

Executive Committee

22 July 2009

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Carole Gandy (Chair), Councillor Michael Braley (Vice-Chair) and Councillors P Anderson, B Clayton, W Hartnett, N Hicks, C MacMillan and M Shurmer

Also Present:

Councillor P Mould (Chair – Overview and Scrutiny Committee)
M Collins (Vice-Chair – Standards Committee)

Officers:

B Ashby, L Bellaby, K Dicks, C Flanagan, S Hanley, T Kristunas, A Marklew, S Mullins, C Hemming, G Revans, H Saunders, Jackie Smith and L Tompkin

Committee Services Officer:

D Sunman

54. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Brunner.

55. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

56. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

Item 13 – Arrow Valley Countryside Centre – Review – External Support.

.....
Chair

57. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 1 July 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

58. COUNCIL FLAT COMMUNAL CLEANING REVIEW - FINAL REPORT

Councillor Mould attended to present a report from the Council Flat Communal Cleaning Task and Finish Group

The Task and Finish Group had reviewed the arrangements currently in place to clean communal areas in blocks of Council flats. The group had also considered whether to recommend that those areas not included in the present contract for cleaning should be included in the next contract which would be implemented in July 2010.

On investigation it was found that cleaning arrangements were only in place in a small number of council flat communal areas and the specification for cleaning each of these areas varied. Where no cleaning arrangements were in place, it was written into tenants' contracts that they were expected to clean the areas themselves.

Members of the Task and Finish Group had visited communal areas in Council flats that were both cleaned and not cleaned and found that the standard of cleanliness between them was very different. It was felt that all Council flat tenants and leaseholders should benefit from a basic level of cleaning and that all communal areas in Council flats should meet a good standard of cleanliness that could be maintained.

Consultation that had taken place with tenants and leaseholders showed that the majority of those who expressed a view thought cleaning should be introduced. Most were also in favour of paying a small service charge to cover costs.

In addition, other elements that could contribute to the overall condition of communal areas were examined. These included professional cleaning of some floors; better lighting; a method to eliminate unpleasant odours and graffiti removal.

Officers were asked to provide an estimated service charge for cleaning communal areas to be used when consulting residents.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the Council undertake statutory consultation procedures with secure tenants and consultation with leaseholders to establish if support exists for the introduction of a service charge to cover cleaning arrangements in communal areas in Council flats. Consultation to include sheltered housing complexes;**
- 2) **a further report be prepared to Executive Committee regarding the feasibility of introducing a service charge for cleaning in communal areas when consultation with residents has been completed;**
- 3) **a revenue bid be submitted to enable the flooring in Three Story flats in Batchley to be stripped, cleaned and sealed to bring it up to a suitable standard;**
- 4) **lighting occupancy sensors be trialled in one block of the Three Storey flats in Batchley to monitor the impact and benefit of this system to residents when entering and leaving the communal areas funded from the current cleaning budget;**
- 5) **a trial use of wall mounted air fresheners be undertaken in one of the communal stairwells funding from the current cleaning budget;**
- 6) **correct no smoking signs be installed in all communal areas where none are currently situated; and**
- 7) **use of graffiti wipes by cleaners be included in the Council's future cleaning contracts.**

59. CONSTITUTION - ADOPTION OF NEW EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS

Members considered a report which outlined a new form of governance for the Council's Executive arrangements for implementation after its elections in May / June 2011.

RESOLVED that

the report be deferred to a future meeting of the Committee together with an additional report regarding the introduction of a four yearly election cycle.

60. OFF-STREET CAR PARKING POLICY

Members received a report which proposed the adoption of a policy for charging for off-street parking at the private car parks owned by the Council at Trescott Road and the Town Hall together with associated parking charges. Delegated authority for drafting, finalisation, publication and implementation of an Off Street Parking Order to enable charges to be implemented was sought.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the Council adopt a policy of charging for off-street parking in its car parks at the Town Hall and Trescott Road, as shown in Appendix 2 to the report, on the days, times and terms set out in the report in accordance with the draft Order contained within Appendix 1 of the report:**
- 2) authority be delegated to the Director of Housing, Leisure and Customer Services and the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services to take all the necessary steps to publish, consult upon, make and implement an Off Street Parking Order in terms similar to the draft “Redditch Borough Council (Off Street Parking Places) Order 2009” (“the Order2), attached at Appendix 1 of the report; and**

subject to the necessary Order being made

- 3) authority be delegated to the Director of Housing, Leisure and Customer Services to issue any passes or season tickets in accordance with the Order; and**
- 4) authority be delegated to the Director of Housing, Leisure and Customer Services to suspend the operation of the Order in relation to the Town Hall car park for such days and times as may be appropriate to enable use of the Town Hall car park by Civic Suite hirers; and**
- 5) the car parking charges, as set out in the draft Order, be added to the Council’s Schedule of Fees and Charges.**

61. CORPORATE IDENTITY - REVISIONS

Members considered a report which sought adoption and implementation of a revised Corporate Identity across the Council.

Members were informed that the last revision of the Corporate Identity had been carried out in 2006 and that future reviews would be carried out annually.

Officers were asked to investigate the cost implications of a change of logo.

RESOLVED that

the Council's revised Corporate Identity, as detailed in the guidelines and the summary of the guidelines, attached as Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of the report respectively, be formally adopted and implemented across the Council.

62. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND PLAN 2010/11 TO 2012/13

Members considered a report outlining the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Plan for managing the Council's finances over the three year period from 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2013.

Officers reported that the Council had experienced a significant reduction in income from planning and building control fees, local land charges and Right to Buy sales and the downturn in the economy had also affected its ability to generate capital receipts.

It was anticipated that high levels of government borrowing and debt would make it almost certain that there would be a reduction in financial support from Central Government in the period beyond 2010/11.

It was noted that Central Government had already announced changes to efficiency targets for Local Government, equivalent to an extra 1% saving each year on top of the 3% annual savings already expected. Further efficiency savings would likely be announced for the period 2011/12 to 2013/14.

Officers also reported uncertainty regarding the future of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) with a consultation paper due to be issued by Central Government in the near future.

Members were informed that the Council had not yet quantified the financial impact of implementing job evaluation from April 2010.

RECOMMENDED that

the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Plan, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be approved.

63. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT 2007 - IMPLICATIONS

Members received a report advising them of the implications of the Sustainable Communities Act 2007.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the powers for Councils and communities contained within the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 be noted;**

and RECOMMENDED that

- 2) the Council adopt a light touch approach to the legislation and associated process, with a report to the Committee following publication of further guidance to review the findings of the initial round of proposals and decisions.**

64. DUTY TO INVOLVE - IMPLICATIONS

Members received a report on the implications of the Duty to Involve, which came into effect on 1 April 2009 and seeks to ensure effective involvement of local people in planning for and delivering services.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the requirements of the Duty to Involve be noted;**
- 2) a self assessment be conducted in order to establish areas of compliance, analyse gaps and identify actions required in order to meet the Duty to Involve; and**
- 3) a Communications and Engagement Strategy be developed, taking into account the findings from the gap analysis.**

65. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES - FORESTRY MANAGEMENT

Members considered a report which sought approval for forestry management by the Council in future.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the current five year programme of works be remodelled into a two year rolling programme;**
- 2) the existing arrangement with the external forestry consultant be continued until 31 March 2010. Officers**

will appoint a suitable consultant via the Council's procurement procedures with effect from 1 April 2010 for a period of four years with the option to extend the contract for one additional year;

- 3) the works be let on a bi-annual basis based on competitive quotations and subject to availability and satisfactory performance by the contractors; and**
- 4) proposals for works to improve the aging footpath network within the woodland areas and any consequential capital bids be brought to the Committee in due course, including the identification of any potential external sources for funding of new or improved footpaths.**

66. ARROW VALLEY COUNTRYSIDE CENTRE - REVIEW - EXTERNAL SUPPORT

Members considered a report from Officers which sought approval to commission external support to undertake a review of the Arrow Valley Countryside Centre. Officers reported that following a presentation to Portfolio Holders, which detailed the current practices and activities that are facilitated from the Countryside Centre, further exploratory work had been identified to:

- a) consider the potential options for how the Centre can deliver value for money for the Council;
- b) identify alternative ways of delivering the service for the community's benefit;
- c) look at the length of the contract period against the investment potential from prospective partners; and
- d) define how best a contract specification can be packaged bearing in mind the number of activities that are currently managed from the facility.

A report was also received from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee suggesting that a Task and Finish Group be established to undertake the review.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) up to the sum of £10,000 be approved from General Fund balances to commission the work; and subject to which**

RESOLVED that

- 2) **Officers commission an external consultant to support the review of the future management of the Arrow Valley Countryside Centre and its local environment.**
- 3) **the consultant's final report be subject to pre-scrutiny prior to presentation to the Executive Committee.**

67. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 17 June 2009 be received and noted subject to Paragraph 20, Recommendation 1 be amended to read:

*"the policies and procedures regarding watercourse dredging maintenance, drainage and landscape maintenance and drainage enforcement **be considered for approval** by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 12 August 2009."*

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

There were no minutes or referrals under this item.

69. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

RESOLVED that

The report be noted.

70. ACTION MONITORING

Officers to present reports on Staff Vacancy and Sickness Absence to the next meeting of the Committee.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00pm
and closed at 10.10pm

.....
Chair