



Executive Committee

28th July 2010

MINUTES

Present:

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

Also Present:

Councillors Kath Banks, Andrew Brazier and Andrew Fry

REDI Centre Users' Deputation:

Ms Justine Bailey, Ms Heidi Gregg, Ms Julie Hughes, Mr Tony Powell and Ms Mandy Bonehill

Officers:

C Flanagan, S Hanley, T Kristunas, S Powell, L Tompkin, K Cook, H Halls and K Dicks

Committee Services Officer:

I Westmore

39. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

41. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

Item 6 – REDI Centre Options

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Chair

42. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 16th June 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

43. DEPUTATION - REDI

A deputation comprising Ms Justine Bailey, Ms Mandy Bonehill, Mr Tony Powell, Ms Heidi Gregg and Ms Julie Hughes, users of the REDI Centre was received by the Committee. Ms Hughes, Ms Bailey and Mr Powell spoke for the deputation.

Ms Hughes spoke primarily in her capacity as a trainer at the Centre. She discussed the courses provided at the Centre and the contention that had sometimes been made that certain courses had been insubstantial. She expressed the opinion that the value of the service provided should not be underestimated and that many users would not be able to find similar provision in the local area.

Mr Powell approached the issue as a local businessman who had used the Centre to fill a training need and could see the value of the service provided to others in a similar situation. The business benefit of retaining REDI was stressed with the Centre being put forward as an important means by which local people could make a success of their careers and lives.

Ms Bailey noted that Redditch had higher unemployment and lower educational attainment than other parts of the County. There was stated to be a need for a service that bridged the gap between unemployment and the gaining of employment. The place of REDI as a training centre as opposed to a college with minimum entry requirements was stressed. The Centre was very much seen as a place that catered for those in society who were in need.

The Chair thanked the deputation for their attendance and contribution.

44. REDI CENTRE OPTIONS

The Committee received a presentation and report detailing the options that were being put forward for consideration for the future provision of service at the REDI Centre. The options included a retention of the current service, complete closure of the service and two models for partial service retention. It was noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had recommended that the service be retained in its current form.

An impassioned discussion ensued, with Members speaking in generous terms of the quality of the staff at the Centre and the service they had provided over the years. It was noted that the management of the Centre had been inadequate in recent times and that the service had repeatedly come before Members as a potential budget saving for a number of years, adding to the sense of instability. The predominant argument put forward was that the Council was in an increasingly difficult financial position and that, with the withdrawal of funding for adult education, grant funding for the Centre was rapidly diminishing. It was proposed that the Council could no longer expect the Council Tax payers of the Borough to fund a service which was entirely discretionary and that the money might be more equitably spent to the benefit of a greater number of people.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the extension of the existing Learndirect contract only to August 2011 be noted and that Officers appraise Members at the earliest opportunity of the sustainability of the contract beyond this point; and**

RECOMMENDED that

- 2) Option 4 as set out within the report (relocation of the Learndirect activity to another Council facility) be approved, subject to this being endorsed by Learndirect and that Officers be instructed to liaise with Learndirect as to validation and inspection arrangements; and**
- 3) the costs of proceeding with Option 4 (£90,000) be approved, these costs to be met from revenue balances.**

45. COUNCIL PLAN 2010 / 2013

Members received the Council's Plan for 2010/13 following the earlier deferral of the Plan at a previous meeting.

The Plan had been amended to take account of Members' comments at that previous meeting. The Committee generally agreed that the Plan was more robust than in its previous incarnation. It was suggested that many of the concerns at the lack of specificity in the targets was the result of the performance indicators themselves being inadequate.

Officers confirmed that the Council would still be judged on a performance management, resource management and value for

money basis, despite the recent ending of the Comprehensive Area Assessment regime.

RECOMMENDED that

the Council Plan 2010-2013 attached at Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

46. REVIEW OF REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL'S SHELTERED HOUSING STOCK FURTHER TO COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Officers presented a report that included the outcome of the consultation that had been undertaken following approval of the Older Person's Housing and Support Strategy, the proposed categorisations that had flowed from the consultation and a draft action plan.

The Strategy and the work that had followed on from it sought to reduce the number of void properties, create a housing stock that better met residents' needs and that increased the numbers of properties for general let.

Officers reported the recommendations that had been made in respect of the report by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. One of the key recommendations was the proposal that further consultation be carried out. It was noted that very extensive consultation had been carried out to date and further contact with residents was already being undertaken in respect of the proposed categorisations set out within the report. However, the suggestion was again made that, given the vulnerability of the residents, it would be beneficial to have more detailed consultation with those most affected by the proposals.

The creation of a new post to deal with the transitional arrangements was welcomed and the Committee considered the report itself to be comprehensive and worthy of plaudits. Members agreed after some discussion that, in response to the sensitivity of the situation, the measures be approved in principle, thereby allowing time for Officers to visit the various schemes and explain to the residents the implications for them of the categorisations prior to full implementation of the recommendations.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the preferred options, as determined by Members, from those detailed in Appendix 2 to the report, Section 6.1 (Option A) and 6.2 (Option A) be approved;**

Section 6.1 – Chiltern House (Option A)

- That the current older persons' accommodation is returned to general let and that officer's should meet with residents to discuss a sensitive approach to allocations.
- Any current tenants affected would be offered an appointment with a dedicated officer to discuss any concerns and all relevant options would be explored.
- If this option is approved Officers could give further consideration to converting the communal lounge into a disabled flat or into other rentable accommodation to increase revenue.
- That further consideration be given to converting the bedsit which is currently used as an office for the Home Support Officer into rentable accommodation to increase revenue.

Section 6.2 – Auxerre House (Option A)

- Opportunity for first time buyers under the Homebuy Scheme. HomeBuy enables social tenants, [key workers](#) and first time buyers to buy a share of a home and get a first step on the housing ladder.
- 2) **up to £166,150.00 capital funding be approved for the essential improvement works recommended in Appendix 4 to the report;**
 - 3) **up to £31,051.00 revenue funding be approved to fund the post of Older Persons' Housing Liaison Officer as detailed in Appendix 16 to the report and paragraph 5.5 of the report; and**

RESOLVED that

- 4) **based on the findings of the Review of Redditch Borough Council's Sheltered Housing, the categorisation of properties on page 11 in Appendix 2 to the report be adopted;**
- 5) **Officers undertake a feasibility study to consider the findings and options in Appendix 2, Section 6.3 to the report and bring a further report back to Councillors within 12 months of this report;**
- 6) **if approved, the above changes only be applied to new tenants from 1st April 2011 with all current residents**

- keeping their tenancy, even if they do not meet the new criteria;
- 7) the revised Action Plan in Appendix 3 be adopted;
 - 8) an additional member of staff be appointed for twelve months to facilitate the change management process (see Appendix 16); and

subject to the Council's approval of the budgetary implications, as specified separately above, and consequent adjustment of the Capital Programme
 - 9) approval be given to incur up to the expenditure detailed in 2) above for the purposes detailed in the report, in accordance with Standing Order 41; and
 - 10) the proposals detailed above be agreed in principle but that the matter be deferred to 8th September 2010 Executive Committee to enable residents' feedback on the specific proposals to be sought.

(The categorisation of properties on page 11 in Appendix 2 to the report is included as an appendix to the minutes)

47. CAPITAL PROGRAMME OUTTURN 2009/10

Members considered a report that set out the actual expenditure and funding of the capital programme during the preceding financial year. With reference to a recent meeting of the Committee, Officers were requested to advise Members of the reason for Job No. C1204 (Asbestos General) not showing as an overspend. The Committee was informed that the additional funding agreed by the Executive had already been incorporated into the figures.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

48. WRITE OFF POLICY UPDATE

Members received a report within which was an amended policy for the write off of debts due to the authority.

A recent LEAN processing review had identified a number of weaknesses in the existing system for writing off debts, primarily in the sense that the process was unnecessarily lengthy and required too many levels of authorisation.

Members agreed that the regular reports received by the Committee in this regard served little useful purpose.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **the draft Write Off Policy included at Appendix 1 to the report be approved; and**
- 2) **the Council's Scheme of Delegation to Officers and Financial Regulations be amended accordingly.**

49. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee considered the minutes of a recent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In respect of the minute dealing with the Worcestershire Hub Review, Officers undertook to speak to Councillor Anderson following the meeting regarding the reliability of the system for forwarding external telephone calls to specified extension numbers via the Council's telephone system.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 23rd June 2010 be received and noted.

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

There were no minutes or referrals under this item.

51. SHARED SERVICES BOARD

The Committee received the minutes of the last meeting of the Shared Services Board. Consideration of the minutes took place in public as the reasons for making the information exempt had ceased to be relevant given the passage of time.

RESOLVED that

Shared Services and Transformation Programme

- 1) **the use of the WMIEP (West Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership) Systems Thinking change methodology for the transformation of service areas be approved;**
- 2) **the proposed programme of service areas to be considered for Shared Services / Transformation**

between the two Councils, as detailed in the Appendix to the report, be approved; and

Procurement

3) the proposal be agreed in principle.

52. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

Meetings of the following Panels were to be arranged in the near future:

Grants Panel; and

Leisure Contracts Advisory Panel.

It was noted that meetings of the Planning Advisory Panel had been suspended whilst information from central Government on the future direction of planning policy was awaited.

It was also noted that the Independent Remuneration Panel responsibilities had transferred to a Council-wide body.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

53. ACTION MONITORING

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

54. URGENT BUSINESS - RECORD OF DECISIONS

Members noted an Urgent Business decisions which had been approved in accordance with Standing Order 36, namely:

Invalid Planning Applications- Introduction of Administration Fee
(UB Reference 483)

RESOLVED that

the matter be noted.

Executive Committee

28th July 2010

The Meeting commenced at 7.00pm
and closed at 9.53pm

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Chair

5. PROPOSED CATEGORIES

Older Persons Supported Housing – Category A

(see Section 9.1 for properties proposed for inclusion in this category)

- suitable for persons aged **65** years old and over **and** who have an assessed support need.
- acceptable safety and security standards
- in a suitable, desirable location
- suitable internal and external access, including a lift to upper floors
- suitable communal facilities
- eligible to join in communal activities at other schemes

Older Persons Housing – Category A Bungalows

(see Section 9.1 for properties proposed for inclusion in this category)

- suitable for persons aged **60** years old and over with preference to be given where there is an assessed support need or to a wheelchair user
- also suitable for adults aged 18 years old and over with severe mobility issues or wheelchair users
- suitable internal and external access
- eligible to join in communal activities at other schemes

Older Persons Housing for Over 60's– Category B

(see Section 9.2 for properties proposed for inclusion in this category)

- suitable for persons aged **60** years old and over with or without an assessed support need
- priority would be given to wheelchair users in level access units
- priority would be given to those with an assessed support need
- upper floors (where appropriate) only suitable for mobile persons
- priority to move to lower floors would be given to current upper floor residents if criteria met
- suitable internal and external access
- eligible to join in communal activities at other schemes

Over 50's Housing – Category C

(see Section 9.3 for properties proposed for inclusion in this category)

- suitable for persons aged 50 years old and over with or without an assessed support need
- upper floors (where appropriate) only suitable for mobile persons
- priority on lower floors would be given those with mobility issues
- priority to move to lower floors would be given to current upper floor residents if criteria met
- eligible to join in communal activities at other schemes

