

Council

9th August 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, Jinny Pearce, Brenda Quinney, Mark Shurmer, Debbie Taylor, Derek Taylor and Diane Thomas

Also Present:

Mrs Deborah Andrews (Chair, Standards Committee), Mr Michael Collins (Vice Chair, Standards Committee) and Ms Justine Bailey (Petition Organiser, REDI Users)

Officers:

J Bayley, T Buckley, A Marklew, J Pickering, K Dicks, S Hanley, C Felton and J Staniland

Committee Services Officer:

I Westmore

22. WELCOME

The Mayor opened the meeting and welcomed all present. In the absence of the Mayor's Chaplain, the Mayor led the Council in prayer.

23. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Graham Vickery.

24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

.....
Chair

25. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 28th June 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

26. PETITION - REDI USERS

A petition had been received in accordance with the new constitutional arrangements and Petition Scheme which contained well in excess of the 400 signatures required to trigger a Council debate.

The 'petition organiser', Ms Justine Bailey, took advantage of the opportunity to address the Council on the subject of the options being considered for the future of the services being provided at the REDI Centre and the Centre itself. Members were asked to reconsider Recommendation 1 to the Executive Committee on 28th July as the preferred option. It was contended that the service provided at the REDI Centre still retained its uniqueness and could not readily be obtained elsewhere in the region. The lack of effective management in recent years was highlighted as was the lack of opportunity for the Centre staff to effect a restructure which could have improved the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the service.

Following presentation of the Petition, the Council proceeded to consider the recommendations of the Executive Committee in respect of the REDI Centre Options, these matters having been promoted on the agenda with the agreement of the Mayor owing to the widespread public interest in the issue.

The relative merits of maintaining the service as it presently existed and relocating the Learndirect service to an alternative venue and ceasing to provide the additional services currently provided were discussed at some length. An amendment to the effect that the Council continue to fund and maintain the service as currently provided was the subject of the following named vote in accordance with Standing Order 16:

Members voting FOR the amendment to the motion:

Councillors Greg Chance, Jack Cookson, Andrew Fry, Bill Hartnett, Robin King, Wanda King, Mark Shurmer, Debbie Taylor and Diane Thomas.

(9 votes)

Members voting AGAINST the amendment to 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, Roger Hill, Gay Hopkins, William Norton, Jinny Pearce, Brenda Quinney and Derek Taylor.

(17 votes)

Members abstaining from voting:

Councillors Malcolm Hall and Nigel Hicks.

Accordingly, the amendment to the Motion fell and it was

RESOLVED that

- 1) **Option 4 as set out within the report to the Executive Committee (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**
- 2) **the costs of proceeding with Option 4 (£90,000) be approved, these costs to be met from revenue balances.**

27. COMMUNICATIONS AND MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor's communications and announcements were considered under the following headings:

a) Good Scrutiny Awards

The Mayor informed the Council of the recognition that had been achieved at the recent Good Scrutiny Awards ceremony organised by the Centre for Public Scrutiny. After being short listed for the Community Influence Award, the Council had received a commendation from the judges for the review that had been undertaken into the Neighbourhood Groups.

Former Councillor Phil Mould attended as he had been the Chair at the time of the review into the Neighbourhood Groups and recognition was given of his role in this achievement, as it was for the efforts of the Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer, Jess Bayley.

b) Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor advised that, since the last meeting of the Council she had attended numerous engagements. The Mayor drew particular attention to the presentation of the Queen's Award for Enterprise to the local firm, Vectric that she had attended.

c) Forthcoming events

The Mayor advised that she was due to attend at least seven forthcoming events.

d) Urgent Business

The Mayor advised that she had accepted two additional items of "Urgent Business":

Item 8 – Leader's Questions; and

Item 9 – Notice of Motion – Value Added Tax (VAT).

The Mayor had also accepted one late report:

Item 10 – Executive Committee Decisions Notice, 28th July 2010.

28. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader's Announcements were considered under the following headings:

a) Queen's Award for Innovation

Members were advised that, further to the Mayor attending the presentation of this award, the Council had subsequently written a letter of congratulation to Vectric on the occasion of receiving this commendation.

b) POD Installation, Palace Theatre

Members were encouraged to visit the POD developed by the Romany Roots organisation and which was currently installed at the Palace Theatre. It contained details of local history, local communities, groups, organisations and individuals of note within the community, both past and present.

c) Additional matters

During consideration of the Leader's announcements, the Mayor gave permission for a member to make a further announcements in relation to a matter not listed on the agenda.

d) Pakistan Floods

Given the scale of the natural disaster that had befallen Pakistan in recent days, the Council agreed that a message of sympathy be extended to the local Pakistani community.

29. LEADERS' QUESTIONS

The Leader responded to a question which had been submitted by Councillor Mark Shurmer too late to meet Standing Order deadlines but had been accepted by the Mayor for consideration at the meeting on the basis of its broad public interest, namely:

"Policy Commitments"
(Cllr M Shurmer)

Councillor Shurmer's question related to what impact the Leader envisaged she would have had by May 2011 and where the policy commitments of her Group to the electorate were to be found.

The Leader responded that the policy commitments of the Group were to be found in the Party's manifesto, a copy of which had been forwarded to the Minority Party, and that the manifesto had set out what she had believed they would be able to deliver, given the current economic climate. The Leader also communicated a list of what she had already achieved and what she hoped to achieve.

30. NOTICES OF MOTION

A Notice of Motion had been submitted by Councillor William Norton in respect of Concessionary Bus Fares. The Motion was withdrawn on the evening by Councillor Norton.

A second, urgent Notice of Motion had been submitted by Councillor Robin King too late to meet Standing Order deadlines but had been accepted by the Mayor for consideration at the meeting on the basis of its broad public interest. The Motion was in respect of Value Added Tax (VAT). This was seconded by Councillor Mark Shurmer.

The Council was advised that the projected rise in VAT in January 2011 would impact most seriously on those who were least able to pay and it was contended that the rise in VAT could not be seen as an equitable measure given the regressive nature of the tax. The view was expressed from elsewhere within the Council that current economic conditions left little option other than to increase Government revenue through means such as an increase in VAT. The latter view prevailed and it was duly

RESOLVED that

the Motion not be approved.

31. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Members received the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 16th June 2010 and the decisions notice of the meeting held on 28th July 2010.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 16th June 2010 be received and adopted; and**
- 2) the decision notice of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 28th July 2010 be received and all recommendations approved, subject to:**

in respect of Minute 46 (Review of Redditch Borough Council's Sheltered Housing Stock further to Community Consultation) it being further RESOLVED that the decisions relating to that item be amended to read as set out below:

- 1) the proposals detailed below 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;**
- 2) the preferred options, as determined by Members, from those detailed in Appendix 2 to the report to the Executive Committee, 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.
- 3) **up to £166,150.00 capital funding be approved for the essential improvement works recommended in Appendix 4 to the report;**
 - 4) **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;**
 - 5) **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;**
 - 6) **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;**
 - 7) **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;**
 - 8) **the revised Action Plan in Appendix 3 be adopted;**
 - 9) **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

- 10) approval be given to incur up to the expenditure detailed in 3) above for the purposes detailed in the report, in accordance with Standing Order 41.

32. REGULATORY COMMITTEES

The Council received the minutes of recent meetings of the Audit and Governance, Licensing, Planning and Standards Committees. Officers undertook to highlight the amendments made to the Members' Planning Code of Good Practice to the Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors, the originators of the model Code.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the minutes of the meetings of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 15th June and 29th June 2010 be received and adopted;
- 2) the minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 19th July 2010 be received and adopted and all recommendations approved;
- 3) the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committees on 22nd June and 20th July 2010 be received and adopted; and
- 4) the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 30th June 2010 be received and adopted and all recommendations approved.

33. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTER - TAXI FORUM

The Council considered a proposal to establish the existing Taxi Forum on a more formal basis and appoint a Chair from among its number.

RESOLVED that

Councillor Juliet Brunner be appointed Chair of the Taxi Forum, to serve until the next Annual Meeting of the Council.

34. URGENT BUSINESS - RECORD OF DECISIONS

There were no Urgent Business decisions under Standing Order 36 for consideration at this meeting.

35. URGENT BUSINESS - GENERAL (IF ANY)

There were no separate items of Urgent Business for consideration at this meeting other than as included earlier in the minutes.

Council

9th August 2010

The Meeting commenced at 7.00pm
and closed at 9.45pm

.....
Chair