



Council

Monday, 10th October, 2022

MINUTES

Present:

Councillors Ann Isherwood, Tom Baker-Price, Salman Akbar, Imran Altaf, Karen Ashley, Joe Baker, Joanne Beecham, Juma Begum, Michael Chalk, Brandon Clayton, Luke Court, Matthew Dormer, Peter Fleming, Alex Fogg, Andrew Fry, Lucy Harrison, Sharon Harvey, Sid Khan, Anthony Lovell, Emma Marshall, Nyear Nazir, Timothy Pearman, David Thain and Craig Warhurst

Officers:

Peter Carpenter, Kevin Dicks, Claire Felton and Sue Hanley

Principal Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley-Hill

38. **TRIBUTES TO HER ROYAL MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II, INCLUDING OBSERVING A PERIOD OF SILENCE IN HER MEMORY**

At the start of this item, the Mayor led the Council in paying tribute to Her Royal Majesty Queen Elizabeth II by observing two minutes' silence in her memory.

Following this period of silence, the Mayor paid respects to Queen Elizabeth II on behalf of Redditch Borough Council. The Mayor commented that the monarch had been an exemplary Queen, who had been the only Head of State that many citizens had ever known. There had been various events in recent weeks that had been held in honour of Queen Elizabeth II and the Mayor commented that it had been a privilege to attend these on behalf of the Council and local community.

Members subsequently paid their respects, and in so doing commented on the 70 years in which Queen Elizabeth II had been the monarch and Head of State. Reference was made to Queen Elizabeth II's role both in relation to Great Britain and as the head of the Commonwealth and the many people and places that she had visited during her long reign. Members also commented on their personal experiences of meeting Queen Elizabeth II over the years, including through attendance at official garden party events at Buckingham Palace. Consideration was also given to Queen

Chair

Elizabeth II's visit to Redditch in 1983, which Members noted as a local highlight of her reign.

39. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Juliet Brunner, Bill Hartnett, Joanna Kane and Gareth Prosser.

40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

41. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of Council held on Monday 25th July 2022 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Mayor.

42. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following announcements were provided at the meeting:

a) The Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor advised that she had already attended 120 civic engagements during the year, including 55 events since the previous Council meeting. A full list of engagements was tabled at the meeting (Appendix 1).

The highlights had included:

- The Astwood Bank in Bloom event on 29th July 2022, where Astwood Bank had been awarded a gold medal.
- An event celebrating the 60th anniversary of Jamaican Independence.
- An event celebrating the 75th anniversary of the declaration of independence for Pakistan, which had been attended by a consul from the Pakistani Embassy.
- The League of Friends of the Alexandra Hospital's Annual Meeting, on 25th August 2022, which had emphasised the hard work of volunteers.
- An awards event at Inspire Craft Centre, held on 4th September 2022, which had also raised the important role of volunteers in the community.
- An event on 10th September 2022 unveiling the book of condolence in memory of Queen Elizabeth II.

- Collecting the Proclamation from Worcester for the announcement of the accession to the throne of His Royal Majesty King Charles III on 11th September 2022 and reading this at the bandstand in Redditch town centre.
- Taking the book of condolence in memory of Queen Elizabeth II to care homes throughout the Borough.
- Attending Queen Elizabeth II's memorial event at Worcester Cathedral on 18th September 2022.
- Attending Church Hill Big Local's Candlelit Vigil, also on 18th September 2022.
- Attending an event at the Bomford Hill Peace Memorial on 8th October 2022.

b) The Leader's Announcements

The Leader confirmed that it had been a privilege to attend many of the events that had been held in memory of Queen Elizabeth II over recent weeks alongside the Mayor. In addition, he had attended meetings of the Redditch Business Improvement District (BID) Board and the Redditch Town's Board. In addition, a Redditch Youth Business Board had been established to involve young people in planning economic development in the Borough. Meetings of this Board had taken place at Trinity High School and St Augustine's High School in recent weeks and these had been well attended and successful events.

During consideration of this item, Members welcomed Councillor Juliet Barker Smith, who had been elected to represent the Headless Cross and Oakenshaw ward at a byelection held on 1st September 2022. Members also thanked all the candidates who had participated in this byelection.

c) The Chief Executive's Announcements

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

43. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE (PROCEDURE RULE 9)

One Question on Notice was considered in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9.

Agency Staff and Consultants

Councillor Joe Baker asked the Leader the following Question on Notice:

“Can the leader tell us the following costs that the Council is paying for:

1. Part time and full time agency staff
2. Part time and full time consultants?”

The Leader responded by explaining that over the first six months of the 2022/23 financial year, the Council had spent £805,000 on agency staff. Nothing had been coded to consultancy costs in the financial year. The £805,000 costs had been spread across 15 different agencies. The highest figure had been spent on Matrix where £529,000 had been spent on 20 full time placements and 13 part time placements. Of the remaining £276,000, £165,000 had been spent on 13 agencies covering 18 placements and £111,000 was spent on the Interim Head of Finance and Customer Services.

Members were asked to note that vacancy rates in 2021/22 were running at 15%, and although the Council had a new recruitment package that had been rolled out in the summer, recruitment remained a Council wide issue.

Councillor Baker subsequently raised a supplementary question, in which he commented that £805,000 was a lot to spend on agency staff and he asked the Leader what action was being taken to address this. He also requested an opportunity to meet with the Leader to discuss the figures further.

The Leader commented that he would be happy to meet with Councillor Baker to discuss the matter further. Council was informed that recruitment to local government was challenging for many Councils across the country, not just Redditch Borough Council. Whilst agency staff were still being recruited, the number of agency staff employed by the authority had declined in recent months. Members were also asked to note that the use of consultants could be cheaper in some contexts than directly employing staff over a period of years.

44. MOTIONS ON NOTICE (PROCEDURE RULE 11)

The Mayor advised that two Motions on Notice had been received prior to the Council meeting.

Armed Forces – Defence Employer Recognition Scheme

Councillor Joe Baker opened the debate in respect of this item by explaining that, prior to the Council meeting, but following publication of the agenda, he had spoken to the Leader about a previous Motion on Notice on this subject that had been agreed in November 2021. As that Motion had been approved and there

remained action that needed to be taken to implement the Motion, it had been agreed that the latest Motion should be withdrawn to provide Officers with time to take the necessary action.

Vote of Thanks to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

Councillor Peter Fleming submitted the following Motion on Notice for Members' consideration:

“As the curtain falls on the Elizabethan Age, and we now embark on the Carolean reign of Charles III, I feel it is right to propose a vote of thanks to Her Late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. Over the decades we in Redditch have marked many happy moments in our country's proud history, in which the Queen has been at the centre. From Her Majesty's visit to Redditch in 1983 to this year's Platinum Jubilee celebrations, Redditch has witnessed the very best moments of Her Late Majesty's reign. For over 70 years, Her Late Majesty made good her vow of service to the peoples of the Commonwealth and United Kingdom. It has been this unswerving commitment to duty that I hope will continue to inspire us all as we continue to serve the people of this Borough.

God Save the King.”

The Motion was proposed by Councillor Peter Fleming and seconded by Councillor Karen Ashley.

Members discussed the proposed Motion and in doing so commented that this could be detailed in a letter to the Royal Household. Members could then choose whether to sign up to the letter.

RESOLVED that

as the curtain falls on the Elizabethan Age, and we now embark on the Carolean reign of Charles III, I feel it is right to propose a vote of thanks to Her Late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. Over the decades we in Redditch have marked many happy moments in our country's proud history, in which the Queen has been at the centre. From Her Majesty's visit to Redditch in 1983 to this year's Platinum Jubilee celebrations, Redditch has witnessed the very best moments of Her Late Majesty's reign. For over 70 years, Her Late Majesty made good her vow of service to the peoples of the Commonwealth and United Kingdom. It has been this unswerving commitment to duty that I hope will continue to inspire us all as we continue to serve the people of this Borough.

God Save the King.

45. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Council considered recommendations that had been made at meetings of the Executive Committee held on 26th July and 6th September 2022 on the subjects of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Budget Framework Finance and Performance Quarter 1 Monitoring Report respectively.

Budget Framework Finance and Performance Quarter 1 Monitoring Report

The recommendations from the Executive Committee on the subject of the Budget Framework Finance and Performance Quarter 1 report were proposed by Councillor Karen Ashley and seconded by Councillor Matthew Dormer.

During consideration of this item, an amendment was proposed by Councillor Joe Baker to the wording of the second recommendation from the Executive Committee. This amendment, which was seconded by Councillor Sid Khan, was as follows:

“The Asset Disposal Strategy is approved for implementation, subject to all disposals being recommended to Council for approval.”

In proposing this amendment, Councillor Baker explained that a lot of matters were determined by the Executive Committee. However, there were some subjects, particularly those which were important to the community, which he felt needed to be debated by Council and he suggested that this included the disposal of assets.

Consideration was given to this amendment and during the debate in respect of this matter, Officers explained that the disposal of Council assets was an Executive function under relevant legislation. However, Members' interest in the subject of asset disposal had been noted and the process for involving more Members in discussions about the disposal of assets could be investigated further.

Reference was made to the extent to which Members could identify the potential for a decision to be taken on the disposal of particular assets. Members noted that all items due for consideration by the Executive Committee were advertised on the Executive Committee's Work Programme, copies of which were published every month on the Council's website. In addition, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee could identify items from the work programme for pre-scrutiny, including items involving the disposal

of assets, and this provided an opportunity for other Councillors to inform the Executive Committee's deliberations on the subject.

On being put to the vote the amendment was lost.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meetings of the Executive Committee held on 26th July and 6th September 2022 be received and all recommendations adopted.

46. POLITICAL BALANCE REPORT

Members considered a report detailing the political balance and allocations to Committees that had been agreed by political group leaders, following the byelection in the Headless Cross and Oakenshaw ward in September 2022.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the Political balance of the Committees of the Council be agreed, as detailed in the report;**
- 2) appointments by political group leaders to the places on each Committee etc. be noted;**
- 3) the Council appoints Chairs and Vice-Chairs to the Committees and other bodies as detailed in the report; and**
- 4) appointments to Working Groups and other bodies as detailed in the report be agreed.**

47. OUTSIDE BODY APPOINTMENTS

Members considered a list of nominations to a number of outside bodies (Appendix 2).

RESOLVED that

- 1) Councillor Alex Fogg be appointed the Council's Armed Forces Champion;**
- 2) Councillor Nyear Nazir be appointed to the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Partnership Assembly; and**
- 3) Councillor Nyear Nazir be appointed lead Member on the Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board and**

Councillor Lucy Harrison be appointed as named substitute on this Board.

48. URGENT BUSINESS - RECORD OF DECISIONS

The Mayor advised that there had been two urgent decisions taken since the previous meeting of Council. These decisions had been made on the subjects of Plot 5, Middlehouse Lane, Redditch and the Levelling Up Parks Fund.

49. URGENT BUSINESS - GENERAL (IF ANY)

There was no general urgent business for consideration on this occasion.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.03 pm