

Executive Committee

7 January 2009

Minutes

Present:

Councillor Carole Gandy (Chair), Councillor Michael Braley (Vice-Chair) and Councillors P Anderson, J Brunner, B Clayton, M Hall and C MacMillan

Also Present:

Councillors K Banks and P Mould

Officers:

R Bamford, M Bough, K Dicks, H Halls, S Hanley, G Harris, S Horrobin, T Kristunas, A Marklew, S Mullins, G Revans, P Rose, S Skinner, E Storer, L Tompkin, K Watkins

Committee Services Officer:

I Westmore and D Sunman

172. APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

173. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Anderson and Gandy declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 17 (Polling Stations Review), as detailed at Minute 188 below.

Councillor Brunner declared a personal interest in Item 14 (Arrow Vale Sports Centre – Installation of Interactive Gym) as detailed at Minute 185 below.

174. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

- Review of Dog Warden Service; and
- Claverdon Close – Option Appraisal

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Chair

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

Item 5 – Housing Revenue Account;

Item 6 – Fees and Charges 2009/10;

Item 7 – Virement Request – Benefits Service;

Item 13 – Section 106 Planning Obligations – Appendix 1;

Item 20 – Shared Service Business Cases; and

Item 24 – Shared Service Board Minutes, 18 December 2008

175. COUNCIL TAX BASE 2009/10

Officers presented a proposal to set the Council Tax Base for 2009/10. This figure had been set assuming a collection rate of 99%. Some concern was expressed that this figure might be affected by the current economic climate. Officers undertook to prepare a Press Release to inform residents that they should inform the Council, at the earliest opportunity, if they were experiencing difficulties with payment of Council Tax or rent during the present financial downturn.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the calculation of the Council's Tax Base for the whole and parts of the area for 2009/10, as detailed in the Appendices to the report, be approved; and**
- 2) in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992, the figures calculated by the Redditch Borough Council as its tax base for the whole area for the year 2009/10 be 27,270.10 and for the parts of the area listed below be:**

Parish of Feckenham	<u>362.09</u>
Rest of Redditch	<u>26,908.01.</u>

176. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2009/10

Members were presented with the Revised Housing Revenue Account Estimates for 2008/09 and the Initial Estimates for 2009/10 to assist them in setting the level of Housing Rents for 2009/10. It was reported that Central Government had set a limit on rent increases for 2009/10 of 7%. Members were informed that the average increase in rents in Redditch would be 5.87% from £60.10 to £63.02. The Head of Financial, Revenues & Benefits Services undertook to provide additional information on increases in supervision and management expenditure (Appendix A) for Councillor Anderson.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the revised estimates for 2008/09 as set out at Appendix A to the report be approved;**
- 2) the draft 2009/10 Housing Revenue Account attached to the report at Appendix A, as amended by the appropriate resolutions below, be approved; and**
- 3) the actual rent increases for 2009/10 be limited to 7%.**

(This report 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 powers vested in the Chair by virtue of Section 100 (B) (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972 to agree 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 to meet statutory reporting deadlines.)

177. FEES AND CHARGES 2009/10

A correction to Appendix E was circulated at the meeting. Members were informed that a minimum increase of 5% had been set to achieve an overall net increase in income of £157,000. Officers were thanked for their work. Officers undertook to provide the additional information on fees paid by spectators, community centres managed by the Council and the strategy behind the calculation of increased fees.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **in cases where:**
 - a) **fees or changes are statutory;**
 - b) **fees and charges are set externally (for example under the Model Scheme of Charges for Building Control fees & charges;**
 - c) **the Council has delegated authority for Officers to vary fees and charges to take into account of various circumstances; or**
 - d) **fees and charges are established under separate processes, for example the setting of Taxi Fares, the requirement for a general minimum 5% increase in fees and charges be waived;**
- 2) **the proposed fees and charges 2009/10, as listed in the appendices to report, be approved; and**
- 3) **the Council seeks to achieve an increase in income of £157,000 from these measures.**

(This report 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 powers vested in the Chair by virtue of Section 100 (B) (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972 to agree 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 to meet statutory reporting deadlines.)

178. VIREMENT REQUEST - BENEFITS SERVICE

Members considered a request to vire budget savings from Financial Services to the Benefits Service to fund external support the Benefits Service Inspection in February 2009 and provide additional resources to manage the increase in caseload.

RESOLVED that

£23,000 be vired from Financial Services to the Benefits Service to fund external support in lieu of the Benefits Service inspection and to provide additional resources to manage the increased caseload.

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

In this case the special circumstances were that the information was required to be considered at the present meeting in order that the approval might be given to this course of action prior to the virement taking place.)

179. DRAFT ECONOMIC PRIORITIES - OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

Members considered a report which set out the Council's Economic Priorities for inclusion in the Worcestershire Partnership's Economic Strategy 2008/18 and Joint Investment Plan. They noted the outcome of public consultation, which aided the establishment of these priorities. Officers outlined funding which might be available from Advantage West Midlands to assist in meeting the priorities.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the consultation process, and responses to consultation, set out in Appendix A and B respectively be noted; and**

RECOMMENDED that

- 2) the changes to the draft economic priorities (following public consultation), set out in Appendix C be approved; and**
- 3) the priorities be added to the Constitutional Policy Framework.**

180. COUNTYWIDE HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Members were informed that the current Worcestershire Countywide Strategy, which was developed in 2003 and was approved by Officers in 2007, would be reviewed in 2009. Members commended Officers on the amount of good work that had been done, which had benefited residents.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **the Worcestershire Countywide Homelessness Strategy 'Working Together to Change Lives' be approved: and**

RESOLVED that

- 2) **Council Officers continue working with key stakeholders to develop a Local Homelessness and Housing Advice Strategy following the recent review of local services.**

181. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF WASTE SERVICES AND REVIEW OF THE JOINT MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Members were provided with information on the review of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy, which would be discussed at the Waste Forum on 14 January 2009. Officers circulated an additional recommendation for consideration. Members commented on each of the resolutions / recommendations. Officers undertook to investigate charges for collection of bulky items at a standard cost for 3 items and a unit cost for additional items. Officers also undertook to discuss the options for recycling contaminated wood at the Crossgates site.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **a feasibility study including a cost benefit analysis be completed for the remaining properties (as detailed in Appendix 1) by the end of January 2009 and that authority be delegated to the Head of Environment, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Local Environment, Planning and Transport, to agree which premises are not suitable to receive a recycling collection);**
- 2) **Members determine whether charges should be levied for waste collection from the premises listed where a charge can be made;**

- 3) collection arrangements be developed and implementation decisions be delegated to the Head of Environment in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Local Environment, Planning and Transport, and that new collection arrangements be put in place by the end of March 2010;
- 4) a pricing schedule and guidance for one-off collections of extra waste from charities be developed for later inclusion in the 2009/10 Fees and Charges;
- 5) in order to meet increasing national targets for recycling and composting, the feasibility of a chargeable self funding garden waste collection, and delivery of this in partnership with Bromsgrove District Council, be explored and Officers draw up detailed proposal and a business case for Members' further consideration in 2009;
- 6) the Council's preferred approach be not to introduce separate collections of food waste but to promote ways of preventing/minimising food waste by supporting the 'Love Food Hate Waste' national campaign led by the Waste Resources Action Programme;
- 7) the short- and medium-term and long-term actions listed in Appendix 4 at paragraph no.3.1 be implemented;
- 8) when the reviews are completed, recommendations for the future of the sites be made and authority be delegated to the Head of Environment, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Local Environment, Planning and Transport, to agree on changes to be made to sites;
- 9) formal management arrangements of sites with owners of private land where recycling banks are provided be agreed;
- 10) a methodology for ways of supporting re-use be developed and the decision to allocate funding from within existing waste management budgets be delegated to the Head of Environment, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Local Environment, Planning and Transport;

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- 11)
- a) the bulky household waste service continue to exclude 'fixtures and fittings' and residents therefore be referred, from April 2009, to a list of potential suppliers who can collect such items;
 - b) the charge for bulky collections be set at a level to cover the cost of providing the service;
 - c) [see recommendation 13) below re increased charges for bulky waste collections];
- 12) the possibility of requiring developers to provide the required appropriate waste collection systems/receptacles for each new property via planning conditions or planning obligations should be explored; and

RECOMMENDED that

- 13) the charge for bulky household waste collections be increased to £15 from April 2009; and
- 14) authority be delegated to the Head of Environment in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Local Environment, Planning and Transport, to endorse the draft revised Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Herefordshire and Worcestershire for public consultation and that the revised Strategy be brought to Members during the consultation period and an information session for Members held to discuss the revised Strategy in more detail.

182. GRANT APPLICATIONS 2009/10

Members were asked to consider the recommendations of the Grants Assessment Panel in awarding grants to voluntary sector organisations for 2008/09 and 2009/10. Officers reported that 14 applications had been received. The Chair thanked the Grants Assessment Panel for their decisions which were transparent and fair. Officers undertook to contact all organisations on 8 January to inform them of the recommendations to Council regarding their grant applications.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **the budget for grants to voluntary sector organisations for 2009 / 10 be set at £244, 800; and**

RESOLVED that

- 2) **subject to Council approval of the budget at 1) above, grants be awarded to voluntary sector organisations as detailed below:**

Organisation	Amount Awarded
North Worcestershire Disability Information and Advice Line	£1,000
Organisation	Amount Awarded
Redditch Choral Society	£1,000
Redditch Twins and Multiple Births Group	£200
Vitalise	£794
Age Concern Redditch and District	£3,270
Batchley Support Group / Talking Drums	£10,000
Caribbean Roots Connection	£7,442
Indigo Arts	£6,062
New Song Community Church (NewStarts Reuse and Resettlement Project)	£3,843

183. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT - NATIONAL CHANGES

Members were informed of a package of changes that had been introduced by the Department of Communities and Local Government to modernise the Disabled Facilities Grant programme and improve delivery of adaptations to the homes of disabled people nationally. Members were asked to consider whether they wished to implement the ability to include a 'Claw Back' clause for Disabled Facilities Grants approved over £5,000. The new arrangements would give the Council the discretion to impose a limited charge (maximum of £10,000) should an adapted property be sold or transferred within ten years. Officers undertook to investigate charges for removing / recycling / reusing equipment no longer required.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the package of changes introduced nationally to the Disabled Facilities Programme be noted; and

RECOMMENDED that

- 2) the Council implement the general consent enabling the Local Authority to place a limited charge on owner/occupied DFG adapted properties where the grant exceeds £5,000 and introduce a condition requiring repayment of the grant of up to a maximum of £10,000 in the event of the adapted property being sold within 10 years of the grant being awarded;
- 3) in the event of this Authority implementing a charge and repayment condition, authority to waive the repayment condition in accordance with the government's criteria set out in Sect 5.19(b) of the report, be delegated to the Care & Repair Manager in consultation with the Housing Policy Manager and relevant Portfolio Holder;
- 4) Disabled Facilities Grants and Lifetime Grants be secured against the property as set out in 5.24 for registered property and 5.27 for unregistered property; and
- 5) any repayments received from DFG's be recycled into the DFG programme and any payments received from Lifetime Grants be recycled into the Lifetime Grants programme.

184. SECTION 106 PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

Members received a report on current planning obligations and the capital schemes to which planning obligation monies had been allocated. Members were informed that in the current financial year £835,000 had been allocated to capital schemes.

RESOLVED that

that the current position be noted.

(This report 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 powers vested in the Chair by virtue of Section 100 (B) (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972 to agree 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 as Members had specifically requested the information be submitted to this meeting.)

185. ARROW VALE SPORTS CENTRE - INSTALLATION OF INTERACTIVE GYM

Members received a report outlining the social, health and commercial benefits of providing an interactive youth gym at Arrow Vale Sports Centre. Officers were commended for their work to develop the scheme.

RECOMMENDED that

the provision of the Interactive Gym Project in partnership with Worcestershire County Council at Arrow Vale Sports Centre be supported, subject to the capital bid for funding from the County Council's Youth Capital Grant Fund being successful.

(Prior to consideration of this item, and in accordance with the requirements of Section 81 of the Local Government Act 2000, Councillor Brunner declared a personal, but not prejudicial, interest in view her involvement with the A.I.M. (Activities in Matchborough) Partnership.)

186. FREE SWIMMING - UNDER16'S

Members were asked to consider the Council's participation in the Central Government's initiative to provide free swimming sessions for the under 16 age group. Members highlighted their concerns regarding long term funding and that the scheme would only provide a 'payment holiday' for two years.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the Council take part in the Government's free swimming initiative for the under 16s at the Council's swimming pools for a two year period years between April 2009 and March 2011; and
- 2) the post of Swimming Development Officer be funded for a period of 2 years between April 2009 and March 2011.

187. COUNCIL MAGAZINE - RE-INTRODUCTION

Members were asked to consider proposals to re-introduce the Council's magazine (Redditch Matters). The magazine would be produced three times a year in March, June and November. Officers commended Officers for their work.

RESOLVED that

- 1) subject to the Council's approval of the change of policy and financial implications,

with effect from spring 2009, the magazine be once again published for the benefit of Borough residents with the following arrangements;
 - a) it be re-introduced for a trial period covering three issues;
 - b) the first of these be a spring edition (published late March), followed by a summer edition (published late June) and a combined autumn/winter edition (published late November);
 - c) a maximum sum of £5,000 be vired from the Publicity & Promotions Budget (0617 4700) to enable the spring edition to be published (the eventual cost being expected to be lower as described at d) below);
 - d) approximately a quarter of the magazine be given over to advertising to help offset the costs of producing and distributing the magazine, with each edition comprising a total of 32 pages;
 - e) funding for the summer and autumn/winter editions be subject to the outcome of revenue bids at the appropriate cycle of meetings;

- f) **Magazine contents be agreed, in advance, in consultation with a new Editorial Panel (comprising two Councillors from the Conservative Group and one each from the Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups);**
- g) **in the spirit of sharing services, and to help keep production costs to a minimum, Officers explore the possibility of printing and distributing Redditch Borough Council's magazine alongside Bromsgrove District Council's 'Together' magazine, which is also produced three times a year; and**

RECOMMENDED that

- 2) **the Council approve the change of policy and above detailed financial implications.**

188. POLLING STATIONS REVIEW - 2009

A report on the additional costs which could be incurred for hire of portkabins (£1000 per unit), portaloos and set up costs (£1000+ per unit) at each site was presented. Members were informed that it was not feasible on grounds of the safety and security of children to only partially close schools for Elections.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the report be noted;**
- 2) **no changes be made at the current time to existing Polling Stations;**
- 3) **in respect of the Abbeywood First School (Church Hill North CH-B Polling District), this be retained as the agreed Polling Station for the electoral area, for the reasons stated in the report;**
- 4) **in respect of the Vaynor First School (Vaynor HO-A Polling District), this be retained as the agreed Polling Station for the electoral area, for the reasons stated in the report; and**
- 5) **the schools be so advised.**

(Prior to consideration of this item, and in accordance with the requirements of Section 81 of the Local Government Act 2000, Councillors Gandy and Anderson declared personal and prejudicial

interests in view of the fact of their involvement in the Governance procedure at Vaynor First School, and withdrew from the meeting. Councillor Braley (Deputy Chair) in the Chair for this item.)

189. ELECTRONIC AGENDAS - MODERN.GOV

Members considered a change to agenda preparation arrangements and provision of other documents electronically. Officers confirmed that paper copies would be circulated to all Committee Members. However, others would be able to access them from the Internet or obtain a paper copy on request. It was suggested a training session might be useful for Members on accessing information electronically. It was also suggested that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee might look at baseline ICT requirements for Members.

RECOMMENDED that

with effect from Tuesday ~~18~~ 20 January 2009, the following revised arrangements be implemented;

- 1) paper copy agendas, reports and minutes will be prepared and provided only for relevant Committee members, substitute Members (if notified to Committee Services), attending Officers, and potential public attendees;**
- 2) other Members, Officers, press, etc. will receive e.mail alerts with links to electronic (website) version of Committee papers;**
- 3) Members and other relevant parties without access to e.mail / website will continue to receive paper copies, if required, so that they may continue to keep informed about the Council's business;**
- 4) other documentation, such as the Forward Plan, Decision Notices, Memos and letters be similarly sent to Members by electronic means so far as possible, subject to the exceptions mentioned at recommendation 3) above;**
- 5) the standard assumption henceforward be for the electronic transmission of documents, so far as practicable for the conduct of the Council's business; and**

- 6) relevant references in the Constitution be amended in accordance with Members' final decisions.

190. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meetings held on 6 and 26 November were received and noted.

191. MINUTES / REFERRALS - SHARED SERVICES BUSINESS CASES

Members were informed about the business cases for Electoral Services and Community Safety, previously considered by the Shared Services Board on 18 December 2008, with a view to establishing shared services for the two services respectively. In view of the fact that the report contained information relating to consultations / negotiations in connection with labour relations, part of this discussion took place after the exclusion of the press and public. There is nothing exempt, however, in this record of the proceedings.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) a shared Electoral Service for Redditch Borough Council and Bromsgrove District Council led by Bromsgrove District Council be established;
- 2) a shared Community Safety team for Redditch Borough Council and Bromsgrove District Council led by Redditch Borough Council be established;
- 3) both the respective services be the subject of a detailed Service Level Agreement delegated to the respective Heads of Legal Services following full Council consideration; and
- 4) the proposals be subject to formal consultation with all affected staff and the respective Trade Unions if agreed by the respective decision making bodies of each Council.

(This report had been accepted as a matter of Urgent Business – not on the Forward Plan for this meeting - and was considered at the meeting as such, with the approval of the Chair, in accordance with the Council's constitutional rules and powers vested in the Chair by virtue of Section 100 (B) (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972 to agree 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 to comply with consultation and possible implementation deadlines set out within the report.)

192. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

Members received an update report from Advisory Panels.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

193. ACTION MONITORING

Members noted the Action Monitoring sheet.

194. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED that

- 1) under S100 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 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.**

Shared Services Business Cases (as detailed at Minute 191 above); and

- 2) non-member, Mr Collins, be permitted to remain.**

Executive Committee

195. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES / REFERRALS - SHARED SERVICES BOARD MINUTES, 18 DECEMBER 2008

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the Shared Services Board held on 18 December 2008 be received and noted.

(These minutes had been accepted as a matter of Urgent Business – not on the Forward Plan for this meeting - and was considered at the meeting as such, with the approval of the Chair, in accordance with the Council's constitutional rules and powers vested in the Chair by virtue of Section 100 (B) (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972 to agree 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 as it related to Minute 191 above.)

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 10.40 pm