

Council

20th September 2010

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Kath Banks (Mayor), Councillor Anita Clayton (Deputy Mayor) and Councillors Peter Anderson, Michael Braley, Andrew Brazier, Juliet Brunner, Michael Chalk, Simon Chalk, Greg Chance, Brandon Clayton, Jack Cookson, Andrew Fry, Carole Gandy, Adam Griffin, Malcolm Hall, Bill Hartnett, Nigel Hicks, Roger Hill, Gay Hopkins, Robin King, Wanda King, William Norton, Jinny Pearce, Brenda Quinney, Mark Shurmer, Derek Taylor and Diane Thomas

Also Present:

Mrs Deborah Andrews (Chair, Standards Committee) and Mr Michael Collins (Vice-Chair, Standards Committee)

Officers:

C Felton, S Hanley, A Marklew, J Pickering, S Powell, Jim Prendergrast, J Staniland and L Tompkin

Committee Services Officer:

I Westmore

36. WELCOME

The Mayor opened the meeting and welcomed all present. The Mayor's Chaplain, the Reverend Jo Musson, led the Council in prayer.

37. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Debbie Taylor and Graham Vickery.

38. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Greg Chance, Adam Griffin, Bill Hartnett and Roger Hill declared personal and prejudicial interests in item 9 (Executive Committee) as detailed separately at Minute 44 below.

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Chair

39. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 9th August 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

40. COMMUNICATIONS AND MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor's communications and announcements were considered under the following headings:

a) Mrs Norma Uphill

The Mayor informed the Council of the recent sad death of Mrs Norma Uphill, wife of former Councillor Jim Uphill. The Council was advised that condolences had been sent to Mr Uphill.

b) Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor advised that since the previous meeting of the Council she had attended various functions, including: the No Barriers Awards for local businesses, Wychavon District Council's Chairman's Barbecue, the Morton Stanley Park weekend festivities, a Redditch Crematorium open day, Woodrow District Centre 40th Anniversary celebrations, a Help4Heroes event at the Black Horse, an Archery Tournament at Kingsley College, Bromsgrove District Council Chair's summer evening event, the opening of new pitch at Redditch Rugby Club, a Scarecrow Day at Arrow Valley Countryside Centre. A Girlguiding Association evening of Celebration, an Army Cadets event at Tiddsley Wood Centre, Pershore, watching Redditch Swimming Club competing in the Annual Finals at Wolverhampton, a Redditch Rotary Club lunch, a visit to Setubal, Portugal, the grand opening of SAPA Pole Products new premises at Ravensbank Drive and the Boys Brigade 50th Anniversary Social and Church Service

c) Forthcoming events

The Mayor advised that forthcoming events included: the Worcester Council for Voluntary Youth Services AGM, MacMillan World's Biggest Coffee Morning at the Town Hall, the Boys' Brigade Worcester Battalion 50th Anniversary Service, Launch of a new Consortium, Carers Action Worcestershire and the Council's own Civic Service on Sunday, 10th October.

d) Local Democracy Day

Members were advised that Local Democracy Day would be taking place on Wednesday, 20th October and invited to attend and take part in some of the activities.

41. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader's Announcements were considered under the following headings:

a) Morton Stanley Park Festival

The Leader thanked all the staff who had worked so hard to organise such a good event and those who had given their time freely over the weekend in question as volunteers in a variety of roles.

b) Heart of England – Britain in Bloom

The Leader was delighted to inform the Council that Redditch had been awarded a Silver Gilt award in the large town / small city category in the Heart of England Britain in Bloom competition 2010. The Leader announced that she intended to write to all of those involved on behalf of the Council for their efforts which had helped to secure this accolade.

42. LEADERS' QUESTIONS

The Leader responded to a question which had been submitted by Mr Mike Chawner in accordance with Standing Order 8A, namely:

Housing for Older Persons

Mr Chawner's question related to the Older Person's Housing and Support Strategy and the role of the Borough Tenants' Panel during the development of the Strategy.

The Leader thanked Mr Chawner for the question, responded that she was pleased the Panel had given its full support to the proposals which had come out of the review of sheltered housing and stressed the importance of gaining the support of groups such as the Panel.

The Leader clarified the comments made at the last meeting by the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Local Environment and Health in this regard and noted that the Strategy had been the subject of the most comprehensive consultation ever undertaken by the Council.

The Leader confirmed that the Council had ensured that the Strategy was responsive to demographic change and would meet the needs of older people in the future and that consultation would be undertaken should further change be required to the Strategy.

43. NOTICES OF MOTION

A Notice of Motion had been submitted by Councillor William Norton in respect of Concessionary Bus Fares. This was seconded by Councillor Diane Thomas.

The Council was advised that the Coalition government was continuing the policy of the previous government of reorganising the free bus pass system. The system in Redditch would in future be administered by Worcestershire County Council. It was noted that any enhancements to the core service to be provided by the County Council would have to be funded locally but there was still a lack of information on the reallocation of funds from the Districts to the County. Given that the changes were to be introduced from April 2011 at the latest it was imperative that the Council received this information as soon as possible in order that the financial implications could be determined.

An amendment to the motion proposing that the Council commit to maintaining the current level of service in the Concessionary Fares Scheme and fund any shortfall in funding from the County Council was the subject of the following named vote in accordance with Standing Order 16:

Members voting FOR the amendment to the motion:

Councillors Greg Chance, Jack Cookson, Andy Fry, Bill Hartnett, Robin King, Wanda King and Mark Shurmer.
(7 votes)

Members voting AGAINST the amendment to the motion:

Councillors Peter Anderson, Kath Banks, Michael Braley, Andrew Brazier, Juliet Brunner, Michael Chalk, Simon Chalk, Anita Clayton, Brandon Clayton, Carole Gandy, Adam Griffin, Malcolm Hall, Nigel Hicks, Roger Hill, Gay Hopkins, William Norton, Jinny Pearce, Brenda Quinney and Derek Taylor.
(19 votes)

Members abstaining from voting:

Councillor Diane Thomas.

Accordingly, the amendment to the Motion fell and the substantive motion as originally submitted to the Council was the subject of the following named vote in accordance with Standing Order 16:

Members voting FOR the motion:

Councillors Peter Anderson, Kath Banks, Michael Braley, Andrew Brazier, Juliet Brunner, Michael Chalk, Simon Chalk, Greg Chance,

Anita Clayton, Brandon Clayton, Jack Cookson, Andy Fry, Carole Gandy, Adam Griffin, Malcolm Hall, Bill Hartnett, Nigel Hicks, Roger Hill, Gay Hopkins, Robin King, Wanda King, William Norton, Jinny Pearce, Brenda Quinney, Mark Shurmer, Derek Taylor and Diane Thomas.
(27 votes)

Members voting AGAINST the motion:

None.

Members abstaining from voting:

None.

Accordingly it was

RESOLVED that

- 1) it be noted that
 - a) the Coalition Government has decided to continue with the policy of the previous government of reorganising the free bus pass system so that in the case of Redditch it will in future be administered by Worcestershire County Council;
 - b) this will involve a reallocation of central government grants from Redditch Borough Council to Worcestershire County Council from April 2011 at the latest;
 - c) as a result of this reorganisation the risk is that free bus pass will in future cover only a core service beginning after 9.30 am, which is narrower than the coverage currently provided by the Redditch-administered bus pass;
 - d) any enhancements to the new bus pass core service will have to be financed by Redditch Borough Council out of other grants and income, and the ability to do so will depend upon the level of grant reallocated from Redditch to Worcestershire County Council by central government;
 - e) despite the fact that this reorganisation was confirmed by Alistair Darling MP in the December 2009 Pre Budget Report, officers of Worcestershire County Council have informed the Overview & Scrutiny Committee that central government has so far failed to confirm the basis on which the

reallocation of funds will take place, or the amounts involved; and

- 2) the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive Officer be requested to:
 - a) write to the Department for Transport deploring the unreasonable delay in confirming the basis of the reallocation of funding and requesting an early deadline by which time these matters will be notified to the Council; and
 - b) use their good offices, together with those of the MP for Redditch, to make the Secretary of State for Transport and other relevant ministers aware of the importance to the residents of Redditch of an early resolution of this issue.

44. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Members received the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 28th July 2010 and the decision notice of the meeting held on 8th September 2010.

In respect of Minute 60, Officers undertook to speak to Councillor Hartnett about the implementation of additional charges for building control services following the meeting.

In respect of Minute 63, Review of Redditch Borough Council's Sheltered Housing Stock – Customer Feedback Update, Councillors Carole Gandy and Diane Thomas requested that their thanks to Sharon Powell, Trainee Housing Manager, for the work she had undertaken over the course of the review of the sheltered housing stock be formally recorded.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 28th July 2010 be received and adopted; and
- 2) the decision notice of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 8th September 2010 be received and all recommendation approved, subject to:

in respect of Minute 63 (Review of Redditch Borough Council's Sheltered Housing Stock – Customer Feedback Update) it being further resolved that the following decision relating to that item be amended to read as set out below:

- 1) **Officers' findings now be considered conclusive; and, further to Council Minute 31(2), the proposals for the Review of Sheltered Housing, subject to Resolution 2 below, now be fully approved and adopted;**

and the original decision taken by the Council on 9th August 2010 be varied by the following additional decision, namely that it be RESOLVED that

- 2) **the Council deem Auxerre House to be unsuitable accommodation for older persons in the future and that authority be delegated to officers to investigate, subject to the outcome of the Housing Market and Viability Assessment, the options available for first time buyers.**

(Prior to consideration of this item, and in accordance with the requirements of Section 81 of the Local Government Act 2000, Councillors Greg Chance, Adam Griffin, Bill Hartnett and Roger Hill declared personal and prejudicial interests in view of the fact that they were Board Members of Redditch Co-operative Homes and took no part in the voting on the relevant recommendations (Minute 69 – Church Hill Redevelopment Project)

45. REGULATORY COMMITTEES

The Council received the minutes of a recent meeting of the Planning Committee.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 17th August 2010 be received and adopted.

46. SCHEME OF DELEGATION TO OFFICERS

The Council considered a minor addition to the Scheme of Delegation to Officers.

RESOLVED that

the Council's Scheme of Delegation to Officers be amended to provide the Head of Community Services with the authority to approve discretionary Disabled Facility Grants, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Local Environment and Health.

47. URGENT BUSINESS - RECORD OF DECISIONS

The Council noted an Urgent Business decision which had been approved in accordance with Standing Order 36, namely:

Portfolio Holder – Committee Places Adjustments
(UB Reference 486)

RESOLVED that

the matter be noted.

48. URGENT BUSINESS - COUNCIL RESPONSE TO THE NHS WHITE PAPER – “EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE: LIBERATING THE NHS” – RECOMMENDATION FROM THE JOINT HEALTH CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

The Council considered a referral from the Joint Health Consultative Committee in respect of the ongoing consultation over the NHS White Paper, “Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS”. That Committee had discussed the implications of the White Paper, particularly as it applied to Redditch and Worcestershire, and commented on the proposals with the intention of these comments forming the basis of a consultation response.

RESOLVED that

the comments of the Joint Health Consultative Committee on the NHS White Paper “Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS” as detailed below, be adopted as the formal Council response to the consultation.

- 1) **The locality focus of the proposals contained within the White Paper is broadly welcomed. However, it is recognised that the resultant GP Commissioning Consortia within Worcestershire may well cover populations and geographical scope that are widely differing in their size;**
- 2) **There is concern that the potential budgetary implications of the changes are unpredictable. The impact of the replacement of Strategic Health Authorities and Primary Care Trusts by GP Commissioning Consortia on administrative and managerial costs are difficult to quantify at present. In addition, the ring-fencing of the health improvement budgets to local authorities is guaranteed at the present time but there is the possibility that situation could change over time;**
- 3) **The speed with which the proposed changes are to be implemented is considered to be a possible risk to the**

provision of healthcare within the County given the level of potential disruption that might ensue;

- 4) The greater involvement of local authorities in the provision of healthcare is welcomed although it is recognised that much of this influence would fall to upper tier authorities; and
- 5) There is a realisation that the Borough would need to work hard to ensure that its voice is heard at the County level but there is also a belief that the GP Commissioning Consortia covering Redditch could, in due course, represent a net benefit to the local population.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00pm
and closed at 9.12pm

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Chair