

Executive Committee

Wednesday, 1 April 2009

Minutes

Present:

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

Also Present:

M Collins and A Fry

Officers:

G Revans, Jackie Smith, S Hanley, S Mullins, S Garratt, R Kindon, A Marklew and M Bough

Committee Services Officer:

D Sunman

263. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

264. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor MacMillan declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in Item 8, Energy Framework Agreement, as a former employee of British Gas.

265. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader advised that she had accepted the following matter as Urgent Business:

Item 17 – Preferred Registered Social Landlords Development Partners.

266. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

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Chair

the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 18 February, 23 February and 2 March 2009 be confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chair, subject to the amendment of the figure in recommendation 7) of Minute 226 (18 February) to read £35,100 rather than £351,000.

267. CORPORATE PLAN 2009 - 2012

Members considered a Corporate Plan which had been developed around the vision and priorities agreed by the Council on 8 December 2008. For the first time the Council was looking to adopt a three-year Corporate Plan rather than a Plan covering a single year.

The Plan attempted to demonstrate that the Council had a clear vision and that it had priorities that would enable it to achieve that vision. Officers explained that there were several gaps within the document, some of which could not be completed until nearer the Council meeting in mid-April.

Members proposed a number of amendments and additions and Officers undertook to incorporate the following amendments prior to Council on 20 April 2009:

- 1) an explanatory note to be incorporated where no specific resource allocations were identified in the section demonstrating how the Council was to achieve its priorities;
- 2) a footnote to be added explaining that the Council opposed the designation of the town as a Settlement of Significant Development;
- 3) an explanation to be added stating that the location of housing to the north of Redditch was a matter for Bromsgrove and Stratford on Avon District Councils.

In addition, Officers undertook to explore further the following matters prior to submission of the document to Council on 20 April 2009:

- 4) addition of an explanatory note that RBC performance against national Performance Indicators beyond the latest available audited information (2007/08) demonstrated improvement;
- 5) the designation of the services provided by the Council ("What we do") as either statutory or discretionary; and

- 6) whether there had been significant changes to the basket of Performance Indicators between 2006/07 and 2007/08.)

RECOMMENDED that

the Corporate Plan 2009-2012 attached to the report at Appendix 1 be adopted, subject to the comments above.

268. TAXI LICENSING HANDBOOK

The Committee received a proposed Countywide policy in relation to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Operators, Vehicles and Drivers' Licences issued under the provisions of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. It was noted that the only four of the six Worcestershire District Councils would be proceeding with the Handbook initially as the remaining two were tied into using their existing handbooks at the present time.

Members were extremely supportive of the new Handbook and saw it as a good example of partnership working. The positive responses to the consultation over the new Handbook were also noted.

Officers highlighted two proposed amendments within Appendix 1:

Rewording a sentence on Page 83 to read: "If you fail the test or any part of it at the first attempt, then you can take **a test** within the following month without charge; further tests will incur the appropriate fee"; and

the deletion of a superfluous "a current" in the section entitled "More than one offence" (Page 103).

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **the policy as stated in the Taxi Licensing Handbook attached at Appendix 1 to the report be approved and added to the Constitutional Policy Framework; subject to which**

RESOLVED that

- 2) **with effect from July 2009, the Taxi Licensing Handbook be published for the benefit of licence holders, Officers and Members as set out in Appendix 1 to the report;**
- 3) **power be delegated to the Head of Environment or Licensing Manager in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to update the handbook following any new**

**guidance and implementation of any policy changes;
and**

- 4) a further report streamlining the delegation process be put before Members for consideration at a future meeting of the Executive Committee.**

269. ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2009/12

The Committee considered the adoption of the Asset Management Strategy for 2009-2012 which had been produced on the Council's behalf by a consultant for the Housing Quality Network.

Members appreciated that the Strategy represented a very important living document for the Council. It was noted that a failure to be cognisant of the Strategy could lead to a crisis of assets and aspirations. The Committee also took the view that, if the Council was to retain assets then it needed to maintain them or else they may become liabilities.

RECOMMENDED that

the Asset Management Strategy 2009-2012 attached to the report at Appendix 1 be adopted.

270. ENERGY FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT

Officers stated that the purpose of this report was simply to add a further company to the framework agreement following the loss of an original energy supplier which had gone into administration.

RECOMMENDED that

the requirements of Standing Order 46 be waived and British Gas Business be added to the Framework Agreement for energy.

271. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee received the minutes from a recent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. There was some discussion of the recommendations that had been made in relation to the Corporate Plan. It was agreed that, where these recommendations had been adopted in the final document, they could be deemed to have been accepted by the Executive Committee.

The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety queried the wording of the final paragraph on page 185 and the misleading impression that

might be given as to her degree of understanding of the situation in question.

RESOLVED that

Portfolio Holder Annual Report – Community Safety

- 1) **the Council continue to support effective partnership working for the delivery of Community Safety in the Borough;**

Corporate Plan Part II – Pre-Scrutiny

- 2) **the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted; and**
- 3) **the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be supported where the proposed amendments had been already incorporated into the Corporate Plan and not supported where the amendments had not previously been incorporated.**

272. SHARED SERVICES BOARD

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Shared Services Board held on 3 March 2009 be noted.

273. MINUTES / REFERRALS - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, EXECUTIVE PANELS, NEIGHBOURHOOD GROUPS ETC.

There were no minutes or referrals under this item.

274. ONE STOP SHOP ADVISORY PANEL

The Committee considered a number of recommendations from the One Stop Shop Advisory Panel, one of which proposed a change of name. A second recommendation concerned a cost reduction measure through the use of signage using the Worcestershire Hub logo without the Redditch Borough Council logo. Members considered that the Hub logo had sufficient recognition locally not to result in potential problems.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the new style signs not incorporating the Redditch Borough Council logo be used for the entrances to the**

face-to-face areas on the grounds of reduced cost to the Council; and

- 2) the Panel be renamed the Customer Services Advisory Panel.**

275. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

The Committee received the update on the activity of the Council's advisory panels, working groups and similar bodies.

It was noted that the Community Safety Advisory Panel was not able to meet at present owing to the indisposition of the Lead Officer.

The next meeting of the Housing Advisory Panel had been put back until a date in late April / early May.

The next meetings of the Modernising Democracy Steering Group and Procurement Steering Group were to be rearranged to later dates.

It was noted that a view needed be taken on the future role of the Fees and Charges Sub-Committee in advance of the coming municipal year.

RESOLVED that

subject to Members' comments, the report be noted.

276. ACTION MONITORING

Members noted the Action Monitoring Sheet.

Members requested that Officers explore separate meetings with the Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB) and Credit Union if a mutually convenient date for all parties could not be found. Members also wished Officers to convey their concern that residents were experiencing extreme difficulty in contacting the CAB.

The Leader reported that discussions had still to be conducted with other local authorities in the north of the County in respect of a joint-funded post to support the grants process and that other options were being explored.

Officers were to confirm whether Councillor Hall had been provided with further information concerning Gypsy, Traveller and Show People's sites.

Members noted the recent lack of reporting of staff vacancy and sickness absence figures.

277. URGENT BUSINESS - PREFERRED REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORDS DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

Members considered a report proposing the establishment of a Members' Panel to assist in the selection process for Preferred Registered Social Landlords Partners.

RECOMMENDED that

a Member Selection Panel comprising two Members of the Conservative Group and one Member each from the Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups be created to formally interview and select Preferred RSL Partners.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.15 pm

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Chair