

# EXECUTIVE

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 9 December 2002, in the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 pm.

**PRESENT:** Councillor Crowther (Chair); Councillors Mrs Begg, Boad, Coker, Ms Flanagan, Hammon, Kirton, Kohler and Tamlin.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor Caborn (Chair of the Resources Scrutiny Committee);

Councillor Mrs Compton (Chair of the Environment Scrutiny Committee);

Councillor Doody (Chair of the Community Scrutiny Committee);

Councillors Gill (Chair of the Council), Mrs Goode and MacKay

Apologies of absence were received from Councillor Kirton

## 639. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

### Minute No. 652(A) Sierra Lone - Local Authority Links

Councillors Mrs Begg and Crowther declared personal interests in this item, as Members of the One World Link.

### Minute No. 652(D) Grants to Voluntary Organisations

Councillor Mrs Begg declared a personal interest in this item as she was a member of the British Asian Business and Professionals Association.

### Minute No. 654 Cultural Quarter at Spencer Yard, Leamington Spa

Councillor Mrs Compton declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item as a Member of the Warwick District Council Planning Committee.

## 640. **SOUTH WARWICKSHIRE PRIMARY CARE TRUST CLINICAL SERVICE REVIEWS CONSULTATION**

The Executive considered a report from Policy Services which sought an official corporate response to the South Warwickshire Primary Care Trust on the proposals contained within the Clinical Service reviews. A presentation by Steven Munday and Viv Bennett of the South Warwickshire Primary Care Trust was received on the matter.

The Council's views were sought on the proposals as part of a consultation conducted on behalf of the South Warwickshire Primary Care Trust involving a wide range of organisations.

## **EXECUTIVE (Continued)**

The proposals within each service area sought to address the current debt of £1.7m inherited by the new South Warwickshire Primary Care Trust, following the merger of the South Warwickshire Combined Care Trust, Warwickshire Health Authority and Stratford and Warwick Primary Care groups.

The proposals could impact on both the Health Improvement Plan and the Community Plan.

The Community Scrutiny Committee noted the report and requested that an element of Health Scrutiny be included within their work plan in the form of a presentation by a representative of the South Warwickshire Primary Care Trust.

The Environment Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendation in the report.

### **RESOLVED** that;

- (1) the briefing document and financial strategy from South Warwickshire Primary Care Trust attached as an appendix to the report be noted; and
- (2) the views of the Member Health Forum attached as an Appendix to the report be used as basis for the Council's response to the consultation on the Clinical Service reviews.

#### **641. SKATE FACILITY - NEWBOLD COMYN**

The Executive considered a report from Leisure & Amenities seeking approval for the installation of a skate facility within Newbold Comyn near the Paul Putz Play area subject to a successful planning permission.

Following consultation to provide a skate facility within the Champion Hills open space, it was found that although there were no objections to it in that location, suggestions were made to locate the facility within Newbold Comyn. Considering all other locations it was suggested from a safety and security point of view, Newbold Comyn represented the most appropriate option.

The facility proposed had funding from three separate sources, Warwickshire County Council's Well Being Fund, Leisure & Amenities, WDC Sustainability Fund and a considerable reduction in costs from Russell Leisure currently installing play equipment in the District as part of the play area improvement programme.

Numerous petitions had been sent to members asking for a facility of this nature within the District. The site would offer skaters a central location with easy access from both road and public transport within a popular leisure park offering diverse and high quality activities suitable for a wide range of ages.

## **EXECUTIVE (Continued)**

The site would consist of a tarmac pad, which planning permission would be required for, with 8 items challenging street style equipment suitable for a wide age range.

The design for the site had been heavily influenced by skaters who helped design the site and their expectation on the fun factor for the facility was high.

The Community Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendation in the report.

**RESOLVED** that subject to planning permission being approved, a skate facility be installed near the Paul Putz play area within Newbold Comyn. .

(Councillor Mrs Goode spoke on this item and left the meeting after it had been considered)

### **642. APPROVAL OF GENERAL FUND ESTIMATES 2002/2003 REVISED AND 2003/2004 ESTIMATES**

The Executive considered a report from the Corporate Management Team, seeking a recommendation to Council of the revised base budget revenue estimates for the General Fund services in respect of 2002/2003, and the base budget revenue estimates for 2003/2004, and to note the action being taken in respect of the 2002/2003 revised estimates as detailed in the report.

The Council was required to set its budget requirements in order to set the Council Tax for 2003/2004.

The purpose of this report was to produce estimates as determined under the requirements of the Financial Strategy, any alternative strategy would be the subject of separate reports.

The Community Scrutiny Committee noted the action being taken in respect of 2002/2003 outlined in paragraph 6.2 of the report and expressed strong concerns at the level of increase in the revised estimates and the lack of clear information contained in the report.

The Environment Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report, but questioned the charge of £134,000 incurred by the Council for the termination of the Marlborough House lease. The Committee asked for details of the unapportionable central overheads on page 21 of the report.

The Resources Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report and felt that the overspend should be vigorously managed with consideration being given to how the net effect would be funded.

## **EXECUTIVE (Continued)**

The Section 151 Officer explained that the costs incurred regarding Marlborough House were due to the relocation of the Council's tenants and that unapportionable central overheads as detailed on page 21 of the report, were related to property awaiting disposal, IT facilities and back funding of pension rights.

### **RECOMMENDED** that

- (1) the revised base budget revenue estimates for the services in respect of 2002/2003 and the base budget revenue estimates for 2003/2004 be approved;
- (2) the actions being taken by Officers in respect of the predicted overspend for 2002/2003, be noted;
- (3) Officers be asked to continue to look for savings within their existing budgets for 2002/2003;
- (4) an appeal be submitted to the Government on a proposed local government settlement for the Council;
- (5) that a budget seminar be held for all Councillors in mid to late January or early February 2003; and
- (6) an update report be submitted to the Executive at its January and February meetings.

### 646. **IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES/MAJOR WORKS TO COUNCIL DWELLINGS AND CONTRACT FOR OUTSIDE OF OFFICE HOURS SERVICE**

The Executive considered a report from Property Services seeking approval to seek tenders for improvements/major works to Council dwellings and to continue the emergency building service for outside of office hours.

Tenders were required to be sought for essential works and emergency service outside office hours which were detailed in the report.

There were no options available as the Council was responsible for maintaining the condition of its Housing stock and the works detailed were contained within the Housing Investment Programme for 2002/3 approved by the Executive at its meeting in January 2002.

The Community Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

### **RESOLVED** that

- (1) tenders be sought for the improvement/major works to Council dwellings; and

## **EXECUTIVE (Continued)**

- (2) continuation of the emergency building services for outside of office hours be approved.

### **647. NEWBOLD COMYN GOLF COURSE LEASE**

The Executive considered a report from Leisure & Amenities seeking approval to seek tenders for the long term lease of the Newbold Comyn Golf Course to the private sector for management and maintenance of the course with a target start date of 1 April 2003.

The future management of Newbold Comyn Golf Course had been identified within the Best Value Review process as an area of possible improvement if managed within the private sector. The course needed improvement works if it were to effectively compete in the golfing market. Current estimates would suggest that investment for basic requirements such as course drainage, rebuilds to some greens and a general facelift to the infrastructure would be in the region of £300,000.

The income from the facility had in recent years seen a reduction affected by the opening of many new golf facilities in the Warwickshire area, the need to close during periods of wet weather and a lack of marketing as a result of limited funds. This was further impacted upon by the reduction nationally in the number of new golfers entering the sport.

Golf in general had been experiencing a difficult time with a number of Golf Courses in both the public and private sectors facing difficult and challenging years. The surviving facilities in the main were run in an extremely competitive way making use of corporate businesses to sustain their profitability.

Officers believed a long term lease would offer both short term improvements whilst ensuring long term benefits to the customers and the Council.

It was suggested that if the tender option was rejected then a further report would be presented to the Executive identifying a future programme of improvements that would have a significant cost implication on the Council.

The Community Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

The Resources Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendation in the report and asked the following questions:

- (i) Will the lease have an effect on the Grounds Maintenance contact?
- (ii) What will be the effect on the charges and will the Council retain control of the charges?
- (iii) As a £300,000 investment need has been identified in the report, will this have an effect on the tenders we receive?

## **EXECUTIVE (Continued)**

The Head of Leisure and Amenities informed the Executive that there was a condition of the tender that the successful tenderer would have to retain the grounds maintenance contract until its expiry in 2007. The Council would not retain control of the charges at the course although these would be taken into consideration when assessing the tenders. The £300,000 of work needed to the course would make an impact on the tenders the Council received.

### **RESOLVED** that

- (1) tenders be sought for a long term lease of the Newbold Comyn Golf Course for private sector management and maintenance with a target start date of the 1 April 2003; and
- (2) within the tender specification a specific request for a pricing policy be included which will be taken into consideration when awarding the tender.

(Councillor Gill spoke on this item)

### 648. **WARWICK TREE NURSERY - PLANNING PERMISSION**

The Executive considered a report seeking approval for Glendale Grounds Management to seek planning permission to construct a purpose built depot facility on Council land at the tree nursery and depot facility at Stratford Road, Warwick and to grant a ten year lease for the site with a peppercorn rent.

Currently, there are limited suitable facilities of this nature within the District.

The facility would be constructed with green issues at the forefront of the design brief and would be constructed in consultation with Action 21, the Council's Environmental Policy Officers and Glendale in a partnership approach. The aim of the partnership would be to demonstrate how a busy works facility could operate in an environmentally aware way.

At the end of the ten year period the facility would be passed to Warwick District Council to add to their assets as a properly managed facility available for any future renting opportunities.

Glendale would look to operate a low level recycling system from the facility to be used within the contract so reducing materials dispersed to landfill.

The request followed negotiations for the grounds maintenance contract as reported at the 19 August meeting in which members agreed to continue a working relationship with Glendale Grounds Management, including the development of the Warwick tree nursery site, for a depot facility.

In principle, the Planning and Engineering unit had agreed that the proposed construction was appropriate for the site.

## **EXECUTIVE (Continued)**

The Community Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

The Resources Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendation in the report but commented that if the Council were granting peppercorn rent, then the Council should not incur any costs.

### **RESOLVED** that

- (1) Glendale Grounds Management be authorised to seek planning permission to construct a purpose built depot facility on Council land at the tree nursery and depot site on Stratford Road, Warwick; and
- (2) a lease of the site be granted to Glendale Grounds Management for a ten year period at a peppercorn rent with the provision for both the Council and Glendale to break the term at the end of the fifth year.

## 651. **MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Community, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committees held on Tuesday 5 November 2002 be noted.

## 652. **GENERAL REPORT**

### (B) **CUSTOMER SERVICES**

The Executive considered a report from Members' and Customer Services seeking approval for the information contained in the report being considered as part of the restructuring proposals and the Customer Services Best Value review.

The report was made in response to the action required under the Customer Services Service Plan that the customer service strategy should be introduced with a review made of the services provided at Riverside House and the Town Hall. The outline of a 'Citizens Charter' was included, which set out the areas for improving customer services within the context of electronic government.

No alternative options had been considered at this stage in view of the proposed management restructure.

The Community Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendation in the report.

**RESOLVED** that the information contained within the report be considered as part of the restructuring proposals and the Customer Services Best Value Review.

## **EXECUTIVE (Continued)**

### (C) RURAL INITIATIVE SCHEME - BUDBROOKE COMMUNITY CENTRE

The Executive considered a report from Policy Services seeking approval for a grant of £5,900 to be awarded to Budbrooke Community Association in order to provide disabled toilet and access ramp to the Community Centre, to be taken from the grant of £20,000 approved three years ago for improvements to the Centre.

The approved capital programme included £295,000 for rural initiative schemes. This included £20,000 per annum for 2003/4 and 2004/5 which had been allocated from the Community Plan budget. To date £262,000 had been allocated to various schemes. After taking account of minor underspends on some schemes there remained about £39,000 within the budget.

The Community Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

#### **RESOLVED**

- (1) that a grant of £5,900 be awarded to the Budbrooke Community Association in order to provide a disabled toilet and access ramp to the Community Centre to be taken from the grant of £20,000 approved three years ago for improvements to the Centre; and
- (2) the Community Scrutiny Committee consider a general policy for dealing with unspent grant allocations before a decision is made whether to keep available to the Community Association the balance of the grant.

### (D) GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

The Committee considered a report from Finance seeking approval that the applications for grant aid from voluntary organisations as detailed in the appendix to the report be approved.

All the applications received met the Council's criteria associated with the grants scheme and contributed to key issue strategies and were therefore considered worthy of financial support.

The Community Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

**RESOLVED** that the applications for grant aid to voluntary organisations as detailed in the appendix to the report be approved.

### (E) THE TRANSFER OF LAND - GARAGE SITES



## **EXECUTIVE (Continued)**

The Committee considered a report from Housing seeking approval of the transfer of land at Greville Road, Warwick to Orbit Housing Association for development and to allow any payment for garage site land to be reinvested into new affordable housing schemes.

Following the garage site survey of 2000/2001 six garage sites had been identified as under used, in poor repair, subject to vandalism and in low demand. Five of the sites were considered to be suitable for redevelopment and registered social landlords were chosen by the Joint Commissioning Partnership to undertake the developments.

Planning permission was given on the 14 November 2002 for seven family houses to be built on the Greville Road site. The scheme was due to start in April 2003 with completion schedule for March 2004.

This was a low density scheme as were all the sites, as large family housing was requested in view of demand for this in the District. However, this had resulted in schemes being extremely expensive and it might be necessary for the planning to be varied in order to make the schemes financially viable.

Development of affordable housing had been considered as a priority within the Community Plan and the demand was evident from the review of the Housing Needs Survey in December 2001.

Alternative options were being considered for the smaller site at Greville Road/Chesford Crescent as this was unsuitable for the development due to the positioning of an electrical Sub Station.

The Community Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

### **RESOLVED** that

- (1) the transfer of land at Greville Road, Warwick to Orbit Housing Association for development be approved; and
  - (2) any payment for garage site land be re-invested into new affordable housing schemes.
- (F) WARWICKSHIRE ON LINE PARTNERSHIP WORKING MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The Executive considered a report from Policy Services seeking acceptance of the Memorandum of Understanding between Warwick District, North Warwickshire Borough, Stratford-upon-Avon District Rugby Borough, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough and Warwickshire County, Councils for joint working on projects contributing to e-government initiatives.

## **EXECUTIVE (Continued)**

The report also sought the appointment of David Kohler and Chris Elliott to representative the Council on the partnership board.

Central Government had set targets for e-government including joined up working. The Warwickshire Association of Information Technology Officers had shared information and some joint developments since 1993. The groups had submitted a bid to the office of the Deputy Prime Minister for partnership funding and had been granted £2m for 2002/2004 from the Local Government on-line budget.

The six councils' officer e-champions had met together with WAITO in recent months to develop a joint e-government agenda. At the request of the Chief Executives of the councils, the group had developed a 'Memorandum of Understanding' to facilitate the joint management of the partnership.

A formal legal agreement had been considered but this was felt to be too constricting an arrangement for what would be an informal partnership.

### **RESOLVED** that

- (1) that the Council accepts the Memorandum of Understanding between Warwick District Council, North Warwickshire Borough Council, Stratford-upon-Avon District Council, Rugby Borough Council, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council and Warwickshire County Council for joint working on projects contributing to e-government initiatives; and
- (2) Councillor David Kohler and Chris Elliott represent Warwick District Council on the Partnership Board.

## **653. 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 for reasons of the likely disclosure of the exempt information within paragraphs 1, 8 and 9 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government 1972.

## **654. CULTURAL QUARTER SPENCER YARD LEAMINGTON**

The Executive considered a report from Policy Services seeking approval for the proposals for the next stage of the Cultural Quarter development, in Leamington Spa.

The Executive on the 19 August had agreed the proposals for the development of the Southbank subject to proposals for Phase 1 receiving planning permission, the receipt of a satisfactory business plan and reaching

## **EXECUTIVE (Continued)**

satisfactory terms and conditions on a lease and for ongoing management arrangements.

A planning application had been received from Supporting the Arts for the Spencer Yard development and would be considered by the Planning Committee on 11 December 2002.

A business plan had been circulated to members and was based on a low revenue scenario. The key to the business plan was the lease cost of Spencer Street Church.

The Community Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

The Environment Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report though sought confirmation that Warwick District Council would take more control with this stage of the development.

The Resources Scrutiny Committee supported recommendations 1.1 and 1.3, but did not form a strong consensus either way for recommendation 1.2.

### **RESOLVED** that

- (1) recommendations 1.1 and 1.3 of the report be approved; and
- (2) in relation to recommendation 1.2 the option for the continuation of revenue support to cover the lease costs of the former United reform church be approved

## **656. SALE OF OPEN SPACE**

The Executive considered a report from Legal Services which sought approval for the sale of part of the land at the rear of Ridgeley Close which was being dedicated to the Council by Persimmons plc as public open space land for garden use by the occupiers of the properties in Ridgeley Close.

The land was part of a larger area of open space which had been dedicated to the Council by Persimmons plc, but because of the location and condition of the land would be difficult to maintain.

The sale of the land had to be advertised because it was open space land and as a result an objection had been received to the proposed sale. The objection appeared to be against the sale of public open space in general and did not give a specific reason why this land should not be sold. The land had been held by the householders for a number of years and was not therefore available for public use at present.

The Community and Resources Scrutiny Committees supported the recommendations in the report.

**EXECUTIVE (Continued)**

**RESOLVED** that the sale of part of the land at the rear of Ridgeley Close, which was being dedicated to the Council by Persimmons plc as public open space land, to the occupiers of properties in Ridgeley Close for garden use be approved.

(The meeting ended at 9.45 pm)