

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 12 September 2012 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 pm.

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

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Gifford (Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee) and Councillor Mrs Knight (Chair of Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee), Councillor Boad (Liberal Democrat Group Observer) and Councillor Mrs Falp (Independent Group Observer).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barrott and Kirton.

56. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Minute Number 58 – New agreement with WCC regarding the operation of Barrack Street car park

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

Minute Number 59 – Tourism Strategy Update

Councillor Grainger declared an interest because she had worked with Warwick Town Council. Councillors Coker, Mobbs, Shilton and Vincett declared interests as Kenilworth Town Councillors.

57. **MINUTES**

The minutes of 11 July meeting were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the removal of Councillor Mobbs from the declaration of interest on Minute number 28 (he had been listed in error) and the amendment of the declaration of interest on Minute number 30 to read Councillor Mrs Grainger.

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 August 2012 had yet to be completed and would be presented to a future meeting of the Executive.

PART 1

(Items on which a decision by Council is required)

NIL

PART 2

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

58. NEW AGREEMENT WITH WCC REGARDING THE OPERATION OF BARRACK STREET CAR PARK

The Executive considered a report from Neighbourhood Services requesting approval of a new management agreement relating to the management of Barrack Street car park by Warwick District Council (WDC) at weekends and bank holidays.

Warwickshire County Council (WCC) owned Barrack Street car park in Warwick and operated it as a car park for WCC staff and visitors throughout the week. Warwick District Council managed the day to day operation of the car park on behalf of WCC at weekends and Bank Holidays. A lease agreement was in place between the District Council and WCC regarding that arrangement.

Officers had observed that the existing lease agreement placed the Council at risk of having to pay compensation if a slip or trip took place in the car park at any time when the Council was managing it as a public car park. The new agreement removed that risk at minimal impact to the Council.

The Insurance Officer had advised that a successful claim for compensation would be significantly higher than the loss of income resultant from only covering the operating costs for the car park. Whilst the Council held third party insurance, there was an excess of £25,000 for each claim which the Council would need to meet. Claims would count against the Council when assessing future premiums. Also, if there was a known risk which the Council had not acted reasonably to reduce, there was the possibility that any insurance cover would be invalidated.

Whilst the Council would cease to receive the income from the car park, this was believed to be outweighed by the reduced risk presented to the Council from the new management agreement.

In presenting the report, Councillor Shilton suggested that paragraph 5.3 should read as follows:

“With the new agreement planned to come into force in October the impact on car park income budget will be reduced by £3,250 (based on half year). This shortfall will be found from existing savings to the salary budget as a result of not recruiting to vacant posts due to the on-going parking enforcement intervention.”

Councillor Shilton also proposed an additional recommendation recognising that “the car park provides an important service for local businesses by providing additional town centre parking on Saturdays and bank holidays.”

The Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee agreed with the recommendations in principal but strongly felt that Warwick District Council should press the County Council to make the car park safer in order to minimise the risk of accidents for the public.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee accepted the report but some had suggested that security doors could be installed on the appropriate level of the car park to prevent access to the office block, and thus the car park could still be used and generate income. The Deputy Chief Executive, Bill Hunt, explained at the meeting that this idea had been discussed in meetings between the Council and WCC, but for various reasons WCC had been unwilling to accept the idea.

Councillors Mrs Knight and Gifford reiterated the concerns of the scrutiny committees. Members were keen to see the car park continue to be made available for public use at weekends, whilst recognising that there were a number of reasons why the County Council had not supported the suggestion to undertake work to allow limited access to the stairwells. Councillor Shilton agreed to maintain a dialogue with the County Council in the hope that they could be persuaded to change their minds.

Having read the report the Executive decided to agree the recommendations, with the additional recommendation as proposed by Councillor Shilton.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the new management agreement set out in Appendix 1 to the report, relating to the management of Barrack Street car park by WDC at weekends and bank holidays, be agreed; and
- (2) it is recognised that the car park provides an important service for local businesses by providing additional town centre parking on Saturdays and bank holidays.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Shilton)

59. **TOURISM STRATEGY UPDATE**

A report from Development Services updated Executive on the progress made to date on the creation of a Destination Management Organisation (DMO) and sought a commitment to co-fund its development with Stratford's Destination Steering Group (SDSG).

At its meeting on 14 March 2012 Executive gave delegated authority to develop the DMO. The creation of the DMO would contribute towards the delivery of the previously adopted Tourism Strategy and accompanying action plan. This supported the Sustainable Community Strategy strategic aims to create a "thriving tourism economy in Warwick District, making it one of the top visitor destinations" and to create a "strong, diverse economy which provides jobs for all".

The creation of a DMO was an integral part of the action plan agreed in the March Executive report. Industry feedback showed that the creation of a joint DMO

would deliver significant benefits in joining up a highly fragmented industry. Warwick district industry feedback indicated support for working jointly with Stratford district, given the caveat that Warwick should not be subordinated to Stratford.

Stratford's equivalent industry group, the SDSG, had already indicated a desire to work with the industry in Warwick and a belief that the whole tourism industry and visitor economy would be stronger and more efficient for it.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was in agreement with the recommendations. It felt the DMO was the right solution and that the views of the local Tourism Industry were of vital importance. The Committee also felt that the DMO must benefit all areas of the District but had concerns about the timings and would like faster progress.

The Portfolio Holder for Development Services, Councillor Hammon, agreed with the Scrutiny Committee's views and stated that the vacuum left by Shakespeare Country needed to be filled as soon as possible. He accepted Members' frustrations with delays and said that work would commence as soon as it had been approved by Executive with the aim of getting the DMO in place by April 2013. Councillor Mobbs pointed out that, as a result of delays, plans for the DMO now tied in with the Local Plan.

Councillor Hammon expressed a desire to see the DMO work with other areas such as the Cotswolds and Coventry and talked about the need for a modern facility in Warwick which would act as the hub for the DMO.

Councillor Mrs Grainger welcomed the report and pointed out the need for planning to encompass IT delivery and the design phase. She was keen to see progress, particularly in respect of the involvement of all interested parties, including Town Councils and her own portfolio.

Councillor Coker wanted to see rapid progress and expressed concern that, in the meantime, what the District had to offer was being poorly advertised. He suggested that an efficient website and booking system was of greater value than visitor centres and that IT should be made a priority. Councillor Coker also expressed a desire for all Town Councils to support the venture, not just with words but financially too.

In response to concerns raised by Councillor Vincett, Councillor Hammon reassured Councillor Vincett that Kenilworth would be represented appropriately by the DMO, as would Stoneleigh. He reported that further reports to the Executive would be presented in November and March, and that in depth work on visitor centres and discussion with Councillor Grainger's portfolio would take place before the first of those reports. Website data was being reviewed for accuracy and any new website and booking system would be managed and kept up to date by the DMO. Councillor Hammon reiterated his commitment to see the DMO up and running by April 2013.

Having read the report, the Executive decided to agree the recommendations.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the development of a joint Destination Management Organisation (DMO) covering the Warwick and Stratford districts be agreed;
- (2) authority be delegated to the Economic Development & Regeneration Manager, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Finance and Development, to work with the Warwick Industry Steering Group (WISG) and the Stratford Destination Steering Group (SDSG) to implement a DMO structure & membership scheme by April 2013;
- (3) feedback from the tourism industry relating to what they want from a DMO be noted;
- (4) up to £40,000 of the Tourism Reserve will be utilised to co-fund the development of the DMO organisation;
- (5) progress against the agreed action plan as set out in Appendix One to the report be noted; and
- (6) future reports be presented to the November 2012 meeting (with recommendations on the visitor services review) and the March 2013 meeting (with recommendations on the finalised legal and financial framework for the DMO).

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Hammon)

60. **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
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The full minutes of Minutes 61 to 65 were contained within a confidential minute which would be made available to the public following the implementation of the relevant decisions. However, a summary of the decisions was as follows:

61. **INTEGRATED WASTE, GROUNDS MAINTENANCE AND BUILDING CLEANING CONTRACTS RE LET**

The Executive noted a number of corrections to the report and the recommendations (as set out in the report) were agreed.

62. **LAND AT SPINNEY HILL, WARWICK**

The recommendation as set out in the report was agreed.

63. **FINANCE STAFFING REVIEW**

The recommendations as set out in the report were agreed.

64. **MINUTES**

The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2012 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

65. **URGENT ITEM**

The Chairman reported that Councillor Vincett would be getting married on 15 September after 20 years of courting! He extended the Executive's congratulations to Councillor Vincett and his future wife, and wished them all the best for the future.

(The meeting ended at 6.55 pm)