

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 7 August 2013 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Doody (Chairman), Councillors Caborn, Coker, Cross, Mrs Grainger, Hammon, Mobbs and Vincett.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Blacklock (Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee), Councillor Boad (Liberal Democrat Group Observer), Councillor Edwards (Labour Group Observer) Councillor MacKay (Independent Group Observer) and Councillor Weed (interim Chair of Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Shilton.

39. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Minute Number 41 - Item 4 – Budget Review to 30 June 2013

Councillor Caborn declared an interest because he was a Warwickshire County Councillor.

Minute Number 42 - Item 5 – Brunswick Healthy Living Centre

Councillor Boad declared a pecuniary interest because he was Chair of the Crown Roots Consortium.

40. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2013 were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

PART 1

(Items on which a decision by Council is required)

There were no Part One items.

PART 2

(Items on which a decision by Council is not required)

41. **BUDGET REVIEW TO 30TH JUNE 2013**

The Executive considered a report from Finance which updated Members on the latest position for the current financial year and the financial outlook. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy had been updated since the 2013/14 Budget was agreed in February of this year in light of the Government's Spending Review 2013 announcements and other known changes discussed below. Various changes to

2013/14 budgets were presented, in line with the Financial Code of Practice approved in March of this year.

The current General Fund service expenditure position was a projected underspend of £139,500 compared to the latest 2013/14 budgets. Appendix A to the report listed the changes identified, and the report requested approval for Budgets to be updated and retrospectively approve those already actioned under delegated powers. Appendix A also detailed budget changes to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

The report advised on the updated Finance Strategy and forecast, which required recurrent savings of £1.975 million to be achieved by 2018/19 and asked that Members note the progress made on Fit for the Future targets.

Paragraph 3.5 detailed the latest General Fund Capital Programme for 2013/14 of £5,940,300 and slippage of £19,900. Approval was also required for virements of HRA Capital for a total of £200,000 as detailed in paragraph 9.3 and further information was given in appendices B and B2.

In addition, an update on the £1.5m previously allocated to fund the Fit for the Future Achievement Award and the latest position in respect of all the Council's Reserves were set out in Appendix C to the report.

Finally, the report asked Members to note that a revised HRA business plan would be presented to the interim Housing and Property Board in August 2013.

An alternative option was to not report to Executive on a regular basis, however, in the current financial climate, officers felt it was imperative that budgets were reviewed, monitored and reported upon on a continuous basis. In addition, from April 2012, the Council had adopted the new Budget Review Process, whereby Budget amendments were brought to members throughout the year and duly updated.

Members could choose not to slip capital to the correct year in which it was intended to be spent. However, this made monitoring projects difficult and Members would not have relevant, up to date information from which to make decisions about capital projects and funding.

Finally, Members could choose not to monitor the Business Rates and Council Tax Collection Fund. However, due to new changes to these from 2013/14 and the significant sums involved, it would not be good practice to wait until the end of the Financial Year to see how actual income collected compared to that forecast.

The Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee was encouraged by the savings achieved in recent years and supported the recommendations in the report. However, some concern was expressed over the level of savings which the Council would still need to achieve in the future.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee registered concerns about the future viability of some parts of the Council, but agreed to wait for more details in October.

In response the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Mobbs, thanked the interim Chair of the Scrutiny Committee for their comments and highlighted the surplus detailed in the report. He accepted that there would be challenges ahead but reminded Members that there had not been, nor would be, any increase to Council Tax. He endorsed the recommendations as written and advised that the October report would lay out the plans for the major savings ahead.

The Leader, Councillor Doody, agreed with the comments from the Portfolio Holder and reminded Members that the Council had taken a financial hit for a number of years and felt that this was likely to continue. He applauded the teamwork of the Finance Portfolio Holder and Head of Finance and stated that there would be neither an increase in Council Tax nor any reduction in services.

Having read the report and considered the comments made by the Scrutiny Committees, the Executive agreed the recommendations as written.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the budget position for the current year for the General Fund is currently £139,500 surplus is acknowledged and the changes relating to the HRA are approved;
- (2) the Budget Changes in appendix A to the report (General Fund and HRA) are agreed, the most significant of which are discussed in this report;
- (3) the updated Financial Strategy and the forecast required recurrent savings of £1.975 million to be achieved by 2018/19, are noted. The latest progress towards meeting the Fit for the Future Targets is also noted;
- (4) the slippage of £19,900 detailed in paragraph 3.5 is approved and the latest General Fund Capital Programme for 2013/14 of £5,940,300, is noted. Virements for HRA Capital for a total of £200,000, as per paragraph 9.3 of the report, are also approved;
- (5) the £1.5m previously allocated to fund the Fit for the Future Achievement Award is no longer required for such and the latest position in respect of all the Council's Reserves is noted, detailed in appendix C to the report; and
- (6) a revised HRA business plan will be presented to the interim Housing & Property Board in August.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Mobbs)
(Forward Plan ref 475)

42. **BRUNSWICK HEALTHY LIVING CENTRE**

The Executive considered a report from Corporate and Community Services which sought support for a one-off financial contribution for equipment for Brunswick Healthy Living Centre (BHLC).

In May 2013, the director of BHLC met with the Leader of Warwick District Council and Chris White MP to explore avenues of support to enable the purchase of additional computer equipment for the centre and an expansion to existing employment support provision. The need had been identified by BHLC when it reported experiencing an increase in customers needing both internet access and, in some cases, individual support to complete new benefit claim forms.

Leamington Job Centre Plus referred customers to BHLC when the customer had a specific need, such as extra help with completing forms, or lack of access to a free computer. This was an informal arrangement and was not supported by funding from the Department for Work and Pensions. BHLC reported a sharp upturn in referrals since the introduction of online benefit claims for new claimants.

BHLC delivered two job clubs; one from the Brunswick centre, funded by Morrisons, until 2014; and one in Lillington, funded by the Council through its voluntary sector commissioning arrangements, until March 2015.

The report proposed making a one-off financial contribution of £13,000 which would be drawn down from the Contingency Budget. A breakdown of the funding request was detailed in paragraph 5.2 of the report and advised that BHLC intended to approach other funders for the remaining balance for the first year and for the year 2 costs.

The alternative option was to not support the BHLC however this could lead to clients seeking access to new benefit claims and advice or support with seeking work may have to wait to receive help, or may be turned away by BHLC. In relation to benefit claimants, this could leave people without money.

Notwithstanding that the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee felt that there should have been more substance in the report, Members recognised that this was a positive project aimed at getting people back in to work, asked that it be emphasised to the people of Brunswick that the Council had given its financial support for one year only, and supported the recommendations in the report.

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Community Services apologised for the lack of detail in the report. She advised that she was working closely with the Community Partnership Team and the local MP to help residents of the District with getting back to work.

Having read the report and considered the comments made by the Scrutiny Committee, the Executive agreed the recommendations as written.

RESOLVED that

- (1) Brunswick Healthy Living Centre (BHLC) offers a wide range of support services for the more vulnerable members of our community;
- (2) BHLC's initiative to expand its existing employment support provision, is supported; and
- (3) up to £13,000 is made available from the 2013/14 Contingency Budget to enable the purchase of laptops and equipment to facilitate customer access to the internet.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Mrs Grainger)
(Forward Plan ref 522)

43. **PROPOSAL FOR THE DELIVERY OF ON-STREET ENFORCEMENT ACROSS WARWICKSHIRE**

The Executive considered a report from Neighbourhood Services which set out the proposal made by officers from across the various Districts and Boroughs involved in delivering on and off-street enforcement to the Warwickshire County Council Task and Finish Group (WCC T&FG) on 1 July 2013.

The WCC T&FG had received a presentation on the future delivery of on-street parking enforcement, a copy of which was attached as an appendix to the report. In the presentation, financial savings, service improvements and new ways of working had been identified.

Following the presentation, the Group asked to speak to Warwick and Stratford District Councillors, Rugby Borough Councillors and Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Councillors to establish the kind of on-street parking enforcement service they wanted and how it could be best delivered. That meeting was due to take place on 4 September.

The report asked members to endorse the proposals laid out in Appendix 1 and to suggest a representative from the Scrutiny Committees to represent the Council at the WCC T&FG meeting in September.

The report advised that the savings identified in the presentation could be achieved in three areas; savings on staff salaries by operating more efficiently; savings from merging back-office facilities; and savings achieved by a review of WCC contracts and operating systems.

The final recommendation was that the cost of any potential redundancies resulting from the externalisation of the contract would be paid for in full by Warwickshire County Council (WCC).

The alternative option was for WCC to go out to tender for on-street parking enforcement across the County. However, officers felt this option would be problematic because the savings from an external contract could not be truly assessed until the tenders had been received. Whereas the proposal made by the Districts / Boroughs would deliver the £320,000 savings that the WCC T&FG had been asked to identify.

The Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee noted that, in respect of the second recommendation, it was intended that the Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees would represent the Council alongside the Portfolio Holder for Finance at the meeting with the County Council on 4 September, and supported the recommendations in the report.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended that the staff who worked on the report should be complimented. The Committee accepted the report in its entirety and gave full support to the delegation.

Councillor Mrs Grainger supported the recommendations and stated that this was a good example of the local Councils working together, led by the political heads, which was a good sign. She felt it was important that residents received a fair service and did not want to see a private enterprise take the service over.

Councillor Coker endorsed the report and was hopeful that a strong partnership was starting to build with the County Council. He reminded Members that this service, if handled poorly, could ruin a town centre's reputation.

Having read the report and considered the comments made by the Scrutiny Committee, the Executive agreed the recommendations as written and accepted the recommendation from Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the proposal for financial savings, service improvements and new ways of working made on 1st July to WCC T&FG, are endorsed. These proposals were set out in Appendix 1 to the report, together with financial savings to WCC detailed in 5.5 to 5.8;
- (2) the respective Chairmen of F&A and O&S, together with the Finance Portfolio Holder, represent the Council at the WCC T&F group meeting on 4 September so that proposals can be put forward as to how the on and off-street parking service should be delivered, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, as being the Council's desired outcome from the WCC T&F review;
- (3) the members attending the meeting with the T&F group will request that a meeting between WCC and District / Borough officers takes place prior to the final decision of the WCC T&F Group, in order that any additional

financial savings that can be delivered from the current WCC contracts are identified;

(4) the cost of any potential redundancies resulting from the externalisation of the contract is paid for in full by WCC; and

(5) the staff who worked on the report are complimented.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Shilton)
(Forward Plan ref 523)

44. **EXCEPTION TO THE CODE OF PROCUREMENT PRACTICE**

The Executive considered a report from Development Services which sought permission for an exception to the Code of Procurement Practice.

The exception was to allow an extension of a contract to the end of March 2014 for the provision of Business Support Services to the Council by Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce (CWCC).

The proposed extension was only required until the end of March 2014, whilst the delivery and action plans for the Job Skills and Economy Strategy were developed. The CWCC contract had been considered to be excellent value compared to the other two quotes received, which were 537% and 414% more expensive. CWCC was also willing to hold the quote and prices from 2012.

The contract had been entered into in March 2012 to deliver mentoring and business support to new start-up businesses. The contract was due to expire on 31 March 2014 and in early 2012 three quotes had been obtained following the Code of Practice procedure. CWCC submitted a quote which provided the best value for money.

In the past 12 months CWCC had successfully delivered in line with the existing contract and the Council had provided business support to 75 Warwick District Council customers who, as a result, had commenced trading within this same period.

There were no alternative options available under the Code of Procurement Practice.

The Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

The Portfolio Holder for Development Services endorsed the report stating that it was good value for money and would hopefully keep business start-ups going in this area.

Having read the report and considered the comments made by the Scrutiny Committee, the Executive agreed the recommendations as written.

RESOLVED that permission is granted to enable the Council to extend its contract with CWCC, until the end of March 2014 or the Jobs Skills and Economy (JSE) Strategy is agreed.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Hammon)

45. **UPGRADE TO LINEN STREET CAR PARK**

The Executive considered a report from Neighbourhood Services which outlined the works that could be included in the upgrade of Linen Street Car Park, following the sale of 21a Church Street which had released the relevant funds.

The report requested approval of the improvements identified for Linen Street car park which were set out in an appendix to the report, along with the funding for those works as set out in paragraphs 5.3 – 5.7 of the report.

As part of the agreed sale of 21a Church Street, Warwick, the Executive agreed to approve the capital receipt for the inclusion of two parking spaces in New Street car park to be used to reinvest and upgrade Linen Street car park.

Linen Street multi-storey car park had seen no improvement work for at least ten years and the only recent works had been to establish its structural integrity and make suitable repairs to ensure its useful lifespan for a further 15 years. The car park was built in the 1960's and the design was based on smaller vehicles, which meant that manoeuvring through the car park could be off putting for customers.

A number of issues that had been identified as problems with the car park included the large kerbs situated at the start of each up and down ramp and the bay markings within the car park, which were set at the minimum width of 2.1metres.

Professional car park contractors had been approached to quote for the associated works at Linen Street. All of the figures provided were fixed cost figures provided by these companies and although it was anticipated that tenders would need to be undertaken for these works, the actual cost paid should not exceed the amounts shown in the report.

The total cost for redecoration to all of the internal areas of the car park was £51,000 as detailed in appendix 1 to the report. The sale of 21a Church Street and 2 parking spaces in New Street car park had ring-fenced up to £30,000 to go towards for improvements to Linen Street car park.

The cost to deliver the other improvements needed to provide an improved customer experience was £37,778 which would be funded from the car park improvement budget which currently stood at £62,000.

One alternative option considered was to limit the improvements to the funding agreed by the Executive in November 2012. However, this option had been discounted on the basis that the new proposals for the development of the car

park at West Rock for housing would result in a reduction of long stay spaces in Warwick.

The other alternative was to limit the amount of redecoration to three floors and the stairwells and reduce the cost by £32,000, however, having a part redecorated car park would not deliver on the customer experience.

The Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report. The Committee also proposed a recommendation that officers be asked to investigate opening Linen Street Car Park to midnight on a daily basis and that efforts be made to ensure that this arrangement be cost neutral.

The Head of Neighbourhood Services had confirmed that the recommendation from the Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee could be supported.

Members agreed that works needed to be undertaken and would help alleviate issues of staff or councillors being locked in the car park. In addition, it was agreed in principle that flower displays were a good idea but the town council would also need to contribute towards the cost.

Having read the report and considered the comments made by the Scrutiny Committee, the Executive agreed the recommendations as written, with the additional recommendation from the Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the improvements identified for Linen Street car park set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be agreed;
- (2) the funding for those works as set out in paragraphs 5.3 to 5.7 of the report, is agreed; and
- 3) officers be asked to investigate opening Linen Street Car Park to midnight on a daily basis and that efforts be made to ensure that this arrangement be cost neutral

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Shilton)

46. **RURAL / URBAN CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT APPLICATION**

The Executive considered a report from Finance which provided details of a Rural/Urban Capital Improvement application which had been submitted by Leek Wootton Sports Club to resurface the car park.

The Council operated a scheme to award Capital Improvement Grants to organisations in rural and urban areas. The grant recommended was in accordance with the Council's agreed scheme and would provide funding to help the project progress.

The existing car park at Leek Wootton Sports Club had "developed" since the sports club building was erected in the mid 1960's with a mixture of rubble and shale. It was now very uneven, very dusty in dry conditions, puddled in wet weather and lethal underfoot in icy weather. The project was to resurface the car park which would alleviate the current health & safety problems and vehicle accidents in wet and icy weather conditions.

It was hoped that by resurfacing the car park and adding lines, more off-street parking spaces would be created including two disabled parking bays helping to make the club's facilities more accessible and further increase the number of people using them.

Leek Wootton Sports Club had stated that it would provide £8,950 (50% of the total project costs) towards the project from its own cash reserves. In addition, the club had requested a £500 contribution from Leek Wootton Parish Council; it had had verbal confirmation that a £300 contribution had been approved and was awaiting written confirmation.

Leek Wootton Sports Club had previously had a successful RUCIS application however, this application met the criteria whereby an organisation must wait for a minimum of two years before re-applying for a new grant.

The Council only had a specific capital budget to provide grants of this nature and therefore there were no alternative sources of funding if the Council was to provide funding for Rural/Urban Capital Improvement Schemes. However, Members could choose not to approve the grant funding, or to vary the amount awarded.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, endorsed the report and promoted it as a good example of rural communities being assisted through this grant process.

Having read the report, the Executive agreed the recommendations as written.

RESOLVED that a Rural/Urban Capital Improvement Grant of 48% of the total project cost up to a maximum of £8,500 is approved, subject to receipt of the following:

- 1) written confirmation of the Parish Council approval to fund £300 of the project cost to ensure that the RUCIS grant remains as 48% of the total project cost; and
- 2) written confirmation of planning permission to carry out the work.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Mobbs)

47. **LOCAL LIST OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS**

The Executive considered a report from Development Services which requested approval of the establishment of a Local List of Historic Buildings and associated criteria and processes within Warwick District.

The report also recommended that delegated emergency powers be given to the Head of Development Services in consultation with the Chair of Planning Committee to remove permitted development rights by service of Notice under an Article 4 Direction where it was considered expedient to safeguard a building or structure which is already on the Local List of Historic Buildings.

This action was the second stage of implementation of a Local List of Historic Buildings within Warwick District following public consultation, in line with national guidance to give protection to historic assets that did not have the benefit of statutory protection.

Warwick District had a significant number of Conservation Areas encompassing many unlisted buildings that had, in the past, not been considered a high priority to establish local lists. With the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework, non-statutory heritage assets were encompassed within this framework and national guidance from English Heritage recommended the establishment of local lists. It was therefore now considered appropriate following public consultation to establish local lists within Warwick District.

Following a report to the Executive in January 2013, public consultation had been carried out and the results were attached as an appendix to the report. Amenity Groups, Parish and Town Councils, had been consulted and positive responses were received to the proposal.

The alternative would be to not proceed with a local list in which case historic assets, particularly those not within Conservation Areas, would receive no level of protection or special consideration when works were proposed to them.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report but had reservations about how it would operate in practice and hoped that grants would be available to some groups for restoration works.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Development Services, thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for its comments and hoped that it would be possible to assist some groups.

The Deputy Chief Executive (BH) confirmed that the report author would check the policy framework but felt that it should be possible. He also suggested that the Portfolio Holder for Development Services should be added to recommendation 2.2.

Having read the report and considered the comments made by the Scrutiny Committee, the Executive agreed the recommendations as written.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the establishment of a Local List of Historic Buildings and associated criteria and processes within Warwick District, is approved;

- (2) delegated emergency powers be authorised to the Head of Development Services, in consultation with the Chair of Planning Committee, to remove permitted development rights by service of Notice under an Article 4 Direction where it is considered expedient to safeguard a building or structure which is already on the Local List of Historic Buildings.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Hammon)
(Forward Plan ref 524)

48. **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 paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, as set out below.

Minute No.	Para Nos.	Reason
50	1	Information relating to an individual
50	2	Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
49	3	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

The full text of Minutes 49 and 50 was contained within a confidential minute which would be considered for publication following the implementation of the relevant decisions. However, a summary of the decisions was as follows:

49. **RETAIL UNIT, 1 MARKET STREET, WARWICK**

The recommendation as set out in the report was agreed.

(The Portfolio Holders for this item was Councillor Hammon)

50. **STAFFING REVIEWS**

The recommendation as set out in the report was agreed.

(The Portfolio Holders for this item were Councillors Coker and Cross)
(The meeting ended at 6.45 pm)