

## **ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SUB-COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 24 January 2000 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 pm.

**PRESENT:** Councillor Evans (Chair); Councillors Attwood, Mrs Begg, Mrs Clayton, Coker, Darmody, Guest, Hammon, Mrs Hodgetts, Kohler, MacKay, Thomas.

Councillor Mrs Compton - Chairman of the Council

(Councillor Kohler substituted for Councillor Mrs Boad)

### **(1) MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 1999, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

#### **PART I**

(Matters not the subject of powers delegated to the Sub-Committee by the Council)

### **2. LOCAL FARMING COMMUNITY**

The Sub-Committee considered a report from the Commissioning Director seeking its views in respect of issues arising from the difficulties being faced by the local farming community.

Nationally, the farming sector was experiencing its most difficult economically challenging period since the 1930's. There had been a decline of 60% in farm income nationally, and had fallen to an average of £9,900 per head in some sectors.

The national situation was reflected locally and the local branch of the National Farmers Union had asked the Council to do what it could to assist the local farming community. The Council had already decided to hold a farmers market in each

of the main towns in the district each month from February 2000 onwards. Ideas were also being developed for a SRB6 bid focussing on developing a Worcestershire/Warwickshire local food mark that could be promoted through enhanced farmers markets, restaurants, local greengrocers, and other points at which the public obtained food.

The Sub-Committee considered the individual requests for assistance made by the local branch of the National Farmers Union.

**RECOMMENDED** that

- (1) no action be taken on a request to ask the Town and Parish Councils within the district which were twinned with French towns, to use those links to lobby the French Government to lift the ban of imports on British beef;
- (2) a letter be sent to the districts MP's and MEP's requesting that the administration of new regulations be undertaken through existing agencies rather than creating a separate set of regulators and inspections;
- (3) the request to engage in discussion in the local plan review about the circumstances in which farm buildings may be converted for other beneficial and appropriate economic uses be referred to the Head of Planning;
- (4) the request to lobby the Environment Agency to discuss how the rural community could be better warned about flooding be referred to the Health & Control Committee;

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- (5) the request to engage in discussions about how fly-tipping and abandoned vehicles could be tackled effectively be referred to the Head of Environmental Health;
- (6) the request to work together to develop a new countryside code and to discuss guidelines relating to the management of hedges be referred to Warwickshire County Council;
- (7) the request to discuss appropriate mechanisms to manage the eviction of travellers etc. be referred to the Head of Legal Services;
- (8) this Sub-Committee confirms its strong support to holding farmers markets in each of the main towns in the district each month from February 2000 onwards; and
- (9) the request to help local farmers understand the implications of the proposed new food standards agency be referred to the Head of Environmental Health.

### **3. PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITY TOWN CENTRES**

The Sub-Committee considered a report from the Commissioning Team on a request to release Key Issues monies to undertake work required to support the action plans for Kenilworth, Warwick and Royal Leamington Spa.

As part of the partnership approach being adopted within the Town Centre Management initiative, the Council was playing a leading role in delivering certain promotional projects which formed part of the action plan. This work was

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particularly important in relation to the promotional work associated with the launch of regular farmers markets, the production of Spring town centre newsletters in Kenilworth, Warwick and Royal Leamington Spa and undertaking survey work to benchmark the commercial performance of the three town centres.

Funding already allocated to support the ongoing projects was now coming to an end and to maximise the full potential, additional funding was required. There was £5,000 remaining unspent or uncommitted from the Key Issues monies allocated for Town Centre Management.

**RECOMMENDED** that the final £5,000 be released from the Town Centre Management Key Issues monies to support the ongoing town centre promotional projects in Kenilworth, Warwick and Royal Leamington Spa.

### **4. SYDENHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD INITIATIVE**

The Sub-Committee considered a report from the Commissioning Director on a proposal to part fund a Project Manager post for the Sydenham Neighbourhood Initiative.

For the past three years, the local community in Sydenham had been developing the concept of a community resource centre. This was now nearing reality and a planning application for the building works had been submitted and some of the bids for finance to construct and run the centre had been successful. Most of the work undertaken so far had been on a voluntary basis, but this was now becoming a burden on the volunteers. It was suggested that the situation could be eased by the appointment of a Project Manager who would work with the local community in submitting other bids for finance and gearing up to run the centre. It was

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suggested that the post would go on to run the centre after the works were completed.

The Council could make a one-off contribution of £18,000 towards the proposed Project Manager post, which would be matched by £5,000 from the local community and possible monies from the County Council. This Council was not making any other contribution to the project and would not be expected to make any further contributions in future years.

**RECOMMENDED** that a one-off contribution of £18,000 be made towards the cost of a Project Manager post for the Sydenham Neighbourhood Initiative to be funded from the community initiative/award budget.

### **5. THE GAP - NEWSLETTER AND BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLING**

(Councillors Mrs Clayton and Mrs Hodgetts declared a non-pecuniary, substantial interest in this item and left the room during the discussion and voting).

The Sub-Committee considered a report from the Commissioning Team requesting funding of £4,000 to produce a newsletter and for a bereavement counselling project on the Percy Estate.

The Gap Community Centre opened in June 1999 and a group of local people now wished to produce a newsletter to share information about the centre with local residents. The Council's contribution to the cost of this newsletter was estimated at £2,500.

In addition, work at centre had identified a need for a bereavement counselling service. Informal discussions had indicated that six out of fourteen young people

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questioned had lost a parent. It was suggested that the Council contribute £1,500 towards the cost of starting a bereavement counselling service.

### **RECOMMENDED** that

- (1) the Council contribute £4,000 in total towards the cost of producing a newsletter and starting a bereavement counselling service at the Gap Community Centre; and
- (2) a further report be submitted to this Sub-Committee and the Health Forum on the success of the bereavement counselling service.

## **6. WORKING WITH PARISH COUNCILS - UPDATE**

The Sub-Committee considered a report from the Heads of Planning and Housing and the Commissioning Team seeking support for continuing to work pro-actively with parish councils and seeking suggestions as to how additional support could be given to members themselves.

The Warwick District, Town and Parish Councils Code of Practice, published in 1998, set out the joint responsibilities and working arrangements between local councils and the District Council.

The report detailed various examples of joint working that had emanated out of

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the Code of Practice. These included the potential for induction training for parish clerks, the provision of more information to parish clerks and the Director of West Midlands Local Government Association surveying all local authorities within the West Midlands to ascertain the existence of similar Codes of Practice which he considered as good practice.

The Council's Personnel Manager, in conjunction with Members' Services, was providing a training/induction session for parish clerks on 9 March 2000. It was requested that a budget of £1,600 be set aside for the training and the provision of an information pack.

### **RECOMMENDED** that

- (1) the initiatives undertaken to date to work with parish councils be supported, including allocating £1,600 to undertake induction training for parish clerks on 9 March 2000; and
- (2) members provide ideas to Jeanette McGarry on the level and nature of the support they require from the District Council in their dealings with town/parish councils.

## **7. ARTS SOCIETY - AN EVENING OF ASIAN ARTS**

The Sub-Committee considered a report from the Commissioning Team seeking approval for a contribution to Warwick Arts Society for a promotion of an evening of Asian arts.

**RECOMMENDED** that consideration of this request be referred to Leisure Committee.

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### **8. WEST MIDLANDS LOW PAY UNIT**

The Sub-Committee considered a report from the Commissioning Team requesting approval of the affiliation fee for 2000/01 to continue membership of the West Midlands Low Pay Unit.

The Council had become an affiliate member of the West Midlands Low Pay Unit in April 1998. The main service the unit offered was an advisory one, which was not only available to individuals but also acted as expert advisor to the local generalist advisors at various voluntary organisations. The unit was reliant upon donations on membership fees to continue their works.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Council renew its affiliate membership of the West Midlands Low Pay Unit for 2000/01 at a cost of £1,263.

### **9. NATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE**

(Councillors Mrs Clayton and Mrs Hodgetts declared non-pecuniary, substantial interests in this item and left the room during the discussion and voting).

The Sub-Committee considered a report from the Commissioning Team providing details of the National Youth Conference and requesting funding so that young people from Warwick District may attend.

The National Youth Conference was scheduled to take place on 5/6 March 2000



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in Manchester and would provide an opportunity for young people to share issues of interest and concern, experiences of involvement in decision making and ideas for the future as well as providing an opportunity for decision makers to discuss issues, ideas and experiences with young people and to develop joint action plans.

**RECOMMENDED** that £500 be allocated from the budget for the Gap to cover the travel and conference fees to enable representatives of the Warwick District area to attend the National Youth Conference on 5/6 March 2000.

### **10. NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RACE AND DISABILITY**

The Sub-Committee considered a report from the Commissioning Team seeking approval for a contribution towards funding of the National Conference on Race and Disability, being co-ordinated by the Council of Disabled People, Warwickshire.

The Council of Disabled Peoples' Race and Disability worker had recently carried out research into the needs of Asian and African Caribbean disabled people in Warwickshire. A two day conference was planned for which funding was requested.

It was proposed to use the Royal Spa Centre to host the conference, the hire of which would cost £520. A contribution towards this cost would go towards meeting a Key Issue Strategy to consider the needs of both ethnic minorities and disabled people in the district.

**RECOMMENDED** that a contribution of £520 be made to meet the cost of hiring the Royal Spa Centre to host the two day national

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conference on race and disability.

### **11. SHOPMOBILITY SCHEME - ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA**

The Sub-Committee considered a report from the Commissioning Team on the developments towards the provision of a shopmobility scheme based in the Royal Priors Shopping Centre.

The development of a shopmobility scheme had been under consideration for some time and was now included as a town centre action plan objective. As part of the modernisation of the shopping centre, Royal Priors was now proposing a permanent purpose built facility being provided and discussions were ongoing to determine the best design and location for the scheme.

The shopmobility scheme would operate as a company limited by guarantee with charity status operating under name "Warwick District Mobility Ltd". The company's objectives would be to facilitate the mobility of people living in or visiting Warwick district and the accessibility of Warwick district to such people. It was proposed that a District Councillor and the Town Centre Manager should represent this Council as trustees of Warwick District Mobility Ltd.

A sum of £15,000 had initially been allocated towards the scheme and it was considered that this could now be used to carry out some of the work identified in the mobility audit, which had been produced to identify what was required to increase accessibility to the rest of the town centre. This work would include the provision of dropped kerbs.

**RECOMMENDED** that

(1) the proposal to develop a purpose built shopmobility unit in the

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Royal Priors, subject to any relevant planning permission, be supported;

(2) it be agreed to release the £15,000 already allocated to the scheme to be used by Engineering on work identified in the mobility audit to improve the disabled links from Royal Priors to the rest of the town centre; and

(3) a District Councillor and the Town Centre Manager represent this Council as trustees of Warwick District Mobility Ltd.

### **PART II**

(Matters delegated to the Sub-Committee by the Council)

NIL

(The meeting ended at 7.50 p.m)

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