

WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the annual meeting held on Thursday 22 September 2011, at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Bunker (Chairman); Councillors Barrott, Mrs Blacklock, Boad, Mrs Bromley, Brookes, Caborn, Coker, Davies, De-Lara-Bond, Dean, Dhillon, Doody, Mrs Gallagher, Gill, Hammon, Mrs Higgins, Illingworth, Kinson, Mrs Knight, MacKay, Mrs Mellor, Mobbs, Pittarello, Pratt, Mrs Sawdon, Shilton, Tyrrell, Vincett, Weber, Weed and Wreford-Bush.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Copping, Dagg, Edwards, Mrs Falp, Gifford, Mrs Goode, Mrs Grainger, Guest, Heath, Rhead, Wilkinson and Williams.

39. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 31 August 2011 were approved as a correct record.

40. COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made the following announcements:

- (A) The Chairman thanked all those who had taken part at her bowls evening. She also congratulated the overall winners Councillors Doody and Mrs Gallagher, the best lady bowler Councillor Mrs Gallagher and best male bowler Graham Leach (Civic & Committee Services Manager);
- (B) The Chairman would be holding two Macmillan Coffee mornings in September, one at the Almanac in Kenilworth from 10.30 am on 29 September and the other at the Town Hall on 30 September from 10.00am and encouraged members to attend to support them;
- (C) The Chairman reminded members of her Christmas Concert on 3 December 2011; and
- (D) The Chairman announced that there would be a gala event at the Spa Centre on one of the showings of the panto in order to raise money for her charities, the date of the event is yet to be confirmed.

41. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

It was moved by Councillor Mobbs, duly seconded and

RESOLVED that

- (1) the following recommendation of the Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committing meeting held on 21 September 2011, be approved and adopted: That the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2011, be approved and adopted; and
- (2) all officers involved in the production of the Statement of Accounts be thanked for their excellent work.

42. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE

It was proposed by Councillor Vincett, that Minute 53 Proposal to Install Photovoltaic Systems to Suitable WDC Housing and Corporate Properties, duly seconded and

RESOLVED that minute 53 as the report of the Executive of 22 September 2011, be approved and adopted.

(It was noted by Council that this minute had been brought to this meeting of the Council to enable the proposed scheme to be introduced quicker and that the rest of the report of the Executive would be reported to Council on 26 October 2011)

43. PRESENTATION BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

The Council received a presentation from the Local Government Boundaries Commission that outlined the process that would be used for the electoral boundary review of Warwick District Council.

44. PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was proposed by Councillor Doody, duly seconded and

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 paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

45. PROPOSED DEMOLITION AND DEVELOPMENT OF A COUNCIL HOUSING SCHEME

The Council considered an urgent report from Housing & Property Services that sought approval to engage with tenants on the proposed demolition and redevelopment of Featherstone Court, a Council housing scheme, consisting of 29 Social Housing Units.

On 28 March 2012, as part of the Government's review of the Housing Revenue Account the Council would be expected to take on debt of approximately £133m. The amount of debt the Council took-on would be affected by the number of dwellings it proposed to retain within the next five years. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) required the Council to notify it of any proposed demolitions over the next five years by 10 October 2011. This was the final date by which the Council's external auditors were required to agree the relevant figures to be submitted to DCLG. By the fact that the relevant return had already been submitted, any decision to agree to the demolitions would need to be made well ahead of this date to enable appropriate discussion to take place with the auditors and for the claim to be re-opened.

COUNCIL MINUTES (Continued)

This notification process needs to be evidenced by a formal Council decision and tenant specific consultation.

The proposed scheme was built around 1960 and included 29 Council owned social housing units. The scheme was tired and in need of significant investment to meet the expectations of customers and the Council. However the size of its amenities meant that the Council would continue to fall short of customer expectations unless there was a significant remodelling exercise.

The Housing and Property Services department had therefore held some initial discussions with Waterloo Housing Group to consider the available investment options. One option that had been discussed was the demolition and redevelopment of the proposed scheme. Initial indications were that a new scheme on the site would deliver a net increase in social housing units and provide the Council a purpose built, energy efficient and state of the art flagship development. In addition the proposed development had the capacity to be phased and hence reduce the inconvenience of disturbance/relocation associated with a decanting programme. As this scheme would be to replace existing dwellings, it would not form part of the Joint Venture with Waterloo to develop 300 new dwellings in accordance with that agreed project.

If the Council decided to redevelop the scheme without notifying the DCLG it would end up taking on approximately £696,000 of debt as part of the final debt settlement following self financing. Thus appropriate notification which was evidenced by a formal council decision and tenant specific consultation would enable the redevelopment of the scheme without the need to carry or pay the overhanging debt.

The proposed scheme would be subject to tenant consultation and a full viability assessment, details of which would follow in subsequent reports. To date there had been no consultation with tenants and they were not aware at all of the proposals.

Councillor Vincett as Portfolio Holder explained to Council that the consultation with residents would be started before 10 October 2011 and that the Council would not take a final decision on the future of these properties until after the full consultation and viability assessment were concluded. However there was a need to inform the DCLG of the number of properties by 10 October 2011 and therefore an in principle decision needed to be taken before this. However the DCLG had no objections to the number of properties being increased after 10 October 2011 and therefore depending on the outcome of the consultation the final decision could be to add these 29 properties back into the figure submitted to DCLG.

RESOLVED that

- (1) delegated authority to the Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Housing and Property Services, Head of Finance in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Housing and Property Services and Finance to consult relevant tenants on the proposed demolitions and redevelopment of a local housing scheme and to confirm before 10 October 2011 whether the properties should be demolished in order to develop a new scheme and inform the DCLG of this, be approved; and

- (2) the benefits of redeveloping the scheme and notifying the DCLG, be noted.

(The Chairman had agreed to take this item as an urgent item because there was a need to respond to the Department for Communities and Local Government before 10 October 2011 which was before the next meeting of the Council or Executive)

46. **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

It was proposed by Councillor Doody, duly seconded and

RESOLVED that the membership of Planning Committee be amended with the replacement of Councillor Dhillon by Councillor Kinson.

(The Chairman had agreed to take this item as an urgent item to enable the membership of the Committee to be amended as soon as possible)

47. **COMMON SEAL**

It was

RESOLVED that the Common Seal of Warwick District Council be affixed to such deeds and documents as may be required for implementing decisions of the Council arrived at this day.

(The meeting ended at 7.36 pm)

CHAIRMAN
26 October 2011