

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 23 November 2010 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00p.m.

**PRESENT:** Councillor Gifford (Chair) Mrs Blacklock, Boad, Mrs Bromley, Copping, Crowther, Davies, Ms De-Lara-Bond, Dhillon, Gill, Mrs Higgins, Mrs Mellor, McFarland and Weed.

Councillor Mrs McFarland substituted for Councillor Wilkinson.

## 57. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

### Minute Number 62 – Housing Strategy Themes

Councillor Weed declared a personal interest in this item because she was a member of the Warwick District Council's Tenants Association.

### Minute Number 64 – Executive Agenda (Non-Confidential items and Reports) Wednesday 24 November 2010 – Executive Agenda Item Number 11 – Audit Commission Report on Housing Services.

Councillor Weed declared a personal interest in this item because she was a member of the Warwick District Council's Tenants Association.

## 58. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 October 2010 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

## 59. **COMMENTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE**

The Committee considered a report from Members' Services which detailed the responses the Executive gave to the Committees' comments on the reports submitted to the Executive on 29 September 2010.

The report was produced to create a dialogue between the Executive and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and it ensured that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were formally made aware of the Executive's responses.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

## 60. **FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee considered the Forward Plan which had been published for October 2010 to January 2011.

The Committee had concerns that there was still not enough information provided for the items included in the dates to be confirmed section, or reasons why these items were late.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

### **61. REVIEW OF THE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered a report from Members' Services on the Committees' work programme for 2010/11.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) the report be noted;
- 2) the Task and Finish Group report for Discretionary Travel Scheme be submitted to the Committee in December;
- 3) Councillor Wilkinson's verbal feedback report on Economic Development Strategy and the Potential Regeneration projects in Old Town be deferred until the Committee's meeting in January 2011;
- 4) a report outlining the Benefit Appeals Process be brought to the Committee's meeting in February 2011; and
- 5) an update report from Housing and Property Services regarding their measures be brought to the Committees meeting in March.

### **62. HOUSING STRATEGY THEMES**

The Committee considered a report from Housing Strategy following a request at the meeting on 26 October 2010 (minute numbers 50 and 51). The report advised Members on the direction and themes to be included within the revised Housing Strategy, including improving the standard of new and existing housing in order to build healthy, safe and strong communities, increasing the supply of housing to meet housing need and increasing the range of housing options available to maintain independent living and prevent homelessness.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

### **63. MAINTENANCE OF TREE'S PROGRESS REPORT**

This item was deferred because there was no further information to update members on at this time.

### **64. EXECUTIVE AGENDA (NON- CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS AND REPORTS) – WEDNESDAY 27 OCTOBER 2010**

#### **Item 4 – Council Tax Discounts**

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

### Item 7 – WDC Play Areas

The Committee felt that accessibility was a key part in providing play areas to residents within the District. They also asked for young people to be continually consulted about their play area and ways to improve them and ensure they contained play equipment they wanted and used. The Committee want the Executive to consider recommendation 2.4 in the report, which outlines the possibility of transferring these areas to groups or agencies.

### Item 9 – Review of Locality Working

The Committee had concerns that the Community Forum meetings took up a lot of officer time, including the output after the meetings. They felt that the meetings were too structured and formal with the grant process dominating the meetings and that these should be changed to include more items put forward by the community. The Committee agreed that the people attending the Community Forum meetings were not a representative part of the community and that smaller groups spread across an area may attract more people and then these could feed back to the main Forum.

### Item 11 – Audit Commission report on Housing Services

The Committee concluded that they had confidence in the new Head of Service for Housing and Property Services and that the draft improvement plan was the right thing to do next. They felt that there were lessons that could be learnt from the problems that had been missed previously and that ways would be found to ensure these sort of problems were not missed at such a magnitude in the future. The Committee asked that a sub-committee be established with all Councillors and tenants, including those from sheltered housing, who were aware of the system. This would enable Councillors to learn of the tenants issues and to both look at the improvement plan.

## **65. EXECUTIVE AGENDA (CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS AND REPORTS) – WEDNESDAY 27 OCTOBER 2010**

There were no confidential items on the Executive agenda, and therefore no items were brought forward for discussion.

(The meeting finished at 8.15pm)