

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 3 November 2015 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Boad (Chairman); Councillors Bromley, D'Arcy, Davison, Edgington, Mrs Hill, Margrave, Naimo, Parkins and Mrs Redford.

Also Present: Councillors Mobbs and Whiting.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs Cain.

31. **Substitutes**

Councillor Mrs Hill substituted for Councillor Miss Grainger.

32. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

33. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2015 were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

34. **Comments from the Executive**

The Committee considered a report from Democratic Services which detailed the responses the Executive gave to the comments the Overview and Scrutiny Committee made regarding the reports submitted to the Executive at the end of September.

Resolved that the report be noted.

35. **Coventry & Warwickshire LEP Update**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Mobbs, gave members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee a short explanation on what the Coventry & Warwickshire LEP (CWLEP) did and what work had been undertaken recently. He explained that his role was as a Board Member and that the Deputy Chief Executive (BH) was a representative for the Officer Group for Warwick District. The CWLEP dealt with applications for funding from grant money provided by Central Government, of which the Government had provided £90m so far, and he cited various examples of where bids for this funding had been made. To-date, there had been 70 expressions of interest for funding, 12 of which were from within the Council's area. Two bids had been received for the Creative Quarter.

The Deputy Chief Executive (BH) was asked to distribute a "snapshot" of Councillor Mobbs' talk to the members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Concern was raised about the issue of broadband roll-out in new housing developments because the required trunking was not, as a matter of

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course, being installed. The question was raised on whether the CWLEP could look at this, but Councillor Mobbs felt that this would be better handled by making it a condition of planning consent; BT had already offered to supply the trunking free of charge.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Mobbs for the information. Councillor Mobbs then left the meeting.

36. Portfolio Holder Update – Finance

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Whiting, gave an update on Finance. In response to questions, he informed the Committee that:

- There was a strategy to finance the large scale projects and priorities had been set. Borrowing funds to cover these would not be an issue providing the Council had the revenue to repay the debt. Ensuring this was the main priority.
- The Finance Section had a manning issue at present because of the number of staff that were leaving; in particular, Procurement was highlighted.
- Some contracts had not performed as well as they should have done and this was a source of frustration. It was likely that the Council may well have to place growing reliance on external contractors, therefore it was vital that knowledge increased in respect of procuring services. Training staff within the different service areas for this was already ongoing and signs of progress were evident.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Whiting for answering the questions. Councillor Whiting then left the meeting.

37. Annual Feedback on Outside Appointments

The Committee considered a report collated by Democratic Services in which Councillors who represented the Council on outside bodies gave their annual statement of work undertaken by those bodies. As this was the first report following the May 2015 Council elections, and therefore some councillors would have had limited experience of this role, the reports could not, in general, give 12 months' worth of information.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee members felt that in respect of next year's report, a template of what the report should cover would be provided to the councillors so that greater emphasis would be placed on what added value and benefit was provided to the District by the representation on the particular outside body and what role the councillor played.

It was noted that several of the outside bodies were represented by a Portfolio Holder. The Committee would use the opportunity of the regular updates given by the Portfolio Holders on their service areas at Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings to question them about what they did in respect of those outside bodies and the benefits derived from it.

Members noted that reports on the Local Government Association (LGA) District Councils' Network and the National Association of Councillors had not been submitted. They requested that the relevant councillors (Councillors Mobbs and Coker) gave a report on these in December.

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38. Review of the Work Programme & Forward Plan

The Committee considered its work programme for 2015/16 and the latest published version of the Forward Plan.

The Chairman informed the Committee that he had received a number of emails expressing concern following on from the Committee's decision not to pursue the formation of a Task & Finish Group to look at the proliferation of sales and lettings boards around the District.

As a consequence, he had spoken to Planning Enforcement staff and driven around the district to see what the current situation was. In his opinion, it had improved greatly. He had asked Planning Enforcement staff to send letters to letting and property sales agents to remind them of the law concerning these boards. When this had previously been done, it had resulted in improvement of the situation. He had also asked the officers to monitor any complaints they received, and, if necessary, undertake prosecution of offenders to set an example.

The Committee agreed that a report from Planning Enforcement on the situation and complaints received would come forward at the meeting in January or February 2016.

It was agreed that a training exercise would be undertaken at the December Committee meeting using the slides that had been circulated arising from a recent meeting of the West Midlands Scrutiny Network. This had concentrated on selecting items to scrutinise. Councillor Boad volunteered to lead this session, and suggested it be done on the lines of a "round table" discussion.

Following on from discussion of items for the Work Programme and Forward Plan, it was

Resolved that:

- (1) the following items are to be added to the Work Programme for December 2015:
 - (a) verbal update from Councillor Mobbs on the LGA District Councils' Network;
 - (b) update from Councillor Coker on the National Association of Councillors;
 - (c) to review the Air Quality Action Plan listing to determine any areas that required any follow-up; and
 - (d) a training event on Work Programme setting;
- (2) the following items are to be added to the Work Programme, with dates to be determined:
 - (a) the vision for Royal Leamington Spa Town Centre – to scrutinise the best way forward to develop a model; how best to engage.

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- Councillor Boad and the Deputy Chief Executive (BH) should liaise to discuss a suitable date for this to come forward to Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and
- (b) a strategy report for parking across the District - Councillor Boad and the Deputy Chief Executive (BH) should liaise to discuss a suitable date for this to come forward to Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- (3) a report on action taken to control the proliferation of sales and lettings boards and analysis on reported incidents be brought to the Committee in either January or February 2016;
- (4) Councillors agreed that the Committee would be able to determine whether scrutiny was necessary in respect of car parking for the HQ relocation following receipt of the report going to the Executive in January 2016; and
- (5) the Forward Plan be noted.

39. Executive Agenda (Non-confidential items and reports) – Wednesday 4 November 2015

The Committee considered the following non-confidential items which would be discussed at the meeting of the Executive on Wednesday 4 November 2015.

Item number 5 – Leamington Creative Quarter

During discussions of this report, questions were asked on information that was confidential. It was therefore

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.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

(The meeting finished at 9.17 pm)