

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 9 June 2020

MINUTES

Present:

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

Also Present:

Councillors Joanne Beecham, Nyear Nazir and Mark Shurmer

Officers:

Clare Flanagan, Sue Hanley, Mark Hanwell, Kevin Hirons, Bev Houghton, David Riley and Judith Willis

Senior Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley

119. APOLOGIES

The Chair introduced the meeting and explained how the Executive Committee would operate whilst meetings took place virtually.

There were no apologies for absence.

120. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

121. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair advised that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had considered the Parking Enforcement Task Group's final report on 4th June 2020. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had approved the recommendations detailed in the group's report, subject to a small amendment to the first recommendation, which required the Leader of the Council to formally request that the County Council should write to the Secretary of State for Transport to request additional funding in order to issue more Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs).

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Chair

Members were asked to note that one of the recommendations in the Task Group's report, Recommendation 4, had been divided into two for the consideration of the Executive Committee. This had occurred because, whilst the Council could determine whether to send a copy of the group's report to the County Councillors, only the County Council could determine whether the issue of road markings should be discussed at a meeting of the Redditch Highways Forum.

Reference was made to an extract from the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 4th June 2020, which set out the Committee's debate in respect of the Parking Enforcement Task Group's report. The Chair advised that, due to the short time between the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Executive Committee meetings, it had not been possible to send paper copies of the supplementary pack to Members, though the pack was available to view electronically on the Council's website or using the modern.gov app.

122. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Monday, 24th February 2020, be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

123. PARKING ENFORCEMENT TASK GROUP - FINAL REPORT

Councillor Mark Shurmer, Chair of the Parking Enforcement Task Group, presented the group's final report. The Committee was informed that during the review Members had gathered evidence from a range of sources including Council Officers, Worcestershire County Council, Wychavon District Council, which delivered the parking enforcement service in Redditch on Redditch Borough Council's behalf, and scrutiny reports issued by other Councils on the subject. The group had consulted with other Borough Councillors by circulating a survey, which had revealed that parking problems were frequently reported to Members representing wards across the Borough, particularly in respect of parking near schools. Each member of the group had also spent time accompanying a Civil Parking Enforcement Officer during a shift working in Redditch and this experience had been very informative.

The review of parking enforcement had been launched following discussion at a meeting of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee, where problems with parking in the Borough had been raised as a concern by Members. The group had initially focused

on the Council's contract with Worcestershire County Council to provide the parking enforcement service in Redditch. Members were asked to note that the service could not generate a profit that would benefit the Council; any excess revenue generated by the service over the costs of delivering the service had to be returned to Worcestershire County Council. However, there had been years where the service had operated at a financial loss and in those instances Redditch Borough Council had to cover the costs.

Members were advised that the group had proposed five recommendations all of which had been based on evidence gathered during the review. In presenting the group's recommendations to the Executive Committee one of these recommendations, recommendation 4 in the Task Group's report, had been presented in two parts; whilst the Executive Committee could determine to send paper copies of the group's report to the County Councillors representing a division in Redditch, only Worcestershire County Council could decide whether road markings should be discussed at a forthcoming meeting of the Redditch Highways Forum, as proposed by the group.

Following presentation of the report the Chair explained that, at a recent meeting of the Worcestershire Leaders' Board he had already mentioned the issue of parking enforcement and the need for more Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to be introduced for the zigzag lines located outside schools. There had been general consensus amongst the other Leaders present at the meeting that this would be a suitable subject for further discussion as there was the same problem across the county.

The Committee subsequently discussed the group's report in detail. The hard work of the group was recognised, and Members welcomed the majority of the group's findings. Members noted that this was an issue that had implications for all wards, as Members frequently received complaints about problem parking, and action to address this problem could help to enhance community safety.

However, during consideration of this item concerns were raised about the group's proposal that Redditch Borough Council should fund an additional Civil Enforcement Officer post dedicated to enforcement action around schools, to work term-time only. Whilst it was acknowledged that this recommendation was contingent on the group's first proposal being successfully implemented, whereby Worcestershire County Council would request and receive extra funding to introduce TROs for the zigzag lines outside schools, concerns were highlighted about the financial implications of the additional post for Redditch Borough Council. Members noted that a Civil Enforcement Officer's appearance could deter problem parking whilst they were visibly present which would mean that

there was no guarantee there would be sufficient income to cover the costs of the post.

In this context an amendment was proposed by Councillor Mike Rouse to recommendation two in the Task group's report (recommendation five in the covering report) as follows:

“that, subject to the successful implementation of Recommendation 1 above, and following a scoped trial period, Redditch Borough Council should consider funding an additional Civil Enforcement Officer post dedicated to enforcement action around schools to work term-time only.”

This amendment was seconded by Councillor Brandon Clayton.

In proposing the amendment Councillor Rouse explained that the action required through the amended wording would result in a trial being undertaken, whereby enforcement action would be focused on schools during the trial period. This would enable the Council to obtain data about the impact of the enforcement action and that data would inform any decision on whether to introduce an additional Civil Enforcement Officer in the future. He also noted that TROs could take significant time to introduce and this would provide an opportune time to undertake a trial as proposed in the amendment

In seconding the amendment Councillor Clayton raised concerns about the lack of data underpinning the proposal to introduce an extra Civil Enforcement Officer, as proposed by the group.

Members subsequently discussed the amendment and during this discussion the following points were raised:

- The need for Redditch Borough Council to work with Worcestershire County Council in respect of enforcement action around schools.
- The number of Officers already employed to deliver the parking enforcement service in Redditch, at 1.8 full time equivalent (fte) staff and their potential to participate in the proposed trial.
- The extent to which the existing Civil Enforcement Officers had capacity to undertake additional enforcement work around schools.
- The number of schools in the Borough and the arrangements that would need to be put in place to enable the Civil Enforcement Officers to undertake enforcement action at different schools during the trial period.
- The benefits of gathering data during a trial period in respect of issues such as the length of time that vehicles were parked

on double yellow lines. Members noted that should a vehicle be parked for less than three minutes on double yellow lines no enforcement action could be taken.

- The potentially positive impact that an additional Civil Enforcement Officer could have when working near schools.
- The concerns raised by some Members about the impact that not introducing an additional officer post could have on community safety near schools. Some Members noted that they were opposed to the amendment.
- The fact that some parking infringements were the police's responsibility to address. In these instances, Civil Enforcement Officers could not take enforcement action.

On being put to the vote the amendment was carried.

RESOLVED that

- 1) at a meeting of Worcestershire Leaders' Board, the Leader should raise the need to introduce Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) for all zigzag road markings outside schools in the county. As part of this process the Leader should formally request that Worcestershire County Council write to the Secretary of State for Transport to request that additional, ring-fenced funding be provided to Worcestershire County Council that can be invested in introducing these additional TROs;**
- 2) Officers from Redditch Borough Council work with Worcestershire County Council, local schools and West Mercia Police to develop a strategy to tackle problem parking near schools;**
- 3) all Worcestershire County Councillors representing a Redditch division should be provided with a copy of the group's final report to facilitate a discussion of this subject at a Redditch Highways Forum meeting;**
- 4) training in respect of parking enforcement arrangements in the Borough should be provided in a single training session each municipal year as part of the member induction programme. New elected Members should be offered the opportunity to shadow a Civil Parking Enforcement Officer;**
- 5) subject to the successful implementation of Recommendation 1 above, and following a scoped trial period, Redditch Borough Council should consider funding an additional Civil Enforcement Officer post**

dedicated to enforcement action around schools to work term-time only; and

RECOMMENDED

- 6) to Worcestershire County Council, that the need for road markings to be replaced as soon as possible after resurfacing work has been undertaken should be discussed at a forthcoming Redditch Highways Forum meeting.**

124. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY

The Head of Community and Housing Services and the Community Safety Manager presented a report outlining proposed amendments to the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

The key aims of the policy were to set out how the Council would tackle anti-social behaviour in the Borough. In many cases, the Council could take action to address anti-social behaviour, but it was not always possible for the Council to respond. The policy introduced a risk assessment that placed the victim at the centre of the process. As part of the process any personal issues impacting on victims could be identified. A reassessment process had also been incorporated into the policy, to occur in the eighth week after the initial intervention, to enable officers to assess the impact that any action taken had had on the reported anti-social behaviour. An equality impact assessment would also be undertaken as part of the process. This would enable officers to identify issues impacting on the perpetrator, though this did not necessarily mean that action would not be taken.

There were various forms of intervention available for Officers to use when handling anti-social behaviour incidents. In the past there had sometimes been a focus on taking legal action. However, in some instances, mediation might be more effective. The choice of action that would need to be taken in response to incidents of anti-social behaviour would need to be assessed on a case by case basis.

After the presentation of the report the following points were discussed by Members:

- The changes that had been made to the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and the legislative basis for these changes. Officers explained that amendments had been made to the policy to enable the Council to make use of powers set out in the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014.

- The costs of mediation services that were available for the Council to access and how these costs would be covered. Officers advised that mediation would be available in cases where one of the parties was a Council tenant. The parties concerned would be expected to pay, though it was possible that the Council would have to cover the costs if mediation was considered necessary and the parties concerned were unable to pay.
- The circumstances in which mediation could be useful. Members were advised that anti-social behaviour cases often built up over time until there was an impasse. Mediation could help to address these cases more effectively than legal action and was less financially costly.
- The length of time required for effective mediation and the fact that this would be charged on an hourly basis. Officers advised that, based on consultation with Housing Associations, it had been found that the length of time required for mediation to work effectively varied, though it was likely that the Council would not permit mediation to last beyond two hours.
- The availability of shuttle mediation, whereby the different parties were met by mediators on separate occasions rather than in the same room at the same time. This could be helpful in cases where the parties did not want to be in the same room together.
- The need to provide training to relevant officers in respect of the changes to the policy and new powers available to the Council.
- The process of consultation that had been followed by Officers when drafting the updated policy. The Committee was informed that relevant senior officers had had an opportunity to comment on the content of the report. Partner organisations, such as Housing Associations operating in the Borough, had been consulted about the process they followed when tackling anti-social behaviour.
- The connection between this policy and the potential for the Council to issue Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) to residents committing anti-social behaviour. Officers explained that the policy would support existing initiatives to introduce PSPOs. In the Officer Scheme of Delegation Officers had been delegated authority in respect of PSPOs and proposals to introduce these would start to be reported to Council for agreement in the autumn.
- The positive impact that changes to this policy would have on residents' quality of life.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the draft ASB policy is adopted; and**

- 2) **the Head of Community and Housing Services be given delegated authority to update and amend the policy in line with any new legislation and guidance, as and when required.**

125. MEMBERS' ICT AND BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE POLICIES

The ICT Transformation Manager and Portfolio Holder for Leisure, as the relevant lead Portfolio Holder for IT, presented the Members' ICT and Members' Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Policies for the Committee's consideration.

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

- Elected Members were all offered the opportunity to use ipads for their Council work at present.
- Unfortunately, the functionality of the ipads was limited. This had created difficulties during the recent lockdown as it had impacted on Members' access to virtual meetings. Members could also not access Microsoft software on their ipads.
- The amended Members' ICT policy proposed that Members should be offered two options; a Council laptop or Microsoft Surface Pro device or to use their own IT equipment, subject to agreeing to the Members' BYOD Policy.
- Under the proposals, Members would continue to provide their own broadband access, but the ICT team would provide support in relation to use of the Council's devices and software.
- All Council devices would need to be PSN compliant and scanning would be required from time to time.
- The cost of purchasing a single laptop would be £400 and a Microsoft Surface Pro device would cost £680 each.
- Additional equipment, such as a docking station to enable Members to view documents on a larger screen, might be required in some cases. These could cost approximately £250.
- The BYOD Policy provided Members with the flexibility to use alternative devices. Initially, as the Council continued to use blackberry software, only android and apple devices could be used under this policy, but when the Council migrated to a different system more alternatives could be used.
- Officers were working on a roll out of Office365 and Microsoft Teams which would provide greater flexibility and functionality for Members in the future.

- Two factor authentication might be required in future, in relation to the BYOD policy, to ensure compliance with security requirements.
- The ICT team would be able to support Councillors in use of the Council's software but would not be able to assist Members with management of their personal devices.
- Under the BYOD policy, the Council would retain control of Council data accessible from a personal device. Should Members lose the device or cease to be a Councillor, the data would be erased, though no personal data would be removed.
- In cases where a Councillor lost either their Council device or the personal device s/he used for Council business s/he would be responsible for notifying the ICT team so that the data could be erased.
- Any laptops purchased during the lockdown for Members' use would be paid for using funding from the Council's Covid-19 budget. This would enable Members to fulfil their responsibilities during the lockdown.

Following the presentation of the report Members discussed a number of points in detail:

- The need for Councillors to be able to access information in a timely manner and to participate effectively in virtual Committee meetings during the lockdown.
- The potential for Members to access Committee papers electronically from their Council devices using the modern.gov app. Some Members noted that they would like to continue to receive paper copies of agenda packs.
- The importance of effective IT devices to enable Members to both participate in decision making at Committee meetings and to manage case work in relation to their wards.
- The timescales for the roll out of Microsoft Teams at the Council. Officers advised that the aim was to provide all elected Members with access to Microsoft Teams by 18th June 2020.
- The timescales for the delivery of Office365 to Members. Officers explained that, following exchange integration, Members would be provided with access to Office365 by 6th August 2020.
- The two options available to Members and the extent to which Members could opt to both have a Council issued piece of equipment and to use his/her own IT equipment. The Committee was advised that Members could use both options for Council business.
- The training that would be available to Members. Officers confirmed that training would be provided and paid for within existing Council budgets.

- The need for ICT devices to be made available for new Members in the future and the potential financial implications for the Council.
- The potential for Councillors who already had access to their own ICT equipment to opt to use this in order to minimise the financial implications for the Council moving forward.
- The fact that some Councillors could not afford to purchase their own IT devices and would be reliant on the Council to supply appropriate equipment.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the proposed Member ICT Bring Your Own Device Policy be agreed and implemented; and**

RESOLVE that

- 2) the proposed Member ICT Policy be agreed and implemented for all Members and that the options within it be made available to Members.**

126. DISCRETIONARY BUSINESS GRANT POLICY

The Financial Support Manager presented the Discretionary Business Grant Policy for Members' consideration and in doing so highlighted the following for Members' consideration:

- The Government had introduced financial support for businesses, including grants for small businesses that were eligible for business rates relief, early in the lockdown for Covid-19.
- By the date of the meeting, £12.6 million grant funding had been distributed by the Council amongst local businesses.
- A number of local business which had been impacted by the lockdown had unfortunately not been eligible for funding under existing schemes.
- The government had recently announced that local authorities would be provided with an uplift, or additional funding, calculated on the basis of 5% of anticipated expenditure in response to Covid-19 by the Council as of 3rd May 2020. Redditch Borough Council had been allocated £724,000.
- This additional funding had been allocated to the Council in order to enable authorities to provide discretionary grant funding to businesses that had been ineligible to apply for grant funding under the previous schemes.
- In order to be eligible to apply for a discretionary business grant businesses needed to be able to prove they had been in business since at least 11th March 2020, had not previously

received grant funding related to Covid-19 and the business could not be in administration.

- The government had advised the Council that in the first place a number of small businesses should be prioritised for discretionary business grant funding including; market stall traders, small bed and breakfast providers, Voluntary and Community Sector organisations occupying premises where they were not required to pay business rates and businesses occupying shared premises.
- The Council had also identified businesses locally that, though impacted by the lockdown, had not previously been eligible to receive grant funding. These businesses would be allowed to apply for funding under the discretionary scheme.
- The Council had identified tiers of businesses, in terms of the extent to which certain businesses would be prioritised for funding over others. The Government's priority businesses would be the first to receive funding followed by other local businesses identified by the Council as in need of financial assistance.
- Following publication of the report a couple of adjustments had been agreed to the policy. This would include explicit reference to the fact that political parties would not be eligible to apply for a grant and funding would be provided to market traders on a pro rate basis.
- The Council would advertise the opportunity for eligible businesses to apply for a discretionary business grant for a set period. Applications would be assessed at the end of that period and then funding provided within five days of the decision.

After the report had been presented Members discussed a number of points in detail:

- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee's pre-scrutiny of the report, which had resulted in Members noting the report.
- The funding that had been allocated to Redditch Borough Council for the discretionary grant, as Members noted that two separate figures had been quoted in the agenda papers. Officers explained that a typographical error had been made in the policy and this would be amended.
- The deadline for applications to the discretionary business grants scheme. Officers advised that the deadline to apply would be 30th June 2020 and Officers would aim to start advertising the funding opportunity as soon as a final decision had been taken on the matter.
- The extent to which schemes at other authorities in Worcestershire had been taken into account when developing the Discretionary Business Grant Policy for Redditch. Officers advised that the policies developed by Wyre Forest District

Council and Wychavon District Council had been considered. There were a number of similarities between those Councils, though local priorities would vary.

- The potential for grant funding to be provided to taxi drivers and taxi firms. Members were informed that many taxi firms had a central office based in small premises and could be eligible for support through business rates relief.
- The action that would be taken to contact businesses that would be eligible to receive business grant funding and how they would be identified. The Committee was informed that a proactive approach would be adopted by Officers and, wherever possible, eligible businesses would be notified of the availability of the funding.
- Members concluded their discussions by thanking the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources, the Financial Support Manager and their team for their hard work in respect of this matter.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the guidance for awards of discretionary grants is adopted; and**
- 2) the Executive Director for Finance and Corporate Resources is authorised to finalise the guidance and to make other decisions in relation to the payment of grants, following consultation with the Chief Executive and the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management.**

127. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee was informed that there were no outstanding recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that required consideration.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 17th February 2020 be noted.

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

The Chair explained that there were no further recommendations requiring Members' consideration on this occasion.

129. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

The following updates were provided in respect of Executive Advisory Panels and other bodies:

- a) Climate Change Cross Party Working Group – Chair, Councillor Brandon Clayton

Councillor Clayton explained that no meetings of the group had been held during the lockdown, though it was possible a meeting would be convened in the next few months.

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

Councillor Dormer advised that a meeting of the Constitutional Review Working Party was due to take place on 14th July, 2020.

- c) Corporate Parenting Board – Council Representative, Councillor Julian Grubb

Councillor Grubb informed the Committee that a meeting of the Board had taken place the previous week. During this meeting the primary topic of conversation had been Covid-19 and reference had been made to the specific impact of the outbreak on foster care.

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

Councillor Dormer noted that during the Executive Committee meeting an update had already been provided by Officers in respect of the roll out of Office365 and Microsoft Teams. As a consequence, there was very little information to report to the Member Support Steering Group at this time and consideration would be given to cancelling the meeting of the group that was scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 16th June 2020.

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

Councillor Dormer informed the Committee that no meetings of the Planning Advisory Panel were scheduled to take place.