



# Executive Committee

Tuesday, 28th June, 2022

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## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillors Nyear Nazir, Karen Ashley, Joanne Beecham, Peter Fleming, Lucy Harrison, Anthony Lovell, Emma Marshall and Craig Warhurst

### Also Present:

Councillor Sid Khan

### Officers:

Ruth Bamford, Peter Carpenter, Kevin Dicks, Clare Flanagan, Sue Hanley and Helen Mole

### Principal Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley-Hill Democratic Services

## 14. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Matthew Dormer.

In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair, Councillor Nyear Nazir, chaired the meeting.

## 15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

## 16. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

In the absence of the Leader, the Deputy Leader advised that there had been a number of supplementary packs issued for the meeting alongside the main agenda pack.

Members were asked to note that, whilst the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had pre-scrutinised the Redditch Town Centre Business Cases and Levelling Up Fund Bid 2 reports at a meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2022, there had been no recommendations made on these items. Therefore, there were no minutes from that meeting for the Executive Committee's consideration at this time.

Chair

**17. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED that**

**the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2022 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.**

**18. REDDITCH TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION BUSINESS CASES (REPORT TO FOLLOW)**

The Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services presented the Redditch Town Centre Regeneration Business Cases report for the Executive Committee's consideration. In presenting the report, it was highlighted that since the original publication of the report, updated copies of the business cases had been issued in supplementary packs for the meeting.

In 2019, the Government invited over 100 towns across the country, including Redditch, to submit bids for a town's deal. Redditch Borough Council had submitted a bid to the Government in January 2021 and had subsequently been awarded in excess of £15 million to spend on particular regeneration projects in the town centre. Whilst these projects had already been agreed, the business cases that had been developed for the report to the Executive Committee in June 2022 provided more detailed information about the actions proposed. The content of these business cases would inform summary statements to the Government, which were due to be submitted by 29<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

There were three key schemes in the Redditch Town Deal, which had previously been approved by the Government:

- Development of a Redditch Digital Manufacturing and Innovation Centre
- Redditch Town Centre Public Realm works
- Redevelopment of the Redditch Library site

In respect of the Redditch Library site, the Government had granted an extension for submission of a detailed business case setting out proposals for the future. This business case would be the subject of a further report to the Executive Committee, which was due to be considered in September 2022.

The business cases that had been submitted for the Executive Committee's consideration had been drafted by external consultants, Mott MacDonald. Based on the company's assessment, Members were advised that it was anticipated that the proposals for the Digital Manufacturing and Innovation Centre

would be over budget by approximately £2 million. Similarly, the estimated costs for the public realm works were likely to be over budget, although there were actions that could be taken to address this, including through use of funding from other sources to cover the total costs.

In line with Government requirements, a Redditch Town's Deal Board, comprising representatives of the public, private and voluntary and community sectors (VCS), had been established to consider proposals in respect of the Town's Deal. The Board had been consulted on the content of the business cases prior to the Executive Committee's consideration.

During consideration of this item, the Interim Section 151 Officer was invited to outline the financial implications of the proposals for Members' consideration. The Committee was advised that, as part of the process, the Section 151 Officer needed to be comfortable with and to approve the business cases in order for the submission to the Government to proceed.

Members were advised that £8 million had originally been allocated to the Digital Manufacturing and Innovation Centre. However, the business case had identified that £10 million would in fact need to be allocated to this project. This estimate included a figure of £1.5 million that had been allocated to contingency costs, including the potential impact of inflation on costs. As construction was not due to take place until 2024, it was not possible to provide an accurate assessment of the likely costs of inflation at that point as it was possible that this would change over the following two years. A similar challenge was likely to impact on Town Deal proposals that were submitted across the country.

All of these points had been taken into account by the Interim Section 151 Officer when assessing the costs. Discussions had been held with representatives of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) and, like other members of the LEP, the Council was eligible to bid for up to £1.5 million to help bridge the financial gap in this instance. There was also the potential for the Council to bid for grant funding from other external sources. In this context, the Interim Section 151 Officer was proposing that the Council should submit a bid to the GBSLEP to help fund the difference.

In relation to the projected overspend on the public realm works, it was anticipated that this would be lower than for the Digital Manufacturing and Innovation Centre. The proposals in relation to the public realm works actually comprised five separate business cases and would involve working with partner organisations, such as Worcestershire County Council. The projected overspend

included contingency figures to help cover the costs of areas of risk, including costs arising due to inflation. It was anticipated that the overspend in this instance could be addressed from other sources of funding and in the long-term these works could lead to a reduction in costs for partner organisations.

Reference was made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's pre-scrutiny of the report at a meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2022. Whilst the Committee had not made any recommendations on the subject, Members thanked Overview and Scrutiny Members for scrutinising the detail contained within the business cases.

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

- The potential for the proposals in respect of the Digital Manufacturing and Innovation Centre and public realm works to have a positive impact on the vibrancy of Redditch town centre.
- The future consultation that would be held with the public and other interested stakeholders in respect of the proposals, including in relation to the plans for the library.
- The opportunities provided by the introduction of a Digital Manufacturing and Innovation Centre, including to help upgrade aging urban assets and to improve skillsets in the local workforce.
- The need for action to be taken to help attract highly qualified young people to live and work in Redditch, including young people who had grown up in the Borough who had received a university education.
- The timescales for commencing the works proposed in the business cases, subject to Government approval. Members were advised that construction work on the Digital Manufacturing and Innovation Centre could not commence until 2024, when the police were scheduled to have demolished the site. However, prior to that date, other action could be taken, including submission of a planning application for the site.
- The deadline for completion of the works. Members were advised that the proposed works would need to be completed by the end of the 2026 calendar year.
- The potential for new businesses, including restaurants, to be established in Redditch town centre as a result of the public realm works.
- The extent to which the Council could work with the police to provide temporary accommodation once premises at Middlehouse Lane had been vacated. Officers confirmed that conversations were being held with the police in respect of this matter.

- The work that had been delivered by other local authorities that had been awarded funding in the Town's Deal process, including their plans in respect of accommodating rising inflation costs, and the potential for the Council to learn from this. Members were informed that a representative of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) attended meetings of the Redditch Town Deal Board and had confirmed that the Council was adopting a similar approach to other local authorities in respect of this matter. The impact of inflation on costs would also need to be taken into account by the Government as part of the process.
- The delays that had been experienced in terms of the issuing of the business cases for the report. Officers apologised for the delays and explained that these business cases had been reissued to ensure that Members had access to the most up to date information prior to submission on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2022.
- The hard work of officers in preparing the report and liaising with the external contractors over the content of the business cases.

## **RESOLVED that**

**the two business cases, in respect of the Digital Manufacturing and Innovation Centre and the Public Realm works are endorsed and used to present summary information for submission to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on the 29th June 2022.**

### **19. LEVELLING UP FUND 2 BID (REPORT TO FOLLOW)**

The Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services presented a report on the subject of an opportunity available for the Council to submit a bid for Levelling Up funding. Members were informed that Levelling Up was a national scheme and the funding that had been made available for bidding purposes formed part of a second round of Levelling Up support available across the country. Councils would be bidding in competition with other local authorities for up to £20 million under this scheme.

The Council would need to ensure that a bid was submitted to the Government by 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022 for this process. Additional work would be required on the bid prior to that date. Therefore, Officers were requesting delegated authority to continue to work on this matter up to the date of submission.

The Council was required to be able to demonstrate to the Government in the bid process that additional funding from alternative sources would be made available alongside the Levelling Up funding. This needed to represent 10 per cent of the

funds allocated to the Council by the Government under the scheme.

There were different categories of local authority that could bid for funding as part of the Levelling Up process. In this round of Levelling Up, Redditch Borough Council had been allocated a category one applicant and it was hoped that this would increase the likelihood that the bid would be successful for the Borough.

There were three key themes in relation to which bids could be made:

- Transport
- Regeneration and the town centre
- Heritage and culture

Officers were anticipating that the Council was likely to have a greater chance of successfully bidding for Levelling Up funding under the regeneration and town centre theme. However, there were lots of plans for regeneration in the town centre that were already being progressed under the Redditch Town Deal process. Therefore, Officers were suggesting that a bid should be made in relation to regeneration of Matchborough and Winyates District Centres. A lot of preparatory work and research had already been undertaken in respect of researching potential options for the regeneration of these two district centres and this would help to inform the submission to the Government. By contrast, whilst it was recognised that Woodrow District Centre would also benefit from regeneration, there had been less preparatory work undertaken in respect of this location and for that reason, Officers were not proposing that it should be included in the focus of the bid.

Members subsequently discussed the proposals in the report in detail and in doing so welcomed the suggestion that funding should be allocated the regeneration of Matchborough and Winyates District Centres. Reference was made to the regeneration of Church Hill District Centre some years previously and Members concurred that this had been successful and had had a positive impact in the local community. However, Members commented that the regeneration of Matchborough and Winyates District Centres would be more complex to achieve, particularly in Winyates, where there was a mixture of businesses, Council houses and owner-occupied properties in the district centre. Officers acknowledged the complexity of the issues in this instance and confirmed that consultation would need to be undertaken with interested local stakeholders as part of the process.

Questions were raised about the timeframes in which the regeneration work in the district centres could commence and be

completed, should the bid be successful. Officers explained that, at the date of the meeting, there was some uncertainty about when the Government would make a decision about the bid. However, successful Councils would be required to complete expenditure by the close of 2025, although it was recognised that not all tasks would have been completed by this point. Should the Council's bid be successful, more detailed plans would be presented for Members' consideration on the proposals later in the 2022/23 municipal year.

During consideration of this item, Members commented that the regeneration of Matchborough and Winyates District Centres had the potential to transform the local community in a positive manner. Unfortunately, instances of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in the district centres had been reported to Members by the public and Members commented that it was important to address this, including through urban design and management of the local environment. Officers explained that there were various options available to Councils that could be adopted to help design out crime, as well as the fear of crime, and this could be taken into account as part of the regeneration process. Reference was also made to the positive impact that Safer Streets funding had already had in Woodrow District Centre and Members commented on the potential for this to be extended to Matchborough and Winyates District Centres as part of the regeneration plans.

In concluding the discussions, Members thanked Officers for their work preparing the bid for Levelling Up funding in the second phase of the scheme.

#### **RESOLVED that**

- 1) the Executive Committee endorse this report and give delegated authority to the Executive Director for Resources (S151 Officer) and the Head of NWEDR (Senior Responsible Owner), following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Development, Commercialism and Partnerships, to submit a Levelling Up Fund bid, as detailed in the report;**

#### **RECOMMENDED that**

- 2) the Executive Committee recommends to Council a match funding contribution of 10% of the total bid value up to £2 million; and**
- 3) should the submitted LUF Bid be successful, that Executive Committee recommends to Council the allocation of 10% of the total bid value in the Capital Programme.**

# Executive Committee

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Tuesday, 28th June, 2022

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm  
and closed at 7.22 pm