

Executive Committee

12th August 2009

Minutes

Present:

Councillor Carole Gandy (Chair), Councillor Michael Braley (Vice-Chair) and Councillors P Anderson, B Clayton, N Hicks and M Shurmer

Officers:

K Dicks, Jackie Smith, E Storer, A Heighway, C Wilson, R Kindon, A Marklew, A Baldwin and B Barr

Committee Services Officer:

I Westmore

76. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Brunner, Hartnett and MacMillan.

77. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

78. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

Item 9 – Maintenance of Un-adopted Paved Areas.

79. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22nd July 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

80. PLANNING FOR PROSPEROUS ECONOMIES

Members received an Officer response to the Consultation paper from Communities and Local Government on a new Planning Policy Statement entitled Planning for Prosperous Economies.

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Chair

There was some concern expressed that the Planning Advisory panel had not been convened in order to consider the proposed response prior to its submission to Government. Officers informed the Committee that the response had been looked at by the Leader and relevant Portfolio Holder prior to submission and explained the reasoning for not arranging an Advisory Panel meeting on this occasion. It was agreed that, in future, such responses should be considered by the Advisory Panel where possible.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the response from the Acting Head of Planning and Building Control to Communities and Local Government regarding the consultation document on new Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Prosperous Economies, as detailed in Appendix A of the report, be retrospectively endorsed; and**
- 2) **where possible, Officers submit such future items for prior consideration by the Planning Advisory Panel.**

81. WORCESTERSHIRE LAND DRAINAGE PROTOCOL

The Committee considered a presentation and report outlining policies and protocols for land drainage maintenance and enforcement. This was in response to the Pitt Review and the Draft Flood and Water Management Bill following the July 2007 flooding.

The policies and protocols had previously been considered both through the county-wide Joint Scrutiny exercise and the Council's own Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Officers took the view that there was some merit in the Council retaining an interest in water management at a District level. There was the possibility that the Council's duty regarding ordinary watercourses may alter and there was a need to minimise any likely financial impact on the Council of legislative changes.

Officers confirmed that the Council's current annual budget for cyclical maintenance was £100K and it was noted that waterways in Redditch had been quite well maintained on that budget, hence the comparative lack of flooding in 2007. At the present time the Council also inspected and cleansed a number of County Council assets and received suitable financial recompense from the County for the provision of that service. It was noted that these protocols and policies would ensure a suitable level of maintenance from other riparian owners in the Borough if by example the Council was to adequately maintain its own assets.

In view of the fact that the current Bill was only at the draft stage, it was proposed by the Committee that Officers be given delegated authority to make any necessary changes that might come about following the enactment of the legislation. The Committee also wished to ensure that the County Council fulfilled its obligations in respect of the cleansing of road gullies as a failure to do so could have a major negative impact on this Council's ability to prevent local instances of flooding.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **subject to the Council's subsequent approval of the financial implications, the land drainage and flooding policies and protocols attached at Appendices 1 to 5 to the report, as recommended by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 17 June 2009, be approved; and**
- 2) **the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, be authorised to amend the Council's land drainage and flooding policies and protocols as appropriate to take account of subsequent changes to the draft legislation.**

82. CHURCH HILL DISTRICT CENTRE - REDEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Committee received an update on progress on the redevelopment of the Church Hill District Centre. The report included a request for additional funding to be committed to the scheme.

Officers undertook to provide a formal legal response from the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services to Members' questions in respect of the transfer of land to and from Worcestershire County Council.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **progress on the scheme be noted;**
- 2) **the marketing testing planned to commence in October 2009 be noted; and**

RECOMMENDED that

- 3) **additional revenue funding of £19,850 be approved to progress the scheme for the year 2009/10 up to and including the Industry market testing day in October 2009, with a further review.**

(During the consideration of this item, Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to move to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed relating to the business affairs of the Council's tenants, disclosure of which was not considered to be in the public's best interests.

There is nothing exempt, however, in this record of the proceedings.)

83. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE MONITORING APRIL 2008 - MARCH 2009

The Committee received a report providing information on aspects of the Council's overall performance. Officers reported that the past year had been challenging with a new set of Indicators applying at a District Council level. The Leader congratulated staff for their performance in the following areas in particular: BVPI 212 ;LIB 240 , BVPI 213, HIP 001, HIP 002 and MWO 10.

As Members asked questions regarding a number of the Indicators, it became apparent that some of the more problematic targets were either new targets which required revision either up or downwards or targets that had subsequently been deleted.

It was hoped that Portfolio Holders might be in a position to report back to the Committee on those indicators where the Council was not performing to target. Officers informed the Committee that a report to Committee on 22nd September might provide additional information in this regard. It was also suggested that targets for which the Council was reliant on factors outside of its immediate control, might usefully be reviewed.

Officers undertook to provide Councillor Hicks with an explanation for the performance recorded in respect of Performance Indicator BV205.

RESOLVED that

the update on key performance indicators for the period April 2008 – March 2009 be noted and commented upon.

84. MAINTENANCE OF UNADOPTED PAVED AREAS

Officers brought a request to the Committee for a budget to undertake cyclical maintenance on the un-adopted paved areas owned by the Council. It was stated that the assets in question had formerly been in the possession of the Redditch Development Corporation and had subsequently been transferred to the Council. These assets had been built to a lower standard than the highways

maintained by the County Council thereby precluding the opportunity for them to be adopted.

Officers undertook to provide clarification to Members as to the actual extent of hard paved area to be maintained by the Borough Council, given the doubt expressed at the figure quoted within the report.

RECOMMENDED that

an annual budget of £100k for three years (2009 to 2012) be allocated from HRA reserves to facilitate the timely repair and maintenance of Council owned, un-adopted, paved area assets.

85. SHARED SERVICES BOARD

The minutes of the most recent meeting of the Shared Services Board were considered by the Committee. It was noted that the apologies of Councillor Hall had not been recorded in the minutes of the meeting of the Board despite his being engaged on other Council business

RECOMMENDED that

Business Case – IT Services

- 1) **the Business Case for Shared IT Services, hosted by Bromsgrove District Council, phase 1, be agreed in principle, subject to further work being undertaken to agree a suite of charging mechanisms (for this and for other Shared services projects), for the further consideration of the Board / both Councils;**
- 2) **it be noted that detailed business cases for phases 2 and 3 outlined in the report to the Board will be required in line with the wider shared service agenda;**
- 3) **similar core principles be worked up for the development of Shared services in terms of pensions funding and the allocation of redundancy costs; these to be based on a 50:50 recharge to both Councils; and**
- 4) **the Business Case template be modified to express all future risk ratings only in 'mitigated' terms.**

Business Case – CCTV / Lifeline

- 5) **the Business Case for Shared CCTV / Lifeline Services, hosted by Redditch Borough Council, be agreed in principle, subject to further work being undertaken to agree a suite of charging mechanisms (for this and for other Shared services projects), for the further consideration of the Board / both Councils;**
- 6) **the proposed Shared Service structure be endorsed, subject to consultation; and**
- 7) **savings be based on the total reported £291,000 at this stage, rather than on the originally proposed 60:40% split, pending further financial reports and subsequent agreements.**

(During the consideration of this item, Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to move to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed relating to contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with labour relations matters between the authority and employees of the authority, disclosure of which was not considered to be in the public's best interests.

There is nothing exempt, however, in this record of the proceedings.)

86. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 8 July 2009 be received and noted.

87. REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL ESTABLISHMENT

The Committee considered a report detailing the number of vacant posts currently in place within the Council's establishment.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

88. CORPORATE SICKNESS STATISTICS

A report was received that detailed the current sickness absence statistics for the Council as a whole and by Individual Directorates and Services. It was confirmed that the Council's direction of travel in terms of sickness absence was positive when compared to other authorities around the region. However, Officers undertook to investigate whether there were national statistics available to use as comparators to those generated locally within the authority.

In respect of the categories used to define the reasons for absence, it was noted that these were established nationally and so there was little scope for amendment.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the statistics be noted; and**
- 2) the programme outlined in the report to reduce sickness absence be approved.**

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

There were no minutes or referrals under this item.

90. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

Members received the update report on the activity of the Council's Advisory panels, Working Groups and other Panels. It was noted that meetings of both the Customer Services Advisory Panel and the Church Hill District Centre Members' Panel were planned for September.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

91. ACTION MONITORING

It was noted that the action arising in relation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1 July 2009 had been completed.

92. 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 matters on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act, as amended.

Church Hill District Centre – Redevelopment Update (as detailed at Minute 82 above and below for the restricted section); and

Shared Services Board (as detailed at Minute 85 above).

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 9.28 pm

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Chair