

# Executive

Minutes of the meeting held remotely on Thursday 1 October 2020 at 6.00pm, which was broadcast live via the Council's YouTube Channel.

**Present:** Councillors Day (Leader), Cooke, Falp, Grainger, Hales, Matecki and Rhead.

**Also Present:** Councillors: Boad (Liberal Democrat Group Observer), Davison (Green Group Observer), Mangat (Labour Group Observer) Milton (Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee) and Nicholls (Chair of Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee).

## 36. **Declarations of Interest**

### Minute Number 42 – Progress Report on Joint Work with Stratford District Council

At the time of discussing this item, Councillor Falp declared an interest because she was a Warwickshire County Councillor.

### Minute Number 42 – Progress Report on Joint Work with Stratford District Council

At the time of discussing this item, Councillor Cooke declared an interest because he was a Warwickshire County Councillor.

## 37. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 August 2020 were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

(Councillor Grainger joined the meeting during this item.)

## **Part 2**

(Items upon which a decision by the Council was not required)

## 38. **Risk Management Annual Report 2019/20 and Strategy**

The Executive considered a report from Finance presenting the annual report for risk management and updates to the Risk Management Strategy for implementing and embedding risk management in the Council.

As part of their responsibility for overseeing the organisation's risk management arrangements, Members were responsible for the Council's Risk Management Strategy and for developing risk management within the Council.

The overriding objective for risk management was to embed it within the organisation so that it was a seamless, but fundamental, part of the organisation's processes, and not viewed as a separate bureaucratic activity with little value. However, as with all objectives of this nature, there was no specific picture of what a fully risk-embedded organisation looked like and

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

the goal of embedding risk management was an ongoing journey, rather than one with a definite ending.

To help achieve the objective of embedding risk management throughout the organisation, the Council had a Risk Management Strategy. This was set out as Appendix A to the report.

Evidence of the application of risk management and of a risk management culture, was set out as Appendix B to the report.

In terms of alternative options, the report was not based on 'project appraisal' so alternative options were not applicable.

The Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee was satisfied with the proposals as set out in the report.

Councillor Hales proposed the report as laid out and thanked officers for their hard work during a difficult period of months.

### **Resolved** that

- (1) the Council's Risk Management Strategy as set out in Appendix A to the report, and Members' responsibilities to oversee the risk management framework, be noted; and
- (2) the existing risk management activities and culture in the Council, as set out in Appendix B to the report, be noted.

(The Portfolio Holders for this item were Councillors Day and Hales)  
Forward Plan Reference 1,137

### **39. Joint Local Plan Review**

The Executive considered a report from Development Services setting out proposals for the preparation of a Joint Local Plan for South Warwickshire, to be carried out by Warwick District Council, in conjunction with Stratford District Council, and seeking approval for this work to progress.

At its 13 July meeting, the Executive approved a paper which considered matters relating to local government restructure, and in particular, it identified a number of opportunities for closer working with Stratford on Avon District Council (SDC). Specifically, it agreed that in the context of the joint statement that had been prepared by the leaders of the two Councils, *"that agreement be given in principle to conducting a Joint Core Strategy/Local Plan Review and that a further paper be presented setting out details of a proposed programme, a member and officer governance"*.

Following this decision, WDC officers had begun detailed discussions with officers from SDC to consider whether a Joint Core Strategy/Local Plan Review should be undertaken, and the way in which this work should be undertaken. The outcome of these discussions was set out in the paper attached as Appendix 1 to the report. This paper was considered both at

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

the WDC Executive meeting on 1 October, and also by SDC's Cabinet on 5 October 2020.

As the July report identified, within the Coventry and Warwickshire sub-region, there were extensive discussions ongoing about developing a sub-regional spatial framework, and both SDC and WDC were part of that discussion. Whilst there seemed to be general agreement, there was no agreed proposal to consider and implement. Meanwhile, both SDC and WDC were committed to reviewing their respective Local Plans/Core Strategies in 2021, though in reality, preparatory work needed to commence. Given the close relationship between the plans, as demonstrated by the extensive joint work undertaken in the development of the existing agreed Local Plan/Core Strategy proposals, there was a logic in undertaking the planned reviews at the same time, as one co-ordinated effort.

There were other good reasons to support the development of a Local Plan for South Warwickshire, which covered both Stratford on Avon and Warwick Districts, particularly around accommodating housing growth, planning for infrastructure and supporting employment growth, and the economy. These were discussed further in section 1 of Appendix 1 to the report. Taken together, there was a strong case for preparing a joint Local Plan to cover both Districts, hence the reference to South Warwickshire.

Appendix 1 to the report also set out in more detail a number of specific matters relating to the production of the Local Plan. These were:

- What might a Joint Local Plan for South Warwickshire (JLPSW) look like?
- What organisational/staffing structure was required to deliver a JLPSW?
- What governance arrangements should be put in place to support and manage the delivery of the JLPSW?
- What might be an indicative work programme?
- What Finance issues needed to be addressed?
- What were the next steps for taking this work forward?

At the end of each of these sections were recommendations in relation to each of these matters. The same recommendations were also to be presented to SDC's Cabinet on 5 October. It was recommended that, subject to SDC Cabinet also agreeing these, the Executive supports all of the recommendations set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

Many of the principles and recommendations in Appendix 1 to the report were there to give a guide to how work on the Joint Local Plan for South Warwickshire (JLPSW) would commence. Some of these could well change as the JLPSW was prepared. For example:

- Section 2 set out a proposed scope for the JLPSW, however it was understood that this was to be kept under review as work was undertaken.
- Section 3 set out how the work on the JLPSW would be staffed. At the time, it was proposed that a small team of three officers was created through secondments from the two authorities, however this was kept under review.

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

With regards to the organisational and staffing structure of the JLPSW Team, this was set out in section 3 of Appendix 1 to the report. Members were made aware that if WDC was to second 1.5 officers to the JLPSW Team, this would still retain a core of four planning policy officers to undertake other planning policy work for this Council (noting, however, that these officers might be required to support the core JLPSW Team at key stages of the JLPSW production, such as during periods of public consultation).

Some of the key recommendations related to the governance and management arrangements, as laid out in section 4 of Appendix 1 to the report.

With regards to a Local Plan Advisory Board, in this Council the role of Member Working Groups and Member Reference Groups had been important in many projects, to ensure that Members across the Council were fully briefed on key issues, and also could effectively input into projects. In the preparation of all previous Local Plans in Warwick District, groups such as this had been vital for building an understanding in, and confidence of, the emerging Local Plan. Such groups had been a place where policy ideas could be tested and discussed and provide a much greater level of scrutiny than was ever possible through the formal Scrutiny Committee. In the context of the major decisions which had to be made in a JLPSW, the need to understand the wider geography of the new JLPSW and the need to understand the views and concerns of fellow Councillors in SDC, such as a Member Working Group, was felt to be of particular importance.

The Council had agreed to replace its many working and reference groups with a series of Programme Advisory Boards. These provided a good model for how any Member involvement in the Joint Local Plan would operate. The proposal in the report was therefore to create a South Warwickshire Local Plan Advisory Board, made up, equally, of Councillors from both SDC and WDC and chaired jointly by Portfolio Holders. For this Council, that person was proposed to be the Development Portfolio Holder.

With regards to the costs associated with preparing a JLPSW, these were known to be significant. At the time, the Local Plan (adopted in 2017) cost approximately £1 million (not including staffing costs). Key areas where costs would be incurred included commissioning the evidence base, public consultation and costs associated with the Public Examination. It was expected that through economies of scale (including by commissioning parts of the evidence base on a wider sub-regional basis) and, importantly, sharing of costs with SDC, the costs of delivering the JLP would be less than if WDC was to prepare a Local Plan on its own.

It was a key early task of the JLP Team to establish a detailed programme for preparing the JLPSW and estimate a budget cost for this work. The budget report presented to Executive in February 2021 set out the likely budgetary requirements for preparing the JLPSW in the context of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. It was estimated that this was likely to be in the region of £500,000 to £600,000 in total (on the basis that the total cost would be £1m - £1.2m and that these costs would be shared equally with SDC). It was prudent, however, to identify funds to commence work on the JLPSW in 2020/21, and £100,000 was identified

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

from within the Planning Appeals Reserve for this purpose. An element of this was to cover early legal fees, including the cost of legal advice pertaining to the establishment of the Joint Committee.

Section 4 of Appendix 1 to the report proposed two alternative models for how key decisions on the JLPSW were to be taken. The recommendation in the report was that, except for those matters that needed to be referred to the Full Councils of both authorities, the two Councils would establish a Joint Executive Committee. Given that the two Councils were actively exploring much closer working, the creation of a single decision-making body for key decisions relating to the JLPSW would be a strong expression of the desire of both Councils to work closely together to address key development challenges across both Districts.

The Joint Executive Committee would be established in accordance with section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 and section 9EB of the Local Government Act 2000, and powers would be delegated to it by the Leader. The Joint Executive Committee would exercise the executive functions relating to the preparation of a joint plan, with decisions on its submission to the Secretary of State and its adoption reserved to the respective full Councils. As the Joint Executive Committee would exercise statutory functions on behalf of both authorities, it would be necessary to agree formal arrangements for its governance and operation, and a separate report would be brought to the Executive and the Leader at the earliest opportunity. The Joint Executive Committee would not need to make any decisions in the near future and work got under way on establishing the other arrangements proposed in Appendix 1 to the report, and beginning the investigatory work for the review in advance of establishing the Joint Executive Committee.

In establishing the Local Plan Advisory Board, there were a number of important matters to agree, including the terms of reference and appointment of Members who would sit on it. It was recommended that the Executive should ask the Leader to agree these and other arrangements, and that the Chief Executive would be authorised to take all other steps necessary to implement the recommendations, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report. In doing this, both the Leader and Chief Executive would work in partnership with the Leader and Chief Executive at SDC.

In terms of alternative options, the Executive could decide not to progress with a Joint Local Plan for South Warwickshire but to continue to prepare a Local Plan for Warwick District alone. For the reasons set out in Appendix 1 to the report, this option was not supported. The two Councils had agreed in principle to prepare a joint Local Plan and nothing in the report would suggest that this was not an achievable option.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee felt that a clear distinction was required to make it apparent that the working party was not a scrutiny function. It also felt that the term "Programme Advisory Board" should be avoided because of the very specific meaning it had at Warwick District Council and the confusion that could arise.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee also noted that concerns raised about the potential impact of the Local Government review and on potential

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

differing needs for affordable and other housing allocations would be addressed through the proposed officer work and Member review.

Councillor Cooke noted the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, taking on board its suggestion to avoid the term "Programme Advisory Board", and requested that the Head of Development Services, would suggest another term that was distinctly different. He then proposed the report as laid out.

The Deputy Chief Executive (BH) clarified for Members that the review was going to be a strategic framework for a Joint Plan across both Districts, and sitting underneath would be a number of Development Plan Documents. Not everything that was spoken about at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be in the Joint Plan, and some would come in a Development Plan Document.

### **Resolved** that

- (1) the work that has been undertaken by officers to explore how a Joint Local Plan Review may be undertaken with Stratford on Avon District Council (SDC), as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be noted;
- (2) the Council's work with SDC to deliver a Joint Local Plan for South Warwickshire, be supported;
- (3) subject to SDC Cabinet also agreeing to work with this Council to deliver a Joint Local Plan for South Warwickshire, the recommendations set out in Appendix 1 to the report as the basis for the Joint Local Plan to be prepared, be agreed;
- (4) a budget of £100,000 be made available from the Planning Appeals Reserve to fund initial work of the Joint Local Plan for South Warwickshire during 2020/2021;
- (5) in respect of the recommendations in Appendix 1 to the report, relating to the establishment of a joint Executive/Cabinet, the details of how this will operate will need to be approved by this Council and Stratford District Council, and officers be instructed to prepare a further report on the options and operations for this; and
- (6) the Leader agree terms of reference and other arrangements for the Local Plan Advisory Board and to appoint its Members on behalf of this Council, and that the Chief Executive be authorised to take all other steps necessary to implement the recommendations as laid out in Appendix 1 to the report.

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Cooke)  
Forward Plan Reference 1,142

### **40. Trees for our Future – Project Framework and Start-up**

The Executive considered a report from Neighbourhood Services setting out recommendations for the scope and delivery of the Trees for our Future planting project, confirmed by the Council at its meeting on 12 February 2020.

The report was to agree mapping, delivery and monitoring processes for tree planting across the District. These would establish a basis for achieving the target of planting 160,000 trees in a sustainable and effective way.

The purpose of the report was to agree initial project funding to ensure that the tree planting work would commence for a period of 18 months. Further reports would be brought to the Executive following the initial phase.

The Climate Emergency Action Programme identified the need to plant trees that would achieve a range of benefits, as set out in the background information shown in section 8 of the report.

The timescale proposed allowed for a range of differing types of tree planting to be established across the District. The approach was sustainable, having allowed appropriate assessment of sites and their opportunities, alongside the longer term needs for maintenance and care.

The recommendation targeted early achievable planting that would be recognisable and pave the way for a measured approach of “the right tree in the right place”, each year until 2030. Lessons would be learnt throughout the project period and methods refined.

An original target of 160,000 trees over the following four years was set in the Council’s Business Strategy. The revised time period allowed for sustainable and appropriate tree planting, that brought long lasting impacts.

It was not possible to achieve the target only on land owned by Warwick District Council. The project was, therefore, structured to enable others to achieve the targets alongside the Council, by offering advice, site assessments and signposting partners to available funding sources.

At the time of the report, there were around eight sites that offered potential to plant immediately in the 2020/21 planting season, from the Autumn. These included seven owned by Warwick District Council and another owned by a Parish council. These would lead the way in establishing the project more widely. Prioritising these sites where the Council could directly influence success, would help establish the work.

Initial work was required to underpin the ten-year period of planting schemes and ensure the benefits were sustainable for residents of the District. Over the first 18 months, an expert resource was needed to identify tree planting opportunities, specifically for Warwick District. Data gathered by the Habitat Biodiversity Audit Partnership, to which the Council belonged, was used to achieve this. Once the mapping and detailed

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

proposals were developed, refined proposals would be brought to the Executive.

There were few opportunities to launch the project in 2020, because preparation work was likely to last beyond the earliest planting season (from Autumn 2020). The eight identified sites presented the possibility of immediately establishing a tangible presence of tree planting in the District, that led the way to enable others to continue the work. Work was on-going to identify external funding sources that would reduce the overall costs.

The project offered the opportunity to communicate a wider understanding of the climate emergency and supported the development of new projects under the Trees for our Future programme, as well as the direct benefits of tree planting within the District's communities.

Specialist forestry expertise was required, as sites came forward, to ensure that appropriate schemes would happen. This work entailed a wide range of engagement with interested organisations and residents and included advice and support on appropriate planting and accessing funding. In addition, sites needed to be monitored throughout the duration of the project, to ensure the number of trees planted, and on-going maintenance and sustainability. Dialogue had indicated that two partners, the Heart of England Forest and Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, were prepared to offer relevant services from within their teams via a call-off arrangement, as well as work individually or together. Discussions continued with these partners.

Initial funds were required to enable 'early wins' and one-off opportunities as they came forward, and to support the community in driving the project forward. This element of the project related to more innovative and unanticipated proposals that would benefit the programme's delivery.

The indicative table of costs for the project initiation period was shown below:

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Indicative Total Cost (over initial 18 months)</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
Identification of a baseline for trees and woodland in the District	Mapping of the tree planting opportunities District-wide, using existing habitat data.	£2,200	£2,200	£0
Early establishment of trees on identified sites	Undertake immediate planting on WDC and Budbrooke Parish Council (BPC) to launch the programme.	WDC – up to £27,000*  BPC – up to £5,800 max**	WDC - £17,000  BPC £5,800	WDC - £10,000 (if required)  BPC £0



**PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Indicative Total Cost (over initial 18 months)</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
Commission expert advice	Specialist forestry expertise is required, as sites come forward, to ensure that appropriate schemes happen. This work will include partner engagement and funding advice for those who are considering taking part. In addition, sites need to be monitored throughout the duration of the project to ensure the number of trees planted and on-going maintenance and sustainability.	£27,500	£9,000	£18,500
Communications work in support of the project	The project offers the opportunity to communicate a wider understanding of the climate emergency and support the development of new projects under the Trees for our Future programme, as well as the direct benefits of tree planting within the District's communities.	£5,500	£1,500	£4,000
Provision of grant funding	This is for the Council to support community tree planting initiatives and other one-off opportunities directly, including in 2021/22 a contribution to Leamington Street Trees subject to further discussions	£50,000	£0	£50,000 ***
<b>Total</b>		<b>£118,000</b>	<b>£35,500</b>	<b>£82,500</b>

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

\*Funding of approx. £10,000 was available from Woodland Trust for these schemes.

\*\*Budbrooke Parish Council had provisionally indicated the potential to provide an element of Parish Council funding towards planting.

\*\*\*Consideration was given to the funding of this work stream through the potential use of any RUCIS funding or future funding associated with the Climate Emergency Action Programme.

In light of the Council's overall financial position, it was recognised that it was necessary to split the funding of this work over the 18-month period. This would enable the Council to progress initial opportunities within the forthcoming planting session (November 2020 – February 2021). The funding required for next financial year (at the time estimated at £82,500) was identified through the February 2021 budget report, to enable the Council to consider the funding needed for this project against other corporate priorities.

In terms of alternative options, aiming to achieve all planting directly, via the resources of the Council was an alternative option. Whilst it might provide the opportunity to strengthen community engagement in connection with the delivery of the Climate Emergency Action Plan, this option would require additional financial and staff resources. It would also not maximise the potential to involve partners in the achievement of the targets. These partners could also be able to access additional grant funding themselves.

The variety and range of possibilities for tree planting was wide. An alternative option to address all of these as soon as they arose, without prioritising particular sites might return quick and visible results. However, experience from other programmes suggested that without following considered mapping and planning for future site maintenance, those quick returns were unsustainable into the medium and longer term future. This could have negative repercussions on the benefits for the project.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee thanked officers for their work and welcomed this initial plan, which was felt to be a good foundation to determine the final plan details. It looked forward to information on both the final number of trees and the amount of woodland established. The community involvement was noted as a very positive aspect of the project.

Councillor Grainger proposed the report as laid out.

### **Resolved that**

- (1) the project targets of 160,000 trees planted by 2030, in accordance with the hierarchy of target types of planting (as set out in Appendix 1 to the report and in section 8.7 of the report), be agreed;
  - (2) the project model, targeting some key sites owned by Warwick District Council, to lead the
- Item 2 / Page 10

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

way in enabling a wide range of partners to undertake tree planting on sites in other ownership, be agreed;

- (3) up to £35,500 be agreed for the project for the remaining current financial year (2020/21), to be funded from the Contingency Reserve, to enable the project start-up and establishment of detailed project scope and delivery structure; and
- (4) the funding for work programmed for 2021/22 be included in the Council's February 2021 budget report, currently estimated at £82,500.

(The Portfolio Holders for this item were Councillors Grainger and Rhead)  
Forward Plan Reference 1,143.

### **41. Use of Delegated Powers – One Off Budget to Procure Independent Support for a Citizens Assembly**

The Executive considered a report from the Programme Director for Climate Change. The Executive approved the Climate Emergency Action Programme (CEAP) at its meeting in February 2020. The CEAP included a proposal to conduct a Citizen's Assembly. The report asked the Executive to formally note the approval of additional one-off funding of £35,000 from the contingency reserve to commission a Citizen's Assembly to help inform proposals to achieve a Zero Carbon District by 2030 (Work Package 3 of the CEAP).

A key priority for the first year of the Climate Emergency Action Programme was the establishment of a Citizens' Assembly during 2020. The Citizens' Assembly would provide a positive way to engage with the community in a high profile way, to obtain positive backing on the CEAP proposals. In supporting this as a method of undertaking some initial citizens' engagement, it was also accepted that other methods were likely to have value in terms of ongoing engagement as the CEAP unfolded. Specifically, it was agreed that a Citizens' Assembly should inform answers to "how" questions, to help the Council understand the best way to plan and deliver the areas of work set out in the CEAP.

To set up and deliver an effective engagement process, the Council needed to engage consultants to provide an independent approach. The consultants would be responsible for:

- (a) planning and setting up the engagement process to provide answers to the lines of enquiry that Council was seeking answers to;
- (b) running the process, ensuring participants were well informed regarding the issues and all had a fair opportunity to contribute to an in-depth enquiry in to those issues; and
- (c) reporting the key outcomes from the assembly.

A major challenge would be the timescales involved, if the Citizens' Assembly was to inform the budget setting for 2021/22. For this reason, officers took the view that a budget for the Citizens' Assembly needed to be

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

agreed under the Chief Executive's delegated authority CE(4). This allowed a procurement process to take place and a consultant was appointed, with the first engagement meetings getting underway in October. The cost of the work was £35,000, which had been set aside from the Contingency Reserve.

It was noted that through the discussions with potential consultants (including those appointed), there was a need to limit the size of the Citizens' Assembly to 30 people, to enable it to be managed using virtual online tools rather than face to face meetings. Whilst this was a smaller sample size than had originally been envisaged, it was sufficiently large to enable participation from a comprehensive cross section of the District's communities, and would provide a legitimate source of advice for future Council decisions relating to the Climate Emergency.

In terms of alternative options, a range of potential engagement methodologies were considered. It was recognised that engagement needed to be an ongoing process and was therefore likely to involve a number of different methodologies over time. At the time, the Council was looking to engage through a Citizens' Assembly. This was seen as important because it was perhaps the only methodology that:

- (a) had a sufficiently large sample to provide balanced representation of the District's population, thereby ensuring the views of different communities were shared; and
- (b) provided for in-depth enquiry in to complex issues.

Councillor Rhead explained to Members that the Citizens' Assembly would actually be called a Citizens' Jury. He also stated that he and the Programme Director for Climate Change would be attending these meetings as observers, and that the meetings would be recorded. He then proposed the report as laid out.

**Resolved** that the approval of additional one off funding of £35,000 from the contingency reserve approved under the Chief Executive's delegated authority CE(4), to enable consultants to be appointed to prepare and manage a Citizens Assembly (or similar citizen's engagement process), be noted.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Rhead)  
Forward Plan Reference 1,147.

### **42. Land off Queensway, Leamington Spa, CV31 3JZ**

The Executive considered a report from Assets seeking the approval of the disposal of land off Queensway, Leamington Spa, CV31 3JZ.

The land in question, shown hatched on the plan in Appendix 1 to the report, covered an area of approximately 3,200 square metres (or approximately 0.8 acres) and was located off Queensway in Royal Leamington Spa. It was owned by Warwick District Council (WDC) and leased to another party under a long lease agreement, upon which a

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

restaurant was erected by the original tenant, following planning consent in August 1993.

The long lease agreement commenced in October 1993, for a term of 125 years, for which WDC received a capital receipt at the commencement of the lease, followed by a peppercorn rent of £1 per annum, if charged, for the length of the lease. The land, however, was retained in the ownership of WDC.

The tenant of the land in question approached WDC with a request to purchase the land over which they had a long lease, and following negotiations between WDC, its external valuers, and the current Tenant, terms & conditions for the sale of the land in question were agreed, subject to Executive approval.

These terms & conditions were private & confidential, as they fell within the provision of information that related to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, including the authority holding that information, and, hence, were set out in full in the private & confidential report – agenda item 10.

The proposal would provide WDC with a capital receipt and remove any future concerns that might arise from the long lease and any possible future vacant periods.

In terms of alternative options, Members could decide not to proceed with the proposal. This was not recommended as it would not deliver the benefits set out in the Budgetary Framework section of the report.

Councillor Matecki proposed the report as laid out.

### **Resolved that**

- (1) the disposal of the land off Queensway, Leamington Spa, CV31 3JZ, hatched on the plan attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved, subject to terms & conditions listed in the Private & Confidential Appendix 2, Minute Number 44; and
- (2) the use of this capital receipt, alongside other funding demands, as part of the Budget process in February 2021, be agreed.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Matecki)  
Forward Plan Reference 1,146.

## **43. Progress Report on Joint Work with Stratford District Council**

The Executive considered a report from the Chief Executive informing Members of the progress made in respect of decisions made at the end of June 2020, relating to joint work with Stratford District Council (SDC) and on the Local Government Review, and sought authority to progress other opportunities with SDC.

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

At its meeting on 13 July, the Executive agreed that:

*"2.1 The Executive agrees that the joint statement (Appendix 1 of that report – see attached) that was issued by the Leader of the Council and the Leader of Stratford on Avon District Council (SDC) be endorsed, and in doing so:*

- (1) agrees to a jointly commissioned review of local government across South Warwickshire and the wider Warwickshire County area;*
- (2) that the Leaders of this Council and of SDC invite all of the other Borough/District Councils in the County, Warwickshire County Council and the Warwickshire Association of Local Councils (WALC) on behalf of the town and parish councils, to participate in the review as equal partners;*
- (3) that the Leader of the Council be the Council's nominee on a multi Council working party to steer the review;*
- (4) that the Leadership Co-ordinating Group (i.e. all the Political Group Leaders and the Executive) act as this Council's internal steering group of the review and the joint work with SDC;*
- (5) that the brief for the review be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and the Leadership Co-ordinating Group and that the report be procured as a matter of urgency; and*
- (6) that provision of cost for the review be made from a source to be determined by the S151 Officer (at the time of writing the cost has not been determined and will be affected by the number of Councils participating).*

*2.2 The Executive agrees in the context of the joint statement to exploring with SDC, in relation to the following:*

- (1) Sharing of Senior Management Team posts across the two authorities;*
- (2) Exploration of shared contracts across the two authorities; and*
- (3) That agreement be given in principle to conducting a Joint Core Strategy/Local Plan Review and that a further paper be presented setting out details of a proposed programme, a Member and officer governance.*

*Further reports to be presented to Employment and/or Executive on all of the items above as soon as possible.*

*2.3 Subject to the agreement to 2.1 above it is recommend to Council that:*

- (1) That the principle of joint working with SDC be included as part of the Council's Business Strategy; and*
- (2) That agreement(s) be entered into with SDC pursuant to section 113 of the Local Government Act 1972 and all other enabling powers so that employees can be placed at the disposal of the other Councils as may be required.*

*2.4 £35,000 be provided from the Service Transformation Reserve to fund the Council's contribution to the joint study and for additional support in respect of communications.*

*2.5 The cabinet of the County Council be asked to reconsider its informal decision to commission a separate business case for a single unitary*

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

*Council and instead, to participate in the joint study with the other Borough and District Councils to look at all options and to listen to the public's views".*

In terms of progress in respect of the first of the endorsed recommendations:

- (1) All Borough and District Councils were invited to join the review and all agreed to do so, and WALC also agreed. Warwickshire County Council was invited as an equal partner and initially agreed, but then decided it would commission a business case for a single county wide unitary. It was felt that it was impossible for WCC to be both part of the joint work and pursue a separate case, especially as its brief had not been shared nor was an opportunity given to offer a comment on a draft of the subsequent report presented to the WCC Cabinet on 27 August.
- (2) The brief for the review was agreed and was attached at Appendix 2 to the report. Deloitte were commissioned to carry out the work from a framework with SDC as the procuring body on behalf of all the Borough and District Councils.
- (3) The Council's Group Leaders when meeting as the Leadership Co-ordinating Group were kept up to date with progress.
- (4) The sum of £35,000 was agreed as the Council's contribution to the cost of the review and communications.
- (5) As part of the review work a number of steps were to be undertaken to engage the community to help the Borough and District Councils to arrive at a conclusion on the options. These steps included focus groups with residents across the county area; a telephone survey of a sample of residents; a focus group of Parish and Town Councils; businesses; and other key stakeholders. The first of the focus groups would commence before the end of September.
- (6) Discussions were held with various stakeholders to gain their perspective on the issues and approaches inherent in the options.

In respect of the second of the endorsed recommendations:

- (1) A Head of Service from SDC – Julie Lewis - was operating as Head of Neighbourhood Services for WDC. An advert of a Joint Head of ICT had been placed and interviews were held and had concluded prior to the report being considered. Work on addressing the other vacancies would be timed so they could be implemented in the next financial year;
- (2) Work was progressing looking at a Joint Waste Contract. A report was forthcoming for the November Executive to consider the details. It was also recognised that there were other possible procurement opportunities that could be exploited and a mapping exercise was underway to look at them and, in particular, at the timing.
- (3) Appendix 2 to the report set out the proposals for a Joint Local Plan for South Warwickshire.

The third recommendation had been actioned.

Whilst examining how the "splicing" of the SMTs of both Councils could be achieved and in the context of other discussions about how the Council could maintain service delivery but with fewer resources, discussions identified that various opportunities outside of SMT level either existed or

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

should be subject to examination over the following few months, with the intention of reporting back on progress early in 2021.

Mapping work of IT systems and procurement opportunities would also be undertaken as part of that opportunity assessment.

In terms of alternative options, the Executive could decide not to agree to explore further opportunities, but this was not considered helpful in the context of the challenges which this Council was facing.

Councillor Day proposed the report as laid out.

### **Resolved** that

- (1) the progress made in respect of the decisions made at the 30 June Executive, be noted; and
- (2) other opportunities for joint work with SDC, outside of SMT, also be explored as a priority and be reported back upon early in the new year.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Day)

#### **44. Public and Press**

**Resolved** that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the paragraph of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, as set out below.

Minute Numbers	Paragraph Numbers	Reason
45, 46	3	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

#### **45. Confidential Appendix 1 to Agenda Item 7 – Land off Queensway, Leamington Spa, CV31 3JZ**

The Executive approved a confidential Appendix in relation to Agenda Item 7, Minute Number 41 – Land off Queensway, Leamington Spa, CV31 3JZ.

#### **46. Minutes**

The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 24 August 2020 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.



**PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

(The meeting ended at 6.44pm)

CHAIRMAN  
17 November 2020