

Executive Committee

20th October 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:

Councillor A Brazier

Officers:

M Bough, K Dicks, H Halls, S Hanley, S Horrobin, G Revans, A de Warr and L Williams.

Committee Services Officer:

S Skinner

92. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

93. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

94. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader advised that she had accepted the following matters as Urgent Business:

- Item 5 – Council Plan – Council Plan – Part 1
- Item 7 – Garden Waste – Referral from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Item 11 – Referral from the Joint Committee for Worcestershire Enhanced Two Tier Regulatory Service.

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Chair

95. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 29th September 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

96. COUNCIL PLAN - PART 1

The Committee considered a report which set out the Council's Vision and Priorities and strategic focus ready for the forthcoming round of budget preparation. It was essentially proposed to reconfirm the existing Vision and priorities.

Members considered the current content of the Plan and, further to a number of Member queries, what did not perhaps appear at first sight to be included. The Leader explained how various matters were sometimes covered under different headings, such as Housing under 'Enterprising Community' and Leisure under the overall Vision.

In terms of the Government's initial pronouncements on the Comprehensive Spending Review, which had been issued earlier on the same day as the Committee meeting, Members acknowledged that it was far too soon to begin to interpret the possible impacts on the Council Plan. Further detailed consideration would be given to this in later reports.

During consideration of the Plan, specific mention was made of the recent successes achieved in performance at Redditch High Schools. Mindful of earlier less satisfactory ratings, the Committee was gratified to learn of the recent Ofsted successes at both Arrow Vale and Trinity High Schools.

The Leader agreed a further report was required to consider how resources might be refocused to support this area.

Finally, Members acknowledged the usefulness of the 'Budget Juries' used in the Plan preparation processes; thanked the participants; and expressed a desire to build further on this initiative.

RECOMMENDED that

the Vision and priorities, as set out at Appendix 1 (Paragraphs 6.1 – 6.6) of the report, be reconfirmed and the focus for the forthcoming budget round, in line with the analysis of the Council's national, regional and local context, be approved.

97. CUSTOMER FEEDBACK POLICY

The Committee considered proposals for a revised Customer Feedback Policy, to deal more effectively with comments, complaints and compliments.

The Head of Customer Services explained how a streamlined but more responsive process, supported by updated IT solutions, would be more accessible, more consistent, and therefore more satisfactory, for customers.

Some concern was expressed at the loss of the Member Panel final stage of the existing complaints process, but Members generally agreed that this unnecessarily lengthened complaints processes and that, rather than the existing 3-stage process, it was preferable to aim to achieve a high quality response at the very first stage.

During consideration of this matter a strong plea was made for 'Crystal English' letters to be sent to Customers, as Members had sometimes felt Officers' letters to be hard to understand. In this respect, Officers were referred to the readability checks available to them on word processing systems.

RECOMMENDED that

the Customer Feedback Policy as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

98. GARDEN WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE - OUTCOMES OF TRIAL

Members considered a report which detailed the outcomes to date of the current trial garden waste collection service, together with recommendations for future delivery of the service.

Members also received a supplementary report which detailed the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's view that the service should not proceed further. The Executive Committee did not support this view, but did amend Officers' original recommendations, as detailed below.

The key issue for the Committee was that the service should be self-supporting, and that Officers therefore needed to promote and consult on the service, before any further roll out, to be certain that any investment would be repaid. It was important that non users should not fund services available in only parts of the Borough.

The Committee indicated that, if take up was likely to be less than 10%, the service would not be sustainable; but if more than 10%

could be achieved, options should be considered for a wider roll-out to areas which might benefit from the service.

It was agreed that the issue of further capital investment in equipment / bins etc. should therefore await further Committee decision. Similarly, in view of Members' revised recommendations, the possibility of sharing such a service with Bromsgrove DC would now also be considered as part of a further report.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **subject to a publicity and consultation exercise to seek customer response on likely take up and viability of the scheme before rolling out the service further; and further report back to the Committee in due course,**

Option D, as detailed at Paragraph 5.4 of the report, be the preferred option for the future of the garden waste collection service, namely:

'Stop trial in East and increase West trial to cover 10,000 properties (figures based on 10% take up)'; and

RESOLVED that

- 2) **Members note the outcomes of the trial garden waste collection service to date, as detailed in the report.**

99. HOME REPAIRS ASSISTANCE POLICY

The Committee was asked to consider a report which proposed an updated Home Repairs Assistance Policy.

This policy provided discretionary financial assistance to owner/occupiers and would therefore help to improve housing standards in the Borough.

RECOMMENDED that

the Home Repairs Assistance Policy, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

100. REGIONAL HOUSING POT GRANT - PROPOSALS

Members considered proposed uses of the Regional Housing Pot Grant for loans to landlords of houses in multiple occupation (HMO's).

RECOMMENDED that

- 3) up to £30,000 of the Regional Housing Pot be transferred to the 2010/11 Capital Programme for loans to landlords of Houses in Multiple Occupation; and**

RESOLVED that

- 4) up to £10,000 of the Regional Housing Pot be used for the purchase of appropriate management software for the Private Sector Housing Team;**
- 5) up to £50,000 of the Regional Housing Pot be used for the following strategic housing research & intelligence projects including:**
 - Private Sector Stock Condition report;**
 - Strategic Housing Market Assessment;**
 - Worcestershire Housing Strategy;**
 - Worcestershire Local Investment Plan; and**
- 4) expenditure of up to the sum agreed by the Council at 1) above be approved in accordance with Standing Order 41, for the purposes defined in the report.**

101. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee received the two most recent sets of minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, noting that two recommended items had already been dealt with at earlier meetings of the Executive Committee.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 15th and 21st September 2010 be received and noted.

102. JOINT COMMITTEE FOR WORCESTERSHIRE ENHANCED TWO TIER REGULATORY SERVICE - REFERRAL

Members received and noted the minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee dated 9th September 2010.

The minutes included a referral for all constituent District Councils to adopt a single standard range of revised fees and charges for private water supplies.

RECOMMENDED that

the Council adopt the proposed fees and charges for private water supplies as follows:

- **Risk Assessment - £40 per hour (up to £500 maximum);**
- **Investigation (each investigation) - £40 per hour (up to £100 maximum);**
- **Granting an Authorisation - £100 maximum;**
- **Sampling (each visit) - £100 maximum; and**
- **Analysing a sample**
 - **taken under regulation 10 - £25 maximum (small supplies)**
 - **taken during check - £100 maximum monitoring**
 - **taken during audit - £500 maximum monitoring.**

(This item was accepted by the Chair for consideration at the meeting as Urgent Business, in view of the need to obtain approvals from all member authorities within the same limited date range, for which the next meeting of the Committee would have been too late.)

103. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

RESOLVED that

subject to it being noted that the Grants Panel was next set to meet on 8th November 2010, the report be noted.

104. ACTION MONITORING

The Committee received the Action Monitoring report without further update or comment.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

105. 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 paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the said Act, as amended:

Proposed Charity Shop – Winyates Centre – Commercial Rent Reduction Request (as detailed at Minute 106 below).

106. PROPOSED CHARITY SHOP - WINYATES CENTRE

The Committee considered terms for the commercial letting of Council premises in Winyates.

[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).]

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.35 pm

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Chair