

Executive Committee

29th 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, Jinny Pearce and Debbie Taylor

Also Present:

Councillors Peter Anderson and Andrew Brazier

Officers:

J Godwin, C Felton, S Hanley, R Cooke, A Walsh, E Hopkins, L Tompkin and C Wilson

Committee Services Officer:

I Westmore

76. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

77. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Peter Anderson declared an interest in Item 9 (Arrow Valley Countryside Centre – Contractual Arrangements) as detailed separately at Minute 84 below.

78. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

- Town Centre Landscape Improvements; and
- Update on Garden Waste Collection.

The Chair also advised that she had accepted the following matter as urgent business:

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Chair

Item 8 – Pitcheroak Golf Course – Referral from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

(Not meeting the publication deadline as the Overview and Scrutiny meeting post-dated the agenda despatch)

79. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 8th September 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to it being noted under Minute number 69 that Councillor Taylor had declared an interest in view of her personal connection to that organisation and not because she was a Member of the Board of Redditch Co-operative Homes.

80. WORCESTERSHIRE JOINT COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY REPORT SUMMER FLOODS 2007 AND OTHER LAND DRAINAGE MATTERS

The Committee received a presentation updating it on progress with regard to the Joint Scrutiny Report into the 2007 floods and other land drainage strategies. The Members were reminded that Redditch had been in a significantly better position than many other Worcestershire Districts at the time of the 2007 floods as the Borough's records were far more advanced and complete than was the case in other districts. It was noted that progress in respect of more recent legislation could not be made at present as guidance and Commencement Orders were still to be received from central Government.

The Committee commended the Operations Manager on his expertise in this field and stressed the tremendous benefit he had brought to the Borough through his work on drainage over a number of years. Members noted that the Council's Operations Manager was attending the two day Flood Management 2010 conference on behalf of the Borough and County.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the Council's response to the Joint County and District Councils' Scrutiny Report into the Summer Floods 2007 be approved, including additional comments by Officers listed in the report submitted;**
- 2) **the Council's policies on ditches be initially applied to Arterial Ditches only;**

- 3) **the Council notes its position in the light of the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 and the Flood Water Management Act 2010, subject to the Commencement Orders; and**
- 4) **a report be prepared by Officers, as previously instructed by Members, setting out proposals for a joint North Worcestershire Land Drainage Partnership in accordance with the above guidance.**

81. SUB-REGIONAL CHOICE BASED LETTINGS

The Committee considered a report that sought the views of Members on how the Council should proceed in respect of its Housing Allocations Policy. The options presented to Members were either to continue with its current Policy and Redditch Home Choice scheme or continue to work alongside members of the sub-regional partnership with the option of adopting the common sub-regional Housing Allocations Policy and lettings scheme.

Officers highlighted the legal review of the sub-regional scheme that was being undertaken which would influence the Council's choice as to whether to consider adopting this scheme. The other significant issue in this regard was the inclusion within the present Redditch scheme of the priority given to those with medical, homelessness or other special needs which was not a feature of the sub-regional scheme. It was noted, however, that the sub-regional scheme did make use of digital technology which expanded the means and ease by which prospective tenants could bid for local properties.

The Committee was made aware of the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which had received a presentation on this subject the previous week. Contrary to that recommendation, the Executive Committee considered that there was nothing to be lost and potentially something to be gained from continuing to work with sub-regional partners whilst not committing to a particular course of action at this stage.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the report be noted;**
- 2) **the decision to join the Home Choice Plus be delayed until the outcome of the legal review into the scheme is known, but Officer resources be committed to continue to work alongside the existing members of the Sub-Regional Partnership and a further report brought back**

to the Committee to report progress and make further recommendations; and

- 3) the Borough Tenants' Panel be provided with the opportunity to consider and comment upon the Sub-Regional Housing Allocations Policy report.**

82. ADMINISTRATION OF SMALL CHARITIES BY THE COUNCIL

A report was received which put before Members the option of transferring the administration of three small charities to the Worcestershire Community Foundation. Officers confirmed that, having sought further information on the benefit that had accrued to Redditch through the Community Foundation, it was apparent that a considerable number of grants had been made to organisations in the Borough during recent times.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the administration of the Stanley, John Jordan Skinner and Caroline Swann Charities be transferred to the Worcestershire Community Foundation;**
- 2) Mr Colin Evans, Trust Transfer expert of the Community Foundation for Greater Manchester, be appointed to effect the transfer; and**
- 3) the sum of £129.62 in the Redditch Disaster Fund be transferred to the Mayor's Charity.**

83. MANAGEMENT OPTIONS APPRAISAL FOR PITCHEROAK GOLF COURSE

Officers reported that the present 18 month operating arrangement with the Worcestershire Golf Partnership was near its end and updated Members on the performance of the Partnership to date.

The Committee was informed that the Partnership had done a good job with the course, increasing membership at a time when memberships nationally were falling and, in particular, achieving a very significant increase in the numbers of junior members and younger (under 30 years of age) members. These increases had come against a backdrop of inclement weather both in the summer and winter time which served to emphasise the good performance of the Partnership.

Members were advised that the Partnership was generally not in the business of running golf courses and this was the first occasion on which they had undertaken a venture of this nature. The

Partnership was seeking a further 12 month extension to the current arrangement in order that the benefits they had brought to the course could properly be assessed. It was anticipated that the work the Partnership was undertaking would accrue further benefit to the Council in due course. Members were very appreciative of the Partnership's efforts in making a success of the golf course and were keen that the arrangement might be continued.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **the arrangement with the Worcestershire Golf Partnership be extended for a further 12 month period to work up a medium/long term operating solution, with negotiations commencing immediately; and**

RESOLVED that

- 2) **a service review of the non golf related elements of the operation be undertaken; and**
- 3) **the report be noted.**

(The referral report from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been accepted as a matter of Urgent Business –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 Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting post-dated the agenda despatch and the referral report needed to be considered at the present meeting to have any bearing on the decision-making process in respect of this matter.)

84. ARROW VALLEY COUNTRYSIDE CENTRE - CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS

Following an earlier Council decision to go down the route of private sector management of the Countryside Centre, a report was considered which sought approval of the specification format for these new management arrangements.

Officers reported that six companies were to be invited to tender for the contract following receipt of pre-qualification questionnaires from a number of prospective contractors. Members were reminded that it had been agreed that the Council enter into a specific

contract agreement rather than enter into a service level agreement.

The Committee were generally of the view that the Countryside Centre had tremendous potential and, although well used, could be developed to increase footfall significantly.

RESOLVED that

the specification format for the tendering process for the alternative management arrangements as set out in the appendices to the report be approved.

(During consideration of this item, and in accordance with the requirements of Section 81 of the Local Government Act 2000, Councillor Peter Anderson declared an interest in view of his membership of Redditch Sailing Club, a user of Arrow Valley Lake)

85. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Members considered the minutes of recent meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, including a number of recommendations.

RESOLVED that

Climate Change Strategy

- 1) **consideration of the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be deferred subject to consideration of the Climate Change Strategy at the meeting of the Executive Committee on 10th November 2010.**

Drainage – Update Report

- 2) **the Council's policies on ditches be initially applied to Arterial Ditches only;**
- 3) **the Council notes its position with regard to the implications of the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 and the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, subject to the Commencement Orders; and**
- 4) **a report be prepared by Officers, as previously instructed by Members, setting out proposals for a Joint North Worcestershire Land Drainage Partnership, in accordance with the guidance provided in the documents referred to in recommendation 3 above.**

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

There were no minutes or referrals under this item.

87. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

Members considered the latest update report on Advisory Panels and other Council bodies. Officers undertook to update the details of Chair and Vice Chairs subsequent to recent changes.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

88. ACTION MONITORING

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

89. URGENT BUSINESS - RECORD OF DECISIONS

Members noted two Urgent Business decisions which had been approved in accordance with Standing Order 36, namely:

Prospective Tenant – Unit 27, Rubicon Business Centre
(UB Reference 484)

Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant
(UB Reference 485)

RESOLVED that

the matters be noted.

90. 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 matter on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act, as amended:

**Redditch United Football Club – Financial Position Statement
(as detailed at Minute 91 below).**

91. REDDITCH UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB STATUS

(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 affair of any particular body (including the authority holding that information.)

The Meeting commenced at 7.00pm
and closed at 8.57pm

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Chair