

# Council

Monday, 22 July 2019

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## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillor Michael Chalk (Chair), and Councillors Salman Akbar, Joe Baker, Tom Baker-Price, Joanne Beecham, Juliet Brunner, Debbie Chance, Greg Chance, Brandon Clayton, Matthew Dormer, John Fisher, Peter Fleming, Andrew Fry, Julian Grubb, Bill Hartnett, Pattie Hill, Ann Isherwood, Wanda King, Anthony Lovell, Gemma Monaco, Mike Rouse, Mark Shurmer, Yvonne Smith, David Thain, Craig Warhurst and Jennifer Wheeler

### Officers:

Kevin Dicks, Claire Felton, Sue Hanley and Jayne Pickering

### Senior Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley

## 28. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chief Executive opened the meeting and explained that apologies had been received from the Mayor, Councillor Roger Bennett, and the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Gareth Prosser. In the absence of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor Councillor Michael Chalk was nominated to Chair the meeting.

An apology for absence was also received on behalf of Councillor Nyear Nazir.

### RESOLVED that

**in the absence of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, Councillor Mike Chalk be nominated to Chair the meeting of Council held on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2019.**

## 29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

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Chair

## 30. MINUTES

**RESOLVED** that

**the minutes of the meeting of Council held on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Mayor.**

## 31. ANNOUNCEMENTS

### a) The Mayor's Announcements

A written update in respect of the civic engagements that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor had attended since the previous meeting of Council was tabled at the meeting (Appendix 1).

During consideration of the Mayor's announcements Councillor Mark Shurmer highlighted the successful performance of Astwood Bank Cricket Club, which had been visited by the Mayor in recent months. The cricket club had reached the semi-finals in the National Village Cup and should the team be successful it would go on to play the final at Lord's Cricket Ground in London. Members congratulated the Astwood Bank Cricket Club on their success.

### b) The Leader's Announcements

The Leader extended his regards to the Mayor and on behalf of the Council wished him well in his recovery, following a recent stay in hospital.

### c) The Chief Executive's Announcements

The Chief Executive confirmed that he had no announcements to make on this occasion.

## 32. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE (PROCEDURE RULE 9)

There were no Questions on Notice for consideration at the meeting.

## 33. MOTIONS ON NOTICE (PROCEDURE RULE 11)

### Menopause Awareness

A Motion in respect of menopause awareness was proposed by Councillor Juliet Brunner. This was seconded by Councillor Peter Fleming.

In proposing the Motion Councillor Brunner explained that she had brought the subject forward for Members' consideration to

demonstrate the Council's commitment to women and men experiencing the menopause. Employers needed to ensure that they did not discriminate against staff who were experiencing the menopause. The menopause had been a taboo subject until recently but attitudes were changing and there was increasing understanding of the need to create the right working environment for people experiencing the menopause without causing embarrassment.

In seconding the Motion Councillor Fleming advised Members that the subject of the menopause was due to be addressed in schools during Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) lessons from 2020 onwards. By supporting the Motion Redditch Borough Council would be at the forefront of organisations in the public sector, in terms of providing support to those going through the menopause, and would enhance the authority's role as an equal opportunities employer.

Following the presentation of the Motion Members discussed the subject of the menopause and the action that would be required from the Council should the Motion be approved. Members were advised that a draft menopause policy for staff had already been produced and would be reviewed by relevant Officers in due course.

During consideration of the Motion reference was made to the subject of period poverty and the impact that this could have on young girls' attendance at school. Members were advised that Worcestershire County Council had been provided with a grant to address the issue of period poverty and this would be distributed amongst schools in the county.

**RESOLVED that**

**this Council acknowledges the need to raise awareness and increase the understanding of women's needs when they experience the Menopause. The Council should engender a working environment where female employees feel able to openly discuss how the menopause may be affecting them and their work, and request adjustments where appropriate without fear or embarrassment.**

**The Council's existing policies do not reflect the needs of women experiencing the Menopause, which can inhibit how women manage their symptoms, and hinder any support they may need in the workplace.**

**This Council resolves to introduce a specific Menopause policy to address this issue.**

## 34. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### Redditch Borough Council Low Emission Vehicle Strategy

Members were advised that there had been a few typographical errors in the strategy that had been provided for the consideration of Council. These errors would be removed from the final version of the policy before it was implemented.

During consideration of this item Members noted that there was a lot of action that needed to be taken by both the Council and other organisations to reduce vehicle emissions. In particular, Members noted that in the long-term the government would be banning diesel and petrol operated cars and drivers would need to move to using hybrid and electric vehicles. This would also have implications for the vehicles used by the Council, which would eventually need to be upgraded. However, Redditch Borough Council was one of the first local authorities to introduce a low emissions vehicle strategy and the content of the policy would enable the Council to advise interested parties on the subject. Furthermore, by adopting the policy the Council would be in a better position to apply for relevant grant funding from the government.

### Financial Outturn Report 2018/19

Members noted that at the end of the financial year for 2018/19 the Council's budget had been overspent by £183,000. This gap had been addressed by using funding from reserves. The Council's accounts would be published later in the week and at that point further detail would be made available to Members. The discussions concluded with Members noting that local government finances remained challenging moving forward.

### **RESOLVED that**

**the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2019 be received and all recommendations adopted.**

## 35. CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW WORKING PARTY

Members considered a report which detailed the background to three recommendations that had been made by the Constitutional Review Working Party during a meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2019. During consideration of this report the following points were highlighted:

- The reasons why a proposal had been made to change the rules in respect of which Members could Chair meetings of the Licensing Sub-Committee B.

- The potential to consult with the Licensing Committee in respect of the proposed change. Members noted that the purpose of the Constitutional Review Working Party was to review the constitution so it had been the most appropriate body to discuss this matter.
- The extent to which the rules in respect of chairing meetings of the Licensing Sub-Committee B needed to change.
- The fact that the Chair of the Licensing Committee had been consulted prior to the Constitutional Review Working Party.
- The recommendation in respect of the quarterly meetings between the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Leader of the Council and the ways in which this proposal differed from the recommendation that had been made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- The fact that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendation in relation to this meeting had received cross-party support and the need for the scrutiny process to remain apolitical.
- The potential for the Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Deputy Leader of the Council and the leader of the opposition to attend these meetings.
- The purpose of the meetings between the Leader of the Council and the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) **the Officer Code of Conduct be removed from the Council's constitution;**
- 2) **the terms of reference for the Licensing Sub-Committee B should be amended to enable all members of the Licensing Committee to Chair meetings of the Sub-Committee, subject to receiving appropriate quasi-judicial training; and**
- 3) **the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules should be amended to require the Leader of the Council to meet with the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis to discuss scrutiny matters.**

**36. URGENT BUSINESS - RECORD OF DECISIONS**

There were no urgent decisions to note at this meeting.

## 37. URGENT BUSINESS - GENERAL (IF ANY)

### Local Enterprise Partnership Membership

A motion in respect of the Council's membership of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) was proposed by Councillor Matthew Dormer. This Motion was seconded by Councillor Bill Hartnett.

In proposing the Motion Councillor Dormer explained that the matter needed to be considered as urgent business as a decision needed to be taken before the following meeting of Council, which was scheduled to take place in September 2019. Unfortunately, if a decision had not been taken by the Council in respect of LEP membership, it was possible that a decision would have been imposed on the authority. Members were informed that the Council's position continued to be a preference to remain in both the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP (GBSLEP) and the Worcestershire LEP (WLEP). However, should the Council be required to opt for membership of one LEP then the decision needed to be based on an understanding of the local economy and local businesses, which were more likely to work with businesses in Birmingham and the West Midlands rather than the rest of Worcestershire and therefore continuing membership of the GBSLEP rather than the WLEP would be the preferred option for Redditch.

In seconding the Motion Councillor Hartnett explained that the review of LEP membership had been taking place over the previous two year period. During this time it had been clear that Redditch had received good funding settlements from the GBSLEP, the various Chairs of the GBSLEP Board had visited the Borough and meetings of the Board had taken place in Redditch. As the GBSLEP represented the larger urban economies within the West Midlands region Councillor Hartnett suggested that it had greater economic influence than the WLEP. Therefore, should the Council be required to opt to remain a member of one LEP only, it would be in the economic interests of Redditch to remain in the GBSLEP.

Following the presentation of the Motion Members discussed the subject of the Council's LEP membership moving forward. There was general consensus that should the Council be required to choose between remaining a member of one LEP or another the local authority should opt to stay in the GBSLEP.

#### **RESOLVED that**

**Members will be aware that currently Redditch Borough Council sits in 2 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP (GBSLEP) and the Worcestershire LEP (WLEP).**

In 2018 the Government published the “Strengthened Local Enterprise Partnerships” review which sought to bring forward reforms to the leadership, governance and accountability of the 38 LEPs – this included the review of overlapping geographies and sought to remove them – meaning that Councils could only be a member of one LEP.

In the “Strengthened Local Enterprise Partnerships” review it stated that:

**“Government will:**

- Ask Local Enterprise Partnership Chairs and other local stakeholders to come forward with considered proposals by the end of September on geographies which best reflect real functional economic areas, remove overlaps and, where appropriate, propose wider changes such as mergers.”

The submissions made to Government in September 2018 highlighted that there was no agreement locally as to how this should best be resolved. The position of the GBSLEP and indeed this council has always been that overlaps should be allowed to remain and that Councils should be allowed to stay in 2 LEPs. This is because overlaps have been the solution to the local issue of economic geographies and administrative boundaries not aligning, rather than a problem in themselves. Unfortunately this position was not shared by the WLEP.

It has become increasingly clear that central government will insist upon the issue of overlapping geographies being resolved and if it isn’t resolved locally they will impose a solution possibly as soon as in the next few weeks.

The clear preference of this Council is still to remain in 2 LEPs, however we believe that if overlaps have to be resolved then this is a decision that needs to be taken locally by local elected officials rather than imposed on us.

Redditch is clearly part of the functioning economic geography for both GBSLEP and WLEP however without doubt the main economic geography is to the north and GBSLEP.

Therefore Council resolves that if overlaps have to be removed that Redditch Borough Council:

1. declares that GBSLEP is its preferred LEP as this reflects the functioning economic geography (in line with central government guidance on the basis for LEPs)
2. gives notice to WLEP of its intention to leave the partnership

# **Council**

**Monday, 22 July 2019**

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3. **writes to the Secretary of State to inform Central Government of the decision”**

The Meeting commenced at 7.05 pm  
and closed at 7.53 pm