

Executive Committee

9th December 2009

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Carole Gandy (Chair), Councillor Michael Braley (Vice-Chair) and Councillors P Anderson, J Brunner, B Clayton, W Hartnett, N Hicks, C MacMillan and M Shurmer

Officers:

J Bough, K Cook, K Dicks, S Hanley, A Heighway, T Kristunas, A Marklew, S Morgan, S Mullins, G Revans, Head of Environment and K Watkins

Committee Services Officer:

I Westmore

195. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

196. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Anderson and B Clayton declared personal and prejudicial interests in Item 6 (Voluntary Sector Grant Applications 2009/10) as detailed separately at Minute 200 below.

197. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair advised that the following items of business, scheduled on the Forward Plan to be dealt with at this meeting, had been rescheduled to either earlier or later meetings of the Executive Committee:

- Former Covered Market;
- Easemore Road – Community House – Options Appraisal;
- Annual Monitoring Report;
- Shopmobility – Business Case Review;
- Dial-a-Ride – Business Case Review;
- Single Equalities Scheme;

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Chair

- Worcestershire Enhanced Two Tier Programme;
- Council Tax and Business Rate Recovery Policy; and
- Procurement Strategy and Corporate Procedure Rules

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

Item 7 – Opt-in Chargeable Garden Waste Collection – Business Case

Item 9 – Fees and Charges 2010/11

198. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18th November 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

199. TENANT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY 2009-12

Members considered the introduction of the first Redditch Borough Council Tenant Involvement Strategy. The Strategy and Action Plan were welcomed by the Committee and it was noted that widespread consultation had been undertaken during its preparation.

The new model offered flexibility as to how the Council took forward the concept of partnership working with its tenants, with the scope for as many Panels as was required and based upon tenants' interests rather than geographical areas, for instance. Officers stressed that the thrust of the new Strategy was the development of services in partnership with the Council's tenants.

RECOMMENDED that

the Tenant Involvement Strategy and Action Plan be implemented.

200. VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANT APPLICATIONS 2009/10

The Committee received a report setting out the recommendations of the Grants Panel for utilisation of the remainder of funds from the 2009/10 financial year and proposing a figure for the grants budget for the following year. A further key element of the report was the proposal to enhance the role of the post of Grants Support Officer.

In response to questions from Members, it was clarified that the Grants Support Officer post would be a temporary post for a minimum of two years. Grant funding for this post from the County Council was, however, available for a period of five years.

Members were assured that the performance of the Citizen's Advice Bureau was of a level that provided no cause for concern to the Council and that the Council actively engaged with the Bureau in a performance management process.

Members were keen to demonstrate the work of organisations that benefited from Council grant-funding and it was suggested that this be show-cased in the Council's civic newspaper.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **the budget for grants to voluntary sector organisations for 2010/11 be set at £244,800;**
- 2) **the Grants Support Officer post role be enhanced to a full time post to provide support and strategic focus on the voluntary sector, and the associated costs arising from the development of this post be approved;**

and RESOLVED that

- 1) **grants be awarded to voluntary sector organisations as detailed in paragraphs 5.4 of this report, and**
- 2) **authority be delegated to the Head of Strategy & Partnerships to withdraw grant funding to Rainbow Redditch should the full funding not be obtained to complete the project.**
- 3) **the 'core funded' organisations be requested to complete a grant application for 2010/11 at a level not exceeding their current level of grant funding.**

(Prior to consideration of this item, and in accordance with the requirements of Section 81 of the Local Government Act 2000, Councillors Anderson (Play Council) and Clayton (Citizen's Advice Bureau) declared personal and prejudicial interests in view of their involvement in local third sector organisations and withdrew from the meeting.)

201. 'OPT-IN' CHARGEABLE GARDEN WASTE COLLECTION - BUSINESS CASE - AMENDED VERSION

Following the discussions that had taken place at the meeting on 18th November and the inability of the Committee to agree any definitive recommendations on the matter, Members considered an updated report from Officers that addressed the concerns that had been raised previously.

With regard to the means to be employed to discourage the placing of garden waste in grey bins, the Committee was advised that a similar approach would be used to that in existence during the early weeks of the Alternate Weekly Collection. The emphasis would be very much on education of residents and the promotion of composting and recycling. It was made clear that the promotion campaign would cover the entire Borough and not simply the pilot area for the garden waste collection service.

RECOMMENDED that:

- 1) the Council introduces a pilot chargeable 'opt-in' garden waste collection service in targeted areas of the Borough during the first half of 2010;**
- 2) depending on the outcomes and evaluation of the pilot, including financial implications, the effect on performance, publicity requirements, administration and environmental and operational impacts, the service be rolled out across the Borough during 2011/12;**
- 3) the pilot be carried out in the areas identified in the business case and that any additions or amendments to these areas be delegated to the Head of Environment in Consultation with the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Local Environment and Health;**
- 4) the service standard for the collection of garden waste (Appendix B to the report to the Committee) be adopted;**
- 5) the preferred option for the service, Option Two at a customer charge of £35.00 as detailed in the Business Case at Appendix A to the report to the Committee, be agreed;**
- 6) bins be provided free of charge;**
- 7) the Council's current collection policy relating to garden waste in grey bins be amended to coincide with the start**

of the new service to discourage garden waste being placed in grey bins;

- 8) the Council's current collection policy relating to the sale of orange sacks continues unaffected in the pilot areas but that residents purchasing orange sacks who live in the pilot areas will be provided with information about the new service, home composting and what happens to waste disposed of in orange sacks;
- 9) that the orange sack policy be further considered as part of the evaluation of the pilot and the update report to Members; and

RESOLVED that

- 10) an update report on the pilot service and recommendations for the roll out or cessation of the service be brought back to a future meeting of this Committee during 2010/11.

202. FECKENHAM ALLOTMENTS

Officers informed the Committee that it was recommended to provide a grant of £5,000 to Feckenham Parish Council / Feckenham Village Green Trust funded from savings in existing budgets without detriment to the service. There was a prospect of the allotments being lost should the money not be forthcoming, although the grant from the Council only made up a proportion of the total amount required.

Members discussed the possibility of protecting the Council's investment. Officers explained that legal means would be explored to ensure that the grant funding would not be jeopardised and undertook to try and provide details of this by the next meeting of Council. The Committee was informed that, as this was the only allotment site in Feckenham, the outlay was considered reasonable, particularly given the maintenance budgets available to other allotment sites in the Borough. The prospect of this funding being obtained through the Council's Grants process was raised, although it was conceded that timescales would not have made this a realistic possibility and there was uncertainty as to whether allotments would meet the criteria for receiving funding through this route in any event.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) a grant of £5,000 be made to Feckenham Parish Council / Feckenham Village Green Trust towards the purchase of the Feckenham Allotment Site; and

RESOLVED that

- 2) authority be delegated to the Head of Environment and the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services to negotiate the terms under which the grant is given; and
- 3) permission be given to vire £5,000 from existing Environment Services budgets as detailed at paragraph 3.2 in the report to fund the grant payment.

203. FEES AND CHARGES 2010/11

The proposed Fees and Charges for 2010/11 were considered by the Committee. Officers reported that the budget preparation guidelines had set the increase for the year at an average of 2% across a service.

It was noted that rises had not been applied in Leisure Services. It was explained that, as a result of the re-imposition of a VAT rate of 17.5% and the economic downturn, it was not considered sensible to raise Leisure Services charges further as this was an area of discretionary spending that tended to decline during difficult economic circumstances.

Members agreed that, as the Home Support Service was currently undergoing a review, it would be appropriate to increase the charges for this service by no more than the 2% average. Once the review was concluded the charges might be revisited.

Officers advised that the Fees and Charges detailed on pages 125-126 of the report to the Committee be deleted as the Council was no longer able to charge for these services and that the figure for garage rents on page 131 of the report was inclusive of VAT.

Officers undertook to get back to Councillor Hartnett with information regarding the fees levied for Magnets and DVLA enquiries (Taxi Licensing) on page 116.

RESOLVED that

- 1) other than in cases where:-
 - a) fees or charges are statutory;

- b) fees and charges are set externally (for example under the Model Scheme of Charges for Building Control fees & charges);
- c) the Council has delegated authority for Officers to vary fees and charges to take account of various circumstances; or
- d) fees and charges are established under separate processes, for example the setting of Taxi Fares, or service charges set to recover actual costs

the proposed fees and charges for 2010/11, where for each Service area/Directorate they achieve an overall increase of at least 2% in income budgets and the fees and charges proposals have been agreed with the relevant Portfolio Holders, the proposed fees and charges for 2010/11, as listed in the appendices to the report, be approved; and

RECOMMENDED that

- 2) in cases where fees and charges for 2010/11 have not been increased by an overall 2% as detailed in Appendix H attached to the report, the proposed fees and charges for 2010/11, as listed in the appendices to the report, be approved; and
- 3) in the case of the Home Support Service detailed in Appendix F, it be **RESOLVED** that

the charge for the service be increased by 2%, as per the budget preparation guidelines, to £10.50 per week.

204. CHURCH HILL DISTRICT CENTRE - REDEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Further to the decision of Council on 7th December to give in principle support to funding of the next stage of the redevelopment scheme, the Committee was asked to agree the recommendations of the Church Hill District Centre Members' Panel as to the selection of prospective development partners.

RESOLVED that

the selection of three parties to progress to stage 2, as detailed at Appendix A of the report to Council, be approved.

205. REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL ESTABLISHMENT

Members considered the update on the vacant posts held by the authority as at the end of October. It was noted that any post coming free at the present time was being made available for redeployment. The Committee was pleased to see that the Council was still showing a commitment to the use of apprenticeships.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

206. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 4th November 2009 be noted.

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

There were no minutes or referrals under this item.

208. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

209. ACTION MONITORING

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

210. 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 paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act, as amended.

**Options for Future Delivery of the Community Centre Service
(as detailed at Minute 211 below);**

**211. COMMUNITY CENTRE SERVICE - OPTIONS FOR FUTURE
DELIVERY**

(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 relation matters arising between the authority and employees of the authority.)

The Meeting commenced at 7.02 pm
and closed at 8.46 pm

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Chair