

FINANCE AND AUDIT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 13 December 2011 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.30pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Knight (Chair): Councillors Copping, Dagg, Dean, MacKay, Pittarello, Rhead, Mrs Sawdon and Williams.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Mobbs (Portfolio Holder for Finance) and Mrs Grainger (Community and Corporate Services).

There were apologies for absence from Councillors Cross, Edwards, Pratt and Mrs Syson (nee Tyrrell).

89. **SUBSTITUTES**

Councillor Copping substituted for Councillor Mrs Syson and Councillor Dean substituted for Councillor Edwards.

90. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Minute 93 – Executive Agenda (Confidential Items & Reports) – Item 11 – Allocation of budget to deliver Voluntary Sector Services in Warwick District 2012-2015

Councillor Copping declared a prejudicial interest as a trustee of Older People In Action and agreed to leave the room for the duration of the item. He also declared an interest as the Council's representative on WCAVA (Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action).

Minute 96 – Executive Agenda (Non-Confidential & Confidential Items & Reports) – Items 8 & 12 – Retail Development In Leamington Town Centre

On receipt of legal advice Councillors Copping, Dean, MacKay and Rhead declared that they were members of the Planning Committee.

Minute 97 – Executive Agenda (Non-Confidential Items & Reports) – Item 5 – Local Government Pension Scheme Consultation

Councillor Dagg declared a personal interest because he was a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Minute 99 - Executive Agenda (Confidential Items & Reports) – Item 14 - Sale of Art Gallery

Councillor Dean declared a personal interest because she was a member of both the Leamington Town Centre Partnership Steering Group and the board for Bath Place.

Councillor Mrs Knight declared a personal interest because she attended meetings relating to Bath Place.

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91. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2011 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

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

93. EXECUTIVE AGENDA (CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS & REPORTS)

The Committee considered the following confidential item which would be discussed at the meeting of the Executive on Wednesday 14 December 2011.

Item Number 11 – Allocation of budget to deliver Voluntary Sector Services in Warwick District 2012-2015

Responding to members' questions, officers confirmed the names of voluntary sector services which had not received a budget allocation.

The Committee were pleased with the even handed approach taken to the process and supported the recommendations in the report.

(Councillor Copping, having declared a prejudicial interest, left the meeting for the duration of this item. Councillor Grainger left the meeting at the conclusion of the item)

94. INTERNAL AUDIT QUARTER 2 2011/12 PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee received a report from the Audit and Risk Manager detailing progress achieved in the Internal Audit Plan 2011/12, summarising audit work completed in the second quarter and providing assurance that action had been taken by managers.

In June 2010 the Committee had decided that they only wished to receive extracts from internal audit reports, issued during the quarter, where the assurance opinion was moderate or below. The Audit and Risk Manager gave a summary of cases where moderate assurances had been given and responded to Members questions.

Members felt that it might be prudent to consider a shorter period than 4 years before the next audit of the Benefits Fraud Team. Officers clarified arrangements and agreements in respect of the provision of legal advice to the Council.

Officers agreed to follow up concerns expressed by members in relation to the timely updating of ICT Services following staff leaving the employ of the

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Council, and to clarify the reason for annual checking of non-domestic rateable values, which were changed every four years.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and its contents accepted or, where appropriate, acted upon.

95. **PUBLIC AND 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 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

96. **EXECUTIVE AGENDA (NON-CONFIDENTIAL & CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS & REPORTS)**

The Committee considered the following items which would be discussed at the meeting of the Executive on Wednesday 14 December 2011.

Item Numbers 8 & 12 – Retail Development In Leamington Town Centre – Parts One & Two

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

(Councillor Mobbs left the meeting during the course of this item)

97. **EXECUTIVE AGENDA (NON-CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS & REPORTS)**

The Committee considered the following non-confidential items which would be discussed at the meeting of the Executive on Wednesday 14 December 2011.

Item Number 4 – Technical Reform of Council Tax

The Committee supported retaining the status quo, which was to ask residents to pay Council Tax over the course of 10 months (with 2 months when no instalments are due to be paid, but with an option to pay over 12 months if preferred), which consultation had shown residents were happy with.

Item Number 9 – Rural / Urban Capital Improvement Initiative Scheme

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

Item Number 5 – Local Government Pension Scheme Consultation

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

98. **PUBLIC AND 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

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within paragraphs 1 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

99. EXECUTIVE AGENDA (CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS & REPORTS)

The Committee considered the following confidential items which would be discussed at the meeting of the Executive on Wednesday 14 December 2011.

Item Number 13 – Approval of Compensation Payment

The Committee noted that officers would clarify a point in respect of compensation, agreed that decisions should be taken in accordance with Atkins Report recommendations and supported the recommendations in the report.

Item Number 14 – Sale of Art Gallery

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report, although a minority view was expressed that sale should be deferred until the market was more favourable.

100. COMMENTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE

A report from Committee Services summarised the Executive's response to comments which the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee gave on reports submitted to the Executive on 15 November 2011.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

101. FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered a report from Members' Services informing them of the current Forward Plan, attached as an appendix to the report.

One of the five main roles of overview and scrutiny in local government was to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of Executive decisions. If the Committee had an interest in a future decision to be made by the Executive it was within the Committee's remit to feed into the process.

The Forward Plan detailed the future work programme for the Executive. If a non-executive member highlighted a decision which was to be taken by the Executive which they would like to be involved in, members could then provide useful background to the Committee when the report was submitted to the Executive and they were passing comment on it.

RESOLVED that there were no forthcoming Executive decisions which they wished to have an input into before the Executive make their decision, at present.

102. REVIEW OF THE WORK PROGRAMME

A report from Members' Services detailed the Committee's work programme for 2011/12.

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Members noted that a report to the Executive in January would include an update on Risk Management from the Audit and Risk Manager.

RESOLVED that the work plan for 2011/12 be noted.

(The meeting ended at 8.40 pm)