

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Tuesday, 7th April, 2015

## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillor Jane Potter (Chair), and Councillors Carole Gandy, Alan Mason, Paul Swansborough and Pat Witherspoon

### Also Present:

Councillor Andrew Brazier

### Officers:

Kevin Dicks and Steve Singleton

### Democratic Services Officer:

J Bayley and A Scarce

## MINUTE EXTRACT

### 97. FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF REDDITCH MARKET - PRE-SCRUTINY

The Chair reminded Members that they had agreed to hold this extra meeting at an earlier time in order to pre-scrutinise the Future Management of Redditch Market report. She expressed her disappointment in the content of the report and commented that this was not what the Committee had been expecting. Instead, she explained that she had understood that the Committee would be given the opportunity to pre-scrutinise the consultant's report.

Officers explained that at the Portfolio Holders' Briefing it had been agreed that the consultant's report would not be considered until a later date. In the meantime rather than go out with a full procurement exercise Officers had been asked to go for a period of soft market testing. Members were assured that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be given the opportunity to pre-scrutinise the subsequent report on the future of the market, which it was

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Chair

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anticipated would contain more specific recommendations including the consultants' report, if Members so wished.

Members of the Committee expressed serious concerns around the decision which had been made, and suggested that this demonstrated that little regard had been shown for the role of the Overview and Scrutiny function in this decision. It was also commented that this would mean further delay to the process. Members noted that the delay was disappointing, particularly given that this meeting of the Committee had been arranged specifically to look at the consultant's report. Whilst the Committee agreed that they had no objection to the soft market testing taking place, Members concurred that it was still important for them to see the consultant's report.

Officers explained that an approach had been made by the Redditch Town Centre Partnership with a view to putting forward a proposal to take over the running of the market. If the procurement exercise, as suggested within the consultant's report, had been followed it might have precluded action in response to the partnership's suggestion. Whilst the Council wished to ensure that all the criteria within the report were met, it was important to ensure that the Council consider all options available.

It was highlighted that the areas raised within the report were those which had been brought forward by the Market Task Group over two years before. Members commented that it was imperative that this matter was brought to a satisfactory and speedy conclusion in order for all those concerned to move forward and the necessary improvements be made to the market as quickly as possible. In particular, concerns were expressed about the continuing impact of delays on existing market stall holders.

## **RECOMMENDED that**

- a) the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be allowed to see a copy of the consultant's report; and**
- b) the Executive Committee note the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's disappointment with the way in which this report had been handled and the disregard shown to the Committee in failing to permit them access to a copy of the consultant's report.**

The Meeting commenced at 4.35 pm  
and closed at 5.23 pm