCOME

The Mayor welcomed all those present to the meeting.

30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Brandon Clayton and Alan Mason.

31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

32. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Monday 29th July 2024 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Mayor.

33. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following announcements were made at the meeting:

Chair

a) The Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor advised that since the previous Council meeting she had attended a number of civic events. This had included:

- The Mayor's Civic Service, which she had hosted at Forge Mill Needle Museum on 8th September 2024.
- The High Sheriff's drinks reception at Hartlebury Castle on 12th September 2024.
- The Licensing of the new Reverend at St Stephen's Church. Members took the opportunity to welcome the new Reverend, Dr Fraser Oates and to thank the previous Reverend, Paul Lawlor, for his hard work serving the town.

The Mayor also advised that she had received an email from Mr John Leighfield, Chief Executive of ISTEEL, regarding a heritage event that had been held at Redditch library. Unfortunately, the Mayor had been unable to meet with Mr Leefield on this occasion. However, the Mayor read out the following email that had been received from him regarding this event for Members' consideration:

"I would have liked to meet with you when I came to the library on Saturday morning. I wanted, through you, to express my gratitude to Redditch for the help Redditch gave to us when we set ISTEEL up in the 1970s. It was a textbook example of how a town can help a young company get off the ground, something that's as relevant now as it was back in those days. I do hope I'll have a chance to say this personally at some point, perhaps when the blue plaque is unveiled at Grosvenor House. Meanwhile, can I say on behalf of all of us who had the ISTEEL experience, thank you Redditch."

b) The Leader's Announcements

The Leader commented that he had spoken to the Chief Executive about bringing the Christmas Staff Quiz back to the Council. It was hoped that this would boost staff morale whilst also raising money for the Mayor's charity.

Since the previous meeting of Council, the Mayor had attended a meeting with representatives of West Midlands Employers to discuss the services that they provided. The Leader had also participated in a visit to the Gateway site, alongside Councillor Matthew Dormer and Councillor Karen May, Leader of Bromsgrove District Council. Members were asked to note that this was a very large site. In addition, the

Leader had visited a number of community groups based in the Borough to help demonstrate the Council's support.

c) The Chief Executive's Announcements

The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that there were no announcements to make on behalf of the Chief Executive on this occasion.

34. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE (PROCEDURE RULE 9)

The Mayor confirmed that no Motions on Notice had been received for consideration on this occasion.

35. MOTIONS ON NOTICE (PROCEDURE RULE 11)

Composting

Councillor Claire Davies presented a Motion on Notice on the subject of composting. The Motion read as follows:

"That the Executive Committee commits to increasing recycling rates for garden waste through home composting and develops Community Networks to support this."

The Motion was proposed by Councillor Davies and seconded by Councillor Sharon Harvey.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Davies commented that the Motion was asking the Executive Committee to commit to increasing recycling rates for garden waste in the Borough through home composting. Members were asked to note that at the Executive Committee meeting held on 9th July 2024, a report had been considered which had demonstrated that there were decreasing rates of recycling in Redditch. Many residents did not use the garden waste service that the Council provided and therefore a lot of garden waste was disposed of in the grey waste bins. As a consequence of this approach, there were increasing in CO² emissions which had negative implications for carbon emissions in the Borough.

Members were advised that domestic composting in home compost containers was more environmentally friendly than the existing approach. The benefits of home composting included increasing recycling rates, reducing waste, reducing CO² emissions and increasing the accessibility of recycling for those residents who

could not afford or otherwise could not access the Council's garden waste collection service.

Councillor Davies suggested that Redditch Borough Council could work with Worcestershire County Council on home composting. This could include a public awareness campaign to help educate residents on the benefits arising from home composting. The Council could also potentially request additional support from Worcestershire County Council, in terms of asking them to increase their subsidy for the service and exploring the potential to introduce free composting bins. Other partner organisations could also potentially be asked to assist, including garden centres and community groups through local networking. Community composting schemes had been found to work well in other parts of the country and there were examples of good practice that Redditch Borough Council could learn from.

Subject to agreeing the Motion, Councillor Davies suggested that the Council should monitor the uptake of home composting by local residents and that there should be an annual report to Council on this subject. The aim of the Motion was to enhance sustainability in the Borough whilst helping to reduce costs in the long-term which could arise if this resulted in a decrease in the amount of waste that the Council collected from households.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Harvey suggested that the action proposed in the Motion would support recycling as a whole in the Borough. This would also be a timely addition, given requirements to introduce a food waste collection service by 2026. The Council was aiming to increase the garden waste (brown bin) collection service but there was also a duty to support any action that could be taken to increase composting rates in the Borough.

During consideration of this item, Councillor Matthew Dormer proposed an amendment to the wording of the Motion. The amendment read as follows:

“That the Executive Committee commits to increasing recycling rates for garden waste through home composting and develops Community Networks to support this, and when demand is such, we expand our garden waste fleet to accommodate it.”

The amendment was proposed by Councillor Dormer and seconded by Councillor Gemma Monaco.

In proposing the amendment, Councillor Dormer noted that he was in favour of the action that had been proposed in the original Motion but he felt that this did not go far enough. The amendment was designed to enable the Executive Committee to consider as many options as possible when discussing this matter further.

In seconding the amendment, Councillor Monaco commented that the aim was to encourage the Executive Committee to consider taking action that would help to encourage people to do more recycling than at present. Members were asked to note that this amendment would not commit the Council to anything in particular at this stage, as there would be a need for further consideration at an Executive Committee meeting.

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

- The extent to which the wording of the amendment focused on a separate matter to the Motion, given that the intention of the Motion had been to increase home composting.
- The previous action taken in respect of promoting the Council's garden waste collection service, for which there had been a lot of demand in the Borough and the potential to accommodate this demand further.
- The work that was already being undertaken separately to review brown bin service provision.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was agreed so that this then became the substantive Motion.

Members subsequently discussed the Motion in detail and in doing so commented on the following points:

- The potential for the Council to be ambitious when considering action that could be taken to improve recycling rates in the Borough and to lead by example.
- The financial implications arising from some action that could be taken and the need for prudent management of the Council's budget.

- The challenges in terms of recycling rates in the Borough and how these did not compare favourably with other Councils in Worcestershire.
- The potential for an Overview and Scrutiny exercise to be conducted investigating the causes of the low recycling rates and the action that could be taken to address this.
- The previous Overview and Scrutiny investigation in respect of recycling that had been conducted at the Council in the 2010s. Members suggested that this report could be revisited by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a view to identifying the impact that it had had on recycling rates and additional action that could be taken.
- The forthcoming requirement for the Council to introduce a food waste collection service in the Borough and the impact that this might have on recycling rates, including home composting.

RESOLVED to recommend to the Executive Committee that the Executive Committee commits to increasing recycling rates for garden waste through home composting and develops Community Networks to support this, and when demand is such, to expand our garden waste fleet to accommodate it.

36. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Mayor advised that two sets of minutes from meetings of the Executive Committee held on Monday 29th July and Tuesday 3rd September 2024 had been included in the Council agenda for Members' consideration. However, there had been no recommendations made to Council at the first of these meetings and therefore the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 29th July 2024 had been included to provide Members with an opportunity to ask questions of clarification and to adopt the minutes.

Quarter 1 Revenue and Performance Monitoring Report 2024/25

The Portfolio Holder for Finance explained that there was £350,000 included in the capital programme for the three years of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which were due to be spent on upgrading the Arrow Valley Countryside Centre. The Executive Committee was recommending an amendment to the budget to enable £100,000 of this funding to be spent at an earlier stage than

previously anticipated. This would ensure that the works could be delivered at a quieter period for the venue and thereby minimise disruption for income from food and beverage sales during the busy summer period.

Members discussed the proposal and in doing so commended Rubicon Leisure Limited for the positive impact that the company was having on the delivery of leisure services in the Borough. Particular reference was made to the positive contribution of the Managing Director of Rubicon Leisure Limited and he was thanked for his hard work. Members also praised improvements that had been made in the last 12 months to the services available at the Arrow Valley Countryside Centre.

In considering this matter, Members noted that it was important to ensure that all funding was accompanied by appropriate performance indicators. These would enable the Council to assess the impact of the funding moving forward. The suggestion was made that the Shareholders Committee should consider this accordingly.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Ian Woodall and seconded by Councillor Craig Warhurst.

Treasury Management Outturn Report

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the Treasury Management Outturn report for the 2023/24 financial year. Members were advised that there was a requirement for this report to be considered by Council each year. The report detailed the Council's Treasury Management arrangements, including in respect of management of prudential indicators. The Council had made some financial investments and it was important to ensure that these were managed appropriately. In particular, Members were urged to consider the content of paragraphs 3.2 to 3.21 of the report, as these provided useful information about the Council's position.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Ian Woodall and seconded by Councillor Joe Baker.

Shopmobility Future Options

The Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Regulatory Services presented the Shopmobility Future Options report for Council's consideration. Members were advised that the base for the service was due to move from its current location into a unit in the Kingfisher Shopping Centre. This would make the service more

visible and accessible and it was hoped that this would result in an increase in custom for the service.

During consideration of this report, Members discussed the following points in detail:

- The review of the report that had been undertaken at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 2nd September 2024 at which the proposals had been scrutinised in detail.
- The options that were available moving forward and which options had been favoured by Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It was noted that some Members had favoured option 3 whilst other Councillors had favoured option 4.
- The previous support that had been provided by the Kingfisher Shopping Centre to the Shopmobility service.
- The consultation that had been conducted by the Council with customers of the service. Some concerns were raised about the number of responses that had been received in this consultation process.
- The extent to which the current base for the Shopmobility service was visible and the potential increase in demand for the service that might arise once the base had moved into a unit located in the Kingfisher Shopping Centre.
- The locations in which the Shopmobility scooters operated. Members noted that the scooters could be used in the Kingfisher Shopping Centre, Church Green, GP Practices and to access the library.
- The extent to which it was appropriate for the Council to subsidise the Shopmobility service.
- The hard work of the staff employed in the Shopmobility service.
- The previous reviews of the Shopmobility service that had been undertaken in recent years by the Council.
- The proportion of Redditch residents, as opposed to visitors, who used the Shopmobility service.
- The significant weight of many mobility scooters and the difficulties that many elderly people and people with physical disabilities could experience when transferring private mobility scooters from their vehicles.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Monica Stringfellow and seconded by Councillor Ian Woodall.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 29th July 2024 be received and noted; and**

- 2) the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee meeting held on 3rd September 2024 be received and all recommendations adopted.

37. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Mayor advised that a vacancy had arisen since the previous Council meeting for the position of the Council's Armed Forces Champion on the Worcestershire Armed Forces Covenant Partnership.

RESOLVED that

Councillor Sharon Harvey be appointed to the Worcestershire Armed Forces Covenant Partnership as the Council's Armed Forces Champion for the remainder of the 2024/25 municipal year.

38. URGENT BUSINESS - RECORD OF DECISIONS

Members noted that there had been one urgent decision taken since the previous meeting of Council on the subject of securing the future of Council housing.

39. URGENT BUSINESS - GENERAL (IF ANY)

There was no urgent business for consideration on this occasion.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.19 pm