

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 7 May 2014 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Blacklock (Chairman); Councillors; Boad, Mrs Bromley, Copping, Ms Dean, Mrs Falp, Mrs Gallagher, Gill, Guest, Mrs Higgins, Illingworth, Weber and Wreford-Bush.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors; Hammon and Rhead.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brookes, Edwards, Gifford, Kinson and Weed.

142. **SUBSTITUTES**

Councillor Gill substituted for Councillor Edwards; Councillor Wreford-Bush substituted for Councillor Gifford; and Councillor Weber substituted for Councillor Weed.

143. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

144. **DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS**

In response to questions from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, arising from a report giving an update on discretionary housing payments, the Benefits and Fraud Manager stated that:

- the main reason applications for the payment were refused, were that when the income of the applicant was evaluated, it was evident that the rent was affordable;
- if an application was refused, then the applicant would be informed that they should contact either the Coventry and Warwickshire Development Agency or the Citizens' Advice Bureau;
- an officer had been appointed on a full time basis for 12 months to sort Council Tax issues;
- there was not enough evidence to suggest that people had downsized to smaller accommodation; and
- there was political pressure to avoid underspending.

The Chairman thanked the Benefits and Fraud Manager for the report.

145. **SUMMARY OF COMMENTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE**

The Committee considered a report from Civic and Committee Services which detailed the responses the Executive gave to the comments the Overview and Scrutiny Committee made regarding reports submitted to the Executive in April.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

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146. EXECUTIVE AGENDA (NON CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS AND REPORTS) – THURSDAY 8 MAY 2014

The Committee considered the following non-confidential item which would be discussed at the meeting of the Executive on Thursday 8 May 2014.

Item 4 – Council HQ Relocation Project – Update Report

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

It 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 recognised that a Green Travel Plan was not a site based issue.)

A lot more work should be done on the future of the Town Hall and this needed to be progressed more quickly.

In the event that the Executive did approve the report recommendations, the Committee recommended that the Stage 3 decision point in the report was not taken until after the Elections in May 2015.

(Councillors Rhead and Weber arrived during discussions on this item. Councillor Guest left the meeting near the end of discussions on this item, followed by Councillors Hammon and Weber who left at the end of discussions on this item. Neither Councillors Hammon nor Rhead participated in this discussion.)

147. TASK & FINISH GROUP - SEXUAL ENTERTAINMENT VENUES (SEVs)

Councillor Rhead, Chairman of the Task & Finish Group, gave the Committee a brief overview of the interim results of the public consultation on SEVs which sought public opinion on the presence of such establishments in the District. This formed part of the overall work the Task & Finish Group was handling to establish how the Council should handle applications for these premises. The consultation had been instigated on the advice of legal advisors who had advised the Council that it had to be done as part of the process.

The interim results were based on the web-based consultation only and Councillor Rhead read out the results. 422 responses had been made via the web by the end of the survey period, but the interim results were based on a point when only 305 responses had been received. From the results read out, the overwhelming response was that respondents (75%) had indicated they did not want any SEV establishments in the District.

Councillor Rhead advised that the full report was expected the following day and the Task and Finish Group would also find out if the responses received were sufficient to have confidence that the results reflected the District. He did remark that from the interim web results, the majority of

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respondents appeared to be between the ages of 45 and 64. The Chairman thanked Councillor Rhead for his report.

(Councillor Rhead left the meeting.)

148. FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the Forward Plan which had been published for May 2014 to August 2014.

Members were informed that the relocation project for Riverside House had been postponed pending financial appraisals.

Forward Plan reference 593 – Code of Conduct Review

The Chairman was asked to make enquiries on the position with this report. Members were informed that the Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer would be speaking to the Deputy Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer later in the week.

Forward Plan reference 603 – Sports and Leisure Options Appraisal

The Deputy Chief Executive (BH) was asked to see if this report could be delayed so that the Committee could scrutinise it before it went to the Executive.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

149. END OF TERM REPORT

The Committee considered a report from Civic and Committee Services on the work the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had undertaken for the municipal year 2013/2014. Under Article 6 of the Council's Constitution, Overview and Scrutiny Committees were required to provide an end of term report to the Council on work they had undertaken during the year.

RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council that the list of matters considered by this Committee during the municipal year 2013/14, as detailed in appendix A to the report, be noted.

150. REVIEW OF THE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a report from Civic and Committee Services on the Committee's work programme.

Review of the Portfolio Holder Update Process

The Committee accepted that the current system of inviting each Portfolio Holder to a meeting twice a year had proved very time consuming for all parties and needed improvement. It was decided that instead, they would be invited to one meeting a year to answer questions on their portfolio, having first submitted a report. Portfolio Holders would then only be asked to attend further meetings if there was a specific topic that required

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scrutiny. Officers were asked to draw up a timetable for the yearly review starting in September.

HARP

It was reported that the review was still ongoing. It was hoped that a report might be ready in July.

Health Scrutiny Working Party

Councillor Mrs Falp advised Members that the Working Party had met the day before and had discussed a consultation paper on improving dental care and oral health. A representative from NHS England had attended the meeting to provide Members with information on dental care issues.

Councillor Mrs Falp referred Members to matters they needed to consider ahead of the decision at the Committee meeting in June. Councillors had each been handed a written list of these to help, and the Chairman then asked them to pay particular attention to the second part of the written list.

(Councillor Illingworth left the meeting during discussions on this item.)

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

151. **PUBLIC & PRESS**

RESOLVED that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item, by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 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
152	3	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

(Councillor Gill left the meeting.)

152. **SUMMARY OF COMMENTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE**

The Committee considered a report from Civic and Committee Services which detailed the responses the Executive gave to the comments the Overview and Scrutiny Committee made regarding the confidential reports submitted to the Executive in April.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(The meeting finished at 8.55 pm)