

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 13th May, 2025

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Sharon Harvey (Chair), and Councillors Juliet Barker Smith, Bill Hartnett, Jen Snape, Jane Spilsbury, Monica Stringfellow and Ian Woodall

Also Present:

Councillor Juma Begum

Officers:

Ruth Bamford, Neil Batt, Rachel Egan, Claire Holmes, John Leach and Bob Watson

Democratic Services Officers:

Jo Gresham

102. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence. The Chair explained that although Councillor W. King's name appeared on the agenda for this meeting, she was no longer a member of the Executive Committee. It was confirmed that the agenda had been published prior to notification of this change.

103. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

104. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair advised that at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Monday 12th May 2025, Members had pre-scrutinised the Redditch Local Plan and the DMIC (Digital Manufacturing and Innovation Centre) Additional Design Costs (AHR Architects Contract Variation) reports, scheduled for

Chair

consideration at the Executive Committee meeting. Members were advised at the end of their discussions, the Committee endorsed the recommendations in the reports but did not propose any further recommendations.

On behalf of the Executive Committee, the Chair thanked the members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their hard work in pre-scrutinising these reports.

105. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 11th March 2025 be approved as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.

106. REDDITCH LOCAL PLAN

The Assistant Director Planning, Leisure & Cultural Services presented the Redditch Local Plan report for Members' consideration.

In doing so, the Committee were informed that this report had been considered extensively by Members at Planning Advisory Panel (PAP) meetings. In addition to this, it had also been considered at a recent Portfolio Holder Briefing meeting and as highlighted earlier at this meeting, had been pre-scrutinised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the meeting held on 12th May 2025.

Members were informed that Executive Committee were asked to recommend formally to Council that the Redditch Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation document be endorsed in order for it to put out for consultation throughout the Borough for a six-week period.

It was also recommended that delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director Planning & Leisure Services, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to allow any necessary minor technical corrections and editorial changes deemed necessary to aid the understanding of document prior to the final publishing. It was noted that the consultation period would commence on 22nd May 2025 and run for a six-week period until 3rd July 2025.

Following presentation of the report the Chair reiterated that this report had been considered in detail by Members across several meetings in recent months. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee were thanked once again for pre-scrutinising the report at the Committee meeting held on the previous evening.

It was noted by Members that, although the Redditch Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation document would be subject to consultation, the Council was not bound to the outcomes of the consultation. This was more of an opportunity to gather a wide range of views across Redditch which could potentially inform the Plan going forward.

The software package, Commonplace, had been procured in order to collect the data effectively and provided greater flexibility for residents to access the consultation on their smartphones, including interactive mapping tools. It was hoped that this would increase engagement with younger residents within the Borough, who were historically 'harder to reach' in these types of consultations. It was confirmed that there would also be non-digital consultation methods available for residents who did not use this technology. These included face to face stakeholder meetings with Planning Officers at local village halls and in the market area in the Town Centre.

Members queried the timeline for the consultation plan. Officers undertook to provide this information Members following the meeting.

Consideration was given to what the design code included in the Local Plan was likely to be. It was clarified that design code was not strictly part of the Local Plan. However, through stakeholder consultation there would be the opportunity to shape and influence some design characteristics and for Officers to present ideas on what good design looked like. The Assistant Director Planning & Leisure Services stated that there would be a 'daughter document' produced in the future that would invite people to comment on any potential design code.

Members queried whether the current 'Vision' statement included in the Redditch Issues and Options Consultation document was flexible. Officers informed the Committee that this would and should change as the consultation process progressed and developed.

Some Members suggested that Destination Redditch be included within any future iterations of the Vision statement. It was clarified that there would be the opportunity for areas such as an aspiration for tourism to be included in the final document. However, consultation on such matters was important as some residents might have differing options on an increase in people travelling to Redditch for tourism purposes. For example some residents might be in favour of greater use of the Borough's open spaces by those who did not live in Redditch to increase economic development, however some may feel it was detrimental to the area as it might increase traffic. Therefore, the consultation would provide greater clarity in the aspirations and needs of the local residents.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) The Council endorse Redditch Local Plan Issues and Options consultation document (Appendix A) for a six-week public consultation period.**
- 2) That delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director for Planning, Leisure and Culture Services following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration and Governance to make any minor technical corrections and editorial changes deemed necessary to aid the understanding of the documentation prior to final publishing.**

107. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Chair noted that there were no outstanding recommendations from the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 10th March 2025 which required the Executive Committee's consideration.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 10th March 2025 be noted.

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

There were no referrals from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or any of the Executive Advisory Panels on this occasion.

- 109. TO CONSIDER ANY URGENT BUSINESS, DETAILS OF WHICH HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED TO THE HEAD OF LEGAL, DEMOCRATIC AND PROCUREMENT SERVICES PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE MEETING AND WHICH THE CHAIR, BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, CONSIDERS TO BE OF SO URGENT A NATURE THAT IT CANNOT WAIT UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING**

There was no Urgent Business on this occasion.

- 110. DMIC (DIGITAL MANUFACTURING AND INNOVATION CENTRE) ADDITIONAL DESIGN COSTS (AHR ARCHITECTS CONTRACT VARIATION)**

The Regeneration Project Delivery Manager presented the DMIC (Digital Manufacturing and Innovation Centre) Additional Design Costs (AHR Architects Contract Variation) for Members' consideration.

In doing so, Members were reminded that Redditch had been awarded an investment of £15.6 million in 2021 through the Towns Fund. The investment had been allocated to three projects as follows:

- Digital Manufacturing Innovation Centre (£8,000,000)
- Redevelopment of Redditch Library Site (£4,200,000)
- Redditch Public Realm (£3,000,000)

Due to a change in priorities of the current Council administration, the redevelopment of the Redditch Library site project was no longer progressing. This had resulted in £4,200,000 underspend in the funding allocation. It had subsequently been agreed by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) that £3,937,000 of this underspend could be utilised as further funding for the DMIC project. The remaining underspend totalling £263,000 would be allocated to the Public Realm project.

The additional funding would be used to fund an expansion to the DMIC which would require additional design, civil engineering and architecture costs. It was confirmed that the Redditch Town Deal

Board had agreed these proposed changes and that contingency funds had also been included in the funding allocation in order to mitigate any potential issues in the future.

The report also requested that the costs for Gardiner and Theobald (G&T) to provide project management services be increased to £250,000.

Members were informed that both AHR Architects and G&T were originally procured within the Procure Partnerships framework. As a result of the changes to the projects this framework has been revisited in conjunction with the Council's legal and procurement teams. The outcome of this was that both AHR Architects and G&T continued to provide value for money due to prior knowledge of the projects.

Following the presentation of the report, Members thanked the Officers for their hard work on this project, which would be an asset to Redditch. The inclusion of a contingency within the budgets was welcomed and it was felt that this was prudent for such a large project.

Members raised questions in respect of the funding from the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP), which had also been raised at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting the previous evening. It was confirmed that a bid would be made for the funding which would be assessed. Once this had been through the appropriate governance process it was hoped that the funding would be allocated accordingly.

RESOLVED that

- 1) AHR Architects design team costs are increased up to a maximum of £1,450,000 for design of Redditch Digital Manufacturing and Innovation Centre (DMIC);**
- 2) Costs for Gardiner and Theobald (G&T) project management services for the DMIC are increased up to a maximum of £250,000.**

RESOLVED to NOTE

- 3) Any draw down of contingency is subject to approval by the Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer) in conjunction with the Assistant Director for Regeneration and Property.**
- 4) that the additional funding at recommendations 1 and 2 above utilises reallocated central government grant monies.**

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 6.57 pm