

COUNCIL

8th December 2014

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Pat Witherspoon (Mayor) and Councillors Pattie Hill, Joe Baker, Roger Bennett, Rebecca Blake, Andrew Brazier, David Bush, Greg Chance, Brandon Clayton, John Fisher, Andrew Fry, Carole Gandy, Bill Hartnett, Gay Hopkins, Alan Mason, Phil Mould, Jane Potter, Mark Shurmer, Rachael Smith, Yvonne Smith, David Thain and John Witherspoon

Officers:

Kevin Dicks, Sue Hanley, Claire Felton, Sheena Jones and Laney Walsh

Democratic Services Officer:

Amanda Scarce

47. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Michael Braley, Natalie Brookes, Juliet Brunner, Wanda King, Paul Swansborough, Debbie Taylor and Nina Wood-Ford.

48. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

49. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 20th October 2014 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

50. ANNOUNCEMENTS

a) Mayor

The Mayor's communications and announcements were as follows:

i) Mayor's Announcements

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Chair

The Mayor advised that since the last meeting of the Council she and her Deputy, Councillor Pattie Hill, had attended a number of events including Worcestershire Sports Awards, the Redditch Bonfire event, Remembrance Day parades at the war memorial in the Town Centre, Astwood Bank and the Armistice day parade and service at St Stephens Church, the opening night of Jesus Christ Superstar at the Palace Theatre, the Christmas party at Abbeydale. The Mayor's charity quiz evening which was a sell out and a very successful and fun evening and finally the Blind Association Christmas Party.

ii) Forthcoming Engagements

The Mayor advised that her forthcoming engagements included a visit to the Royal Mail Sorting office with a very early start, a number of Christmas Carol Services and finally a visit to the Alexandra Hospital on Christmas Day.

The Mayor also thanked Councillor Hill for standing in for her at those occasions when she had been unable to attend.

b) Leader's Announcements

The Leader thanked members of the Council's new choir, Vocal Authority, which was made up of employees from both Redditch and Bromsgrove Councils, for attending this evening's meeting and singing a number of festive songs.

i) The Heels Walk

For the third year the Leader had joined 16 men including many officers from the Town Hall on the Mile Heels Walk around the town centre as part of the white ribbon campaign part of the 16 days of action, speaking out against domestic violence.

ii) Mayor's Charity Quiz

The Leader had attended this and confirmed what a great evening it had been, with festive tunes once again being provided by Vocal Authority.

iii) Saturday Polish School

The Leader had attended this along with Inspector Rebecca Love and PC Jon Watts all had interacted with the children attending and given them the opportunity to sit in a Police car and sound the siren.

iv) Remembrance Sunday Parade

The Remembrance Sunday parade and service had been the best to date, with a huge number of public attending along with the deputy Lord Lieutenant.

The Leader also informed Members of a book, Redditch Fallen Heroes, which had been produced locally with the support of the Standard and other local writers. It contained information on all those named on local memorials and provided very interesting reading. It was available to purchase from Heaphys or the Library at a cost of £5.

v) Plymouth Road Memorial Gardens

The tree planting had taken place with two local schools and British Legion representatives. An oak tree was planted to commemorate the 100 years since WW1 and a commemorative bench was also provide depicting soldiers and poppies.

vi) Worcestershire Sports Awards

This had been attended along with the Mayor and officers with the Council being mentioned in respect of the Walking Football which had been set up.

vii) Skills on Show at NEC

This had been a really good event, but the Leader had been disappointed with the small number of Redditch schools who had attended. It was hoped that this would improve at future events.

viii) The Leader had also attended the Jamaican High Commissioners visit which had been arranged by the Caribbean Roots Connection and the Redditch Business Leaders meeting which had also been attended by Councillors Potter and Clayton.

He had also attended a number of Christmas/festive gatherings including the Sunset Club, MHAG, the Chinese Association Communities Together and Batchley Yule by the School. Finally he had attended the pantomime, Cinderella at the Palace Theatre.

No questions had been submitted.

52. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

A Notice of Motion had been submitted by Councillor Bill Hartnett in respect of the Time to change pledge. This was seconded by Councillor Rebecca Blake.

In proposing the Motion Councillor Hartnett thanked the other political groups for supporting the sentiment of this motion and following on from the previous meeting when support had been given to World Mental Health Day. It was believed that the Council was the first organisation in the West Midlands to sign the pledge, which would be formally carried out at the next Executive Committee meeting.

The Time to Change pledge was a public statement of aspiration that an organisation wanted to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination. Any organisation could pledge and there were no restrictions around the size of that organisation or the sector from which it came. Whilst there was a requirement to evidence that any organisational pledge had meaning, it was not a quality mark accreditation or endorsement as such. As an organisation, the Council would own the pledge and action plan. As such the Council would take responsibility for completing any actions it committed to. The Council's action plan would include training, a support programme, and enhanced phone a friend service and health checks.

In seconding the Motion Councillor Blake paid tribute to the tremendous amount of work which had been carried out by Laney Walsh from Unison in promoting the importance of considering mental health. Councillor Blake highlighted that it was important that the Council not only signed the pledge but carried through the work to ensure the mental health and wellbeing of all staff was paramount.

It was

RESOLVED that

The Motion be agreed in the following terms:

“That this Council supports the Time to Change pledge as follows:

To reduce the stigma of mental illness and support staff who are experiencing, or who may experience, personal or family mental health issues.”

53. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Members considered the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of 28th October 2014.

Improved Parking Schemes

In respect of the recommendations from the Committee in relation to Improved Parking Schemes across the Borough, the following points were discussed prior to a decision being taken.

- The majority of schemes being within Council owned estates.
- The potential alternatives methods to operate a scheme.
- Residents seeking to be able to park appropriately close to their homes.
- The areas covered by the scheme.
- The option to roll out the scheme to other areas throughout the Borough.
- Enforcement of the scheme.
- The overall and any additional cost of the scheme.

Fees and Charges

The following areas were debated prior to a decision being taken in respect of the recommendations for the Fees and Charges Review 2015/16 Report.

- Disappointment in the increase in the cost of junior swimming lessons and a suggestion that the Council could show support for children learning to swim by keeping the current charge.
- The discount available through the use of a Redicard.
- The provision of free swimming for both under 16 and over 60 year olds.

An amendment to exclude junior swimming lessons from the list of charges proposed to be increased was declared lost.

Members considered the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of 25th November 2014.

Public Service Network Compliance

Members were informed that further funding was required to maintain Public Services Network (PSN) compliance in the current financial year. There would be further funding requirements to achieve full compliance in 2015 and 2016 which would be included in the budget setting process. The following areas were discussed in detail prior to a decision being taken on the recommendations detailed in the agenda.

- The introduction of Ipads to all Members and how the appropriate level of support required by Councillors could be gauged;
- The pressures from central government to become PSN compliant and the need to make adequate provision for future requirements.

Council Tax Support Scheme 2015/16

Members were pleased to see that there were no proposed changes to this scheme and were supportive of the work which it allowed officers to carry out. However, it was noted that universal credit would be in place at some stage in the future and it was important that people were aware of this.

Joint Property Vehicle Full Business Case

Members were reminded that this had been raised earlier in the year and were now being asked to agree that the Council participate in establishing a Joint Property Vehicle as detailed in the report. Whilst Members queried who would sit on the Board that would be established, it was accepted that it was not possible to say at this stage, but that all members would be advised once the appointment had been made.

Environmental Services Transformation and Shared Services Restructure

Members were reminded that there had been a number of opportunities through the Shared Services Board and Group meeting briefings to receive detailed information and raise any queries about the Environmental Services Transformation and Shared Services restructure. It was confirmed that agreement would also be required from both Cabinet and Council at Bromsgrove District Council.

RESOLVED that

- a) **The Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 28th October be received and all recommendations adopted; and**
- b) **The Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 25th November be received and all recommendations adopted.**

54. REGULATORY COMMITTEES

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

RESOLVED that

The minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 12th November 2014 be received and adopted.

55. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Council was informed that there had been a slight change to the membership of outside bodies which needed to be resolved by the Council.

It was

RESOLVED that

- (a) Councillor Phil Mould be appointed as the representative for the 3 northern districts for the Worcestershire Local Transport Body, with Councillor John Campion, Wyre Forest District Council being appointed as substitute;**
- (b) Councillor Bill Hartnett be appointed as substitute member for the Council to the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel;**
- (c) Councillor John Fisher be appointed as the substitute Member for the Worcestershire LEP Area EU Structural and Investment Fund Strategy Committee (ESIF) with Councillor Mike Webb, Bromsgrove District Council being appointed as lead representative; and**
- (d) Councillor John Fisher be appointed as the substitute Member for the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP Area EU Structural and Investment Fund Strategy Committee (ESIF) with Councillor Mike Webb, Bromsgrove District Council being appointed as lead representative.**

COUNCIL

8th December 2014

56. URGENT BUSINESS - RECORD OF DECISIONS

There were no urgent decisions to note.

57. URGENT BUSINESS - GENERAL

There were no separate items of urgent business to consider at this meeting.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.13 pm