

## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillor Joanna Kane (Mayor), Juliet Barker Smith (Deputy Mayor), and Councillors Juma Begum, Brandon Clayton, Claire Davies, Matthew Dormer, James Fardoe, Andrew Fry, Bill Hartnett, Sharon Harvey, Sachin Mathur, Gemma Monaco, Rita Rogers, Gary Slim, Jen Snape, Jane Spilsbury, Monica Stringfellow, Craig Warhurst, Ian Woodall and Paul Wren

### Officers:

Claire Felton, John Leach, Guy Revans and Bob Watson

### Democratic Services Officers:

Jess Bayley-Hill

### 18. WELCOME

The Mayor welcomed all those present to the meeting.

At the start of the meeting, the Mayor led Members by observing a minute's silence in memory of former Mayor and former Councillor, Mr Roy Vickers, who had sadly passed away since the previous meeting of Council.

### 19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Joe Baker, William Boyd, Chris Holz, Wanda King, Alan Mason and David Munro.

### 20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 21. MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025 were considered.

The Mayor highlighted a typographical error in the minutes, whereby the community mass at Mount Carmel Church hosted by

Chair

the Mayor's Chaplain, Canon Brian McGinley, had taken place on 13<sup>th</sup> June rather than 17<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

**RESOLVED that**

**subject to the amendment detailed in the preamble above, the minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Mayor.**

**22. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The following announcements were made at the meeting:

a) The Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor circulated a list of civic engagements that she had attended since the Annual Council meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025 (Appendix 1). The Mayor thanked those Members who had attended the Mayor's community mass event on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

During consideration of this item, the Mayor invited Members who had known former Mayor and former Councillor, Mr Roy Vickers, to pay tribute to him. In response, Members commented that Mr Vickers had first been elected as a Councillor in 1983 and had served as the Mayor of the Borough of Redditch in 1995/96. Mr Vickers had been one of the first Councillors to represent the then Church Hill ward and had also served on the former Hereford and Worcester County Council. Later in life, Mr Vickers had been involved in the work of the University of the Third Age. Members commented that he would be sadly missed.

b) The Leader's Announcements

The Leader advised that she had attended various meetings since the Annual Council meeting where the subject of discussion had been Local Government Reorganisation. Redditch Borough Council, working with Bromsgrove District, Malvern Hills, Worcester City and Wychavon District Councils, was receiving support with the next steps of the Local Government Reorganisation process from Mutual Ventures. A Member briefing on the subject of Local Government Reorganisation had been provided earlier in the month which had been attended by representatives of Mutual Ventures and the Leader thanked those Members who had attended this briefing. Council was also asked to note that there were a lot of discussions ongoing in respect of devolution.

Reference was made to the recent Pride event that had taken place in Redditch in June 2025. On behalf of the Council, the Leader thanked the LGBT community, particularly the co-ordinating group that had organised the Pride event.

c) The Chief Executive's Announcements

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

**23. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE (PROCEDURE RULE 9)**

There were no Questions on Notice on this occasion.

**24. MOTIONS ON NOTICE (PROCEDURE RULE 11)**

There were no Motions on Notice on this occasion.

**25. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Warm Homes Local Grants Funding and Resources

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity presented a report on the subject of Warm Homes Local Grants Funding and Resources. The Climate Change Manager was thanked for his hard work on this project, which would have a positive impact on carbon emissions in the Borough. The funding would be invested in improving the energy efficiency of eligible properties in parts of Woodrow and would only be available to benefit owner occupiers of properties in this locality. Separate funding had been made available to upgrade the energy efficiency of Council House properties in Woodrow. For both the owner occupiers and Council tenants, this would result in a reduction in fuel bills for residents at properties that benefited from either source of funding.

During consideration of this item, reference was made to the income threshold of £36,000 annual earnings for owner occupier households who were eligible to apply for this funding. Members highlighted that there could be some households with slightly higher annual incomes who might also benefit from this funding and questions were raised about the extent to which there might be the flexibility to help residents in this position. Members were advised that use of the funding had been targeted by postcode, so it was unlikely that there would be any flexibility in this context.

Consideration was given to the level of expenditure that was likely to be required per property under this project. Members were informed that it was anticipated that an average £15,000 would be

spent on each property. Officers were hoping to be able to apply for similar funding in the future to help benefit further properties in the Borough, subject to availability from the Government.

Reference was made to the fact that the Warm Homes Local Grant Funding would be utilised to enhance owner occupiers' properties in target postcodes at the same time as separate funding would be made available to Council houses in the same locations. Members noted that this had created opportunities to make efficiency savings during the procurement process.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Jen Snape and seconded by Councillor Bill Hartnett.

## Shareholders Committee Annual Report 2024/25

The Chair of the Shareholders Committee in 2024/25, Councillor Sharon Harvey, presented the Committee's Annual Report for the 2024/25 municipal year. In presenting the report, it was highlighted that this was the first annual report to be prepared on behalf of the Committee following a review of the Committee's terms of reference in 2024 which had introduced a requirement for there to be an annual update to Council.

During the year, Members of the Committee had held a number of meetings. The Managing Director of Rubicon Leisure Limited had attended each of these meetings and was thanked for his hard work. Committee Members had also had opportunities to meet informally with representatives of the Rubicon Board, which Members had found to be a useful way to build understanding of the direction of travel of the company.

The Committee had received performance monitoring updates during the year with respect to the work of Rubicon Leisure Limited. In particular, Members had been pleased by improvements to the food and beverage offer at various sites managed by Rubicon Leisure Limited on behalf of the Council. The financial performance of the company had also improved and the Committee had welcomed this progress. The staff and volunteers at Rubicon Leisure Limited were thanked for all their hard work during the year and it was recognised that the successful operation of the company was in large part due to their efforts.

Following the presentation of the report, Members discussed the activities of the Committee in 2024/25 and in doing so questioned why the membership of the Shareholders Committee now only consisted of Members of the Executive Committee where previously other Councillors had been appointed to this body. Clarification was provided that external legal advice had been received which

suggested that the Shareholders Committee should always have been a sub-Committee of the Executive Committee rather than reporting straight to Council. This advice had not been provided to the Council when Rubicon Leisure Limited and the Shareholders Committee had first been established. Prior to changing the governance structure of the Shareholders Committee discussions had been held with the then leaders of the political groups who had indicated their support for the change, which had subsequently been agreed at the Annual Council meeting held in May 2024.

During consideration of this item, questions were raised with regard to recent work undertaken at play areas and the extent to which Rubicon Leisure Limited had been involved with this work. Members were advised that the Council continued to manage play areas and Rubicon Leisure Limited did not have any involvement with this service. Questions were subsequently raised about how Members could influence decisions about play areas. Clarification was provided that any Member decisions would be taken by the Executive Committee and could be pre-scrutinised by Overview and Scrutiny, which could also request an overview of the service if this was considered to be necessary.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Sharon Harvey and seconded by Councillor Ian Woodall.

#### Executive Committee Minutes – 10<sup>th</sup> June 2025

The content of the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2025 were considered. Reference was made to the number of resolutions that had been determined by the Executive Committee and questions were raised as to why a number of matters had not been referred to Council. Officers explained that there were some functions that were determined by the Executive Committee, in accordance with Government regulations, and these would be recorded as resolutions in the minutes of the Executive Committee's meetings.

#### **RESOLVED that**

**the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2025 be approved and all recommendations adopted.**

#### **26. URGENT BUSINESS - RECORD OF DECISIONS**

Members were advised that no urgent decisions had been taken since the Annual Council meeting.

**27. URGENT BUSINESS - GENERAL (IF ANY)**

There was no urgent business for consideration on this occasion.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm  
and closed at 7.32 pm