

Executive Committee

18 February 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, W Hartnett, M Chalk and M Shurmer and Mrs D Andrews (Chair – Standards Committee)

Officers:

T Kristunas, A Gittins, A Teepe, H Saunders, J Smith, S Mullins, K Dicks, S Hanley, J Staniland, A Marklew and S Skinner

Committee Services Officer:

D Sunman

218. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor MacMillan who was unable to be present from the start of the meeting.

219. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

220. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader advised that she had accepted the late circulation of the following reports and their receipt as Urgent Business:

Item 7 – Treasury Management Policy Statement;

Item 8 – Prudential Indicators 2009/10 and 2011/12 and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy;

Item 9 – General Fund Revenue Budgets and Capital Bids 2009.

221. MINUTES**RESOLVED that**

the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 3 and 17 December 2008 and 7 and 13 January 2009 be confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chair.

222. FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH - MERCIAN REGIMENT

Further to the Council's decisions of 28 January 2008 that proposed granting Freedom of the Borough to the Mercian Regiment, Members considered a further report. The report included mention of the timing difficulties of arranging a ceremonial event because of the Regiment's commitments on manoeuvres or active service abroad. It was therefore proposed that a two-stage process be followed. Firstly that a formal Council meeting be arranged to consider the Motion to grant Freedom of the Borough followed by a further event in the form of a parade when the Regiment returns from Afghanistan.

In terms of the associated Street naming proposal, Officers were asked to include an explanation for the naming of 'Mercian Square' on the plaque.

It was noted that representatives of the Regiment had only very limited availability in March / April 2009, in respect of the proposed Special Council meeting / initial Freedom Ceremony.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) Freedom of the Borough be granted to the Mercian Regiment;**
- 2) a special meeting of the Council be convened for this purpose in due course;**
- 3) a Welcome Home Parade event be held on the Regiment's return from active service in Afghanistan, on the terms detailed in the report (at paragraph 5.b), and that Corporate Officer support be provided for this event, as appropriate;**
- 4) the present Mayor of the Borough, Cllr Jack Field, as original sponsor of the Freedom of the Borough initiative, be invited to preside at the above event, with next year's Mayor;**
- 5) a revenue Budget of £1,500 be established from balances to cover the cost of associated Reception and**

production of two copies of the commemorative framed scroll; and

RESOLVED that

- 6) the renovated Market Place be named 'Mercian Square' and that an unveiling ceremony form part of the Welcome Home celebrations referred to above.**

223. ROLE OF THE MAYOR TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Committee was asked to consider the final report of the Role of Mayor Task and Finish Group. The Chair of the Task and Finish Group attended the meeting to present the report. He acknowledged that some of the final report's recommendations contained financial implications. However, he asked that the Committee approve the recommendations in principle and review them at a future date when adequate funding becomes available.

The Committee noted that, in the longer term and as budgets permitted, it was intended to put up a 'gallery' of past Mayors in the Town Hall. Given the current financial circumstances, it was not felt appropriate to bid for additional funding for the above purposes in the current year.

RESOLVED that

- 1) a picture of the current Mayor be placed in a prominent position within the Town Hall;**
- 2) a revenue bid be submitted in a future round, to seek to obtain an additional £1,000 for the Mayoral Hospitality Budget;**
- 3) the Mayoral induction booklet be update and developed;**
- 4) the planned programme of work within the Town Hall be reviewed to seek redecoration of the Mayor's Parlour before the presently scheduled date in 2010/11;**
- 5) the content of the Mayoral web pages be developed and expanded.**

224. TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT

The Committee was asked to approve the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2009/10. Members were informed that the turmoil within financial markets and, in particular, the failing of a number of Icelandic banks and the issue with Northern Rock had highlighted the risks associated with treasury management activities.

Officers confirmed that despite other Local Authorities experiencing significant potential losses, the Council's investments had remained secure.

RECOMMENDED that

the Treasury Management Strategy for 2009/10 be approved.

(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, and 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 requirements.)

225. PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2009/10 AND 2011/12 AND MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY

The Committee was asked to approve the new Prudential Code for borrowing and the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy for 2009/10.

Members were informed that in order to comply with the requirement of the Local Government Act 2003 the Council would be required to publish a range of prudential indicators for the next and following two financial years as listed below:

- a) Actual and estimated capital expenditure;
- b) Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream;
- c) Capital financing requirement;
- d) Actual limit for external debt;
- e) Operational boundary for external debt;
- f) Council tax implications of the incremental effect of capital decisions; and Treasury Management Indicators.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the Prudential Indicators as set out in the report be approved; and
- 2) the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy for 2009/10 be as defined below:

Asset Life Management (Option 3)

Where capital expenditure is financed wholly or partly by borrowing or credit arrangements, MRO is to be determined by reference to the life of the asset. There are two main methods by which this can be achieved, as described below. Under both methods, authorities may in any year make additional voluntary revenue provision, in which case they may make an appropriate reduction in later years' levels of MRP.

a) Equal instalment method:

MRP is the amount given by the following formula:
 $(A - B)/C$

Where:

A is the amount of capital expenditure in respect of the asset financed by borrowing or credit arrangements,

B is the total provision made before the current financial year in respect of that expenditure, and

C is the inclusive number of financial years from the current year to that in which the estimated life of the asset expires.

b) Annuity method:

This method is intended to link the MRP to the flow of benefits from an asset where the benefits are expected to increase in later years. It is considered to be appropriate for projects promoting regeneration or administrative efficiencies or schemes where revenues increase over time.

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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.

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226. GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGETS AND CAPITAL BIDS 2009/10 - 2011/12

The Committee considered a report on the Estimates at Directorate level for 2009/10 prepared in accordance with the Budget Guidelines approved by Council on 15 September 2008. Members were asked to approve the Medium Term Financial Plan (Revenue and Capital Budgets) for 2009/10 – 2011/12 which included a range of proposals to address the budget gap. The Head of Financial, Revenues and Benefits Services made a presentation on the content of the report and outlined the net position to balance the three year plan.

The Leader confirmed that the report contained a range of options for savings that would be subject to staff and public consultation with no options ruled in or out. She confirmed that the Council would be required to make extremely difficult decisions regarding budgets and the situation was unlikely to improve in the short term. She reported that she had received a number of representations regarding the future of Pitcheroak Golf Course and said that the suggested alternative options would be investigated.

Members were asked to consider a recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to upgrade the Grants Officer post, as outlined in the final report of the Third Sector Task and Finish Group, from medium to high priority status in the General Fund Revenue Budgets and Capital Bids report 2009/10. (Minute 234 of refers)

Officers were tasked with carrying out further work on car park charges at District Centres.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the Initial Estimates for 2009/10 be approved;**
- 2) the Revenue Bids categorised as unavoidable and high, detailed in Appendix 14 of the report, be approved as follows:**

2009/10	£465,000
2010/11	£367,000

2011/12 £280,000;

- 3) the General Fund bids for capital resources categorised as unavoidable and high, detailed in Appendix 15 of the report, be approved as follows:

2009/10 £1,127,200
2010/11 £ 920,000
2011/12 £ 820,000;

- 4) the Housing Revenue Account bids for capital resources categorised as high, detailed in Appendix 17, be approved as follows:

2009/10 £1,090,000
2010/11 £ 570,000
2011/12 £ 570,000;

- 5) the savings / additional funding, detailed in Appendix 17 and below, be approved for the purpose of consultation:

2009/10 £ 960,700
2010/11 £1,478,500
2011/12 £1,585,300;

- 6) the balance of the set up costs for Civil Enforcement Parking be funded by the Council from future income streams;
- 7) potential redundancy costs of £35,100 be funded from balances; and
- 8) Officers be asked to do further work with regard to:
- a) Arrow Valley Countryside Centre;
 - b) Forge Mill Museum;
 - c) Shopmobility; and
 - d) Dial A Ride.

(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, and 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 requirements.)

227. ENFORCEMENT POLICY

Members were asked to approve and adopt a Corporate Enforcement Policy which complied with Sections 63 and 64 of the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **the draft Enforcement Policy, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be adopted; and**
- 2) **it replace the Prosecution Policy adopted by the Council on 13 August 2007.**

228. REDDITCH CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTION PLAN

Members considered an Action Plan that identified the core activities required to support the Worcestershire Children and Young People's Plan and deliver change in Redditch. Officers reported that the Action Plan had been endorsed by the Children and Young People's Sub-Group of Redditch Local Strategic Partnership and would be monitored by that group who would provide regular updates to Executive Committee.

Members thanked Officers for their work and recognised the importance of the provision of opportunities for young people to enable them to reach their potential. They expressed concern that Worcestershire County Council had failed to produce an Action Plan for Redditch as had been previously agreed.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **the action plan for Redditch be endorsed and monitored through the Local Strategic Partnership work programme; and**

RESOLVED that

- 2) **a letter be sent to the Worcestershire County Council Cabinet Lead for Children's Services, with a copy to the Chief Executive, enclosing a copy of the action plan, expressing concern at the failure of the County Council to provide an action plan as previously agreed.**

229. EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY

Members considered an Empty Homes Strategy which would reduce the number of empty homes that might have a detrimental impact on the communities in which they are situated, and could potentially reduce the level of affordable housing in the Borough.

RECOMMENDED that

the Empty Homes Strategy, detailed in Appendix 1 of the report, be adopted.

230. INTERIM MANAGEMENT ORDERS

Officers introduced a report requesting the adoption of a Policy and Procedure for the operation of Interim Management Orders (IMO) together with necessary delegated powers. Members were informed that IMOs had a minimal impact in Redditch. However, adoption of the Policy and Procedure would bring the Council in line with other Local Authorities.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the Policy on using Interim Management Orders (IMO), detailed in Appendix 1 of the report, be adopted;**
- 2) the procedure, detailed in Appendix 2 of the report, be approved; and**
- 3) authority be delegated to the Head of Environment, in consultation with the Head of Strategy and Partnerships, to make Interim and Final Management Orders and to amend the adopted procedure, if required.**

231. SHARED SERVICES BOARD

Members received the minutes of the meeting of the Shared Services Board held on 26 January 2009. The Chief Executive confirmed that no lead Council had been identified when 'medium-term wins' were discussed. He clarified the process for appointing a Consultant to look at the wider business case.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2009 be noted; and**
- 2) Audit Services, IT Services, CCTV / Lifeline and Economic Development Services be pursued as the potential medium-term wins.**

232. CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW WORKING PARTY

Members considered the recommendations of the Constitutional Review Working Party from their meetings on 22 January and 3 February 2009.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the notes of the meetings of the Constitutional Review Working Party held on 22 January and 3 February 2009 be received and noted; and

RECOMMENDED that**Constitution**

- 2) the target turnround for issue of Executive Committee Decision Notices be increased to 3 days;
- 3) Officers bring forward more detailed proposals for in-year changes of 'minor policy' for Member's consideration;
- 4) Officers be requested to review the current Policy Framework to check that it is appropriate and up-to-date;
- 5) the O&S Committee be urged to seek closer links with the Executive Committee's / Council's corporate objectives;
- 6) the Constitution be amended to fix current practice that there will be an Opposition Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee;
- 7) no more than 1 Executive Committee representative be appointed to serve on the Audit and Governance Committee;
- 8) at the Council's Annual Meeting in 2009, a single Licensing 'parent Committee' be appointed to deal with all matters of personal, premises, taxi and other relevant licensing;
- 9) that Committee appoint appropriate Sub-Committees to deal with licensing obligations under the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2006, all 'Taxi Licensing' and any other ad hoc licensing matters (such as licensing of incinerators and sex establishments);

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- 10) the Independent Remuneration Panel be advised of (9) above to inform their current review of Members' allowances;

Standing Orders

- 11) the existing Standing Orders regarding time limits for speeches at Council be more closely applied at full Council meetings;
- 12) 'Prime Speakers' clearly identify themselves to the Mayor at full Council meetings, otherwise only 2 minutes will be permitted for general speeches; and then only 1 speech be normally permitted per Member;
- 13) Members be encouraged not to speak at full Council meetings unless to make constructive and non-repetitive contributions;
- 14) Leaders to be requested to take back a request to their Party Groups to do what they can within party processes to improve the conduct of full Council meetings;
- 15) Council business be normally expected to end no later than 10.00pm; after which time the meeting should stand adjourned unless, by majority vote, it is agreed that it should continue for any specified length of time;

Financial Regulations

- 16) in principle, budget-holding Officers should be permitted to vire within their own range of budget heads, and that virement only be reported to the Executive Committee when proposed between services, as long as policy remains unaffected and standards of service are not degraded;
- 17) the change recommended in (16) above be not implemented until such time as appropriate amendments to the Constitutional documents are drafted by Officers and subsequently approved by Council; this to include the setting of any necessary financial 'break points' for reports at various levels;
- 18) any underspend arising from monies received as a result of Bids be reported to Members, returned to the corporate centre and not be available for virement / other use;

- 19) **Officers establish a system of provision of monthly profiles of budgets at Service level for the Leader's information in order that variations might be monitored; and**
- 20) **Officers be instructed to alert the relevant Portfolio Holder and the Corporate Management Portfolio Holder, if the development of any significant budgetary variations is noticed (+5% / -10%); and that these Members then determine whether Executive Committee consideration is required.**

233. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 14 January 2009 were received.

The Committee noted an update by Councillor Anderson, as relevant Portfolio Holder, that a further recommendation regarding the use of the Room Upstairs at the Palace Theatre as a cinema, was now redundant as this facility already existed at the theatre.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14 January 2009 be received and noted; and**
- 2) **Officers be requested to publish a different walking trail within the Borough as a feature in each future edition of the civic newspaper.**

234. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REFERRAL - REVENUE BID FOR GRANTS OFFICER

The Committee received a report requesting consideration of a recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the subject of the Initial Estimates 2009/10. Discussion of the item took place when the General Fund Revenue and Capital Bids 2009/10 report was discussed earlier in the meeting (Minute 226 refers).

RESOLVED that

the request that the revenue bid for a Grants Officer post, as outlined in the recommendations of the Third Sector Task and Finish Group's final report, be upgraded from medium to high priority status in the General Fund Revenue Budgets and Capital Bids 2009/10 be not approved.

(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, and 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 226 above.)

235. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT - MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

A report was received updating Members on the work of the Executive Committee’s Advisory Panels, Working Groups, etc.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the report be noted; and

RECOMMENDED that

Member Development Steering Group

- 2) the Council’s Member Development Programme, and the Council’s intention to gain West Midlands Local Government Association Charter Status, be supported by pooling £500 from every Member’s individual personal support budget into a corporate Member Development budget of £14,500.

236. ACTION MONITORING

Members noted the current Action Monitoring sheet and that a number of actions had now been discharged and could be removed.

The Meeting commenced at 7.05 pm
and closed at 10.05 pm

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Chair