

EXECUTIVE

Committee

12th January 2016

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Bill Hartnett (Chair) and Councillors Juliet Brunner, Brandon Clayton, John Fisher, Mark Shurmer, Yvonne Smith and Debbie Taylor

Officers:

Kevin Dicks, Clare Flanagan, Sue Hanley, Rachel McAndrews, Paul McLaughlin, Sam Morgan, Jayne Pickering, Amanda Singleton, Liz Tompkin and Judith Willis

Committee Officer:

Debbie Parker-Jones

69. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Greg Chance and Pat Witherspoon.

70. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

71. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Work Programme

The following reports, which were due to be considered at the meeting or possibly considered at the meeting, had been deferred to a later date:

- Housing Business Case;
- Review of Pay Enhancements for Leisure Assistants; and
- Independent Remuneration Panel Report and Recommendations.

Agenda Item 4 – Minutes

A typographical error in the agenda listing was noted, with the Executive Committee minutes of the 15th December 2015 meeting

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Chair

and not the 7th December meeting being the required minutes for approval. The correct minutes had however been included in the agenda pack.

72. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 15th December 2015 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

73. CCTV CODE OF PRACTICE

Members received a report which sought adoption of a revised CCTV Code of Practice for Redditch Borough Council and Bromsgrove District Council Shared Service.

Officers advised that the new Code before Members had been totally revised in order to meet legislative changes under the Protection of Freedom Act 2012, and to adopt the Surveillance Commissioner's Code of Practice. The Code also took into account changes in best practice.

In response to a Member question, Officers confirmed that they would email Members with any future minor revisions to the Code.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the CCTV Code of Practice as appended to the report be approved; and**
- 2) authority be delegated to the CCTV and Lifeline Manager to make minor changes to the Code of Practice to comply with legal requirements and advice from the Surveillance Commissioner.**

74. VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR GRANTS PROGRAMME - FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

Members considered the Notes and recommendations of the Grants Panel Meetings held on 14th and 15th December 2015 for the award of major grants to voluntary sector organisations for 2016/17. Officers highlighted an error in recommendation 2 of the Notes, the second figure of which in relation to the 'Help me to live my life independently' theme should have read £2,200 and not £2,000.

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The Panel had considered a total of 44 applications from a variety of organisations. Each application had been scored in accordance with the Council's Grants Programme requirements, with recommendations then made to either approve or reject the applications. There had been some minor underspends across three of the themes, the unallocated budgets for which it was suggested be re-advertised alongside the Stronger Communities Grant applications in January 2016.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the following grants for 2016/17 be awarded:

Organisation	Project Name	Amount
Help Me to be Financially Independent - £75K		
Bromsgrove and District Citizens Advice Bureau	Citizens Advice Redditch – Financial/Debt and Problem Solving Advice	£75,000.00
Help Me to be Financially Independent - £10K		
Jestaminute Community Theatre CIC	“Money Talks”	£5,000.00
Help Me to Live My Life Independently - £35K		
Redditch Play Council	Redditch Play Council	£35,000.00
Help Me to Live My Life Independently - £30k		
NewStarts	Skills for a New Start	£4,000.00
Compass Community and Education Group Ltd	Work Club and Employability Skills Programme	£5,820.00
Redditch Mental Health Action Group	Coaching for all	£6,000.00
Bromsgrove and Redditch Network	Volunteering and Employability	£5,978.24
Inspire Community Training CIC	Inspiring Journey	£6,000.00

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Provide Me with Good Things to Do, See and Visit - £6K		
Redditch Wheels Project	Accessible Activities	£3,000.00
REACH (Redditch East Aspiring Communities Hub) CIC	REACH Positive Activity Days Out	£2,665.00
Keep My Place Safe and Looking Good - £15K		
The Ditch Youth Project	The Ditch Youth Project	£3,000.00
Sandycroft	DV Support Group	£5,000.00
Connectar Training and Biodiversity Trust	Connectar Training Centre – trainers salary	£5,000.00
Help Me Run a Successful Voluntary Sector Business - £50K		
Touchstones Support CIC	Supporting Bereaved Children	£10,000.00
Carers Careline	Carers Telephone Support Service	£9,306.92
Where Next Association	Where Next	£10,000.00
Bromsgrove and Redditch Network	The Volunteer Centre	£9,867.10
Sandycroft	Sandycroft Support Services	£10,000.00

and

- 2) the following unallocated sums be retained and their availability be re-advertised in parallel with the Stronger Communities Grants applications in January 2016:

Theme	Unallocated sum
Help me to be financially independent	£5,000
Help me to live my life independently	£2,200
Keep my place safe and looking good	£2,000

75. EARLY HELP COMMISSIONING - CONSULTATION

The Committee was asked to endorse comments on Worcestershire County Council's consultation on the future of Children's Centres and Early Help 0-19 services, and to approve the Council's entering into a partnership/consortium to submit a tender to deliver the new 0-19 integrated prevention services for children, young people and families, and to enter into a relevant contract should any tender be successful.

Officers explained the implications of the new 0-19 service, which would see substantial changes for early health. Commissioning would take place in all services except family support, and Connecting Families would not form part of this. Members were encouraged to complete their own questionnaires on the Children's Centre Buildings Consultation and to return these to the County Council by the 31st January 2016 deadline. Service users had been asked to complete questionnaires and so far Redditch had provided the highest number of responses across the county. The new contract was to be advertised in February, with the contract to be awarded in May and an anticipated start date for the new service of October 2016.

Members supported the proposed response to the redesign proposals and agreed that a local approach to service delivery was key to the future success of this. They felt that this should be based on either the Clinical Commissioning Group boundaries of Bromsgrove and Redditch, Wyre Forest and South Worcestershire, or that consideration could alternatively be given to a North and South delivery model. Members requested that Officers highlight the importance of the local knowledge element in a rider when submitting the Council's response.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the comments on the future of Worcestershire Children's Centres and 0-19 services, as outlined in section 3.10 of the report, be submitted to Worcestershire County Council; and**
- 2) the Council explore participation in a partnership or consortium arrangement to submit a tender, and if successful a contract be entered into for the delivery of the new 0-19 integrated prevention services for children, young people and families service.**

76. MATCHBOROUGH CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT - CONSULTATION

Members received a report which sought approval to undertake a feasibility study into the redevelopment of the Matchborough District Centre.

It was noted that the former New Town district centres of Church Hill, Matchborough, Winyates and Woodrow had previously been identified as areas for redevelopment. Following on from the success of the Church Hill redevelopment Matchborough District Centre was the next preferred centre for redevelopment, and from a planning perspective this was an excellent opportunity to look at mixed use of the site.

Officers advised that, where possible and in the time available, tenants and shop owners of the Matchborough District Centre had been informally advised as to the position and that the Executive Committee's approval was being sought to undertake a feasibility study. Planning Officers would lead on the study and would work in conjunction with the Place Partnership on this. Ward Members and stakeholders would be consulted and the outcomes of the study would be reported back to Members, together with suggestions from Officers about the next stages of the process of possible redevelopment.

A Member requested that Officers ensure that the following were consulted:

- RSA Academy Arrow Vale;
- Matchborough First School Academy;
- Noah's Ark Nursery;
- Christ Church;
- CCTV; and
- The local Police.

A Member queried what was happening with the S106 money for leisure and when a decision would be made in this regard. Officers stated that they would come back to Members on this, but that they would not expect expenditure to be incurred which might not support any future redevelopment of the area. A request was made by some Members for Member involvement in the stages following the feasibility study, for example on either a working party or sub-committee, which would avoid the need for large numbers of matters being referred to the Executive Committee.

RESOLVED that

a feasibility study be undertaken as to the merits of the redevelopment of the Matchborough District Centre.

77. PURCHASE OF CROSSGATES HOUSE

The Committee considered a report, for recommendation to full Council, which sought approval for Officers to enter into negotiations with Worcestershire County Council to purchase their interest in Crossgates House.

Members noted that the capital investment, which would be funded from capital from the sale of Threadneedle House, would make a revenue saving of £14,745 per annum with pay back after ten years. It was further noted that there was likely to be an increase in the rent following the rent review due in 2016.

Some Members did not support acquisition of the leasehold and raised issues in relation to staff accommodation at the Town Hall, Crossgates House and Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) following the District Council's relocation. Officers provided clarifications in this regard and confirmed that all three sites were fully used at present. Officers agreed to come back to Members on the numbers of Officers based at the BDC offices.

RECOMMENDED that

authority be delegated to the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to purchase Worcestershire County Council's leasehold interest in Crossgates House.

78. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT, RENT AND CAPITAL 2016-17

Members were presented, for recommendation to full Council, with the Initial Budget for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the proposed dwelling rents for 2016/17. Officers highlighted an error in the Housing Revenue Account Budget 2016/17 at Appendix A to the report, the 2019/20 Balances carried forward figure of which should have stated £20.415m and not £20.145m.

Officers explained the background to the report recommendations and the impact of the 1% rent reduction to be imposed by central government effective from 2016/17. Over a 30-year period the loss of rent income was estimated at £120.873m, which was almost the same as the £122.158m housing debt, and which would have a significant impact on the HRA Business Plan.

It was proposed that Officers be instructed to explore ways of balancing the HRA in 2019/20, including rental income from new housing stock and reviewing service charges. Members proposed an additional recommendation that Officers take to Executive Committee a report setting out the available options in light of the implications on the HRA, such options to include, amongst others, further details in relation to the Council's previously successful Mortgage Rescue and Buy Back Schemes.

For transparency purposes, Officers highlighted that the indicative costs of the Housing Business Case, which it had been hoped would be referred to Executive that evening but which had been delayed to the February meeting, had been included in report before Members that evening.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the draft 2016/2017 Budget for the Housing Revenue Account attached to the report at Appendix A be approved;**
- 2) the four year budget projections 2016/17 to 2019/20, incorporating the 1% rent reduction, be noted and that Officers be instructed to explore ways of balancing the HRA in 2019/20 including rental income from new housing stock and reviewing service charges;**
- 3) the actual average rent decrease for 2016/2017 be 1% (as per the Welfare Reform and Work Bill 2015/16);**
- 4) the capital programme for new housing stock be increased from £0.500 million to £1.052 million in 2016/17 and a programme of £1.064m be created in 2017/18 to ensure that all capital receipts retained under the one for one replacement scheme are applied before the deadline;**
- 5) £2.182 million be transferred to the capital reserve in 2016/17 to fund the future Capital Programme and/or repay borrowing; and**

RESOLVED that

- 6) Officers take to Executive Committee a report setting out the available options in light of the implications on the HRA, such options to include, amongst others, further details in relation to the Council's previously successful Mortgage Rescue and Buy Back Schemes.**

79. COUNCIL TAX BASE 2016/17

A report enabling Members to set the Council Tax Base for 2016/17 was considered. It was noted that the Executive could resolve on this matter.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the calculation of the Council's Tax Base for the whole and parts of the area for 2016/17, be approved; and
- 2) in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992, the figures calculated by the Redditch Borough Council as its tax base for the whole area for the year 2016/17 be 25,144.49 and for the parts of the area listed below be:

Parish of Feckenham	365.88
Rest of Redditch	<u>24,778.61</u>
	<u>25,144.49</u>

80. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2016/17 - 2018/19

Officers provided Members with an update on the impact of the provisional local government finance settlement 2016/17 which had been published on 17th December. On the back of the initial settlement details Heads of Service were currently working through the budget pressures prior to the budget and Council Tax setting reports in February.

In relation to the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) which the authority received from central government to support services across the Borough, Officers had expected this to reduce to zero by 2019/20, as announced previously, and were considering plans to address this. However, as a result of the latest settlement Redditch would lose all of its RSG in 2018/19, and would move into a position of having to contribute funds totalling £330k back to the Government in 2019/20.

Officers illustrated the impact of the settlement on the Council and the loss of the RSG over the next 4 years compared to previous forecasts together with the impact for Redditch compared to other councils which was significantly higher for Redditch than many other councils nationally. There would be a £3m shortfall in funding compared to the original budget assumptions, and a £5m reduction had the RSG have increased by 1% inflation since 2015/16.

Officers explained that the assumptions on the Council improving its spending power were based on an estimate of the Council Tax base growth exceeding current expectations and therefore increasing available funding to support services. The somewhat optimistic assumptions included Council Tax base increases of approximately 1% initially (which was double the current estimations), rising to 3% increase in future years. Officers felt that this was highly optimistic based on current growth across the Borough. The impact of the growth assumptions on Council Tax resulted in a further £350k shortfall to Government expectations for the Borough finances.

There were also proposals to change the New Homes Bonus Scheme. The Council currently received a 6-year payment for any property built in the Borough and the Government was looking to change this to 4 years. Additionally, there were a number of proposals to reduce New Homes Bonus (NHB) where there was no local plan, where homes had been allowed on appeal or where the growth would have occurred anyway, meaning there was no longer any certainty with this. The potential reduction of income to the Council over the 4-year period was just over £2m. The Government had given assurances that they would look at a 4-year settlement offer, which would sit around an 'efficiency statement'. There was some certainty around the use of capital receipts, although various uncertainties still remained overall. Earmarked balances were also affected.

Officers advised that the first consultation response on the proposed settlement was due by Friday 15th January, which Members would be sent a copy of, with the NHB consultation deadline being 15th March. A joint response from the six county District Leaders expressing their combined concerns was an option, with it being unclear at this stage as to whether 3-year budgets could be produced given the scale of the reductions and timescales involved. Officers stated that they would start with a 1-year budget, and that whilst they could project for 4 years this would not be a balanced budget. One of the key difficulties for Officers was the timescale between the settlement announcement and the setting of the Council Tax and budget. The Leader stated that he had written to the MP about the settlement and what were felt to be some unrealistic assumptions on which this had been based, as well as some inaccuracies with percentages quoted.

Officers would continue to work on customer demand and how this would best be met in the future and thanks was expressed to Officers overall for their work following publication of the settlement.

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RESOLVED that

the position be noted.

81. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 8th December 2015.

It was noted that there were no recommendations to consider as the recommendations at Minute No.'s 52, 53 and 56, in relation to Bereavement Services Review of Cremation Fees and Charges and Proposed Capital Work – Pre-scrutiny, Fees and Charges 2016-17 – Pre-Scrutiny and Review of the Operation of Leisure Services respectively, had been dealt with by the Executive Committee at its last meeting.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 8th December 2015 be received and noted.

82. MINUTES / REFERRALS - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, EXECUTIVE PANELS ETC.

There were no outstanding referrals to consider.

83. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

In addition to the details set out in the report, Members noted that the Planning Advisory Panel which was due to take place that evening had been cancelled due to lack of business and that a meeting of the Housing Advisory Panel was scheduled to take place later in the month.

RESOLVED that

the report and Officer update be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.38 pm

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Chair

