

Council

Monday, 25 July 2016

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Joe Baker (Mayor), Councillor Jennifer Wheeler (Deputy Mayor) and Councillors Tom Baker-Price, Roger Bennett, Natalie Brookes, Juliet Brunner, David Bush, Michael Chalk, Greg Chance, Anita Clayton, Brandon Clayton, Matthew Dormer, John Fisher, Andrew Fry, Bill Hartnett, Pattie Hill, Gay Hopkins, Wanda King, Jane Potter, Gareth Prosser, Mark Shurmer, Rachael Smith, Yvonne Smith, Paul Swansborough, Debbie Taylor, David Thain and Nina Wood-Ford

Officers:

Kevin Dicks, Sue Hanley, Sheena Jones and Sarah Sellers

Democratic Services Officer:

Amanda Scarce

16. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Antonia Pulsford and Pat Witherspoon.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Debbie Taylor declared an other disclosable interest in respect of agenda item 7(b) as an employee of University Hospital Birmingham NHS Trust.

18. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 23rd May 2016 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

19. ANNOUNCEMENTS

a) The Mayor

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Chair

The Mayor advised that he had had a busy first two months in office and thanked his deputy for attending a number of events on his behalf. He also took the opportunity to thank the Leader for his support at a number of events. Particular reference was made to the lowering of the flag in respect of the Orlando shootings and the atrocities which had taken place in Nice, France. He had also attended the Bandstand event, which had been well attended, the Astwood Bank Carnival and the 37th Signals Civic Reception and it had been a pleasure to support the Cycle Race.

b) The Leader

The Leader reiterated the Mayor's comments in respect of it being a busy two months and highlighted a number of events and meetings which he had attended during that period. The comments of the Mayor were echoed in respect of the tragic events which had taken place in recent weeks, including the Orlando shootings, the death of Jo Cox, MP and the horrific events in Nice. The Leader and Mayor had been joined by the MP, Mosque leaders and two French nationals on the roof of the Town Hall with the tricolour and Union flag flying at half-mast.

The Leader also made reference to the following events which had taken place:

- The parade for Armed Forces day had been followed by a Civic Reception at the Town Hall for the Armed Forces and their families, which had been a great success.
- The first Syrian refugees had arrived in Redditch and had been visited by the Leader welcoming them to the town. There had also been a funding raising dinner held in the Town Hall which had been a great success and which the families had attended.
- The Leader had collected the Inspiring Co-op of the Year Award on behalf of Redditch Co-op Homes/Riverside Co-op.
- Together with Councillor Hill the Leader had attended the re-opening of the Polish Club, which was also attended by a representative of the Polish Embassy from London.
- The first Bandstand event of the year had a theme of the Queen's Birthday and had been well attended.
- 40th Birthday celebrations of the Ecumenical Centre.
- Redditch Has Talent finals – thanks were given to all the staff and volunteers at the Palace Theatre.
- Along with other Members, the Leader had attended the Service of Remembrance for the 100 year anniversary of the Battle of the Somme. It was acknowledged that over 50 soldiers from Redditch and surrounding areas had lost their lives in the battle.

- The Leader had also attended, along with other Members, a community fun day at the Ryce building, which had been a diverse multi-cultural event.
- A fund raising event hosted by the Mayor at the Shai Palace which had raised over £600 towards his chosen charities for the year.

The Leader had also attended a number of meetings/briefings which he made reference to during his announcements:

- The West Midlands Combined Authority had now been formed and more councils had joined, including Warwickshire County Council, Stratford Upon Avon, North Warwickshire and Rugby.
- The Leader had held a meeting with the Transport for West Midlands (formerly Centro), together with the Chief Executive and a representative from the MP's office. The aim was to get changes to timetables between Redditch and Birmingham New Street, to allow for an "express" or limited stop train twice a day. Fare equalisation on the network had also been discussed. There had been no guarantees but it had been a positive meeting and if successful the changes would be beneficial to commuters as well as attracting businesses to Redditch.
- A press release had been issued in respect of the Council supporting the Cycle Race as the County Council will no longer sponsor it in future years. The Leader wanted to encourage local businesses to sponsor the event and help raise the £80k for the event to take place in Redditch next year.
- A Member Development session had been attended in respect of safeguarding and prevent for children.
- Following another tragic death the Leader had written to the County Council Leader in respect of the Muskets Way footbridge requesting that it make it safe. A positive response had been received and a time limited, multi-agency group had been set up to make recommendations for a safe solution. Councillor Yvonne Smith would be the Council's representative on the group.
- A press release had also been issued in support of the Worcestershire multi faith group's statement about xenophobia and hate crime.

Councillor Brunner thanked the Mayor for writing letters of condolence to those countries affected by the recent tragic events.

20. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

There were no questions on notice on this occasion.

21. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

a) Redditch against Hate Crimes

A Notice of Motion had been submitted by Councillor Juliet Brunner in respect of Redditch against Hate Crimes. This was seconded by Councillor Bill Hartnett.

In proposing the Motion Councillor Brunner explained that the Motion had come about as Members had been approached by residents asking for this to be brought forward. Councillor Brunner reassured all the communities in Redditch that they were valued and supported and that any acts of Hate Crime would not be tolerated. The Redditch Anti Hate Partnership was one of the first to be set up in 1995, and pre dated the Crime and Disorder Act. There had not been an increase in such crimes, but the Council should not be complacent and anyone who had witnessed or experienced such a crime should report it as soon as possible, in order to work together to support officers in dealing with such matters.

In seconding the Motion Councillor Hartnett thanked all the residents who had sent emails to many Members, with a draft notice of motion which this had been based on. Council was reminded that Redditch had a long and proud history of diversity, tolerance and of communities working together. Whilst it was unfortunate that the public felt the need to move a notice, it was an opportunity to reaffirm the Council's rejection of racism, xenophobia and hate crime. Councillor Hartnett highlighted the work of the Council's Community Safety Partnership and in particular the anti-hate crime programme which was instigated by them and rolled out across the county, together with the good working relationships which had been built up with community leaders throughout the town. Redditch was made up of diverse communities with a great community spirit, coming together at many events held throughout the year. Councillor Hartnett reminded Members that Redditch had been the first town in the county to welcome refugees from Syria. In supporting the motion he concluded that xenophobia and hate had no place in our society and would not be tolerated in Redditch.

A number of Members spoke in support of the Motion with Councillor Paul Swansborough bringing forward an amendment to the original Motion, to insert the phrase "and working" into the final sentence of the Motion. This was agreed by the proposer and seconder and subsequently by the Council.

RESOLVED that

The Motion be agreed in the following terms:

"We in Redditch are proud to live in a diverse and tolerant society. Racism, xenophobia and hate crimes have no place in our town or country.

The Elected representatives on Redditch Borough Council, condemn racism, xenophobia and hate crimes unequivocally. We will not allow hate to become acceptable.

Councillors and officers of Redditch Borough Council will continue to work to support local bodies and programmes such as the North Worcestershire Hate incident partnership, to prevent and tackle racism and xenophobia.

We reassure all people living and working in Redditch that they are valued members of our community."

b) Announcement of emergency temporary change to paediatric inpatient services at the Alexandra Hospital from September 2016

A Notice of Motion had been submitted by Councillor Bill Hartnett in respect of the announcement of emergency temporary change to paediatric inpatient services at the Alexandra Hospital from September 2016. This was seconded by Councillor Juliet Brunner.

In proposing the Motion Councillor Hartnett thanked the other political groups for supporting it. He highlighted that the aim of the motion was three fold, to enable the people to have their say, to allow potential other providers to have a say if they chose to and to enable the public to understand what was going on and what the long term plan was for the hospital.

Councillor Hartnett advised that since the Motion had been brought forward both groups had met with senior officers of the Worcestershire Health Trust. The Council was in support of the staff at the hospital and had campaigned for its services for a long time. The following points had been reiterated at the meeting:

- 20% of Redditch families do not have access to a car
- Access was a major issue which needed to be resolved, not only for patients, but also for visitors and staff.
- The mortality rate for Redditch was the worst in the County by 5 years.
- Redditch was one of the fastest growing areas in the county – with an estimated 20,000 homes being built in Redditch and Bromsgrove over the next 20 years.
- Warwickshire was only a matter of yards away from the hospital, with residents in Alcester, Studley and Bidford relying on the hospital. However, Warwickshire had been excluded from the consultations.

- The Trust remained in “special measures” with a deficit now estimated at £67m.
- The high vacancy rate and the continued cost and need to use locum consultants.

Members were reminded of the work of the Save the Alex campaigners and reaffirmed the support from the Council. Councillor Hartnett highlighted the alliance, which had been forged over the last 5 years, with the 3 local councils and corresponding MPs. This alliance had lobbied government ministers and civil servants tirelessly.

In seconding the Motion Councillor Brunner unequivocally gave the support of her Group and endorsed the comments of the Leader. It was highlighted that there was not a single family in Redditch who would not have had contact with the hospital and took the opportunity to praise the staff that had to live with this ongoing uncertainty. She commented on what she considered to be a poor communications strategy of the Trust, together with the importance of the Council and its residents being given the opportunity to have a say in any future plans. Councillor Brunner also gave details of a meeting which had been chaired by Karen Lumley MP alongside the Trust where the option of a shuttle bus between sites had been discussed and further meetings which would take place. She concurred that all such areas should have been thought through at the outset. It was important that all concerned stood together to bring this matter to a satisfactory and speedy outcome.

A number of Members spoke in favour of the Motion and reiterated the points already made, but also highlighted a number of other areas. Councillors Pattie Hill and Nina Wood-Ford in their role on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee assured Members that they continued to raise the issue of the Hospital at the meetings of this Committee.

Whilst thanking those residents that had attended, Councillor Brunner shared her disappointment in there not being a large number present and stated that it was important that residents made their voices heard. This was supported by Councillor Hartnett in his summing up and he urged residents to take part in any consultation in order to put across the message of clear support and the need for sustainable and accessible services. Councillor Hartnett confirmed that the actions within the Motion would be put in place as soon as possible and the fight to retain the services would continue unabated in partnership with our adjoining authorities.

RESOLVED that

The Motion be agreed in the following terms:

“Council notes with dismay the recent announcement from Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust (WAHT) with regard to an emergency temporary change to paediatric inpatient services at the Alexandra Hospital from September 2016 which is the latest in a series of changes made to the detriment of our local hospital using the “cover / shield” of safety – all in advance of the much publicised public consultation. Whilst the council fully supports and endorses the need for services to be safe we need to be assured as to what has been done to mitigate this decision and that this does not represent the easy option and a further downgrade of services to the people of Redditch and surrounding areas.

As agreed before the Council’s policy is to look towards Birmingham. This is further proof that this is the correct position and that the Acute Services provision in Worcestershire is simply unsustainable in its current form and we believe will be proven when the Sustainability and Transformation Plan is published.

The Council need to be assured that this isn’t a permanent move in the same way the removal of maternity was. When the latest move was announced the Trust stated that the period between now and September will enable them to engage with the public on the reasons for the changes and how services will be affected:

Council

- call upon the Chair and Chief Executive of WAHT to host a series of public consultation events in Redditch, Bromsgrove and Stratford to outline the reasons for the change, the actions already taken to address the situation and also what will be done to ensure this isn’t a permanent change;**
- call upon the Chair and Chief Executive of WAHT and the Redditch and Bromsgrove CCG Chief Operating Officer to attend the previously agreed Redditch Borough Council’s Health Commission to address wider issues around the future of the Alex Hospital ;**
- to write to UHB and the Women and Children's Trusts in Birmingham to ask for their views on this matter.”**

22. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Members considered the minutes of the Executive Committee meetings of 8th March 2016, 7th June 2016 and 12th July 2016. The minutes from the March meeting were for information only as the recommendations had been dealt with at the last ordinary meeting

of the Council. There were no recommendations from the minutes of the meeting held in June. There were a number of recommendations to be debated from the minutes of the July meeting of the Executive and these were discussed as follows:

Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.4 – Proposed Main Modifications

Members were reminded that the proposed modifications were those which had been put forward by the Inspector and it was clarified that the consultation referred to was in respect of those modifications only and not the plan as a whole. The consultation period had been extended to take account of the holiday period.

Councillor Juliet Brunner proposed the following amendment:

“The consultation not to commence until the outcome of the ‘notice to hold’ has been formally decided by the DCLG and the Executive Committee and Council has considered a report on the outcome.”

Councillor Brunner explained that she had proposed the amendment due to Karen Lumley, MP having requested a “notice on hold” against the Local Plan No. 4. It would therefore be prudent for the Council to await the outcome of that request before making a decision and entering into a consultation period. A consultation could be a costly exercise and one which may have to be repeated should changes following the “notice of hold”.

Officers clarified the “Notice of Hold” process, which entailed the Plan being brought before the Secretary of State. This was a valid mechanism for the MP to use in order to put the Local Plan on hold. The following areas were debated by Members:

- The Plan was “out of date” already as no account had been taken in respect of the Council’s membership of the West Midlands Combined Authority.
- Potential flaws within the plan in respect of the location of both housing and commercial sites and the impact on the infrastructure of borough.
- Whether the deferral of the Plan would impact on any of the Council’s neighbours, for example Bromsgrove District Council.
- It was reiterated that the amendments within the report were merely those of the Inspector and that the Plan as a whole was not being consulted upon, as this process had already taken place.
- Whether the Plan had taken into the account the true views of the residents.

Following debate the amendment was declared lost.

Members thanked Officers for their hard work and those residents who had taken the time to respond to previous consultations. The Council had been transparent during the process and the Inspector was merely asking for a consultation to take place in respect of those amendments. It was highlighted within the report that the consultation was not an opportunity to raise matters that either were, or could have been, part of the earlier representations or hearings on the submitted Plan and that comments should be confined to the Main Modifications and address the following points:

- Make clear in what way the published Main Modification is not sound or not legally compliant,
- Support representation by evidence showing why the Main Modifications should be changed,
- Say precisely how the Main Modifications should be changed.

Reference was made to particular areas (and the location of the high schools in relation to the proposed housing developments) within the Borough which had been highlighted in the Plan and its impact on transport infrastructure. However, the view was expressed that discussion of these was not appropriate at this time and that Members had previously had an opportunity, through the frequent Planning Advisory Panel meetings, to raise any particular concerns that they might have had in respect of all the points raised. Consultation had been carried out with neighbouring authorities when preparing the Plan and the Inspector had acknowledged this within his report.

Redditch Local Development Scheme July 2016 and Draft Statement of Community Involvement 2016

Councillor Brunner proposed the following amendment:

“The Council will defer the adoption of the Redditch Local Development Scheme and the 6 week consultation on the draft Statement of Community Involvement until the outcome of the ‘note to hold’ has been formally decided by the DCLG and the Executive Committee and Council have considered a report on the outcome.”

Councillor Brunner explained that again, she had proposed the amendment due to the MP’s request for a “notice on hold” against the Local Plan as it was felt it was not appropriate to make a decision until this process had been completed. In debating the amendment a number of areas were discussed including:

- The potential cost to the Council should further amendments be made following the “notice on hold” report being received.

- It was understood that the Birmingham Local Plan had also been subject to a “notice on hold” and it had been agreed that any further action would be deferred until the process had been completed.
- Concerns around the Local Plan No. 4 in its current format.
- The recommendation before Members was in respect of how the Council would deal with consultations in the future; it was suggested that the documents should be agreed in their current formats to enable work to proceed.
- The reasons why the MP had found it necessary to instigate the “notice on hold” process and when this had happened.

Following debate the amendment was declared lost.

Consolidated Revenue and Capital Outturn and Financial Reserves Statement 2015/16

Concerns were raised in respect of vacant posts which had not been filled and that savings had been made due to funds being earmarked for specific areas and the work which these related to had not been carried out.

Councillor John Fisher gave his thanks to the Section 151 Officer and her staff for completing the accounts for 2015/16 and to officers for making savings in excess of those which were expected. This had led to a £40k improvement in the Council’s general fund balances.

RESOLVED that in relation to the meeting of the Executive Committee of 12th July

- a) the recommended Main Modifications of the Inspector, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be noted, and that Officers be authorised to proceed with an 8-week consultation on the Main Modifications, to run from 27th July 2016 to 21st September 2016. Details of the method of consultation are set out in paragraphs 3.19 to 3.22 of the report;**
- b) the revised Redditch Local Development Scheme (LDS), as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be adopted as the Council’s current LDS;**
- c) delegated authority be granted to the Head of Planning and Regeneration Services, in conjunction with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to review and publish amended LDS timetables for the publication of the Development Plan Documents;**

- d) the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) 2016, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved for publication as part of a 6-week period of public consultation in September – October 2016; and
- e) delegated authority be granted to the Head of Planning and Regeneration Services, in conjunction with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to consider the response to the public consultation and, subject to no significant issues arising, to amend and adopt the SCI.
- f) the transfer to balances of £40k be approved;
- g) the movement in reserves, as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved; and
- h) the Minutes of the meetings of the Executive Committee held on 8th March 2016, 7th June 2016 and 12th July 2016 be received and adopted.

23. REGULATORY COMMITTEES

The Council received the minutes from meetings of the Planning and Audit, Governance and Standards Committees:

RESOLVED that

- 1) the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 13th April 2016 and 8th June 2016 be received and adopted; and
- 2) the minutes of the meetings of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee held on 21st April 2016 and 7th July 2016 be received and adopted.

24. REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION 2016

Council reviewed its constitution on an annual basis. Members were asked to consider a report outlining updates that had been proposed to the Council's constitution.

RESOLVED that

the Council's constitution as presented be approved.

25. APPOINTMENT TO REDDITCH CO-OP HOMES

As Councillor Hartnett had stood down from the Redditch Co-operative Homes Members were asked to appoint to the vacancy for the municipal year 2016/17.

RESOLVED that

Councillor Andy Fry be appointed to Redditch Co-operative Homes for the municipal year 2016/17.

26. WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD

The Council was informed that there had been a slight change to the Council's membership of Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board (formerly Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee) in that Councillor Yvonne Smith had replaced Councillor Pat Witherspoon as substitute member.

RESOLVED that

the appointment of Councillor Yvonne Smith as substitute Member for the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board be endorsed.

27. URGENT BUSINESS - RECORD OF DECISIONS

There were no urgent decisions to note.

28. URGENT BUSINESS - GENERAL

The Mayor informed Members, as notified on Friday 22nd July 2016 he had accepted an item of urgent business, which was to appoint a Vice-Chair to the Planning Committee as Councillor Yvonne Smith had stepped down from that role. The item was urgent as a Vice Chair needed to be in place for the next meeting of the Planning Committee, which was due to take place in August.

RESOLVED that

Councillor Nina Wood-Ford be appointed Vice Chair of the Planning Committee for the municipal year 2016/17.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.50 pm