

Executive Committee

16th June 2010

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Carole Gandy (Chair), Councillor Michael Braley (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Peter Anderson, Greg Chance, Brandon Clayton, Malcolm Hall and Debbie Taylor

Also Present:

Councillors Brenda Quinney and Roger Hill
Michael Collins (Vice-Chair, Standards Committee)

Officers:

R Bamford, H Bennett, K Cook, K Dicks, C Felton, J Godwin, H Halls, S Hanley, G Lavery, J Pickering, G Revans, D Taylor, L Williams and M Williams

Committee Services Officer:

D Sunman

20. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

22. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair advised that the following item of business, scheduled on the Forward Plan to be dealt with at this meeting, had been rescheduled to a later meeting of the Committee:

- Shopmobility – Business Case Review

The Chair also advised that the following items of business, scheduled on the Forward Plan to be dealt with at this meeting, had been removed from the Forward Plan:

- Redditch Borough Council Logo

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Chair

- Core Strategy

The Chair also advised that she had accepted the following matter as urgent business:

Item 19 – REDI Centre – Options

23. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 26th May 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

24. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE MONITORING - QUARTER 4 - JANUARY TO MARCH 2010

The Committee received a report on the Council's performance for quarter 4 of the 2009/10 financial year.

Officers reported that data had been provided for 59 indicators for the quarter. Of these, 35 had improved in performance and 15 had declined. In addition 9 indicators had remained static but 6 of these were already at optimum performance and, therefore, no improvement was possible.

Members were informed that data from external sources had not been received for a further 12 indicators and that the time lag for receipt of such data could be up to 12 months. The performance indicator set for 2010/11 had been revised to exclude these long term indicators. However, they would be included in the Sustainable Community Strategy for future reporting.

Members noted the improvements in performance for the quarter.

Officers undertook to provide Councillor Chance with additional information on the percentage of Council Tax collected by the Authority in the year (BV009) and One Stop Shop: customer satisfaction (WMO 003) and all members of the Executive Committee with information relating to adult participation in sport and active recreation (NI008) both countywide and nationally.

RESOLVED that

the update on key performance indicators for the period ending March 2010 be noted.

25. QUARTERLY BUDGET MONITORING - QUARTER 4 - JANUARY TO MARCH 2010

The Committee considered a report which showed the Council's financial outturn for the 2009/10 financial year.

Members were informed that the report showed the actual income and expenditure for the 2009/10 financial year compared to the budgets for General Fund Services and the Housing Revenue Account.

Officers undertook to provide Councillor Chance with additional information regarding Item 8 Debit; and all members of the Executive Committee a breakdown of amounts held in specific reserves from public donations.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

26. QUARTERLY MONITORING OF THE BENEFITS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN - QUARTER 4 - JANUARY TO MARCH 2010

The Committee considered a report on the performance of the Benefits Service during quarter 4 of the 2009/10 financial year together with an update on progress against the Benefits Service Improvement Plan.

Officers reported that work was ongoing to progress the aims of the Improvement Plan in partnership with the Performance Development Team (PDT) from the Department of Work and Pensions. In particular the main areas to be improved were the management and collection of overpaid Housing Benefit, adopting a Take-Up Strategy, accessibility of the service and setting challenging service standards and performance targets.

Members were informed that the overpayment recovery process had been mapped and an Overpayments Officer appointed. Officers reported that overpayments amounting to £116,139 had been recovered during the quarter.

A Take-Up Strategy had been created that would help local people maximise their income. Consultation had taken place with stakeholders including Job Centre Plus, Age UK and the Citizens Advice Bureau and the strategy would be promoted through a variety of scheduled events and activities. Services users had been asked for their views on all aspects of service provision and closer

working relationships were being sought with voluntary and community organisations.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

27. QUARTERLY MONITORING OF FORMAL COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS - QUARTER 4 - JANUARY TO MARCH 2010

Members considered a report which provided them with an overview of the Council's Formal Complaints Procedure for quarter 4 of the 2009/10 financial year including the number of complaints at each stage of the procedure.

Officers reported on the number of compliments recorded during the period and also gave details of Ombudsman Enquiry response times and outcomes.

RESOLVED that

the report on complaints and compliments for the period January to March 2010 be noted.

28. PETITION SCHEME

The Committee received a report regarding the adoption of a Petition Scheme as required under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Members were informed that the rationale behind the reduction in the number of signatures on a petition to trigger a debate at full Council was to enable residents of the Parish of Feckenham to petition the Council.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the draft Petition Scheme in respect of non-executive functions be approved, as reported to the meeting, subject to an amendment to reduce the number of signatures required for a debate at full Council to 650; and that the number of signatures required to call a Senior Officer to account at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be amended to 200;**
- 2) the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services be designated as the Petitions Officer and instructed to report annually to Council on the operation of the Scheme;**

- 3) **the Monitoring Officer be instructed to incorporate the Petition Scheme in the Council's Constitution and make consequential amendments; and**

RESOLVE that

- 4) **the draft Petition Scheme in respect of executive functions be approved; and**
- 5) **a further report be submitted to the Committee in due course in respect of on-line petitions.**

29. WORCESTERSHIRE PARTNERSHIP - TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT

Members considered a protocol that had been agreed by all members of the Worcestershire Partnership with regard to future budget decisions.

The Chief Executive reported that significant reductions in public sector funding were anticipated in the future.

Members were informed that a protocol had been developed which sought to ensure that all Partners take a more joined up approach to budget decisions and their potential impact on communities.

RECOMMENDED that

the protocol be endorsed, as reported, subject to an amendment to paragraph 6 as follows:

'Engage with businesses and the third sector where appropriate and jointly consult stakeholders, including the public, before major decisions are made.'

30. CHURCH HILL - REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

[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 prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).]

31. BUSINESS CENTRE REVIEW

The Committee received a report on the performance of the business centres administered by the Council, which also clarified their role and purpose.

Members were informed that the report circulated to this Committee had included all amendments suggested following pre scrutiny by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 2nd June 2010 and outlined in the referral from that Committee.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the Borough Council continue to own / lease and manage all three business centres;**
- 2) the aim of the business centres be to provide accommodation and support to as many businesses as possible, having a mixture of maturities, that realises the Borough Council's wider objectives to boost enterprise and employment across the Borough as a whole (the business centres should be viewed as an economic development asset, contributing to the process of creating and supporting a prosperous community);**
- 3) in the first instance, Officers be instructed to improve occupancy and business support, with regard to helping start, grow, retain and attract businesses (Appendix 5 to the report outlines the matters which Officers shall consider in this respect);**
- 4) Officers be instructed to investigate how the business centres' expenditure can be reduced and income better maximised (Appendix 5 outlines the matters which Officers shall consider in this respect);**
- 5) the recommendations be reviewed in three years, as key factors may have changed in that time – or earlier if urgent matters arise which need examining or changing;**

RECOMMENDED that

- 6) further authority be delegated to the Head of Planning & Regeneration, Business Centres Manager, or Economic Development Manager, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, so that occupancy and performance can be improved, as detailed in Appendix 6 to the report.**

32. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 28th April 2010 be noted.

33. MINUTES / REFERRALS - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, EXECUTIVE PANELS, NEIGHBOURHOOD GROUPS ETC.

There were no minutes or referrals under this item.

34. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

In relation to the Independent Remuneration Panel, the Chair informed Members that a report on a proposal for a joint Worcestershire Panel was being prepared for submission to the next full Council meeting.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

35. ACTION MONITORING

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

36. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED that

under S.100 I 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(s) on the grounds that it/they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act, as amended.

Church Hill District Centre – Redevelopment Report (as detailed at Minute 30 below); and

**37. REDI Centre – Options update (as detailed at Minute 38 below)
CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES / REFERRALS (IF ANY)**

There were no confidential minutes of referrals.

38. REDI CENTRE - OPTIONS

[During consideration of this item Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. Councillor Chance queried the reason that the item had been designated as confidential and was advised that it contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of particular persons / organisations, disclosure of which was not in the public's or the Council's best interest. It was therefore agreed to exclude the press and public prior to any debate.]

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 9.05 pm

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Chair