

Council

14th June 2010

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Kath Banks (Mayor), Councillor Anita Clayton (Deputy Mayor) and Councillors Peter Anderson, Michael Braley, Andrew Brazier, Juliet Brunner, Michael Chalk, Simon Chalk, Greg Chance, Brandon Clayton, Jack Cookson, Andrew Fry, Carole Gandy, Adam Griffin, Malcolm Hall, Bill Hartnett, Nigel Hicks, Roger Hill, Gay Hopkins, Robin King, Wanda King, William Norton, Brenda Quinney, Mark Shurmer, Debbie Taylor, Diane Thomas and Graham Vickery

Also Present:

Michael Collins (Vice-Chair, Standards Committee) and Brian Warwick (Independent Member, Standards Committee)

Officers:

K Dicks, C Felton, S Hanley, J Pickering, S Skinner and A Walsh

Committee Services Officer:

I Westmore

1. WELCOME

The Mayor opened the meeting and welcomed all present.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Jinny Pearce and Derek Taylor.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. COMMUNICATIONS AND MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor advised that, since this was an extraordinary meeting of the Council, her communications and announcements would be reported at the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

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MAYOR, in the Chair

5. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader advised that she had no exceptional announcements to make.

6. CONSTITUTION - NEW EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS / WHOLE COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The Council considered a report that had been prepared in response to requirements set out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. There were two aspects to the report. The first was in respect of a requirement that every authority operating a Leader and Cabinet model change its executive arrangements in accordance with a statutory timetable. The second was an opportunity for a District Council that was subject to a scheme for elections by thirds to resolve to become subject to a scheme for whole Council elections.

A public consultation had been undertaken during late 2009 – early 2010 through a variety of means. The very low response rate to this consultation was reported, with only seven responses being received to each aspect of the proposals.

A discussion ensued on the relative merits of the Strong Leader Executive model and the elected Mayor and Cabinet Executive model. Members were in general agreement that they did not wish to see any further power vested with the Leader and the present Leader was in full agreement with this viewpoint. It was contended that the adoption of the Mayoral model would improve democratic input and public engagement given the move nationally towards personality politics. Mayoral systems had been adopted elsewhere in the country and, in some cases had been successful.

The contrary view was expressed that the retention of a Leader and Cabinet, with any necessary amendments to fulfil the requirements of the legislation, had served and would serve a Borough such as Redditch well. The adoption of a Strong Leader, together with elections by thirds, would result in a system very similar to that in existence at the present time. It would allow the Council the opportunity to change Leadership during the four year period of the term of office whereas a Mayor would retain office for the four year period irrespective of the views of Council. The poor consultation response was also taken as an indication that the public was unconcerned by the way that the Council was run, with its focus being more on the quality of service provision.

The overwhelming view of Members was that the retention of elections by thirds was the preferred option, notwithstanding the modest cost saving in moving to a system of whole Council elections. The present system provided a degree of stability to the

Council and allowed the electorate the opportunity to express its view on the policies being adopted by a ruling group on a regular basis. Councillors and prospective Councillors had the onus put upon them to engage with the electorate and those who had not proved themselves effective risked electoral loss.

Following the discussion a motion recommending adoption of the elected Mayor and Cabinet model was the subject of the following named vote in accordance with Standing Order 16:

Members voting FOR the motion:

Councillors Greg Chance, Jack Cookson, Andy Fry, Bill Hartnett, Robin King, Wanda King, Mark Shurmer, Debbie Taylor and Graham Vickery.
(9 votes)

Members voting AGAINST the motion:

Councillors Peter Anderson, Kath Banks, Michael Braley, Andrew Brazier, Juliet Brunner, Michael Chalk, Simon Chalk, Anita Clayton, Brandon Clayton, Carole Gandy, Adam Griffin, Malcolm Hall, Nigel Hicks, Roger Hill, Gay Hopkins, William Norton and Brenda Quinney.
(17 votes)

Members abstaining from voting:

Councillor Diane Thomas.

Accordingly the Motion fell and it was subsequently

RESOLVED that

- 1) the results of the consultation with the public and interested parties in respect of the two potential governance models and whole council elections be noted;**
- 2) a “New-style” Leader and Cabinet executive governance model be adopted, with effect from the 3rd day after the local elections in May 2011.**
- 3) the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services be authorised to make all necessary amendments to the Council Constitution to reflect the adopted model; and**
- 4) the Constitution be amended to include a provision to enable the removal of the Leader from office by ordinary resolution on notice and for the appointment of a new Leader.**

7. URGENT BUSINESS - GENERAL (IF ANY)

There were no separate items of Urgent Business for consideration at this meeting.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00pm
and closed at 7.59pm

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MAYOR, in the Chair