

Executive Committee

22 April 2009

Minutes

Present:

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

Also Present:

Councillors K Banks and R King

Officers:

G Revans, R Seager, H Halls, K Dicks, S Hanley, Jane Smith, L Miller and J Willis

Committee Services Officer:

D Sunman

278. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

279. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

280. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

Item 9 – Local Land Charges Fees; and

Item 10 – Shared Services Board Minutes.

281. MINUTES

Members noted that Minute 259 (2) had been referred to and approved by the Council on 20 April as a Recommended rather than a Resolved item.

RESOLVED that

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Chair

the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11 March 2009 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

282. AIR QUALITY STRATEGY AND PLANNING PROTOCOL FOR HEREFORDSHIRE AND WORCESTERSHIRE

The Committee received a report which detailed the background to and the purpose of the Air Quality Strategy and Planning Protocol for Herefordshire and Worcestershire. Officers reported that the Strategy identified commitments in relation to communication and cooperation between Local Authorities, external organisations and the community to meet the requirements set out in the Environment Act 1995. Members were informed that the Strategy provided a unified approach to Air Quality across all Local Authorities in Hereford and Worcestershire and would assist the Council in meeting its statutory duty to assess air quality within the Borough. Officers outlined the positive impact of the Strategy on residents, businesses and developers. Members were advised that the Council's Planning Policy Statement guidance had been incorporated into the Air Quality Strategy Planning Protocol. Officers confirmed that work was ongoing in one area to identify whether an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) should be declared.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the Air Quality Strategy (Appendix 1 of the report) and the Air Quality Strategy Planning Protocol (Appendix 2 of the report) be approved and adopted; and**
- 2) the Air Quality Strategy be added to the Constitutional Policy Framework.**

283. CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY AND TRANSFORMATIONAL GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

The Committee received the first progress report following approval of the Customer Access and Transformational Government Strategies in March and September 2008 respectively. Officers reported that progress against the action plans was mainly on target and that links to the Strategies had been built into Service Plans to ensure their priority in terms of delivery. Members did not make any decision on the frequency of future reports as outlined in Paragraph 2 (2) of the report.

RESOLVED that

the report on progress made, as detailed in the report, be noted.

284. CHILDREN'S CENTRES - FUTURE CONTRACTS

The Committee considered a report on whether to submit tenders to deliver Children's Centre Services in respect of the Willow Trees and Maple Trees Children's Centres in Redditch and / or three new Centres that will be developed in Bromsgrove. Members recognised the excellent work carried out by the Children's Centres in Redditch and in particular families being supported through the current economic climate. Officers informed Members that invitations to tender for three new Bromsgrove Children's Centres were to be phased over a longer period and advertised individually.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) no tenders be submitted in respect of additional Children's Centres in Redditch; and**
- 2) no tenders be submitted in respect of the new Children's Centres planned in Bromsgrove.**

285. GOVERNMENT CONNECT

Members received a report seeking delegated authority to make minor changes to existing policies in regard to the Recruitment and Selection and IT Equipment Use and Security to comply with the requirements of the Gov. Connect scheme. Officers reported that the scheme provides a secure network for information sharing between Local Authorities, Central Government, Health and Fire Authorities. They were informed that the Council could be audited and if found to be non-compliant could have its authorisation to the Gov. Connect scheme suspended or terminated. Members were advised that should this happen the Council would be unable to process Council Tax and Housing Benefits claims on behalf of the Department of Works and Pensions.

RECOMMENDED that

authority be delegated to Officers to make minor policy changes to relevant existing recruitment and security policies to comply with the requirements of the Gov.Connect scheme, as follows:

- 1) **authority be delegated to the Head of Customer and IT Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management, to make relevant minor changes to the IT Equipment Use and Security Policy; and**
- 2) **authority be delegated to the Head of Human Resources and Communications, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management, to make relevant minor changes to the Recruitment and Selection Policy.**

286. LOCAL LAND CHARGES FEES

Members considered a report which sought authority to amend currently approved fees for Local Land Charges in line with the Local Authorities (Charges for Property Searches) Regulations 2008. Officers reported that these Regulations confirmed that all Local Authorities must make searches available to all on equal terms and equal costs.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **the Democratic Services Manager, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management, be authorised to review and amend Local Land Charges Fees to meet the latest statutory requirements and related guidance;**
- 2) **in view of the requirement to set fees at a maximum of recovery level only, ongoing authority be delegated to the Democratic Services Manager to review and amend the fees at an appropriate frequency, subject to the reporting of fees in the Council's annual Fees and Charges reports.**

RESOLVED that

- 3) **urgent approval of the above recommended delegation 1) be sought under Standing Order 36 Urgent Business arrangements, in order that the revised fees and charges for Local Land Charges services may take effect from 1 May 2009;**
- 4) **the revisions be notified to all other interested parties as a matter of urgency, including via the Council's website;**
- 5) **the effect of the fee changes be regularly monitored against the costs of providing the service and further reports be submitted to Members as appropriate.**

(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, 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 to allow the charges to take effect from 1 May 2009.)

287. SHARED SERVICES BOARD

Members received the minutes of the Shared Services Board meeting held on 30 March 2009.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Members note the reported progress to date and that Officers continue to apprise Shared Services Board Members of key issues and progress at each meeting; and**

RECOMMENDED that

- 2) Internal Audit be removed from the list of 'medium term wins' and that it be considered as a Shared Service as part of the 'enhanced two tier' programme; and**
- 3) the additional cost of £6,370 arising from procuring Serco to undertake preparation of the full business case be met by the two authorities 50:50 from savings arising from the overall project.**

(These minutes 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, 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 to meet required deadlines.)

288. SHARED SERVICES BUSINESS CASE - ELECTORAL AND COMMUNITY SAFETY SERVICES - CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Members received a report outlining the feedback from staff regarding the proposed Shared Services for Electoral and Community Safety Services. In view of the fact that the report contained information relating to consultations / negotiations in connection with labour relations, this discussion took place after the exclusion of the press and public. There is nothing exempt, however, in this record of the proceedings.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **that the outcomes of consultation be noted; and**

RECOMMENDED that

- 2) **Shared Services for Electoral and Community Safety Services be implemented.**

289. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Members received the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 18 March 2009. There were no matters for the Executive Committee's decision.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18 March 2009 be received and noted.

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

There were no minutes or referrals.

291. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

Members considered an up-date report on the work of the Executive Committee's Advisory Panels and similar bodies.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

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292. ACTION MONITORING

Members noted the Action Monitoring Sheet and requested that Officers submit an early report to the Executive Committee on staff vacancy and sickness absence figures.

293. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED that

under S100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting following matter on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act, as amended.

Shared Services Business Case – Electoral and Community Safety Services - Consultation Response. (Decision 11 above refers.)

294. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES / REFERRALS (IF ANY)

No Confidential Minutes or Referrals were discussed.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.35 pm

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Chair