



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 1st September, 2015

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Jane Potter (Chair), Councillor Gay Hopkins (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Joe Baker, David Bush, Andrew Fry, Gareth Prosser and Nina Wood-Ford

Officers:

Sue Hanley and Jayne Pickering

Democratic Services Officers:

J Bayley and A Scarce

27. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Paul Swansborough.

28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest nor party whip.

29. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting held on 7th July 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

30. BUDGET SCRUTINY 2015/16 - DISCUSSING APPROACH FOR THE YEAR

The Chair reminded Members of the role of the Committee and its duties, including being a critical friend and highlighting the need to be apolitical. She went on to explain the background to the report and that the information received by the Committee in the previous year had not been sufficient to enable them to make a constructive contribution to the budget setting process. She had therefore met

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Chair

with the Executive Director, Finance and Resources to agree the format, which was being presented to Members for discussion.

Officers acknowledged that the information provided previously was not as comprehensive as Members would have liked and explained that the template attached to the report had a much wide range of information within it, including the previous two years figures and the projections for 2015/16. This was linked to the strategic purposes, which had been agreed by Members, and further detail given in respect of each team's expenditure within that specific purpose. Whilst the information provided allowed Member to concentrate on the proposed budget for 2016/17 the Council would be producing a three year budget.

The initial budget, together with the Fees and Charges report, would be discussed at the Committee's December meeting with the capital budget, planned savings and income and expenditure being presented at the January 2016 meeting. It was anticipated that the detail provided would allow the Committee to select any particular areas of concern and request, if necessary, further information in order to make any recommendations.

Members discussed the expenditure that the Council would incur due to the Gas Testing which was currently been carried out on Council house properties. Officers confirmed that this would be included within the Housing Revenue Account with a separate cost centre being used in order for these costs to be easily identified.

Officers finally assured Members that the information would be available within the appropriate timescale in order to allow time to consider the reports prior to each meeting.

31. TASK GROUP REVIEWS - DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENTS

The Chair explained that she had put together a scoping document for a short sharp review in respect of the options for the management of Leisure and Cultural Services in Redditch. She explained that she felt it was important that the Council did not lose sight of making savings, but also ensured that excellent services continued to be provided. Whilst the Committee had looked at the options appraisal at its previous meeting, the Committee had not received enough information in order for it to make an informed decision. A Short, Sharp Review of this subject would enable an in depth investigation to be carried out into the financial and service benefits of all models which were detailed under the Key Objectives section of the scoping document.

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The Chair appreciated that this was a large piece of work, but believed that a questionnaire could be created and sent out to other local authorities that delivered leisure and cultural services in order to establish which model might be the most suitable for Redditch.

Officers raised concerns in respect of the officer time needed to fulfil the piece of work and reminded Members of the decision by the Executive Committee, which was for officers to carry out transformational work within Leisure Services. It had been highlighted within the options appraisal report presented to the Executive Committee that if a detailed business case was required in respect of the options then this would need to be carried out by external experts.

Following presentation of the scoping document Members discussed a number of areas in detail, including:

- Whether this review represented a duplication of the work carried out by the previous Abbey Stadium Task Group.
- The timing of the review and whether it would be more appropriate to postpone this until the service transformation work was completed.
- The timeline for the service transformation work and the areas covered by it.
- Discussions held by the Chair with the Leader and Deputy Leader about carrying out further scrutiny of this subject.
- The number of reviews currently being undertaken by the Committee.

In order for the Task Group to hold its initial meeting as soon as possible, Members agreed to a deadline of Friday 11th September for notifications of interest from Members who wanted to join the group.

RESOLVED that

- 1) a short sharp review in respect of Leisure Services Options be launched; and**
- 2) Councillor Jayne Potter be appointed Chair of the Leisure Services Options Short Sharp Review.**

32. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION TRACKER

Officers reminded Members of the purpose of the Quarterly Monitoring Recommendation Tracker and explained that the

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recommendations were in chronological order. Members' attention was drawn to the following:

- Installation of a canopy over the ramp access to Shopmobility continued to be outstanding and no further updates had been provided.
- The introduction of exhibition space at the Palace Theatre and the Abbey Stadium. Space had been made available at the Abbey Stadium for some time and officers were pleased to report that it would also be available at the Palace Theatre from 8th September 2015.
- All recommendation from the LGBT Task Group had been endorsed by the Executive Committee who had complimented the group on its informative report.
- The Leader had already written to Worcestershire County Council in respect of recommendation 2 from the LGBT Task Group and a positive response had been received back from them.
- Councillor Joe Baker, Chair of the Task Group, had met with the LGBT Hate Crime Forum and received positive feedback on the content of the report. The Forum had been appreciative of the support and funding which would be available for future LGBT History Month events.

Members congratulated Councillor Baker and the Task Group on an excellent piece of work, which had already had a positive impact on the LGBT community in Redditch.

The Committee debated the recommendation in respect of the ramp access to Shopmobility. Concerns were raised as to whether this item would ever be completed, with Members noting that the recommendation had been made in August 2012. Consideration was therefore given as to whether it should be removed from the tracker. However, Members' were mindful that this had been agreed by the Executive Committee and that implementation of this proposal could lead to positive outcomes for residents and visitors with physical disabilities. Members therefore requested that officers speak to the Kingfisher Centre and an update on the current position be provided as soon as possible, detailing reasons why the delay had occurred.

Concerns were also raised in respect of the recommendations from the Voluntary and Community Sector Task Group, with particular regard to the recommendation for an apprentice to support the Council's grants programme. Officers explained that due to staff sickness absence a decision had been taken to postpone recruiting to the apprenticeship post as there was no resource to support an

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apprentice available in the grants programme. Members accepted these difficulties but questioned whether the post could initially be created in the Policy Team, as there had originally been a proposal for the apprenticeship to be shared between the grants programme and the Policy Team, with the apprentice taking on duties in the grants programme at a later date once this was an option. Members stressed that the Council's Grants programme was important and needed to have sufficient support to operate effectively and to ensure that the grants were reach those that needed them the most within the voluntary and community sector.

Officers suggested that it might be helpful for the Committee to receive a report at its next meeting providing more detailed information in respect of administrative support for the Grants Panel and a time scale of how this could be resolved. It was highlighted that parts of this report might need to be considered in confidential session.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Officers contact the Kingfisher Centre and an update be provided in respect of Recommendation 2 of the Access for Disabled People Task Group – Installation of a canopy over the ramp access to Shopmobility;**
- 2) a report be provided to the next meeting of the Committee in respect of the Council's grants programme; and**
- 3) the latest edition of the Quarterly Recommendation Tracker be noted.**

(During consideration of this item Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed relating to identity of an individual. However, there is nothing exempt in this record of the proceedings.)

33. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES AND SCRUTINY OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 14th July and Officers highlighted the following points:

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- The Committee's recommendation in respect of no longer requiring the landscaping data for each ward had been approved and actioned with immediate effect.
- The Committee's recommendation in respect of procurement and contracting processes to select and appoint a contractor to manage Redditch Outdoor market had been endorsed.
- Future arrangements for Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee and Worcestershire Regulatory Services: it was noted that the recommendations in respect of governance, which had been brought forward were similar to those which had previously been proposed by the Joint Scrutiny Task Group.
- The Committee's comments in respect of the review of the operation of Leisure Services had been noted by the Executive Committee.

Whilst the latest version of the Work Programme was not currently available, officers provided the following updates:

- Consideration of the item in respect of Reorganisation and Change Policy by the Executive Committee had been postponed until December 2015.
- The Housing Business case would now be considered at the October meeting of the Executive Committee.
- The Business Rate Relief – Poundstretcher Unit, Town Centre item had been removed from the Work Programme as it transpired that officers had delegated authority in this matter.
- The Tower at Site of former Methodist Church, Headless Cross item had also been removed from the Work Programme.
- An item in respect of Worcestershire Child Exploitation Strategy and Action plan, which had been referred by Worcestershire County Council, would be considered at the October meeting of the Executive Committee.
- Three Health and Safety Policies – Lone Working for Staff, Contractor Safety and Contractor Security would also be considered at the October meeting.

RESOLVED that

the Executive Committee Minutes of 14th July 2015 and the latest edition of the Executive Work Programme be noted.

34. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Officers reminded Members that the Work Programme would be updated to take account of the Fees and Charges report being put back to December 2015.

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Members discussed the value of receiving an update in respect of Gas Testing in Council house properties which had recently emerged as a cause for concern, and noted that this was something the Committee could consider investigating further in order to ensure that problems did not arise again. Officers informed Members that Internal Audit had been asked to undertake a full audit which would look both back at how this had happened and forward at procedures that could be put in place to ensure that problems did not happen again. This report was expected to be available shortly. The Council had self-referred to the Homes and Communities Agency and the matter would be reviewed by their Consumer Regulations Panel. It was understood the local M.P. had also referred the matter to the Health and Safety Executive, but to date the Council had not been contacted by this agency.

Concerns were also raised regarding testing of the air conditioning units within Council properties as well as legionella testing. Officers advised that such testing would be carried out through the contract the Council had with the Worcestershire Joint Property Vehicle Place Partnership and they could be approached to provide full details.

RESOLVED that

- 1) an update report be received by the Committee in respect of the Gas Testing and this report to include any Internal Audit Report recommendations;**
- 2) Members to receive via email details of the testing carried out in respect of legionella testing within Council properties; and**
- 3) the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme be noted.**

35. TASK GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

Joint Worcestershire Increasing Physical Activity Task Group –
Redditch Borough Council Representative, Councillor Gareth
Prosser

Councillor Prosser provided Members with a brief summary of the background of this joint Task Group, including its aims and objectives. He explained he had arranged to meet with the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services to discuss specific issues within Redditch and in order to feedback to the joint Task Group. The next meeting of the Task Group had been arranged for 3rd

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September with a presentation from Steve Brunston, Sports Partnerships. A further meeting had been arranged for 18th September when the group would carry out a health walk; these walks were aimed at promoting and supporting well-being in Worcestershire. It was anticipated that the group's final report would be presented to the Worcestershire Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board in November 2015 and considered by Cabinet at its December 2015 meeting.

36. HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor Nina Wood-Ford, as the Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) confirmed that the last meeting of the HOSC had been held on 15th July and with two presentations being received.

Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust

The Committee had received information about the Worcestershire Acute Hospital NHS Trust's response to the findings from the Care Quality Commission's (CQC's) unannounced inspection. This had covered details of staffing levels and procedures put in place to provide better patient care, together with concern about patient flow through the EDs where some improvements had been made. Funding had also been received to create further car parking spaces, which were due to be completed by the end of the year. Information had also been received in respect of the closure of Cookley Ward at Kidderminster Hospital. This had occurred following a fire safety assessment, when it had been determined that the ward was no longer safe in the event of evacuation.

Primary Care Commissioning and GP Access

A presentation had been given which outlined the background, changing commissioning arrangements, development of local plans and delivery of seven day access to services. New commissioning services would allow Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to commission additional services which reflected their agreed local priorities.

It was noted that recruitment and retention was an issue with an increase in GPs seeking part time employment. However, it was acknowledged that nationally there was skills gap and Members discussed whether consideration had been given to increasing the number of student doctor places, the decrease in nursing spaces and the requirement for some nursing staff to have a degree qualification.

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A seven day delivery of services had also been discussed and it was understood that this was already happening if the out of hours service was taken into consideration. Many GP practices had also extended their opening hours to include evenings and Saturdays.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.15 pm

