

Executive

Excerpt of the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 28 June 2017 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa, at 6.00 pm.

Present: Councillors Butler, Coker (Deputy Leader), Grainger, Phillips, Rhead and Whiting.

Also present: Councillors; Mrs Falp – Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Whitnash Residents' Association (Independent) Group Observer; Councillor Naimo, Labour Group Observer; Quinney, representative from Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee;

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mobbs and Thompson.

Councillor Coker chaired the meeting in Councillor Mobbs' absence.

13. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

14. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 5 April and 12 April 2017 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Part 1

(Items on which a decision by Council on 9 August 2017 is required)

15. **Updated Council Strategy and Performance Management Framework**

The Executive considered a report from the Chief Executive which set out a proposed revised Council strategy for the District, along with an updated performance management framework.

The report requested approval of the proposed revised Council Strategy, which was set out in tables 1 and 2 of the report and at Appendix 1.

In addition, the strategy would be published in a short document and agreement on the narrative should be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Finance Portfolio Holder. If the revised policy framework was agreed then the Council would need to know if it was making progress in achieving the intended outcomes. This would be the subject of a further report to agree the measures that would be used to track the proposed outcomes on an annual basis.

The report advised that last year the Council was part of a Peer Review by the Local Government Association (LGA) which was reported to the Executive in April along with a proposed Action Plan in response. That Action Plan committed the Executive to bring forward an updated Council Strategy which addressed the concerns within the LGA Peer Review report suggesting that the Council needed to be clearer as to its priorities and as to why it had those priorities.

As suggested by the LGA, an away day was held which helped refine the views and priorities of the Executive, for consideration by the wider Council.

The report highlighted the three key points about the Council's current Policy Framework. These were;

- recognition that the Council needed an internal Mission Statement – the Council's long standing vision was widely acknowledged but the supporting description was long winded;
- the Sustainable Community Strategy no longer served the same purpose as when it was adopted in 2009 and needed revisiting; and
- the Council's internal change programme Fit for the Future with its three strands of People, Service, and Money had significant internal staff recognition and support and success and so should be retained.

It was also recognised that the Council core values, adopted in 2007, were now widely understood by staff and remained highly relevant and so should be retained. The core values were Community Focussed; Value for Money; Environmentally Sensitive; Honesty and Openness; and Fairness and Equity.

The report outlined the proposed policy Framework in full at section 3.4 of the report. However, the a summary of the aims were to maintain the overall vision ("To make Warwick District a great place to live work and visit"), to agree a Mission Statement, to subsume and summarise the intentions of the Sustainable Communities Strategy with the Fit for the Future (FFF) Strategy.

The Mission Statement was proposed to read as follows:

To deliver our ambitions for the communities of Warwick District by: working as One Council and in partnership with others; being Enterprising in our approach; making the most of our creativity and innovation; transforming our services through the use of digital and other technologies; maximising the use our assets; employing, engaging and empowering great staff; making sure that we can both keep "the lights of the day job on" and do "the bright lights of our key projects".

In addition, the proposal was to translate these strategies, which would inform the annual Service Area Plans across the Council and in turn would inform Team Operational Plans and ultimately individual staff appraisals.

The framework would also agree and ensure that the Council's Key Projects (Table 2) would be aligned to the FFF Strategy whilst retaining the Values as stated in earlier in the report.

Once complete an update to the Council's Performance Management Framework (PMF) was required, as proposed and set out in detail on pages 3 onwards of Appendix 1 to the report. The framework would require additional support and it was proposed that the £60,000 allowed by the Executive in April 2017 be used to achieve this ongoing support.

The alternative options were that the Council could decide not to change its overall strategy in the way set out in this report. However, what was

recommended kept the best of what the Council had had over the past few years but enabled the Council to refine and focus its overall strategy.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee requested that:

- (1) the wording in respect of “lights” in the Mission Statement referring to “the lights of the day job on” and “the bright lights of our key projects” should be changed as Members were not keen on this phrasing; and
- (2) District car parks be listed as a major project in Table 2.

Councillor Naimo addressed Members and explained that it was felt that the introduction needed to be more precise because currently, it was a little vague.

In response, the Executive advised that it had noted the comments made and these would be taken into account when the main document was drafted. In relation to the car parking project request, Councillor Coker assured Members that this would also be taken into account.

Having considered the report, and having had regard to the comments made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Executive

Recommended that Council agree the proposed revised Council Strategy set out in Tables 1 and 2 in Appendix 1, to the report; and

Resolved that

- (1) subject to recommendation above being agreed, the Strategy be published in a short document and authority be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Finance Portfolio Holder to agree the narrative for the document;
- (2) subject to recommendation 2.1 being agreed, a further report will be brought on proposed measures and will be used to track the proposed outcomes on an annual basis; and
- (3) the updated performance management framework as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, Table 3 onwards, be put in operation.

(The Portfolio Holder for this Item was Councillor Mobbs)

16. **Review of Warwick District Council Members’ Allowances Scheme**

The Executive considered a report from the Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer which brought forward the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel following a review of Warwick District Members’ Allowances Scheme undertaken in 2017.

At its meeting in July 2016, the Executive approved the terms of reference for undertaking a review of the Warwick District Council Members' Allowances Scheme.

A panel was convened under The Local Authorities' (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 1021) ("the 2003 Regulations") which comprised of Dr Hall, Ms Howe, Mr Purser and Mr Wilkinson. Specific details of the individual panel members were provided at section 3.4 of the report.

The report explained that all Councils were required to convene their Panel and seek its advice before they made any changes or amendments to their Members' Allowances Scheme. They must 'pay regard' to their Panel's recommendations before setting a new or amended Members' Allowances Scheme. On this particular occasion, the Panel had been reconvened under the 2003 Regulations as it had not reviewed the allowances scheme since 2012 and there had been no changes to the allowances since 2009.

The IRP met at Riverside House, Royal Leamington Spa on 24 and 25 January 2017, in closed session to enable them to meet with Members and Officers and conduct its deliberations in confidence.

All Members were given the opportunity to meet with the IRP and 11 Councillors took this opportunity. Members were also sent a questionnaire addressing the issues that the IRP were required to consider. 20 Councillors responded to the questionnaire and two further Councillors responded to say they had no comments.

In addition, the IRP met with the Chief Executive and the Democratic Services Manager for factual briefings on political structures and constitutional changes since the last review and to obtain an overview on the challenges facing the Council.

The IRP took account of the range and levels of allowances paid in comparable local authorities, namely the four other district/borough councils in Warwickshire and Warwick District Council's eight Nearest Neighbours as defined by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy or CIPFA (2014 model), which were used by councils for benchmarking purposes. The IRP's report and recommendations were attached as Appendix A to the report.

An alternative option was that the Executive could make a number of recommendations to Council about the Independent report. This was because within law they only had to 'pay regard' to their panel's recommendations before setting a new or amended Members' Allowances Scheme. In addition, the Executive could consider not proposing alterations to the broadband allowance budget at this stage, in case the Councillor IT Working Party brought forward further proposals for the use of mobile data with iPads.

Additional information was circulated prior to the meeting which provided responses to a number of questions raised by Councillors. These included details relating to the percentage uplift in staff salaries since 2009, benchmarking of Warwick District Council's Civic allowances, allowances for Planning Committee members and other special responsibility allowances and

the ICO registration fee. In addition, Members were supplied with links to the 2005 and 2008 Members Allowances reports.

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

Having considered the report and the additional responses to queries raised, the Executive agreed the recommendations subject to recommendation 2.1 being amended.

Recommended that

- (1) the recommendations in the IRP report, attached at Appendix 1, are implemented from 1 September 2017, with the increased cost, estimated at £19,000 for 2017/18's met from the Contingency Budget and the full cost included within the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for subsequent years;
- (2) the Councillor IT Working Party bring a report to the Executive concluding its work after Council has reached a decision in relation to the IRP's Members' Allowances Scheme recommendations; and
- (3) Council thank the Independent Review Panel for their work and detailed report which clearly sets out the challenges faced and reasoning for their recommendations.

(The Portfolio Holder for this Item was Councillor Mobbs)

17. St Mary's Lands Masterplan and Update on Progress of Delivery Plan

The Executive considered a report from the Chief Executive which sought approval for the masterplan of the St Mary's lands area of Warwick, following the undertaking of research work on the need for and impact of a hotel as part of the elements of a masterplan for the whole area.

In addition, the report also provided a further update on progress of the agreed Delivery Plan for this area. A few relatively minor decisions were needed to help further progress implementation of the Delivery Plan.

Members were asked to note the two research reports relating to the need for and the impact of a hotel in this area, approve the adoption of the Masterplan attached at Appendix 3 to the report and note the progress made to date as attached at Appendix 4 to the report. This included an update on specific issues including; the footpath/cycleway, the Saltisford Brook Car Park, and a new entrance to, and concourse at, the racecourse. Full details relating to these issues were provided in sections 3.5 to 3.11 of the report.

Members were also asked to agree that a further report be submitted to Executive in due course relating to the hotel proposal. Officers were mindful that bringing forward a hotel on the site would not be straight forward and a

land use allocation within a masterplan did not of itself guarantee delivery of the proposal.

The preparation of a masterplan for the St Mary's Lands area was Council policy as explained at paragraph 4.3.3 of the report. If agreed by Council, the masterplan would form part of the Council's planning policy framework used for determining planning and related applications as well as providing a framework for investment decisions by the Council and its partners.

In addition, budgetary decisions were required relating to the repairs of the roof of Racing Club Warwick and the costs of funding the staff time from Plincke to deliver the remainder of the agreed Delivery Programme for 2017/18.

As explained in paragraphs 3.13 to 3.15, experience had demonstrated that the Council's progress was being impeded by the lack of resource available to deliver the agreed delivery plan. The report proposed that the contract with Plincke be extended to provide an enhanced amount of officer time for the year to June 2018. It was estimated that this would cost £34,000 and could be funded from the Community Projects Reserve. However, this would require an exemption from the Council's Code of Procurement Practice under Clause 6.4 and the supporting reasons for this were explained in paragraph 3.15.

Finally, approval was sought to run a community online competition to find a new name for the St Mary's Lands Park, the results of which would be fed back to the Executive. It was hoped this would also help to better promote the area, resulting in achieving this area as a destination park.

There were a number of alternative options available to Members and these were detailed in full at section 7 of the report. These included not including the hotel proposal in within the masterplan, not receiving a report on the implementation of a hotel, or not adopting the masterplan. However, Members needed to be mindful that the plan had been based on a considerable amount of public support and it may not be conducive to the community if variations were made.

An alternative proposal to address the lack of resource would be to accept a slow pace of delivery but this carried with it the risk that some projects may not come to fruition at all, or the Council could employ an additional member of staff temporarily. This would likely result in costing the Council £35-£40,000 but would lose the benefit of Plincke's knowledge and experience of the scheme.

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

Having considered the report the Executive

Recommended that

- (1) the research reports attached at Appendices 1 and 2 on the need for and impact of a hotel be noted;
- (2) the Masterplan at Appendix 2, to the minutes, is adopted;

- (3) a further report is brought to the Executive on how the hotel proposal may be brought forward for delivery;
- (4) progress on the implementation of the Delivery Plan as set out at Appendix 4 is noted and more specifically that:
 - i) the preferred route of the footpath/cycleway as shown on Plan 1 is agreed and appropriate legal agreements are entered to enable it to happen and to be maintained;
 - ii) the car park design for the extension of the Saltisford Brook car park as shown at Plan 2 be approved for the purposes of public consultation and that the response to the public consultation be subject to a further report in due course;
 - iii) the new entrance proposal to be funded by the Jockey Club shown at Plan 3 and supplemented by The District Council is supported; and
 - iv) the land shown on Plan 4 is leased to Racing Club Warwick on terms to be agreed along with other alterations to the Jockey Club's lease boundary to enable the proposed Multi use Games Area (MUGA) to be implemented;

Resolved that

- (5) up to £26,000 be moved from improving toilets in the area to assist with repairing the roof of Racing Club Warwick's (RCW) clubhouse subject to that sum being repaid from grants to be raised by RCW and the usual rules that the Council applies to RUCIS grants;
- (6) £34,000 is made available from the Community Project Reserve to fund staff time from Plincke to deliver the remainder of the agreed Delivery Programme for 2017/18;
- (7) an exemption from the Code of Procurement Practice under clause 6.4 be agreed to allow Plincke to carry out the work set out in Appendix 5 for the period to June 2018;
- (8) an online competition is run for a new name for the St Mary's Lands Park and the results fed back to the Executive; and

- (9) authority is delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Business, to make any minor amendments to the Masterplan, for example, the correction of street names if necessary.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Butler)

(The meeting ended at 7.01pm)