

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 8 February 2011 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Gifford (Chair), Mrs Blacklock, Boad, Mrs Bromley, Copping, Crowther, Davies, Ms Dean, Dhillon, Mrs Higgins, Mrs Mellor, Weed and Wilkinson.

Councillor Ms Dean substituted for Councillor Gill.

Apologies were received from Councillor Ms De-Lara-Bond

84. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

85. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2011 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

86. **COMMENTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE**

The Committee considered a report from Members' Services which detailed the responses the Executive gave to the Committees' comments on the reports submitted to the Executive on 26 January 2011.

The report was produced to create a dialogue between the Executive and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and it ensured that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were formally made aware of the Executive's responses.

The Committee were pleased that their comments made to the Executive on 26 January regarding the Declaration of Air Quality Management Area in Coventry Road, Warwick, had been taken on board.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

87. **FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee considered the Forward Plan which had been published for February 2011 to May 2011.

The Chairman made the Committee aware of a number of reports that would be submitted to Executive over the coming months that the Committee may find of interest to them, these included Charging for Events in Parks and the Empty Homes Strategy.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

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88. REVIEW OF THE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a report from Members' Services on the Committees' work programme for 2011.

RESOLVED that a report for the Scrutiny of Crime and Disorder be submitted to the Committee on 29 March 2011.

89. DEVELOPMENT OF VOLUNTEERING POLICY

The Committee received a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (BH) which summarised the progress made to date on developing a volunteering policy that would be adopted by the Council.

At their meeting in September 2009 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee suggested that it may be useful to investigate a volunteering policy to assist those who were carrying out volunteer work and how they could engage with the Council.

The report asked the Committee to indicate any specific issues they wished to see addressed in any future policy and to decide if a Task and Finish Group should be established to oversee the development of a policy.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) the specific issues to be addressed in any future policy were to include any financial implications, ways to encourage volunteering, how to avoid discouraging volunteering and to identify what work could be carried out with other authorities and organisations;
- (3) a Task and Finish Group be established and a scoping document submitted to the Committee's meeting on 29 March 2011; and
- (4) the membership of the Task and Finish group is not finalised until after the election in May 2011 and the new Committee has been established.

(Councillor Mrs Mellor left during this item)

90. BENEFIT APPEALS PROCESS

The Committee received a report from Customer and Information Services which outlined the Appeals process as prescribed within the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (Decisions and Appeals) Regulations 2001.

At their meeting on 23 November 2010, minute number 61, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee asked that this report be submitted to the meeting.

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The Committee agreed that the process was satisfactory and had no further comments or questions.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

91. **EXECUTIVE AGENDA (NON- CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS AND REPORTS) – THURSDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2011**

Item 11 – Feasibility Study of various WDC assets in Leamington

The Committee were pleased with the report overall and were impressed with the amendments made to recommendation 2.6. However, the Committee asked for the four year business plan that would be submitted by the Head of Cultural Services and the Spa Centre Manger as mentioned in the recommendation to be submitted as soon as possible.

The Committee supported the study of the assets within the report.

The Committee, whilst understanding the decisions also expressed their disappointed that the business case for the One Stop shop at the Pump Rooms would need to be deferred as they felt there was a need for this service within Royal Leamington Spa.

Item 6 – Budget 2011/12 and Council Tax – Revenue and Capital

The Committee had concerns regarding the legality of creating two separate pots for the Urban Initiatives Grant and the Rural Initiatives Grant because Council had already agreed that there would be one to fund both and that this decision made by Council would not be able to be changed until after a 6 month period had lapsed.

The Committee continued to support the principle that there should be only one pot to fund both the Rural Initiatives Scheme and the Urban Initiatives Scheme and that this fund should have the budget of £150,000. Any of this money that had not been committed to a project by the end of the municipal year should not then be carried over into the following years budget but instead put back into general balances.

The Committee felt that if there were to be two separate pots more funding should be made available for the Urban Initiative schemes than the Rural Initiative Schemes, with the criteria for the urban applications being different to the ones used for rural applications and potentially a need to limit how much each application could receive because of the difference between the areas

There was a strong concern from a member of the Committee that the funding for the urban grant was not enough for its size and population.

The Committee also expressed their thanks to the Grants view Panel for getting funds agreed for the Urban Initiatives Grant.

The Committee had concerns regarding 8.3.5 which gave the Committee the impression that any new proposals for funding an Assisted Travel Scheme, that were agreed as a result of Overview and Scrutiny's report

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being submitted to Executive on 2 March 2011, would not be considered until the 2012/13 service plans were developed. The Committee wanted reassurance that if their recommendations were agreed this could be funded with the budget from

Item 15 – Impact on Financial Reductions on Warwick District Council and the Area

The Committee agreed that the high level meetings as mentioned within the report should go ahead but felt that if there were local issues being decided upon and discussed they felt that local members should be involved in these discussions at the appropriate stage.

The Committee agreed that the local health service sector should be included in the high level meetings that would be taking place with other organisations as detailed in recommendation 2.2.

92. EXECUTIVE AGENDA (CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS AND REPORTS) – THURSDAY 26 JANUARY 2011

There were no confidential Executive items brought forward for discussion.

(The meeting finished at 19.35pm)