

Executive Committee

8th September 2010

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Carole Gandy (Chair), Councillor Michael Braley (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Juliet Brunner, Greg Chance, Brandon Clayton, Malcolm Hall, Gay Hopkins and Debbie Taylor

Also Present:

Councillors Kath Banks, Andrew Brazier and Derek Taylor

Officers:

C Audritt, R Bamford, J Bayley, H Bennett, K Dicks, C Felton, S Hanley, T Kristunas, J Pickering, S Powell, Jim Prendergrast, I Ranford, D Taylor, L Tompkin and A Walsh

Committee Services Officer:

I Westmore

55. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Jinny Pearce.

56. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Greg Chance and Debbie Taylor declared personal and prejudicial interests in Item 15 (Church Hill District Centre – Redevelopment Report) as detailed separately at Minute 69 below.

57. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair advised that the following item of business, scheduled on the Forward Plan to be dealt with at this meeting, had been rescheduled to a later meeting:

- Review of Financial Regulations

The Chair also advised that she had accepted the following matter as Urgent Business:

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Chair

Item 14 – Budget Guidance and Timetable 2011/12

(Not on the Forward Plan for this meeting and not meeting the publication deadline)

58. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 28th July 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

59. LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP TASK AND FINISH GROUP - FINAL REPORT

The Committee received the final report of the Local Strategic Partnership Task and Finish Group, as approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Members welcomed the report and were happy to endorse the recommendations contained therein, with the exception of that pertaining to the funding of a full-time post. On this issue Members did not feel that they were able to consider such a financial commitment in isolation from the overall budget setting process.

RESOLVED that

Recommendations 1-8 detailed in an interim report endorsed previously on 17th March and approved by both the Executive Committee and the Redditch Partnership Management Board, as detailed in Appendix 8 to the report, be noted; and

RECOMMENDED to the Redditch Partnership that

Monitoring: ensuring that the Redditch Partnership is subject to regular overview and scrutiny by Councillors:

- 9) there should be pre-scrutiny of each new Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;**
- 10) there should be a full review and audit of each completed SCS by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;**
- 11) the Redditch Partnership and SCS should be subject to six-monthly monitoring sessions by the Committee;**

Operational: suggestions for improving the future work of the Redditch Partnership and the next SCS:

- 12) the next SCS should have fewer, more focussed targets (perhaps four – six) which are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound;
- 13) for the foreseeable future, the SCS should contain targets relating to health and educational inequalities in Redditch;
- 14) the priorities within the SCS should reflect residents' priorities (as identified through consultation) and also dovetail with those of the Worcestershire Partnership; and

RESOLVED that

- 15) the comments made in respect of the LSP requiring the support of a full-time permanent Partnership Manager reporting directly to the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships be noted but the matter be subject to consideration alongside other budget bids as part of the budget setting process.

60. BUILDING CONTROL - FEES AND CHARGES

Officers reported that they were seeking the introduction of additional charges for building control services in order to offset the cost of Officer time and in order to increase customer satisfaction overall. The introduction of such charges was broadly in line with what other local authorities were undertaking.

It was noted that these changes would create additional work for Officers in the short term but that this could be absorbed by the current levels of staffing. The longer term benefit would be in tidying up a considerable number of outstanding applications.

RECOMMENDED that

implementation of additional charges for building control services be approved as follows:

- 1) for retrospective Completion Certificates for archived applications as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report;
- 2) for processing the withdrawal of applications as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report; and

- 3) **for processing the transfer of obligations to a third party including the re-direction of inspection fees and issue of copy documents as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.**

61. IRRECOVERABLE DEBTS

It was noted during the course of the debate that no further routine quarterly reports on the write-off of irrecoverable debts were to be submitted to the Executive Committee following a decision taken at Council in August.

Officers undertook to respond to Councillor Braley as to whether the damage inflicted upon void properties constituted criminal damage.

RESOLVED that

the debts totalling £54,754.90 as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report be written off as irrecoverable.

(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 contained the personal details of individuals. There is nothing exempt in this record of proceedings, however.)

62. DECENT HOMES CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND ASBESTOS REMOVAL

Members were pleased to note that monitoring of capital spend was being undertaken rigorously and, in particular, that the spending on asbestos removal had been incorporated into the current report.

It was noted that a number of properties had had their work deferred owing to the review of the Sheltered Housing Stock as it was not considered a good use of resources to undertake the work in advance of decisions being taken on the future categorization of various schemes.

Officers provided an update to members on the course of action followed in those cases where tenants refused access to the property. Where there was not a health and safety concern there was no right for the contractor to enter the property. There was an increasing requirement on the tenants concerned to sign documentation detailing their wish not to have the specified works carried out.

RESOLVED that

the contents of the report be noted.

63. REVIEW OF REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL'S SHELTERED HOUSING STOCK - CUSTOMER FEEDBACK UPDATE

Further to earlier decisions to agree in principle the proposals submitted to previous meetings of the Executive Committee and Council, Officers informed Members of the outcome of the period of information sharing with tenants which had taken place over recent weeks.

A number of responses had been received from tenants, which were included in the papers presented to Members. It was contended that no substantially new issues had arisen during this process but tenants seemed appreciative of the time that Officers had spent going over the proposals with them.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) Officers findings now be considered conclusive and the matter progress through Full Council on 20th September, 2010; and**

RESOLVED that

- 2) sufficient consultation and opportunity for interested parties to feed back on the outcomes of the Review of Sheltered Housing have taken place; and**
- 3) in order to achieve the desired outcomes included in the Action Plan of the Older Persons Housing and Support Strategy, as approved by Full Council on 18th September 2009 the thoughts of interested parties be noted but proposals as approved by the Executive Committee on 28th July 2010 remain unchanged.**

64. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE MONITORING - QUARTER 1 - APRIL TO JUNE 2010

The latest quarter's performance figures for key aspects of the Council's performance across a range of services were considered.

Members were generally happy with the trends in performance and in the manner of presentation. One issue that was highlighted was the performance against the recycling target (NI 192) where it was noted that problems with contamination at a new County facility was leading to increased rejection rates across the districts.

RESOLVED that

the update on key performance indicators for the period ending June 2010 be noted.

65. QUARTERLY BUDGET MONITORING - QUARTER 1 - APRIL TO JUNE 2010

The latest budget monitoring report submitted to Members was considered by the Committee.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

66. QUARTERLY MONITORING OF THE BENEFITS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN - QUARTER 1 - APRIL TO JUNE 2010

Officers provided an update on the performance of the benefits service. The service was generally making progress across the range of objectives identified in the Benefits Service Improvement Plan with the Council on target to receive the maximum possible subsidy.

The current financial climate had led to an expansion of the work for the service as people were taking on low paid work but were still requiring additional benefits besides. The most recent data on overpayment recovery was brought to the attention of Members, demonstrating that this area was beginning to show signs of improvement.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the report be noted;**
- 2) the secondment of the Improvement Plan Project Officer be extended until 31st March 2011; and**
- 3) £11,950 be allocated from the balance of Department of Works and Pensions monies received in 2008/09.**

67. QUARTERLY MONITORING OF FORMAL COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS - QUARTER 1 - APRIL TO JUNE 2010

The Committee considered the most recent information on the monitoring of complaints and compliments. Members were informed that the Stage One complaints referred to at Appendix 1

represented fourteen separate individuals with complaints as opposed to multiple complaints by fewer individuals.

RESOLVED that

the update on complaints and compliments for the period April-June 2010 be noted.

68. BUDGET GUIDANCE AND TIMETABLE 2011/12

Members received an update on the process that was to be followed to enable development and consideration of the forthcoming financial plan. Members were particularly interested to hear of the recruitment of a budget jury.

RESOLVED that

the timetable be noted.

(This report had been accepted as a matter of Urgent Business – not on the Forward Plan and not having met the publication deadline – and was considered at the meeting as such, with the approval of the Chair, in accordance with the Council's constitutional rules and the powers vested in the Chair by virtue of Section 100 (B) (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972 to agree to matters of urgency being discussed by reason of special circumstances.

In this case the special circumstances were that the information, which was not available at the time of the agenda going to print, was required to be considered at the present meeting in order that the earlier milestones on the timetable might be reported to Members prior to these milestones being attained.)

69. CHURCH HILL REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

[During consideration of this item Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Prior to consideration of this item, and in accordance with the requirements of Section 81 of the Local Government Act 2000, Councillors Greg Chance and Debbie Taylor declared personal and prejudicial interests in view of their positions on the Management Board of Redditch Co-operative Homes]

70. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Members received the minutes of recent meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It was noted that the Council was still in the process of developing its procedures for dealing with petitions following the implementation of the new Petitions Scheme, including those dealt with through the Overview and Scrutiny Process.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 14th July, 22nd July and 4th August 2010 be received and noted;**

Bus Pass Scheme: County Provision – Update

- 2) **a motion be put to full Council on 9th August 2010 asking that a letter be sent to the Department of Transport expressing concern about the lack of detailed information regarding funding for concessionary fares in 2011;**
- 3) **the Executive Committee request that the Member of Parliament for Redditch be requested to make representations on behalf of the Council to the Department for Transport regarding funding for concessionary fares in 2011;**

Council Flat Communal Cleaning Task and Finish Review – Monitoring – Consultation Update Report

- 4) **no further action on consultation regarding cleaning of communal areas in Council properties take place unless groups of residents in properties, not currently included in the cleaning contract, approach the Council for a cleaning service;**

Petition – Against Anti-Social Behaviour in Lowlands Lane Park

- 5) **a multi-agency approach be adopted to discourage drinking and anti-social behaviour in Lowlands Lane Park**

71. MINUTES / REFERRALS - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, EXECUTIVE PANELS, NEIGHBOURHOOD GROUPS ETC.

There were no minutes or referrals under this item.

72. SHARED SERVICE BOARD

The Committee received the minutes of the most recent meeting of the Shared Services Board.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Shared Services Board on 19th August 2010 be noted.

73. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

74. ACTION MONITORING

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

75. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED that

under S.100 I 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 the relevant paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act, as amended:

Irrecoverable Debts (as detailed at Minute 61 above); and

Church Hill District Centre – Redevelopment Report (as detailed at Minute 69 above).

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 10.05 pm

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Chair