

AUDIT AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 4 March 2003 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Caborn (Chair); Councillors Mrs Boad, Darmody, Davis, Dray, Mrs Evans and Windybank.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Crowther (Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Strategic Leadership)

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Thomas.

852. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

853. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings held on 7 January and 4 February 2003 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

854. **REVIEW OF MEMBERS' SERVICES**

The Committee considered a report from Members' and Customer Services on the progress being made on the review of Members Services. Members recalled that the Best Value Review Programme for 2003 originally agreed in January 2002, had identified six reviews including support and democratic services.

At their meeting on 14 January 2003, the Executive had agreed to reduce the number of reviews to be undertaken during the year. As a result, the review of support and democratic services had been postponed. Members' Services had already begun preparing for the Best Value Review and it had been considered appropriate to proceed with a mini service review.

A draft scope for the review had been produced and circulated to all members, Corporate Management Team, Chief Executive's Management Team, Departmental contacts and the Coventry and Warwickshire Committee Administrators Forum for comments.

Towards the end of 2002 a questionnaire had been issued to all members seeking their views on the services currently provided. In January 2003 a questionnaire had been drawn up and copies given to members of the public attending meetings.

RECOMMENDED that the report be noted and a further report be submitted to the Committee three months after the start of the review.

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855. ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Committee considered a report from the Asset Management Steering Group on the Asset Management Plan.

The Asset Management Plan (AMP) became a statutory requirement for Councils in 2001. The latest AMP had been submitted on the 31 July 2002 and had been assessed by the West Midlands Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) as satisfactory, the gradings being poor, satisfactory and good. This was considered to be extremely harsh bearing in mind the investment this Council had made on such things as a land and property gazetteer, a geographical information system and a property management system and appealed against the decision. The Council had now been notified that their decision stands.

The AMP contained an action plan against which performance can be assessed. This was detailed in Appendix A to the report. Appendix B to the report sought to keep members up to date with disposals, acquisitions, possible developments etc as and when they occur.

RECOMMENDED that the report be noted.

856. EXECUTIVE MEETING MONDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2003

The Committee received a report from the Chair on the meeting of the Executive held on Monday 10 February 2003.

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on Monday 10 February 2003 which came within the remit of the Committee was submitted for information and scrutiny.

RECOMMENDED that the Chair's report and the minutes be noted.

857. EXECUTIVE AGENDA - (NON-CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS AND REPORTS)

The Committee considered the items which would be discussed at the meeting of the Executive on Monday 10 March 2003 which came within their remit. As a result the following comments were made for forwarding to the Executive:-

Agenda Item Number 3 - Performance Management System

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

Agenda Item Number 4 - Performance Management

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report, but would like to know the current situation with the Quality Strategy and why service plans which are only partially achieved (Page 50), have been credited with an achieved percentage?

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Agenda Item Number 5 - Local Strategic Partnership and the Community Strategy

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report, but highlighted that the timetable may slip due to the elections.

Agenda Item Number 6 - Best Value Performance Plan - Summary

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

Agenda Item Number 7 - Treasury Management Strategy Plan 2003/2004

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

858. **WORK PLAN 2002/2003 AND 2003/2004 PORTFOLIO HOLDER PRIORITY AREAS**

The Committee considered a report from Policy Services updating the Scrutiny Committees work plan and to monitor progress against the Portfolio Holder priority areas.

It had been agreed to consider the Committees work plan as a standing item on each agenda. At recent meetings, particularly on the 4 February, the Committee had considered its work programme for the coming year and agreed to receive a brief retrospective view of work undertaken during the year and an extension of its work programme be considered. Appendix 1 and 2 to the report summarised the Committee's scrutiny work during the year and Appendix 3 to the report listed its work for the coming year. This included standard items and work commissioned by the Committee. It also incorporated a work programme for its recently acquired responsibilities of an Audit Committee.

The Executive agreed service plans at its meeting on the 5 March 2002. It was anticipated that revised service plans would be available for the April cycle. The Portfolio Holder was present at the meeting to answer questions.

RECOMMENDED that

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) the following items be included in the Committee's work plan:
 - (a) catering at the Jephson Gardens and the Pump Rooms;
 - (b) St Mary's Lands;
 - (c) final costs of the Jephson Gardens project;
 - (d) costs of Marlborough House;

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- (e) the cultural quarter; and
- (f) Court Street proposals;
- (3) as part of the management of the Council's corporate property, property which comes within the remit of this Committee, be visited by the Committee;
- (4) a future meeting of the Committee be held away from the Town Hall; and
- (5) the review of Discretionary Rate Relief, Grants and Support in kind would be a suitable policy review for a wider discussion and involvement of interested parties and the public.

859. PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within paragraphs 8 and 9 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

860. EXECUTIVE AGENDA (CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS AND REPORTS)

The Committee considered the items which would be discussed at the meeting of the Executive on Monday 10 March 2003, which came within their remit. As a result the following comments were made for forwarding to the Executive:-

Agenda Item Number 16 - Redevelopment of The Court Street - Car Park Area, Leamington Old Town

The Committee were not convinced about the proposals and would like further appraisals. They were concerned about the need for a rapid decision They would also like clarification about whether or not it should go out to tender.

Agenda Item Number 17 - The Band Factory

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report, but would like to know why the District Council are paying the £6500 and suggested that whoever the rent is paid to, should pay the costs.

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Agenda Item Number 18 - Proposed Crazy Golf Course - St. Nicholas Park, Warwick

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report, but would like clarification on whether or not there will be any costs to the Council with regard to disposal and reinstatement of equipment.

(The meeting ended at 8.00 p.m.)