

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 1 November 2016

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Bill Hartnett (Chair), Councillor Greg Chance (Vice-Chair) and Councillors John Fisher, Mark Shurmer, Yvonne Smith, Debbie Chance (nee Taylor) and Pat Witherspoon

Also Present:

Councillor Joe Baker – observing
Councillor Jane Potter – for Minute No.37

Officers:

Ruth Bamford, Jess Bayley, Clare Flanagan, John Godwin, Sue Hanley, Sam Morgan and David Riley

Committee Services Officer:

Debbie Parker-Jones

33. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Juliet Brunner and Brandon Clayton.

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

35. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Work Programme

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

- Fees and Charges 2017-18;
- Economic Priorities for Redditch – Annual Report;
- Council Plan (including Leisure Intervention Update);
- Engagement Strategy; and
- Corporate Performance Strategy.

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Chair

It was noted that the Public Realm Scheme report at Agenda Item 7 was an additional report which had not previously been included in the Work Programme. As this was not a Key Decision however there was no requirement for this to have appeared in the Work Programme.

Agenda item 5 – Budget Scrutiny Working Group – Proposals

Councillor Jane Potter, Chair of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group, was in attendance to present the Working Group's report and recommendation, and was accompanied by Jess Bayley, the report author.

Agenda item 9 – Medium Term Financial Plan 2017/18 to 2020/21 Budget Assumptions

Members' attention was drawn to Additional Papers 1 which had been circulated the previous week. These comprised a minute extract and recommendation relating to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's pre-scrutiny of the Budget Assumptions report on 25th October 2016, and would therefore be considered along with Agenda Item 9.

Agenda item 15 – Development Management Shared Service Business Case

It was noted that this report was confidential as it contained exempt information in accordance with Paragraph 4 – labour relations matters – of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

Members' attention was also drawn to the confidential Additional Papers 2, which had been circulated earlier that day. These comprised the minutes and recommendations of the Shared Services Board's consideration of the Business Case on 27th October 2016, and would therefore be considered along with Agenda Item 15.

36. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 13th September 2016 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

37. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE BUDGET SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP

Councillor Jane Potter, Chair of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group, presented the Working Group's report. Councillor Potter explained the background to the report and the Working Group's recommendation, which detailed proposals concerning future versions of the Council's Capital Programme.

Members agreed that, in principle, the Working Group's proposals were a good idea. However they were mindful that in light of the current economic climate and the financial challenges which the Council would continue to face over the years ahead, there needed to be a flexible approach to capital projects and the ability to propose changes to the approved Capital Programme on an annual basis. As such, an additional recommendation was agreed to address these issues.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the Council should have a robust four year funded Capital Programme for the period 2017/18 to 2020/21, to include estimates across each year of the budget; and**
- 2) Officers estimate the Capital Programme requirements over a four year period to include the associated funding implications. In addition, an annual review should be undertaken to propose any changes to the approved Programme to ensure the Council has a flexible approach to capital projects.**

RESOLVED that

- 3) the report be noted.**

38. PARKS INFRASTRUCTURE - USE OF SECTION 106 MONIES

Members received a report which detailed potential improvements to the infrastructure within a number of parks and green spaces in the Borough, which were designed to increase usage and participation. Member approval was also sought for the use of Section 106 funding to support the proposed improvement schemes.

It was noted that the Section 106 Agreements that were in place meant that there were restrictions as to what schemes could be funded and where within the Borough monies could be spent. It was further noted that Officers had consulted the relevant Ward Councillors on the proposals.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **the Capital Programme be increased by £69,448, to be funded by Section 106 receipts, and revised to reflect the approved schemes detailed in resolution 2) a) to d) below.**

RESOLVED that

- 2) **the following schemes, as identified in section 4 of the report, be approved:**
 - a) **Astwood Bank Outdoor Gym – £4,005;**
 - b) **Astwood Bank Teenage Play (Skate Ramps) – £30,426;**
 - c) **Astwood Bank Improvements at Overdale Park – £5,645; and**
 - d) **Matchborough Play facilities – £29,372.**

39. PUBLIC REALM SCHEME

Further to Minute No.116 of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 19th April 2016, when Members approved details of the proposed enhancements of Alcester Street and Market Street, together with capital expenditure of £275k towards the estimated total cost for this phase of the Town Centre Public Realm Scheme, Members received a report which sought formal approval to the Section 106 funding element of the project.

Members stated that they wished for the improvement works to commence as soon as possible. Officers confirmed that the County Council had advised that the works would start at the end of January 2017 and would take 6 months to complete. Members wanted the work to be of a high quality, with there being a county supply of building products available to ensure that any necessary works undertaken by the statutory undertakers following enhancements works could be put right on a like-for-like basis.

RECOMMENDED that

in addition to the £275k capital expenditure previously approved, £75k of Section 106 monies be released towards the estimated total cost of the first phase of the Town Centre Public Realm Scheme.

40. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2017/18

Further to Minute No.15 of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 19th April 2016, when Members approved the draft Council Tax Support Scheme (CTSS) 2017/18 for consultation, Members were asked to recommend approval of the final CTSS and other related issues including future scheme consultations and continuation of the Council's Hardship Fund.

It was noted that the Council was required to review its CTSS annually and that it had to implement a scheme which protected people of a pensionable age, incentivised work and contained provisions to support vulnerable persons in financial hardship as a result of the Scheme.

Members noted the importance of the Hardship Scheme. Whilst not all of the annual Hardship Scheme budget had been spent 203 hardship awards had been agreed since April 2015, with staff also signposting those most in need to other agencies who could further assist them based on their individual circumstances. Members asked that Officers be congratulated in their work in this area.

In response to Members' concerns that council tax support did not form part of Universal Credit and how those most in need would be made aware of the CTSS and Hardship Fund, Officers advised that on receiving notification from the Department for Work and Pensions of those who were subject to Universal Credit, the Council would automatically contact those concerned to assess them for any other relevant support/awards. Members also raised concerns in relation to the increased future costs of administering the CTSS, as detailed at paragraph 3.19 of the report. Officers responded that they were unable to say at this stage what the financial impact of this would be to the Council.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the Council Tax Support Scheme 2017/18, amended as follows, be implemented:**
 - 1.1) reduce backdating of Council Tax Support to bring this in line with the changes in Housing Benefit announced by Central Government;**
 - 1.2) enable claims to be processed based on information provided by the Department for Work and Pensions without the need for further information; and**

- 1.3) **removal of the Family Premium on claims made from 1st April 2017 to bring Redditch Borough Council's Council Tax Support Scheme in line with the changes in Housing Benefit announced by Central Government, and already implemented.**
 - 2) **there be future 'uprating' of some of the figures to take account of other national changes in benefits and allowances;**
 - 3) **authority be delegated to the Head of Customer Access and Financial Support to carry out statutory consultation on future draft Council Tax Support Schemes in accordance with the legislative guidelines and in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder; and**
 - 4) **the Council's Hardship Scheme continue.**
41. **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2017/18 - 2020/21 BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS**

The Committee considered a report which set out budget assumptions to be used in the preparation of the detailed 2017/18 budget and provisional budgets for 2018/19 to 2020/21. Members also considered the minute extract and recommendation following the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's pre-scrutiny of this report on 25th October 2016, as detailed in Additional Papers 1.

Officers gave a short presentation on the key points within the Medium Term Financial Plan, which included:

- 4 year budget projections;
- 1.9% Council Tax increase;
- 1% pay inflation;
- 6% utilities increase; and
- 3% fees and charges increase – subject to variation with supporting evidence.

Information in respect of the superannuation rates was also provided based on a 3 year revaluation of the fund which had been received in mid-October and which reflected current pension liabilities. Details of both back funding and forward funding rates were provided, which would result in a total net saving of £327k over a 3 year period owing to a reduction in the back funding contribution.

Members noted that these were budget assumptions only which would enable Officers to work on the base budgets, with final decisions to be taken as part of the actual budget-setting process.

RECOMMENDED that

the revenue assumptions detailed in paragraph 3.4 of the report be incorporated into the budget setting process.

42. WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD - ENFORCEMENT POLICY

Members were asked to consider amendments to the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy, as set out in the minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Board meeting of 6th October 2016.

Officers confirmed that only minor amendments had been made to the existing Policy to reflect changes to the partnership, the replacement of the supporting Regulator's Compliance Code and the time that had elapsed since the original Policy was adopted in 2011. Members supported the proposed amendments, together with an additional minor amendment raised at the WRS Board meeting, all as detailed in the minutes.

RECOMMENDED that

subject to the additional minor amendment raised at the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board meeting on 6th October 2016, and as detailed in the minutes for that meeting, the amended Worcestershire Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy be adopted.

43. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee received the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 12th September 2016.

It was noted that there were no recommendations to consider as the recommendation at Minute No. 28 had been included in the report from the Budget Scrutiny Working Group at agenda item 5 – Minute No.37 refers.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 12th September 2016 be received and noted.

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

Minute extract of 25th October 2016 Overview and Scrutiny Committee

A minute extract and recommendation arising from the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 25th October 2016 (circulated as Additional Papers 1) were considered along with agenda item 9 – Medium Term Financial Plan 2017/18 to 2020/21 – Budget Assumptions – Minute No. 41 refers.

Minutes of 27th October 2016 Shared Services Board

The confidential minutes and recommendations of the meeting of the Shared Services Board held on 27th October 2016 (circulated as Additional Papers 2) were considered along with confidential agenda item 15 – Development Management Shared Service Business Case – Minute No.47 refers.

45. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

It was noted that, following the meeting of the Planning Advisory Panel (PAP) which had taken place on 20th October, the PAP meeting which was due to be held that evening had been cancelled owing to lack of business.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

46. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED that

under S.100 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 for the following matter on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act, as amended.

Item 15 – Development Management Shared Service Business Case.

47. DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SHARED SERVICE BUSINESS CASE

The Committee received a confidential report which presented the Business Case for a Shared Development Management Service between Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council. Members also considered the minutes and recommendations of the meeting of the Shared Services Board (SSB) held on 27th October 2016, which had considered the Business Case, as detailed in confidential Additional Papers 2.

Officers detailed the background to the Business Case and responded to Members' questions in this regard. Officers agreed to provide all Executive Members, outside of the meeting, with certain additional information, including information which had been requested by a Member at SSB.

On noting the recommendations of the SSB, which endorsed the proposed Business Case, it was

RECOMMEDED that

the Business Case for the Development Management Shared Service be approved.

[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 exempt information would be revealed relating to labour relations matter.]

48. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES / REFERRALS

The Committee received the confidential minutes and recommendations of the meeting of the Shared Services Board held on 27th October 2016, in relation to the Development Management Shared Service Business Case. These were considered with agenda Item 15 – Minute No. 47 refers.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.05 pm

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Chair