

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 9 July 2019

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Matthew Dormer (Chair), and Councillors Juliet Brunner, Greg Chance, Brandon Clayton, Julian Grubb, Bill Hartnett, Mike Rouse, David Thain and Craig Warhurst

Officers:

Kevin Dicks, Sue Hanley, Jayne Pickering, Guy Revans, Judith Willis, Jayne Baylis, Anna Wardell-Hill and Kath Manning

Committee Services Officer

Sarah Sellers

16. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

18. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader circulated a written update in respect of his announcements at the meeting.

19. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Tuesday 11th June 2019 be held as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

.....
Chair

20. REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL LOW EMISSION VEHICLE STRATEGY

The Environmental Policy and Awareness Officer and the Climate Change and Energy Support Officer presented a report in respect of introducing an Ultra Low Emissions Vehicle (ULEV) Strategy including a five year action plan. The policy was designed to assist in the development of the necessary infrastructure in light of the change over to wider use of electric vehicles.

It was explained that officers were seeking delegated authority to allow them to apply for central government grant funding to enable the installation of electric vehicle charging points.

In particular the Council would be seeking funding towards:-

1. On street residential charging point schemes. These would be relevant to streets where home charging of vehicles would not be possible, and instead drivers would require off-street parking facilities with access to charging points.
2. Workplace Charging Schemes. This funding would contribute towards the installation costs of electric vehicle (EV) charging points for employees.

It was noted that the aims of the strategy would also contribute towards improving air quality and the sustainable environment. There would also be links to the Council's commercialism agenda. Initial areas which could be focussed on included streets with no off street parking, for example terraced housing areas, and provision of charging points to serve the council's own housing stock.

Officers were mindful of the need for charging points to be compatible in the wider area and a North Worcestershire working group had been set up to promote a consistent approach.

In response to questions from Members officers clarified that:-

- A review of the Council's own vehicle fleet would be undertaken to find out what changes could be made to transfer to alternative fuels, and the potential costs and timescales.
- No immediate changes to the rules around licenced taxi vehicles were envisaged; however the installation of charging points would provide the infrastructure to support any future moves to encourage taxis to switch to alternative fuels.
- Clean Air Zones were being introduced to large cities such as Birmingham; there were no government plans for smaller conurbations such as Redditch.

- The aim of the strategy was to enable the Council to pursue initiatives using the government grant funding provided for this purpose.
- As this was a new area, there are no recognised models of how tenants would be charged for use of charging points; the solution might be to have an operator as an intermediary.
- At a national level, work was being undertaken to ensure that the grid could cope with the increasing demand that would be placed upon it arising from the transition to EVs.
- The designs of plugs and charging points were becoming more standardised as the technology developed, and officers would ensure that charging points installed were compatible to as wide a spectrum of users as possible.

Members acknowledged the importance of making preparations to establish the infrastructure required for EVs, as this was the way technology was progressing. To this end the report was welcomed and Members were supportive of the work officers were doing to apply for grant funding and install EV charging points.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1. The ULEV strategy and associated action plan attached at Appendix 1 be adopted.**
- 2. The Head of Environmental Services and Head of Community Services have delegated power to act following consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to apply for, accept, and administer (including in partnership with other local authorities) future funding in line with this strategy.**

21. TENANCY CONDITIONS FOR COUNCIL HOUSING TENANTS

Members considered a report providing an updated version of the Housing Tenancy Agreement and Conditions, and seeking Members approval to carry out a formal consultation with tenants on the document.

The Housing Services Manager and the Head of Community Services presented the report and highlighted the key areas. The Housing Tenancy Agreement had not been updated since 2007; the revised document was designed to give tenants a clearer understanding of the operation of tenancies, and in particular the responsibilities of tenants. Alongside the updated Housing Tenancy Agreement, officers were also updating arrangements for recharging of tenants, and a separate policy in this regard would be considered at Executive in September.

Members were referred to paragraph 5.8 of the report which summarised the key changes that were being made to the document.

During consideration of this matter the following points were noted:-

- That the updated Housing Tenancy Agreement would reinforce the responsibilities of tenants, and help to promote better care being taken of properties; in the recent past this had been area where there had been problems with the Council having to fund significant repair work, particularly upon the surrender of tenancies. It was hoped that the changes would foster more responsibility by tenants to care for their properties and this would have benefits for the community at large.
- That the ability of officers to ensure that the conditions of tenancies were complied with would continue to be challenging. The core process would remain the same and officers were intending to make greater use of powers under the Crime and Disorder Act, including the issuing of Community Protection Notices.
- That it was important to encourage good landlord and tenant relationships, and officers would have a role to support tenants in making sure that they were able to comply with the terms of their tenancies.

Members considered the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out at pages 2 to 3 of the agenda pack Additional Papers 1, and agreed that they should be added to the recommendation, and that subject thereto the updated document should be released for formal consultation.

RESOLVED that

- 1. The revised Housing Tenancy Agreement & Conditions attached at Appendix 1, be released for formal consultation with tenants.**
- 2. Subject to the outcome of the consultation, a final version of the Tenancy Agreement be brought back to Executive Committee for formal adoption.**
- 3. The tenancy agreement should be amended at Paragraph 9.20, to read “park vehicles in areas set aside for emergency vehicles and allocated disabled bays”.**

4. **The Council be more proactive with the enforcement, in particular, with regard to rubbish deposited in gardens, to ensure that gardens are kept tidy.**
5. **The “your rights” section be retitled “your rights and responsibilities”.**

22. FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2018/19 AND RESERVES

The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources presented the Finance Monitoring Outturn Report 2018/19 and in so doing highlighted the following points for the Committee’s consideration:

- Members were referred to the Revenue Budget Summary table on page 113 which showed that for some strategic purposes there had been a shortfall in income or overspend of costs and that for others there had been an underspend.
- Overall there had been an overspend of £183k on general services which would be balanced by drawing down £183K from reserves.
- The budget had set out to achieve unidentified savings of £1m, and taking into account the overspend savings of circa £800k had been achieved.
- The capital budget was underspent by just under £3m. The majority of the underspend would be carried forward to the following year to spend on any delayed projects. More work was planned with Heads of Service regarding the capital budget going forward.
- The General Fund Balance as at 31st March 2019 was £1.223m.
- There had been savings of £176k in the HRA resulting from additional rental income and lower than expected numbers of Right to Buys. However, this had been offset by higher costs for repairs resulting in a drawdown of £706k from reserves.
- The balance of reserves as at 31st March 2019 was £770k.

In response to questions from Members clarification was given as to the overspend regarding housing benefits detailed on page 114 of the agenda, and it was confirmed that the scheme for grants for residents for Energy Efficiency installation had now been restarted.

RESOLVED that

The Executive Committee note the current financial position in relation to revenue and capital budgets for the period April – March 2019 as detailed in the report.

RECOMMENDED that

1. **Approval of the movement of £122k in existing reserves as included in Appendix 2.**
 2. **Approval of the addition of new reserves of £3,385 as included in Appendix 2.**
 3. **Approve the carry forward to the 2019/20 capital programme of £2,943k as detailed in Appendix 4.**
 4. **Approval of an increase in the 2019/20 Capital Programme of £39k for Disabled Facilities Grants. This is due to the budget allocations having now been announced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). This will increase the available budget to £839k.**
 5. **Approval of an increase to the Capital programme 2019/20 of match funding from PCC for digital upgrade of CCTV infrastructure.**
 6. **Approval of an increase to the capital programme 2019/20 of £3k s106 monies for Borough wide open space improvements.**
 7. **Approval of an increase to the Capital programme 2019/20 of £33k for Arrow Valley park Safety Improvements. (£180k already approved at Budget 2019/20)**
 8. **Approval of an increase to the Revenue budget 2019/20 of £5k due to grant being received from Communities and Local Government towards High Street clean up and future community environmental enhancements and approval for BARN to administer the grant and any future monies received which have similar requirements to this grant, as per paragraph 3.4.**
- 23. HOUSING / HOUSING REVENUE IMPROVEMENT PLAN - PROGRESS REPORT**

The Deputy Chief Executive presented a report in respect of the progress that had been achieved with the implementation of the Housing Strategic Improvement/ Action Plan.

It was noted that Overview and Scrutiny had pre-scrutinised the report at its meeting on 4th July but had not put forward any recommendations.

During the presentation of the report the following matters were highlighted for Members' consideration:

- This was the second progress report in respect of the Housing Implementation Plan that had been presented to Members since December 2018.
- Whilst corporate actions were being progressed, the cultural changes would need a longer timeframe.
- Recruitment was ongoing for the two senior posts in the structure which were vacant, and it was anticipated that these would be filled by September.
- Pending appointment to those two posts the service reviews listed at paragraph 3.3.8 would be deferred.
- The Gas Business Case was being progressed and was due to be considered by Executive in October 2019. The Council remained compliant with its statutory requirements in this regard; the business case would look at options for future service delivery.
- The Stock Condition Survey was progressing and was anticipated to be 60% to 70% complete by November 2019.
- 43 out of the 50 strategic and operational measures approved earlier in the year had been placed on the Council's dashboard. The measures were being regularly monitored and reviewed.
- The procurement of the Housing Management IT system was progressing subject to a slight delay.
- Risk logs were being maintained and regularly reviewed, and Members were referred to the 4 areas categorised as high risk as set out on page 135 of the main agenda.

Members discussed the report in detail and thanked the officers for their continuing work in addressing the areas identified for improvement within Housing Services in 2017/18.

RESOLVED that

The contents of the report and progress reports be noted.

24. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Members were advised that there were no outstanding recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 6th June 2019 be noted.

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

There were no additional referrals from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or from any other Committees.

26. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

The following updates were provided:

- a) Constitutional Review Working Party – Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer

Councillor Dormer confirmed that the next meeting of the Constitutional Review Working Party would take place on 16th July 2019.

- b) Corporate Parenting Steering Board – Council Representative, Councillor Juliet Brunner

Councillor Brunner advised that the Corporate Parenting Steering Board was carrying out work with regard to young persons.

- c) Member Support Steering Group – Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer

Councillor Dormer confirmed that the Group had last met on Tuesday 18th June 2019. He urged any Councillors who had not yet returned their form for the Members IT survey to do so as soon as possible.

- d) Planning Advisory Panel – Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer

Councillor Dormer confirmed that there had been no meetings of the Planning Advisory Panel since the last Executive meeting.

27. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that

under S.100 (A) (4) 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 paragraphs 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act (information relating to financial or business affairs).

28. INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY

Members considered a report in respect of an investment opportunity in exempt session.

[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 during the course of the debate on the grounds that information would be revealed which related to the financial and business affairs of the local authority].

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 8.05 pm