

# EXECUTIVE

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 8 May 2014 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 pm.

**Present:** Councillor Mobbs (Chairman); Councillors Caborn, Coker, Cross, Mrs Grainger, Hammon and Shilton.

**Also present:** Councillor Barrott (Chair of Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee), Councillor Mrs Blacklock (Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee), Councillor Boad (Liberal Democrat Group Observer) and Councillor MacKay (Independent Group Observer).

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Vincett.

## 193. **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

## 194. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 16 and 23 April 2014 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **Part 1**

(Items on which a decision by Council is required)

## 195. **Vice Chairman of the Council 2014/15**

It was proposed and duly seconded and

**Resolved** that Councillor Wilkinson be appointed Vice Chairman of the District Council for the ensuing municipal year.

### **Part 2**

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

## 196. **Riverside House HQ – Update Report**

The Executive considered a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (BH) which updated Members on the Riverside House Headquarters relocation project.

On 26 March 2014 the Executive agreed the proposals for a Council HQ offices relocation project. The site of the new HQ offices would be on the open land adjacent to the Spa Centre, with the project also delivering new housing on the current Riverside House site and on land in the vicinity of the Council owned Court Street car park.

The report had also explained that the relocation project, comprising of the development of the three linked sites, would be delivered through the Limited

Liability Partnership (LLP) established by the Council with its private sector partner Public Sector Plc (PSP).

The LLP would release funding of £673,940 to forward fund the engagement of an external design team to undertake detailed feasibility studies on the three elements of the project. The Executive would receive a further report, in February 2015, once detailed technical and financial appraisals had been completed and planning approvals secured for all three sites before any final commitment to the completion of the project was made.

However, in parallel with the commencement of the LLP funded detailed financial and design appraisals of the Spa Centre site, the Executive had also instructed officers to: *'formally review the potential use of other WDC town centre landholdings as alternative relocation sites and to report back no later than May 2014'*.

The update report set out the outcomes of that review and asked Members to note the findings and confirm the Spa Centre as the relocation site subject to successful progression of the project from Stage 2 to Stage 3 following the completion of the scheme viability tests and their formal 'sign-off' by both the LLP and the Council.

In addition, the report proposed that potential future options for the sites listed in appendix one to the report would be considered through the development of a Leamington Town Centre Area Action Plan.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee did not support any of the recommendations in the report and recommended that the Executive refer the decision to Full Council and felt that this decision should be based on a further evaluation of all the sites in appendix 1 of the report.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee further recommended that a Green Travel Plan should be further advanced because some Members of Overview and Scrutiny were not convinced that there would not be a net loss of parking spaces. The Committee did, however, recognise that a Green Travel Plan was not a site based issue.

Members felt that a lot more work should be done on the future of the Town Hall and this needed to be progressed more quickly.

If the Executive approved the recommendations in the report, then the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended that the Stage 3 decision point in the report was not taken until after the elections in May 2015.

An addendum was circulated at the meeting which outlined revised recommendations following receipt of the comments from Overview and Scrutiny Committee the previous evening. The recommendations ensured that the decision would be taken by Council on 25 June 2014 to ensure all Members were involved in the decision making. In addition, officers were instructed to programme in Member briefings to ensure all queries could be dealt with prior to the decision being taken.

Members welcomed the revised recommendations and felt that this would alleviate some of the confusion and would help Councillors understand the volume of work that had already taken place behind the scenes.

The Leader, Councillor Mobbs, thanked everyone for their input and comments and reminded Members that the project had to be cost neutral along with the opportunity to provide more affordable housing in the area. He assured Members that there would be complete consultation with Group Leaders and he would ensure that all Members had attended the briefings and had the opportunity to engage fully. Councillor Mobbs also reminded the Executive that there would be a cost implication caused by the delay in progress but was sympathetic to the request for more time.

The Executive took on board the comments and recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and, in response, agreed the recommendations as detailed in the addendum.

**Resolved** to recommend to Council on 25 June 2014 that:

- (1) Council notes the review findings as set out at Appendix One to the report;
- (2) Council confirms that the Spa Centre site will be the location of the Council's new HQ offices, subject to successful progression of the project from Stage 2 to Stage 3 following the completion of the scheme viability tests and their formal 'sign-off' by both the LLP and the Council;
- (3) Council agrees that potential future options for the sites listed in Appendix One will be considered through the development of a Leamington Town Centre Area Action Plan;
- (4) Council notes that the sub-group of the Members Reference Group will be involved in the development of the draft planning application and accompanying Green Travel Plan and that these will be brought to Council for consideration prior to submission;
- (5) Council notes that any delay in the HQ office relocation will cost the Council and Council Tax payers up to £350k per year; and
- (6) the Executive instructs officers to agree with the Group Leaders a programme of member briefings, to ensure that all Councillors are able to make an informed decision on 25 June.

(The Portfolio Holder for this item was Councillor Caborn)  
(Forward Plan reference number 451)

197. **Use of Chief Executive's delegated powers for Heritage Lottery Funding Grant**

The Executive considered a report from the Chief Executive and Neighbourhood Services which informed Members of the exercise of delegated powers by the Chief Executive, under CE(4) of the Scheme of Delegation to accept a development grant amounting to £48,800 and its standard terms, from the Heritage Lottery on behalf of the Council.

The grant would be used to develop a second round application for the restoration of the Pump Room Gardens, Royal Leamington Spa under the Heritage Lottery Parks for People Award scheme.

'Parks for People' was a three-year joint initiative between Heritage Lottery Fund and the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) to help with the restoration and regeneration of public parks and gardens. The development grant of £48,800 had been determined at first-round stage. Dependent upon the final costs, a further grant in the region of £850,000 would be applied for at the second round from the Heritage Lottery Fund to restore the Gardens and deliver various activities.

The ways in which the development grant, combined with other funding, could be used were detailed in section 8 of the report and included survey work, development of a Masterplan and other detailed plans relating to cost and management.

Provision CE(4) of the Scheme of Delegation, contained within the Council's Constitution provided for the Chief Executive (and in the absence the Deputies) to have authority to: *'deal with urgent items that occur between meetings, in consultation with the relevant Deputy Chief Executives, Heads of Service (if available) and Group Leaders (or in the absence Deputy Group Leaders) subject to the matter being reported to the Executive at its next meeting'*.

The Chief Executive had to make a decision, due to the Heritage Lottery Fund standard terms of grant requiring evidence that the Council had decided to accept the grant and its standard terms. Since there had not been previous Executive approval for this grant, the Chief Executive had to take this decision under his powers.

This was a retrospective report of action taken so no alternative options were proposed.

Having read the report the Executive

**Resolved** that the use of delegated power CR(4) by the Chief Executive to obtain Group Leader's (or their Deputy's) approval in relation to accepting the development grant of £48,800 and the standard terms of grant as detailed in Appendix 1, was noted.

198. **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 item 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
199		Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

199. **Minutes**

The confidential minutes of the meetings held on 12 March 2014 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

(The meeting ended at 6.45 pm)