

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 2 December 2008 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Gifford (Chair); Councillors Barrott, Coker, Copping, Ms De-Lara-Bond, Mrs Gallagher, Gill, Mrs Goode, Guest, Mrs Higgins, Mrs Sawdon and Weed.

(Councillor Mrs Goode substituted for Councillor Boad and Councillor Guest substituted for Councillor Davies)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Britland and Mrs Scarrott.

617. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

618. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 September and 14 October 2008 were confirmed as a correct record.

619. **EXECUTIVE AGENDA (NON CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS AND REPORTS) – WEDNESDAY 3 DECEMBER 2008**

Agenda Item Number 3 – Development of Options for the West Midlands RSS

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

Agenda Item Number 8 – Proposed Strategy for the Development of Warwick Town Centre

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report and recommended that the consultation model used for the development in Kenilworth be applied to this scheme.

Agenda Item Number 13 – Consultation Draft Supplementary Planning Document on Open Space

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report, and requested that the Head of Planning investigated the possibility of including allotment provision within the draft SPD, and how the practical issues in relation to this could be addressed. The Committee also wanted assurances that existing allotments would be secured and protected.

The Committee also recommended that the Play Policy was considered in greater detail within the Policy.

Agenda Item Number 15 – Council Meeting Agenda Format

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

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Agenda Item Number 16 – Fees for Sex Shops

The Committee did not support the recommendations in the report. The Committee recommended that the fee was set at £3500 for 2009/10 and that officers inspected sex shops on a quarterly basis and this fee would cover the costs of those inspections.

Agenda Item Number 25D – Sustainable Communities Act

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report but would like Town and Parish Councils to be consulted.

620. PUBLIC AND PRESS

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

621. EXECUTIVE AGENDA (NON CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS AND REPORTS) – WEDNESDAY 3 DECEMBER 2008

Agenda Item Number 28 – Future of Newbold Comyn Golf Course

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

622. SCOPING DOCUMENT – TREE AND WOODLAND TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Committee considered a scoping document submitted by Councillor Mrs Sawdon with regard to the Tree and Woodland Task and Finish Group.

The Committee were of the opinion that the scope was too wide and should be narrowed down to make it an easier review to manage.

RESOLVED that Councillors Copping, Gifford, Gill and Mrs Sawdon be appointed to the Task and Finish Group and the suggested amendments to the scoping document made by the Committee, be taken into account by the Group.

623. 2008/2009 SECOND QUARTER PERFORMANCE RESULTS

The Committee considered an Executive report, item 19, from Organisational Development and Performance Improvement on the first quarter performance results for 2008/2009 along with the mitigations and corrective actions for those indicators that were off target.

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The regular and systematic reporting of performance results against target, trended over time and compared with other authorities was a fundamental element of the Council's integrated performance management framework. The performance management framework in turn remained a key tool for ensuring the Council stayed focussed on what mattered to ensure it delivered its services efficiently and effectively.

As in previous quarters, a report relating to each Portfolio had been prepared and arranged to enable the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to hold portfolio holders to account for the performance of services within their portfolio area.

When examining performance results for any given area the following points should be considered with relation to the results achieved and used to evaluate the appropriateness of any corrective action proposed:

- Result against target
- Result compared to previous results - trend over time.

There were a number of targets which the Committee queried, and an explanation was provided by the Acting Strategic Director for Housing and Development.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

624. SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS

The Committee considered an updated report from the Head of Planning on the current position with regard to 106 agreements made between 2005/2006 and 2007/2008.

At the last meeting of the Committee on 14 October, members received a summary report of current procedures operating in respect of Section 106 Obligations/Agreements under the Town and Country Planning Act, accompanied by a schedule of all agreements entered into in the last 3 years.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

625. SPONSORSHIP OF FLORAL DISPLAYS

The Committee considered a report from Neighbourhood Services on the sponsorship of floral displays in the District.

For many years the Council had raised sponsorship towards the cost of providing floral street displays in various parts of the District. These funds had been aimed at enhancing the quality of the District by providing floral street displays at a number of high profile roundabouts, in some borders adjacent to the highway and by the provision of hanging baskets, tubs and poles in town centres.

At the September meeting of the Committee, additional information had been requested regarding the sponsorship income that was included in HA34 target for 07/08. This report highlighted the sponsorship that Warwick District Council

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had received in support of providing floral street displays which were a component of the annual In Bloom Competition and should have been included in the HA34 figure, but this was now no longer reported.

The income received by Warwick District Council in 08/09 from sponsorship towards Britain in Bloom was £21,875.

The cost of providing floral planting for floral street displays in 2008/09 was expected to be around £38,000. Given the increase in energy costs the cost of floral planting was likely to increase significantly over the next few years.

The level of financial support i.e. the difference between sponsorship received and the expenditure for floral planting had been around £16,000 a year for the last three years.

Changes in the economic climate were likely to impact on the advertising and sponsorship decisions of companies. As a result the sponsorship received by Warwick District Council towards floral street displays could be adversely affected in 2009 and 2010. It was vital therefore more cost effective methods of planting were developed to maintain the quality of the District.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) a review of the areas where floral planting currently takes place to establish where and how more cost effective and sustainable methods of planting could be introduced, without detriment to the quality of the District, be supported; and
- (3) Town and Parish Councils be consulted during the review in (2) above.

626. FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered a report from Members' Services on the future use of the Forward Plan by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

There were five main roles of overview and scrutiny in local government. These being:

- Holding to account
- Performance management
- Policy review
- Policy development
- External scrutiny

The pre-decision scrutiny of executive decisions falls within the role of 'holding to account' and to feed into the pre-decision scrutiny of Executive decisions, the Committee needed to examine the Council's Forward Plan and identify items which they would like to have an impact upon.

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The Council's Forward Plan was published on a monthly basis and sets out the key decisions to be taken by the Council in the next twelve months. The Council only had a statutory duty to publish key decisions to be taken in the next four months. However, the Forward Plan had been expanded to a twelve month period to give a clearer picture of how and when the Council would be making important decisions.

The Committee were keen to take more of a role in the formulation of Executive decisions and during the debate, it was reported that the Forward would be amended to include a further column titles 'purpose of report'. It was then suggested that the Forward Plan should also include a column titled 'history' so members were aware of items that had been deferred from previous meetings.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) at future meetings when the Forward Plan is submitted, members will identify decisions to be made by the Executive in the coming months, which they would like to impact upon, to enable the Committee to feed into the pre-decision or policy development process; and
- (3) investigations be made into the inclusion of a further column in the Forward Plan titled 'history.'

627. COMMENTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE

The Committee considered a report from Members' Services on the response the Executive gave to the Committees' comments on the reports submitted to the Executive on 3 December 2008.

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.

As part of the new scrutiny process, the Committee were no longer considering the whole of the Executive agenda.

On the publication day of the agendas for the previous meetings of the Executive and Overview & Scrutiny, all Councillors were emailed asking them to contact Committee Services, by 9.00am on the day of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Tuesday 2 December 2008, to advise which Executive items they would like the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to pass comment on.

As a result the Committee considered the items as detailed in appendix 1 to the report, and the response the Executive gave was also shown.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

628. REVIEW OF THE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a report from Members' Services on the Committees' work programme for 2008/2009.

At the Committees' meeting on 14 October 2008, it was agreed that the Committee would receive the following reports in December 2008:

- Performance Report
- Section 106 agreements
- Sponsorship of roundabouts etc for Britain in Bloom
- Executive decisions
- Forward Plan

However, the report on the Executive decisions had not been produced because there was not enough officer time available to complete the research and write the report. This would be submitted to the Committee in February 2009.

CCTV Task and Finish Group had now had several meetings. The group met on 28 October to produce a list of questions for the witness sessions to be held in November. Then on 12 & 25 November, various witnesses attended the meetings and provided some valuable information which would feed into the draft report to be submitted to this Committee in February 2009

Engaging Young People Task and Finish Group held their first witness meeting in October, at which young people gave a presentation on the importance of youth engagement. The young people also answered a number of the Groups' questions. The November meeting had been an opportunity to question witnesses from Warwickshire County Council on the plans for future engagement mechanisms on which WDC and WCC are working jointly. The draft report would be submitted to this Committee in February 2009.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) a draft report from the Engaging Young People Task and Finish Group be submitted in February 2009;
- (3) a further report on the Forward Plan be submitted in February 2009; and
- (4) an email be sent to all non-executive members requesting volunteers for the Royal Spa Centre Task and Finish Group and the amended scoping document be submitted to the Committee in February 2009.

(The meeting ended at 8.20pm)