

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Joe Baker (Chair), Councillor Sharon Harvey (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Juliet Barker Smith, Bill Hartnett, Wanda King, Jen Snape, Jane Spilsbury, Monica Stringfellow and Ian Woodall

Also Present:

Councillors Brandon Clayton, Claire Davies, Matthew Dormer, Joanna Kane, David Munro, Rita Rogers and Craig Warhurst

Officers:

Peter Carpenter, Mike Dunphy, Claire Felton and Sue Hanley

Democratic Services Officers:

Jess Bayley-Hill

79. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

80. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

81. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader highlighted that a number of papers, including three supplementary agenda packs, had been published for consideration at the meeting. These packs included copies of the Council Tax Resolutions, Appendix A to the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2025/26 to 2027/28 and an additional recommendation in respect of the MTFP that had been added following publication of the main agenda.

In addition, the supplementary packs detailed recommendations arising from a recent meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group (BSWG) at which the MTFP had been considered. On behalf of the Executive Committee, the Leader thanked the BSWG for their hard work and noted that their recommendations would be considered alongside that report.

Chair

82. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 4th February 2025 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

83. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

The Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager presented the Local Development Scheme for Members' consideration.

The Committee was advised that the Local Development Scheme detailed the proposed timetable for the production of the new Local Plan for the Borough of Redditch. This report had been produced in response to instructions arising from the Government as part of the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Councils had been notified of the need to produce new Local Development Schemes within a period of 12 weeks of receiving this instruction. Councils that failed to do so were at risk of Government intervention. The Local Development Scheme addressed key timelines and deadlines but did not specify the proposed content of the future Local Plan.

New guidance was due to be issued at a national level in respect of Local Plans by the end of the year. In the meantime, Officers were in the process of preparing an issues and options appraisal, which would be subject to public consultation. This was the first stage of the Local Plan process and would provide an opportunity for local residents and other interested stakeholders to contribute their views and aspirations for the Local Plan. There would be two more rounds of consultation before the Council reached the public inquiry stage.

Following the presentation of the report, Members discussed the content and in doing so noted that the timeframes available to Councils to produce a Local Plan had changed under the new NPPF. In previous years, Councils had been able to dedicate years to work on the preparation of a Local Plan. Under the new arrangements, the Council would have 30 months to prepare a Local Plan. In this context, it was suggested that the authority might require additional external support to help complete the preparation of the new Local Plan according to deadline.

Reference was made to the opportunities that would be available for Members to contribute to the development of the new Local Plan. The Committee was informed that meetings of the Planning

Advisory Panel (PAP) would take place throughout the process and all Members could attend these meetings. The Leader therefore urged Members to attend PAP meetings in order to help shape the Local Plan.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) Redditch Borough Council Local Development Scheme 2025 is approved as the Council's programme for plan-making, effective as of 24th February 2025; and**
- 2) delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director for Planning and Leisure Services, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration and Governance, to approve updates to the Local Development Scheme as required.**

84. COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTIONS 2025/2026 (TO FOLLOW)

The Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer presented the Council Tax Resolutions 2025/26 for the Committee's consideration.

Members were informed that the report provided instructions to Officers to issue Council Tax requests to local residents on behalf of precepting authorities. The Council had set the Council Tax Base in January 2025 at 26,455.5 for the whole area and for dwellings in the Parish Precept area of Feckenham Parish at 382.1. The Council Tax Resolutions focused on the next stage of the Council Tax setting process and an increase of 2.99 per cent, in terms of Council Tax contributions for the Borough, was being proposed in line with Government assumptions.

The Committee was reminded that the Council collected Council Tax on behalf of Redditch Borough Council as well as other precepting authorities. The other precepting authorities were Worcestershire County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service. The proportion of Council Tax payments from households paid to each precepting authority differed, with Worcestershire County Council receiving the largest contribution.

Following the presentation of the report, Members discussed the content and in doing so noted that a 2.99 per cent increase to Council Tax in 2025/26 would be necessary in order to address a pressure in the budget arising from a 0 per cent increase in the Local Government Settlement for the authority.

RESOLVED to NOTE that at meetings of the Executive and Council held in January 2025, Members approved the calculated Council Tax Base 2025/26 as:

- (a) for the whole Council area as 26,455.5 [item T in the formula in section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the “Act”)]; and**
- (b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a parish precept relates; this being Feckenham Parish, as 382.1.**

RECOMMENDED

- 1) the calculation for the Council Tax requirement for the Council’s own purposes for 2025/26 (excluding parish precepts) as £7,345,116.71;**
- 2) that the following amounts be calculated for the year 2025/26 in accordance with sections 31 to 36 of the Act:**
 - a) £50,366,2909.22 being the aggregate of the amounts which the council estimates for the items set out in section 31A(2) of the Act (taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils) (i.e., gross expenditure)**
 - b) £42,961,173.51 being the aggregate of the amounts which the council estimates for the items set out in section 31A(3) of the Act. (i,e gross income);**
 - c) £7,405,116.71 being the amount by which the aggregate of 1.2.2(a) above exceeds the aggregate of 1.2.2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in section 31B of the Act);**
 - d) £279.91 being the amount at 1.2.2(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1.1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year (including parish precepts);**
 - e) £60,000 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Feckenham Parish precept) referred to in section 34(1) of the Act;**
 - f) £277.64 being the amount at 1.2.2(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 1.2.2(e) above**

by Item T (1.1 (a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no parish precept relates;

- g) £434.67 being the amount given by adding to the amount at 1.2.2(f) the amount for the special item relating to the parish of Feckenham 1.2.2(e), divided by the amount in 1.1(b) above;
- h) the amounts shown below given by multiplying the amounts at 1.2.2(f) and 1.2.2(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band, divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwelling listed in band D, calculated in accordance with section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwelling listed in different valuation bands

Valuation Band	Proportion of Band D paid	Feckenham Parish Council Precept £	Parish of Feckenham Total £	All other parts of the council area £
A	6/9ths	104.69	289.78	185.09
B	7/9ths	122.13	338.07	215.94
C	8/9ths	139.58	386.37	246.79
D	1	157.03	434.67	277.64
E	11/9ths	191.93	531.27	339.34
F	13/9ths	226.82	627.86	401.04
G	15/9ths	261.72	724.45	462.73
H	18/9ths	314.06	869.34	555.28

- 3) that it is to be noted that for the year 2025/26, Worcestershire County Council, Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia, and Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with section 40 of the Act for each category of dwelling in the Council's area as indicated below:

	Valuation Bands							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Worcestershire County Council	1,077.14	1,256.66	1,436.19	1,615.71	1,974.76	2,333.80	2,692.85	3,231.42
Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia	194.33	226.72	259.11	291.50	356.28	421.06	485.83	583.00
Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority	68.15	79.50	90.86	102.22	124.94	147.65	170.37	204.44

- 4) that having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 1.2.2(h) and 1.2.3 above, that Redditch Borough Council in accordance with sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 hereby sets the amounts shown below as the amounts of Council Tax for 2025/26 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings;

Valuation Band	Proportion of band D paid	Parish of Feckenham Total £	All other parts £
A	6/9ths	1,629.40	1,524.71
B	7/9ths	1,900.95	1,778.82
C	8/9ths	2,172.53	2,032.95
D	1	2,444.10	2,287.07
E	11/9ths	2,987.25	2,795.32
F	13/9ths	3,530.37	3,303.55
G	15/9ths	4,073.50	3,811.78
H	18/9ths	4,888.20	4,574.14

- 5) that the Director of Resources be authorised to make payments under section 90(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 from the collection fund by ten equal instalments between April 2025 to March 2026 as detailed below:

	Precept (£)	Surplus/Deficit on Collection Fund (£)	Total to Pay (£)
Worcestershire County Council	42,744,416.00	708,645.00	43,453,061.00
Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia	7,711,778.25	127,783.69	7,839,561.94
Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority	2,704,281.25	44,768.03	2,749,049.28

- 6) that the Director of Resources be authorised to make transfers under section 97 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 from the collection fund to the general fund the sum of £7,405,116.71 being the Council's own demand on the collection fund (£7,345,116.71) and parish

precepts (£60,000) and the distribution of the surplus/deficit on the collection fund (£125,184.84);

- 7) that the Director of Resources is authorised to make payments from the general fund to Feckenham Parish Council the sums listed above (£60,000) by two equal instalments on 1st April 2025 and 1st October 2025 in respect of the precept levied on the Council;**
- 8) that the above resolutions to be signed by the Chief Executive for use in legal proceedings in the Magistrates' Court for the recovery of unpaid Council Taxes; and**
- 9) notices of the making of the said Council Taxes signed by the Chief Executive are given by advertisement in the local press under section 38(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.**

**85. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2025/26 TO 2027/28
TRANCHE 2 (FOLLOWING CONSULTATION)**

The Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer presented the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2025/26 to 2027/28 Tranche 2 report for Members' consideration.

Members were reminded that the Committee had previously considered the report at a meeting held on 4th February 2025, when recommendations on this subject had been endorsed by the Executive Committee, and this had been reflected in the report. However, at that time, Appendix A to the report had not been available to consider and therefore arrangements had been made for the Committee to reconsider the item in order to provide an opportunity to note the content of that Appendix.

Since that date, the Council had received a letter from Birmingham City Council, which managed the funding due to all Councils that had previously been members of the former Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP). This letter, a copy of which had been sent to all former members of the GBSLEP, had asked that no business cases be submitted in 2025/26 requesting funding. The Council was challenging this request. However, it was considered prudent to update the MTFP to list access to these funds as a risk in the 2025/26 financial year.

During consideration of this item, Members noted that the MTFP 2025/26 to 2027/28 Tranche 2 report had been pre-scrutinised at a meeting of the BSWG held on Tuesday 18th February 2025. At that meeting, Members had proposed the following recommendations for the consideration of the Executive Committee:

- 1) *“That the Council review as a priority all grants and funding available to ensure that the Council’s use of them is maximised.*
- 2) *To note that Budget Scrutiny Working Group is dissatisfied with the Budget as presented and has major concerns about the viability and inherent risks of this Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). The Executive is asked to take action to mitigate the risks to the Budget outlined in the MTFP Tranche 2 report.”*

The Executive Committee discussed each of these recommendations in turn. In respect of the first recommendation, Members suggested that the Council already reviewed all grants and funding sources available to the Council as part of the ongoing budget setting process. The Council was also due to recruit to a new post, of a bid writer for the Council, which would enable the Council to maximise any attempts to access additional grant funding available to local government. Under these circumstances, the Executive Committee suggested that this recommendation from the BSWG was not necessary.

In respect of the second recommendation from the BSWG, Members commented that they disagreed with the premise of the recommendation. Instead, Executive Committee Members commented that viable proposals had been included in the MTFP 2025/26 to 2027/28. Furthermore, Members commented that a significant amount of work had been undertaken to identify and mitigate against risks identified in the report. There was also greater certainty in respect of reserves and balances, following the submission of three sets of accounts. In this context, Members commented that they would not be supporting this recommendation from the BSWG.

In concluding their remarks, Members thanked the BSWG for their hard work in reviewing the budget and for making suggestions for the Executive Committee’s consideration.

RECOMMENDED that

the additional risk, in terms of access to existing former Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership funds from Birmingham City Council in 2025/26 be added to the Risk Log for the Medium Term Financial Plan.

The Leader confirmed that there were no outstanding recommendations from the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 3rd February 2025 requiring consideration.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 3rd February 2025 be noted.

87. MINUTES / REFERRALS - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, EXECUTIVE PANELS ETC.

Members were informed that there were no referrals from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Executive Advisory Panels for consideration on this occasion.

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 6.54 pm