

Executive Committee

13th September 2011

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Carole Gandy (Chair), and Councillors Juliet Brunner, Brandon Clayton and Malcolm Hall and Derek Taylor

Also Present:

Councillor Andrew Brazier

Officers:

R Cooke, K Dicks, C Flanagan, S Hanley, M Hanwell, T Kristunas, J Pickering, D Taylor and A de Warr

Committee Services Officer:

I Westmore

74. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Michael Braley, Jinny Pearce and Debbie Taylor.

75. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

76. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair advised the Committee that the following item of business, scheduled on the Forward Plan to be dealt with at this evening's meeting, had been rescheduled to a later meeting of the Committee:

- Hewell Road Pool – Disposal.

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Chair

77. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 23rd August 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to it being noted that Councillor Derek Taylor had been omitted from the list of those present and, in respect of Minute 72 (Shared Services Business Case – Car Parking), it being noted that recommendations 2) to 6) were matters properly for decision by Bromsgrove District Council.

78. ICT POLICIES

The Committee considered a number of documents supplied by central Government that would help to ensure that the Council was compliant with the Code of Connection. Compliance with the Code was essential to ensure that the Council could operate certain key services.

It was made clear that summaries of the documents would be available to Officers as it was recognised that the documents in their entirety were impractical for day to day use or reference. The obligations on Officers contained within these documents would also be communicated through the staff induction process.

Officers commented that they were already investigating or would investigate potential issues in the following areas:

- printing and access more generally through Citrix;
- the enabling of the use of personal lap-tops in the Town Hall through the installation of Wi-Fi;
- the forwarding of blocked e-mails to Redditch Helpdesk rather than Bromsgrove Helpdesk where appropriate; and
- the problems experienced by some Housing Officers over the locations of their telephones.

RECOMMENDED that

the documents, at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved for use and apply to all members of staff and Councillors.

79. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE MONITORING - QUARTER 1 - APRIL TO JUNE 2011

Members considered a report highlighting key areas of the Council's performance over the first quarter of the 2011/12 financial year.

Officers reported on actions being taken to address two of the areas of concern. It was reported that a time limit on getting invoices paid by the Council signed off and payments made was to be instituted by Senior Management. The increase in the number of British Crime Survey comparator crimes had been brought to the attention of the Redditch Community Safety Partnership and was to be addressed through that body.

Members requested that, for those indicators where there was currently no data available, the indicators only be incorporated within the report at year end once there was data available. Members also suggested that the direction of travel for visits to the Arrow Valley Countryside Centre was misleading and should be removed and the commentary reflect that Officers were unable to accurately report attendance figures due to the automatic counting system being inoperable for a period of time.

Officers undertook to meet with Councillor Malcolm Hall following the meeting to discuss the programme of events provided at the Palace Theatre.

RESOLVED that

the update on key performance indicators for the period ending 30th June 2011 be noted.

80. QUARTERLY MONITORING OF THE BENEFITS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN - QUARTER 1 - APRIL TO JUNE 2010

A report was received which advised Members of the performance of the Benefits service during the first quarter of 2011/12. The Committee stated that staff within the Benefits Service were to be congratulated for the progress that had been made in the performance of the service.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the report be noted; and**
- 2) Officers be requested to provide updates on transformation and future measures of the service to reflect new processes that are being implemented within the service.**

81. QUARTERLY BUDGET MONITORING - QUARTER 1 - APRIL TO JUNE 2011

The Committee considered an overview of the General Fund budget situation, including the achievement of approved savings for the first quarter of 2011/12. Explanations were provided for

variances in the budget for the first quarter. Members were informed that there was a dispute over the payment of the rent for the grazing project at Papermill Farm and the need for a new agreement with the tenant to be signed was highlighted.

The over-ambitious income projection targets for the Pitcheroak Golf Course were noted. Officers reported that the good work being undertaken at the course by the Hereford and Worcestershire Golf Partnership was expected to demonstrate real benefits within a five year timescale.

Following a brief discussion of the Reddicard discount scheme it was noted that the scheme would benefit from the additional marketing support available through the new Leisure and Cultural Services management team

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the report be noted; and**
- 2) **Officers be requested to show the budgets at service level and reflect variations against the service budgets in future reports.**

82. QUARTERLY CUSTOMER SERVICES - QUARTER 1 - APRIL TO JUNE 2011

Officers presented a report which provided the Committee with key information in respect of customer services. Members were informed that the rise in recorded complaints was seen as a positive development and reflected more effective recording by staff. The increased volume of complaints would better enable the Council to identify those aspects of the Council's services which were not working well. It was also noted that a drop in the number of complaints responded to within 15 working days was within the context of customers receiving a fuller, better quality response to their complaint in the first instance. Members commended the report for being clear and comprehensive.

RESOLVED that

the update for the period 1st April 2011 – 30th June 2011 be noted.

83. WRITE-OFF OF DEBTS - MONITORING REPORT

Following a previous Executive Committee decision to amend the manner in which the Council authorised the write-off of debts, Members received the first monitoring report detailing those debts

written off during the first quarter of 2011/12 and the profile of the outstanding debt.

Councillor Derek Taylor was invited to meet with Officers to discuss the action that was taken by the Council to manage bad debt and Officers undertook to provide Councillor Carole Gandy with further detail on the liquidation / winding up write-offs for non-domestic rates.

RESOLVED that

the contents of the report be noted.

84. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 16th August 2011. In respect of Minute 65 (Private Sector Home Support Service – Post Scrutiny) it was noted that consideration of the recommendations from the Committee was pending a further report and business case for the proposals outlined in the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 16th August 2011 be received and noted.

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

There were no minutes or referrals under this item.

86. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

The Committee received an update on the work of the Council's Advisory Panels and similar bodies.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

87. ACTION MONITORING

The Committee received the latest Action Monitoring report.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

88. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED that

under S.100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matters on the grounds that they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act, as amended.”

- **Review of Lease – Unit 1, Matchborough House**
- **Park House (150 Evesham Street) Site - Disposal**

89. REVIEW OF LEASE - UNIT 1, MATCHBOROUGH CENTRE

The Committee received a report on the review of the lease for a unit at the Matchborough District Centre in the light of a report to a previous meeting of the Committee. Alongside consideration of the terms of the lease Members requested that a policy be developed to determine appropriate rents for voluntary sector organisations.

(During consideration of this item Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).)

90. PARK HOUSE (150 EVESHAM STREET) SITE - DISPOSAL

The Committee received a further report on the former Park House site, detailing the outcome of the consultation by Ward Members with local residents.

The outcome of the consultation had been a proposal that the site be used as a play area / open space. Officers confirmed that, although there was an overall over-provision of play areas in the Borough, the Town Centre area was relatively poorly served. However, Officers did not consider that this site was at all suitable for the proposed use as the footprint was extremely steep, the site was surrounded by residential properties and it was next to a busy road. Officers noted that the new Leisure and Culture Services management team was actively seeking longer-term solutions to the issue of the lack of Town Centre play area provision.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the feedback from the Central Area PACT be noted, as detailed in the report; and**
- 2) Officers be instructed to progress with the disposal of the land at 150 Evesham Street, formerly the site of Park House.**

(During consideration of this item Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) However, there is nothing exempt in this record of the proceedings.)

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.36 pm