

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Sharon Harvey (Chair), Councillor Jane Spilsbury (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Juliet Barker Smith, Juma Begum, Bill Hartnett, Monica Stringfellow and Ian Woodall

Officers:

Debra Goodall and John Leach

Democratic Services Officers:

Jess Bayley-Hill and Eve Davies

45. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Jen Snape.

46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

47. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader advised that at a meeting held on 3rd November 2025, the Budget Scrutiny Working Group had pre-scrutinised the Medium Term Financial Plan Budget Update and Consultation Report 2026/27 to 2028/29 – Business Rates Pool, which was due to be considered at the Executive Committee meeting. Members were informed that at the end of their deliberations, the Budget Scrutiny Working Group had endorsed the proposals detailed in the report.

On behalf of the Executive Committee, the Leader thanked the members of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group for their hard work in pre-scrutinising the report.

48. APPOINTMENTS TO THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR GRANTS PANEL

The Principal Democratic Services Officer presented a report relating to the appointment of Members to serve on the Voluntary

Chair

and Community Sector Grants Panel for the remainder of the 2025/26 municipal year.

At the previous meeting of the Committee, Members had agreed arrangements for funding Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations from 2026/27 to 2028/29, including to establish a Voluntary Sector Grants Panel. At a Council meeting, held on 15th September 2025, Members had subsequently approved the proposed funding provision for the VCS funding programme. There remained a need to appoint Members to serve on the Grants Panel.

Political Group leaders had been consulted regarding nominations to serve on the Grants Panel. The nominations had been made in accordance with the terms of reference for the Grants Panel which had been approved at the Executive Committee meeting held on 2nd September 2025. The Executive Committee was invited to consider and approve these nominations to the Grants Panel.

Members discussed the report and in doing so welcomed the role of the Grants Panel. The suggestion was made that this would enhance the transparency of the process for consideration of applications for grant funding from VCS organisations and would also ensure that there was effective scrutiny of applications.

The resolutions were proposed by Councillor Juma Begum and seconded by Councillor Jane Spilsbury.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Councillor Craig Warhurst be appointed Chair of the Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Panel for the remainder of the 2025/26 municipal year; and**
- 2) Councillors Matthew Dormer, David Munro, Rita Rogers, Craig Warhurst and Paul Wren be appointed to serve on the Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Panel for the remainder of the 2025/26 municipal year.**

49. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN BUDGET UPDATE AND CONSULTATION REPORT 2026/2027 - 2028/29 - BUSINESS RATES POOL

The Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services presented the Medium Term Financial Plan Budget Update and Consultation Report 2026/27 to 2028/29 – Business Rates Pool for the Executive Committee's consideration.

Members were informed that, in accordance with the Local Government and Finance Act 2012, Councils were permitted to

work together to pool business rates. Where Councils participated in business rate pools, this operated on a no detriment principle, meaning that Councils should not be placed at a disadvantage as a result of participating in a pool.

Members were informed that there were some advantages arising from pooling business rates which included:

- Retaining a larger proportion of business rates growth locally.
- Reducing the associated levy payable to the Government.
- Sharing the risks and rewards.
- Supporting regional economic development through collaborative investment.

Redditch Borough Council had previously taken part in the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Business Rates Pool. Therefore, agreement to participate in this pool would ensure continuity. Alternatively, the Council could decide not to participate in a business rates pool in 2026/27. There was a deadline of 24th November 2025 by which the submission of proposals for business rate pools for 2026/27 needed to be made.

Following the presentation of the report, Members discussed the proposals and in doing so commented that participation in a business rates pool was considered to be good practice. Members also noted that participation in a business rates pool would help to reduce financial risks for the Council. On this basis, Members commented that they were in agreement with proposals to participate in the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Business Rates Pool in 2026/27.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Ian Woodall and seconded by Councillor Juma Begum.

RECOMMENDED that

- 3) the Council approve joining the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Business Rates Pool for 2026/27; and**
- 4) authority for the decision on the financial arrangements be delegated to the Section 151 Officer following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance.**

50. 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.

51. TO CONSIDER ANY URGENT BUSINESS, DETAILS OF WHICH HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED TO THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR 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 for discussion at the meeting.

52. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 2nd September 2025 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

53. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 1st September 2025 were submitted for Members' consideration. Confirmation was provided that there were no outstanding recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee requiring discussion.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 1st September 2025 be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 6.41 pm