

# RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 13 August 2002 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 pm.

**PRESENT:** Councillor Caborn (Chair); Councillors Mrs Boad, Darmody, Davis, Dray, Mrs Evans, Short and Windybank.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor Crowther (Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Strategic Leadership)

## 300. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

### Minute Number 304 - Highways Agency and Support Service Costs

Councillors Mrs Boad and Davis declared a personal interest as they were members of Warwickshire County Council.

## 301. COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT PRESENTATION

The Committee received a presentation from Nigel Smith, Audit Commission, Commissioning Inspector.

Nigel Smith circulated copies of the slides he had presented to the Committee and invited questions from members.

### **RECOMMENDED** that

- (1) the presentation be noted;
- (2) Nigel Smith be thanked for this presentation; and
- (3) the same presentation be made to all members of the council at a later date

## 302. ICT SERVICE PLAN

The Committee considered a report from ICT Services on the progress of the ICT element of the Corporate Management Service Plan.

ICT Services would now be delivering all the Council's E-Government work. Until June, this had been jointly undertaken with ITNET as part of the Open Door project. The vast majority of the work which had been undertaken by the staff had involved new technology with the ensuing learning curve.

## **RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

A major project that had arisen out of the E-Government/ICT Action Plan for 2002/2003, that had been approved by the Executive in April, was the implementation of Microsoft's e-mail system. This would include moving the Council's desk top network infrastructure into Microsoft's active directory, (which included the file and print services), and had been an action for review this year in the ICT Strategy. This would involve the network and desk top teams in several months work.

### **RECOMMENDED** that

- (1) the progress on the ICT element of the Corporate Management Service Plan be noted; and
- (2) an update be submitted to the committee in 6 months.

## **303. VOICE AND DATA NETWORK INTEGRATION**

The Committee considered a report from ICT Services who had investigated the costs for a Voice Over IP solution to Kenilworth Connection, following a report submitted to this Committee on 9 October, 2001.

One of the recommendations of the IT Fundamental Review was to integrate voice telephony and data networks. This was one of the actions of the Corporate and Strategic Portfolio Priority Areas.

ICT had been asked at the meeting of the Committee in October 2001 to report back with the cost of setting up a Voice Over IP project, at Kenilworth Connection and this totalled £25,336.

The cost of setting up a new site with Voice Over IP was £27,716, compared with the cost of a traditional separate voice and data network which was £9,906.

It appeared at this time, that the set up costs outweighed any ongoing savings or functionality benefits. However, it would be worth reviewing again in 18-24 months or when a suitable opportunity arose.

### **RECOMMENDED** that

- (1) the pilot does not take place due to the relative high cost of IP Telephony Equipment and the lack of cost savings at present; and
- (2) Voice Over IP be re-evaluated in 24 months.

## **304. HIGHWAYS AGENCY SUPPORT SERVICE COSTS**

The Committee considered a report from Policy Services which examined the support service costs attached to the direct costs of providing the Highway Agency and the savings that may be accrued on transfer of the Agency.

## **RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

The District Council, over the past two years, had undertaken a Best Value review of its Highways and Land Drainage services. The review concluded earlier this year that the Highways Agency, that the Council operated for the County Council, had not been an effective use of resources.

Information generated through the review identified that the Council contributed £307,000 per annum to run the Agency and that it did not gain any real benefit or influence by doing so. It had been agreed in February this year that the Agency should be terminated at the end of March 2003.

A major saving of £167,000 per annum would occur as a result of the transfer of twenty-one staff from the District Council to the County Council. However, the present contribution by the District Council also included £139,900 of support service costs. These costs were detailed in Appendix 1 to the report. All the Business units identified in that appendix had been asked to see how they could reduce their costs as a result of the transfer of the agency.

### **RECOMMENDED** that

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) a further detailed report be submitted to the committee on the specific service costs including how the council support service costs are calculated and managed.

## **305. DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT/OFFICE ADMIN BEST VALUE REVIEW**

The Committee considered a report from Policy Services on the progress of the Document Management/Office Administration Best Value Review.

The Best Value Review had started in March 2002 and aimed to report to the Change Board in December. The purpose of the review was to identify and prepare an Improvement Action Plan for the implementation of measures to streamline and centralise the administrative functions carried within the Council.

**RECOMMENDED** that the progress with the Best Value Review be noted.

## **306. COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT**

The Committee considered a report from Policy Services on the questions raised in the corporate assessment of the comprehensive performance assessment.

Details of the comprehensive performance assessment had been provided at a previous meeting of the Committee. The corporate assessment part of the process considered the four responses to all questions:-

- (a) What was the Council trying to achieve?
- (b) How had the Council set about delivering its priorities?
- (c) What had the Council achieved/not achieved to date?

## **RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

- (d) In the light of what the Council had learnt to date, what does it plan to do next?

The Committee had considered the first and second questions at previous meetings. The first two questions and the issues discussed were detailed in Appendix 1 and 2 to the report.

The next questions, along with the key questions suggested by the Audit Commission, were detailed in Appendix 3 to the report.

### **RECOMMENDED** that

- (1) discussion on the third and fourth questions be deferred as the matters are currently being investigated by the Change Board; and
- (2) a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee, detailing how the work of the Committee, relates to that of the Change Board in respect of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

## **307. LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP/COMMUNITY PLAN - PROPOSALS PAPER**

The Committee considered a report from Policy Services on the Local Strategic Partnership and Community Plan proposals paper.

The Committee had been tasked to review the Community Plan process and to make recommendations about the establishment of an LSP for the District and how the Community Plan should be rolled forward. In meeting this obligation, the Committee had requested a survey of participants in the Community Plan process, that an audit of partnerships in the district be undertaken and that a seminar be held to raise awareness of LSPs.

The survey of participants had been reported to the Committee earlier this year.

The July meeting of the Committee considered the first draft of the partnership audit and the summary of the responses on the work shop and the flip chart notes of the LSP seminar held in May. The Committee also received the first progress report on the implementation of the current Community Plan for Warwick District. At that meeting, they considered a number of questions, the answers to which would help officers to devise a proposal for an LSP and as a way forward. The results of that deliberation were detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

**RECOMMENDED** that appendix 1 to the report be approved, as the discussion paper on the LSP/Community Plan.

## **RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

### **308. EXECUTIVE MINUTES**

The minutes of the Executive held on Monday, 22 July 2002, which came within the remit of the Committee was submitted for information and scrutiny.

**RECOMMENDED** that the minutes be noted.

### **309. EXECUTIVE AGENDA (NON-CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS AND REPORTS)**

The Committee considered Items 3 & 4 on the agenda for the meeting of the Executive on Monday, 19 August 2002.

**RECOMMENDED** that

- (1) Agenda Item Number 3 - The Committee supported the recommendation in the report, but would like an explanation as to why the shortfall figures on page 18 differ to those on page 35; and
- (2) Agenda Item Number 4 - The Committee supported the recommendation in the report.

### **310. WORK PLAN 2002/2003 AND PORTFOLIO HOLDER PRIORITY AREAS**

The Committee considered a report from Policy Services updating the Scrutiny Committee's work plan for the year and monitoring the progress against the Portfolio Holder Priority Areas.

It had been agreed to consider the Committee's work plan as a standing item on each agenda. The current work plan reflected items raised by the Committee at previous meetings and was detailed in an appendix to the report.

The Executive agreed service plans of each Portfolio Holder and relevant service plan action for this Committee was detailed in Appendix 2 to the report.

**RECOMMENDED** that

- noted;
- (1) the progress against the Portfolio Holder Priorities be
  - (2) the work programmes be noted and a report on Jephson Gardens be scheduled for the next meeting; and
  - (3) a report on E-Government Savings be submitted to the October meeting.

## **RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

### **311. 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 8 and 9 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

### **312. EXECUTIVE AGENDA (CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS AND REPORTS)**

The Committee considered Item 8, 11 & 12 on the agenda of the meeting of the Executive on Monday, 19 August 2002.

**RECOMMENDED** that

- (1) Agenda Item Number 8 - The Committee supported the recommendation in the report but would like assurance that the contract is carefully monitored;
- (2) Agenda Item Number 11 - The Committee supported the recommendation in the report, but would like an explanation as to why the costs have exceeded the cap which was placed on them; and
- (3) Agenda Item Number 12 - The Committee supported the recommendation in the report, but would like to see the contract run for 5 years with a 5 year option and that there be in-house monitoring arrangements.

(The meeting ended at 8.00 p.m.)

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