

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Ann Isherwood (Deputy Mayor in the Chair) and Councillors Salman Akbar, Imran Altaf, Karen Ashley, Tom Baker-Price, Joanne Beecham, Juliet Brunner, Michael Chalk, Debbie Chance, Brandon Clayton, Luke Court, Matthew Dormer, Aled Evans, Peter Fleming, Alex Fogg, Andrew Fry, Julian Grubb, Lucy Harrison, Wanda King, Anthony Lovell, Emma Marshall, Gemma Monaco, Nyear Nazir, Timothy Pearman, Mike Rouse, Craig Warhurst and Jennifer Wheeler

Also Present:

Mr I. Willcock

Officers:

Kevin Dicks, Claire Felton, Sue Hanley and James Howse

Senior Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley-Hill

25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Gareth Prosser and David Thain.

In the absence of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Ann Isherwood, chaired the meeting.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

27. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of Council held on Monday, 26th July 2021 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Mayor.

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Chair

28. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following announcements were made during the meeting:

a) The Mayor's Announcements

A list of the Mayor's civic engagements was circulated at the meeting (attached at Appendix 1 to the minutes).

b) The Leader's Announcements

The Leader explained that he had been attending a number of meetings of partnership boards in recent weeks, including a meeting of the West Midlands Combined Authority Board on Friday, 17th September.

There was no update available at the meeting in respect of the review of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). However, Members were asked to note that, following the appointment of a new Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, it was possible that the situation might change.

c) The Chief Executive's Announcements

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

29. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE (PROCEDURE RULE 9)

Two questions were submitted for consideration in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9.

Town's Fund Bid

Councillor Andrew Fry asked the Leader the following question:

"To ask the Leader of the Council if he will update the Council on the outcome of the Towns Fund Bid, including the response by the Towns Fund board to the further information required by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on the proposed demolition of the Town Centre Library and future Library provision. Further, will the Leader set out the proposals for public consultation on the future provision of Library Services in Redditch Town Centre."

The Leader provided the following answer:

"In early June 2021, the Government announced Redditch had been awarded £15.6 million through The Town Fund. The Heads of

Terms document was subsequently agreed by the Redditch Town Deal Board and returned to the Government on 29th June 2021.

Following the summer, Town Deal Board meetings and project prioritisation session documentation was sent to the Government on 27th August 2021 identifying the projects to be progressed. These were:

- Development of a new digital manufacturing and innovation centre
- Redevelopment of Redditch Library
- Town Centre public realm improvements

With regard to the information concerning the library, Worcestershire County Council, which was the owner/occupier of the library building, was represented on the Town Deal Board and was fully engaged with the project. Officers had established a project group with Worcestershire County Council's library and property services colleagues to discuss the needs of the service and infrastructure requirements. Site options for the relocation of the service and proposed consultation plan would be investigated and drafted through the project group and circulated at the appropriate time."

Councillor Fry subsequently asked the following supplementary question:

"I'm informed that the Library and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will be located in the Town Hall. The DWP previously contributed considerable income to Worcestershire County Council when it had offices based in the library. Will that money be provided to Redditch Borough Council if the DWP is located in the Town Hall?"

The Leader responded by explaining that no decision had yet been taken about the location of the library. Any decision on this subject would need to be taken by Worcestershire County Council, not Redditch Borough Council. Consequently, it was not possible to provide an answer to this question at the meeting.

Ipsley Meadow

Mr I. Willcock asked the Leader the following question:

"What is the designation of Ipsley Meadow in the Council's Local Plan. Is it or is it not Public Open Space?"

The Leader provided the following answer:

“Yes, the land is designated as Primarily Open Space in the Borough of Redditch Local Plan, which is one of the classifications of public open space.”

Mr Willcock subsequently asked the following supplementary question:

“How will the Council protect open space in future when the Council is looking to develop this space?”

The Leader responded by explaining that he could not comment on any live planning applications. It was also not possible to enter into a debate at the Council meeting in respect of this matter, when considering Questions on Notice. However, members of the public had an opportunity to comment on specific planning applications at meetings of the Planning Committee and could also register to speak further at meetings of other Committees.

30. MOTIONS ON NOTICE (PROCEDURE RULE 11)

There were no Motions on Notice for consideration on this occasion.

31. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector

Members discussed the proposed introduction of electrical safety standards for properties in the private rented sector. Under the terms of this policy, landlords would be required to act on any issues identified through electrical inspections. There would be penalties for non-compliance, set at £1,000 for a first offence and £3,000 for any subsequent offences.

During consideration of this item, questions were raised about the enforcement processes that would be in place to ensure compliance with the requirements. Members were informed that a full written response on this subject would be obtained after the meeting, though it was confirmed that enforcement measures would be in place. Members could assist in respect of this matter by helping to communicate the requirements in place to both tenants and landlords based in their wards.

Reference was also made to the penalties that would be imposed on landlords and clarification was requested about whether the penalties for subsequent offences would apply to landlords in relation to infringements for the same property or different properties. Members were informed that it was understood that that penalty for repeat offences related to the same property.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Tuesday 7th September 2021 be received and all recommendations adopted.

32. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL COMMITTEE ARRANGEMENTS AND CONSTITUTION

Members considered a report detailing the background to the proposed introduction of a constitution for the Holocaust Memorial Committee. In discussing this matter, Members noted that there was a tradition in Redditch of holding an Annual Holocaust Memorial event on Holocaust Memorial Day in January. The proposals would enable the Council to continue to facilitate a Holocaust Memorial event in future years.

The proposals were subsequently discussed in some detail. Members commented that the Council had started to work with local community representatives over 20 years' ago on holding an annual event marking Holocaust Memorial Day. Many Members had been involved in these arrangements for years and were proud of the fact that an event was held in the Borough observing Holocaust Memorial Day. This was not the case in all other areas in the region and consequently many people travelled from neighbouring areas to attend the Redditch Holocaust Memorial Day commemorations each year.

The introduction of a new constitution for the Holocaust Memorial Committee was welcomed. However, concerns were raised about the proposal for the Chair and Vice Chair of the Holocaust Memorial Committee to be Councillors who would be appointed at the Annual Council meeting in May. As an alternative, it was suggested that it would be more appropriate for the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee to be nominated at the first meeting of the Committee in the municipal year and that these roles should be taken by representatives of local community groups, rather than Councillors. Council was informed that this was not intended as a criticism of the Members who had been appointed as the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee, but it would help to ensure that the meetings were co-ordinated in an apolitical manner. Reference was also made to the proposals detailed in the constitution, whereby the Leader and relevant Portfolio Holder would receive copies of the minutes of the Committee meetings. The suggestion was made that the leader of the opposition should also be provided with access to copies of these minutes.

The issues that had been raised in respect of the proposals were subsequently discussed. Members noted that this was the first constitution to be developed for the Holocaust Memorial Committee and it had been in development for a period of 12 months. The

appointment of Councillors as the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee was an arrangement that had been in place for many years. As the Council was providing a small budget to support the delivery of a Holocaust Memorial Day event, it was suggested that it was reasonable to expect Councillors to be appointed as the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee.

Community groups would continue to be involved in organising the annual Holocaust Memorial Day event in Redditch. Reference was made to the inclusion of information about the protected characteristics and the seven principles of public life in the constitution, which demonstrated that the arrangements for organising the Holocaust Memorial Day event would remain inclusive. Members concluded by noting that it would be helpful for the minutes of the meetings of the Holocaust Memorial Committee to be published in the public domain, except where the subject of the discussions was considered to be exempt, so that all Members and other interested parties could view the matters discussed.

RESOLVED that

the new Constitution for the Holocaust Memorial Day Committee be adopted.

33. URGENT BUSINESS - RECORD OF DECISIONS

Members were informed that no urgent decisions had been taken since the previous meeting of Council.

34. URGENT BUSINESS - GENERAL (IF ANY)

There was no urgent business for discussion on this occasion.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 7.39 pm