

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 26 January 2011 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Michael Doody (Chairman), Councillors Caborn, Coker, Mrs Gallagher, Mrs Grainger, Hammon, Mobbs and Shilton.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Barrott (Labour Group Observer), Councillor Gifford (Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee) and Councillor Mrs Knight (Chair of Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee).

120. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Minute Number 123 – Customer Service Centre Performance & Co-location Review

Councillors Caborn, Michael Doody, Kirton and Shilton declared personal interests because they were Warwickshire County Councillors.

Minute Number 124 – Rural Initiatives Grant Application

Councillor Mrs Gallagher declared a personal interest because the grant application was for a premises located in her Ward.

121. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2011 were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

PART 1

(Items which a decision by Council is required)

Nil.

PART 2

(Items which a decision by Council is not required)

122. **DECLARATION OF AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA IN COVENTRY ROAD, WARWICK**

The Executive considered a report from Environmental Services which concluded that there was an exceedance of air quality standards in multiple parts of Warwick, due to nitrogen dioxide, derived mainly from vehicle emissions.

This data was compiled following an overall review and assessment of air quality in Warwick District and when extensive monitoring and computer modelling of air pollutants across the district had been carried out.

The consultation exercise was carried out in relation to the proposal to declare a new Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Warwick. This

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closed on Friday 1 October 2010 and the results were provided within the report along with a recommendation of the declaration of the AQMA.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee asked for officers to investigate if there was any money available to Warwickshire County Council for works at this section of road from section 106 agreements that had been negotiated when the planning application for Tesco was agreed.

The Committee also expressed their concern regarding the time allowed for the Air Quality Action plan to be produced and asked for this to be brought forward if possible. They did however understand that 12 months had been detailed in the report to allow officers time to communicate with Warwickshire County Council.

The Committee also asked that the Executive put pressure on Warwickshire County Council to take notice of the Air Quality Action plans already in place in the District.

In response to the Overview & Scrutiny Committees comments, the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, Councillor Coker highlighted that there was no easy solution to this issue and it would need careful consideration. He stated that he was aware of the monies available and agreed that pressure needed to be applied to the County Council to carry out the necessary works.

Officers advised with regard to the specifics of the Section 106 agreement relating to Tesco, that this did include a provision for junction improvements along the Emscote Road, however, an action plan could only be implemented once the development at Tesco commenced. Discussions had taken place with officers to investigate best practice, specifically involving two tier authorities, to advise members of the practical steps that could be taken to take the scheme forwards.

The Executive thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their comments.

RESOLVED that;

- (1) the results of the consultation process are noted;
- (2) the area as defined in Appendix 2 to the report below is declared an Air Quality Management Area, namely: -

Air Quality Management Area No. 7 (Coventry Road, Warwick)

This area covers the east side of Coventry Road, from the junction with St. John's / Coten End, incorporating 2 – 4 Coventry Road (The Crown Hotel) and Montgomery Court, properties fronting onto Coventry Road only; and

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- (3) an Action Plan for the reduction of pollutant levels, within the AQMA, be drafted within 12 months from its declaration and that a further report be brought to Executive to agree this.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Coker)

(Forward Plan reference 293)

123. CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE PERFORMANCE & CO-LOCATION REVIEW

The Executive considered a report from Customer and Information Services following completion of a review on the performance during the past year and on the options for the future location of the Customer Service Centre (CSC).

The report detailed how the performance of the CSC was measured by using the following, which highlighted whether our customers were having calls answered quickly and effectively; Grade Of Service (percentage of calls answered within 30 seconds); Abandoned Rate and First Point Of Contact resolution of query. The individual areas of performance were reported in detail in section 3 of the report along with areas of improvement to be actioned.

The Grade of Service and Abandoned call rates were not meeting the targets set however, the First Point of Contact target was consistently being met. The general trend had been an improvement in respect of all three targets since the start of the year. A higher than normal staff turnover and the inability to recruit a full complement of capable staff had been the major issues. Some of the turnover had been related to the move to Shire Hall, but capability issues, sickness and maternity had also factored. In addition, the call volumes were significantly higher than usual due to bad weather, the SITA strike and the general election.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee felt that to agree recommendation 2.1 the performance of the CSC needed benchmarking against other Local Authority's performance and asked that a mystery shopper type exercise be undertaken by Councillors who could then report back the results to the Committee.

The Committee asked that the Service Level Agreement be made to a high standard expected by Warwick District Council but must also be flexible due to the number of calls that may be lost upon changes being made to Housing Benefits and Council Tax.

The Committee felt that the business case should take into account the success of the one stop shops and learn from employing staff who are slightly more senior and that measures should be put in place to encourage staff to stay in the job posts for a longer period of time keeping a high level of knowledge within the service area.

The Portfolio Holder for Customer and Information Service, Councillor Caborn, addressed members and stated that the transfer of the call centre

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to the County Council had proved harder than originally envisaged and part of this was due to the different working ethos of each authority. He agreed to investigate the possibility of benchmarking against other authorities and to circulate his findings to scrutiny committees and all members.

With regard to Lean Systems Thinking, he highlighted that this was still a very important procedure to complete and this way of working should also be applied to the County Council, to ensure that customers were receiving the best service.

The Executive thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their comments.

RESOLVED that;

- (1) the performance of the CSC since its move to Shire Hall, Warwick, be noted;
- (2) the integration of the WDC CSC with the WCC CSC located at Shire Hall, Warwick continue and the ongoing improvement plan, including the actions taken to date, be noted;
- (3) a Service Level Agreement is entered into with WCC;
- (4) a further report be submitted on the business case for the possible transfer of all Customer Service Advisors (in the CSC and One Stop Shops) to WCC; and
- (5) subject to agreeing 2.4 of this report, the report also covering an appraisal of the CSC technology, the implications of the Council's systems thinking approach and the introduction of the Government's Universal Credit, be agreed.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Caborn)
(Forward Plan reference 274)

124. ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION IN RESPECT OF SMALL HMO'S IN LEAMINGTON SPA

The Executive considered a report from Development Service following a request from the Chairman of the Planning Committee. It outlined a number of changes which were introduced to the planning regulations to enable local planning authorities to control new student accommodation where there was evidence of harm to local amenity or the proper planning of the area.

The report recommended the authorisation of an Article 4 Direction in respect of small Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in Leamington Spa.

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This would enable the Council, as local planning authority, to control the location of new HMOs in cases where the change of use did not currently require the submission of a planning application.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed that the report that had been submitted was excellent and they thanked the officers for their work undertaken. Concern was expressed regarding the time of the length of notice given and would have liked for this to be shorter, however they were aware of the risks that the Council would be under if this was reduced.

The Portfolio Holder for Development Services, Councillor Hammon addressed members and highlighted the importance of this Article 4 Direction which would help to give some directive to the Planning Committee. In order of them to make more informed decisions, it was vital for the authority to know the types of housing in the area in order to plan for the future.

The Executive thanked the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for their comments.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the making of an Article 4 Direction under Article 4(2) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) be authorised, to remove permitted development rights in relation to changes of use from Use Class C3 to Use Class C4 (as defined in the Town and Country Planning [Use Classes] Order 1987, as amended). Twelve months advance notice of the Direction taking effect shall be given and representations will be invited for a period of 28 days from the date of notification. The Direction shall apply to the Leamington Spa wards of Brunswick, Clarendon, Crown, Manor, Milverton and Willes; and
- (2) a further report be received following the period of 28 days on representations received by the Council, in order to decide whether or not to confirm the Article 4 Direction.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Hammon)
(Forward Plan reference 300)

125. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE & FINANCE AND AUDIT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – SCRUTINY UPDATE

This item was withdrawn from the agenda and officers advised that it would be deferred to the next Executive meeting on 9 February 2011.

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126. RURAL INITIATIVES GRANT APPLICATION

The Executive considered a report from Finance which provided details of a Rural Initiative Grant Application by Shrewley Village Hall to replace existing sewer drains and main connection under the car park following recent rebuilding work.

In June 2008 the Village Hall Committee were awarded a grant of 50% which equated to £14,500 for two specific parts, firstly the ceiling which was budgeted at £5,000 but the final cost was £7,540 due to extra electric works being required when the ceiling was replaced. The second part of the work involved the building of an extension, which due to an increase in labour and materials now stood at £27,375 for which they were awarded an extra £8,915 to complete the project in April 2010.

During the final stages of the project when the builder came to connect the drain it was discovered that the existing sewer drains were broken where they left the Hall's foundation slab and that they had in fact been leaking into the soil for a few years, further to this the builder also found the connection under the car park leading to the main sewer was also partly blocked. The additional Grant was now required to stop the closure of the Hall on Health and Safety Grounds.

The Village Hall Management Committee was trying to raise additional funding by way of small grants from other organisations and should they be successful then the Council's contribution would be reduced in line with the additional funding received.

The report recommended that the award of a Rural Initiatives Grant to of 50% of the total cost of the project inclusive of VAT subject to a maximum payment of £5,573 be approved.

An alternative option was to not approve the grant funding or vary the amount awarded.

RESOLVED that an additional Rural Initiatives Grant of £5,573 which equates to 50% of the cost as detailed in paragraph 7.1, and supported by appendix 1 of the report, be approved.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Caborn)

(The meeting ended at 6.40 pm)