

WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 22 January 2014, at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.05pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Davies (Chairman); Councillors Barrott, Mrs Blacklock, Boad, Mrs Bromley, Brookes, Mrs Bunker, Caborn, Coker, Copping, Cross, Ms De-Lara-Bond, Ms Dean, Dhillon, Doody, Mrs Gallagher, Gifford, Gill, Mrs Goode, Guest, Heath, Mrs Higgins, Illingworth, Kinson, Mrs Knight, MacKay, Mrs Mellor, Mobbs, Pittarello, Pratt, Rhead, Mrs Sawdon, Shilton, Mrs Syson, Vincett, Weber, Wilkinson, Williams and Wreford-Bush.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Edwards, Mrs Falp, Mrs Grainger, Hammon, Kirton, Ms Weed.

79. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Minute Number 91 - Kenilworth Public Service Centre – Call in of Executive Decision

Councillors; Mrs Bunker, Davies, Illingworth and Shilton all declared a personal interest because they were members of Kenilworth Town Council.

Councillor Mrs Blacklock informed Council that she had been member of the Steering Group for this development and the development was also in her Ward.

Councillor MacKay informed Council that he had been a member of the Steering Group for this development.

80. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 4 December 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

81. **COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman congratulated Councillor Brookes on becoming a father.

The Chairman informed the Council that the arrangements for the approval of the submission version of the Local Plan Planning Forum on 7 April 2014 had been moved to 28 April 2014 and Reserve Planning Committee on 9 April 2014 had been removed from the calendar of meetings. Following these changes there would now be Group meetings on Monday 7 April 2014 at 6.00pm and Council would meet on 9 April 2014 to determine the Submission Version of the Local Plan.

The Chairman informed Council that there would be no business under items; 5, Public Interest Debate; 7, Notices of Motion; 8, Public Submissions; and 9, Questions to Committee Chairmen.

82. **PETITIONS**

The Council received two petitions, from Save Warwick and Chris White MP. The petitions were presented to Council by Mr D Williams.

The petition from Chris White MP was an objection to the Local Plan and the signatories stated that *"We do not believe that the current proposed Local Plan is in the best interests of our community and we call on Warwick District Council to reconsider this Plan and work with Town and Parish Councils as well as local residents to develop an alternative."* This had received 2100 signatures.

The petition from Save Warwick also objected to the Local Plan and the signatories stated that *"We, the undersigned, wish to register our objection to the proposals in the Local Plan, especially for the 12,300 new houses in Warwick District and the road proposals that go with them. We request the Council takes note of the weight of public opinion expressed by this petition and all the objections from residents and that the Council withdraws its current plan that would be ruinous to our town and re-plans on the basis of a more/most expansion on the real needs of our community."* This had received 700 signatures.

Mr Williams addressed the Council outlining the petitions and the concerns that residents had about the Local Plan. He welcomed the dialogue that Councillor Mobbs had started and hoped that this would continue.

It was proposed by Councillor Davis, duly seconded and

RESOLVED that the petitions be noted and considered as part of the Council's determination of the draft submission version of the Local Plan.

83. **QUESTIONS TO PORTOFOLIO HOLDERS**

Councillor Mrs Blacklock asked the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services, Councillor Shilton:

"Is the Portfolio Holder aware of persisting problems with waste collections, in particular the Assisted Collections?"

The operatives are reluctant to carry out Assisted Collections and sometimes refuse to take on new Assisted Collections when they have been accepted by WDC as qualifying for this service; so would he agree with me that the underlying reason is that the rounds have been changed and elongated to include more properties in the same shifts, expecting the operatives to work faster, in order to make the economies deriving from the new contract which in retrospect seems to have been under-priced - making it very difficult for a decent standard of service to be achieved within the budget?"

Councillor Shilton, had circulated the following response to Council prior to the meeting:

"The process of communicating changes to the crews and ensuring assisted collections take place as scheduled has been improved recently, and should drastically reduce the number of missed collections. SITA are continually reviewing the workloads of the crews to ensure that they can complete the work each day, without any impact on service quality. Members can be assured that any service issues raised by residents are responded to very quickly by the Neighbourhood Service Team, and if you have any concerns please contact the Area Officer for your ward or report them via the team's email address contract.services@warwickdc.gov.uk

The Waste Contract was awarded on the basis of both price and quality. An extensive amount of information was provided to bidders to ensure they could appropriately resource the contract, and deliver the level of service required. SITA scored the highest on quality of all the tenders that were submitted."

Councillor Mrs Blacklock asked a supplementary question to Councillor Shilton, asking if he was aware that more complaints had been submitted this week from a property where the crew had been briefed by officers through direct intervention but again the collection had not occurred.

Councillor Shilton explained that he had not been aware of any complaints, but if Councillor Mrs Blacklock could pass him the contact details he would visit the site personally with the officers to ensure the problems were resolved. He reminded all Councillors that as a Council we collected from nearly 60,000 properties each week and issues were normally resolved within a matter of hours. If there were common problems he encouraged Councillors to pass issues to Shadow Portfolio Holders for them to raise with the Head of Service directly.

(Councillor Guest arrived during this item.)

84. **LEADER'S AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' STATEMENTS**

(A) Councillor Mobbs, Leader of the Council, thanked Councillors for their support in appointing him as Leader. He hoped that they had seen his statements about his desire to work together in unity and take decisions based upon common sense and not political bias. Together these decisions would work to making the District a Great Place to Live Work and Visit which is what we all wanted. He looked to assure the Council that there were no underlying plans within any Executive decisions and that he wanted to look at issues together. As Leader he aimed to improve communication with everyone.

Councillor Mobbs went on to highlight from the briefing for members on Monday that he wanted to work with and listen to local people on issues and he wanted to help resolve some of the issues. To support this he explained that he had started to meet with his councillors individually as well as some councillors from other groups.

(B) Councillor Shilton, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services announced that the Pump Room gardens restoration had received first round heritage approval of a £49,000 grant to make a second stage grant application. This would look at investing £1million to make it an all-year venue. The second round application would include drainage works, with Warwick District Council providing £100,000 match funding, the Royal Leamington Spa Building Conservation Trust £50,000 and Friends of the Park £20,000. He took the opportunity to thank the Friends Group for its work. The award of the full grant would see the bandstand restored to original quality, the bridge being upgraded, improving bank side wildlife, improved drainage, realigned and laid paths to their historic positions. The deadline for submission was 31 August 2014 with awards being made in December 2014. If this was successful, work would start in March 2015 with work completed by summer 2017.

(C) Councillor Vincett, Portfolio Holder for Housing & Property Services, informed Council that the number of social housing built across the District for 2013 was 80 across. In 2014, with builders on site in a number of

locations, the expected completion rate was 250 homes. The partnership with Waterloo Housing to-date had secured 55 new properties. It was anticipated this partnership would deliver a further 72 properties in 2014 with a further 379 in system to come forward.

- (D) Councillor Vincett, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Property Services, reminded Councillors of the question from Councillor Pittarello about energy switching. He thanked Councillor Pittarello for this and for his input into the energy cooperative purchasing schemes. Officers were looking into this and it was looking promising. The aim was to make it easier, quicker and cheaper to help alleviate fuel poverty within the District. The Council also aimed to provide help and support to the elderly and disabled. The work was progressing with officers investigating the ichooser system. By using them the Council would receive a fee for each change which could then be used to fund other energy changes. He would be bringing a paper on this proposal to the Corporate Management Team and the Executive for them to consider.
- (E) Councillor Coker, Portfolio Holder for Health and Community Protection, announced that work had now started on the Cubbington flood alleviation scheme. He thanked Councillors Hammon, Pratt and Doody who had taken this item forward and did a lot of the work over the years to ensure it would happen.
- (F) Councillor Coker, Portfolio Holder for Health and Community Protection, announced that the Street Marshalls were now in place in the student area of Royal Leamington Spa. The aim of their work was to help keep the students safe and that the students got home safely or even help students recognise they had had enough to drink. This helped to make Royal Leamington Spa had a good night time economy and was a safe place to visit.
- (G) Councillor Coker, Portfolio Holder for Health and Community Protection, congratulated the Licensing Committee decision on reviewing a premises and dealing with the issues where there were problems.
- (H) Councillor Coker, Portfolio Holder for Health and Community Protection, reminded Councillors that previously there had been an informal arrangement with the Primary Care Trust providing £10,000 match funding for one off projects to improve health generally. However this had been increased to £30,000 from the Arden Clinical Commissioning Group. This would be for a project to support garden organics in tandem with the Trussell Trust and food banks to encourage people to grow their own food and in doing so to change their eating habits. In addition there would be work with Nuneaton and Bedworth Healthy Living at the Children Centres to help growing families change their eating habits particularly for under fives.
- (I) Councillor Cross, Portfolio Holder for Culture, informed Council that the pantomime had gone well with £183,000 taken which was on budget. Two performances were signed for those with hearing impairments, which had been well received and a repeat corporate booking had been received from a company which booked out the venue for a performance. In addition the new digital projector had been installed in the cinema and positive feedback had already been received.

- (J) Councillor Shilton, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services, reminded the Council about the Guide Dog, Warwick, that the Council had sponsored and had been puppy walked by a member of staff who had been based at Riverside House. Councillor Shilton had recently been informed that Warwick had passed his Guide Dog Training and he had now received a letter to say that Warwick had successfully been placed. Following this he had now received a letter of thanks from the person Warwick had been placed with and an award from Guide Dogs for the Blind for the work of this Council, which he presented to the Chairman.

(Councillor Heath arrived during this item.)

85. **QUESTIONS FOR THE LEADER**

Councillor Barrott asked the Leader that as the consideration of the implementation of the Living Wage had been deferred by Employment Committee, was the Leader still committed to the Living Wage and would a report come forward before April to enable this to happen?

In response, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Mobbs explained that he was disappointed that the recent newspaper article had not highlighted the Living Wage was a joint initiative. He explained he was still committed to the Living Wage. At Employment Committee, a number of issues had come up that needed to be considered prior to a final decision. As Leader, he was committed to rewarding but at the same time needed to be mindful of looking at potential changes to Living Wage. With this in mind he hoped to implement this proposal from 1 October 2014 and reviewed every year thereafter. As Council we needed officers to investigate and bring things forward, but committed to speaking with officers to see if it could come forward quicker.

86. **REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE**

The report of the Executive meeting of 11 December 2013 was proposed by Councillor Mobbs, duly seconded and

RESOLVED that the report be approved.

87. **ASSET REVIEW – CALL IN OF EXECUTIVE DECISION**

The Council considered a report from Civic and Committee Services. The report explained that on 11 December 2013, the Executive had made a decision on the asset review. This had duly been called in and referred to the Council for debate.

The matter had been called in by Councillors Boad, Copping, Gifford, Mrs Goode and Wreford-Bush because it related to the Royal Pump Rooms which was at the heart of the cultural heritage of Royal Leamington Spa. They considered that full and free public access must be a condition in any market testing of its commercial potential that was undertaken and not considered as an afterthought.

It was proposed by Councillor Boad and duly seconded that the decision should be referred back to the Executive referring them to the comments of both Scrutiny Committees and emphasising the need to maintain full and free public access as part of the commercial testing not afterwards.

On being put to the vote the proposal was lost.

It was proposed by Councillor Mobbs, duly seconded and

RESOLVED that the decision be referred back to the Executive with no further comments.

Prior to the vote Councillor Boad had requested a recorded vote, which was duly supported by two Councillors. The votes were recorded as follows:

For: Brookes, Mrs Bunker, Caborn, Coker, Cross, Davies, Doody, Mrs Gallagher, Guest, Mrs Higgins, Illingworth, Kinson, MacKay, Mobbs, Pratt, Rhead, Mrs Sawdon, Shilton, Vincett and Williams

Against: Barrott, Blacklock, Boad, Bromley, Copping, Ms De-Lara-Bond, Ms Dean, Gifford, Gill, Mrs Goode, Heath, Mrs Knight, Mrs Mellor, Pittarello, Mrs Syson, Weber, Ms Weed, Wilkinson and Wreford-Bush.

There were no abstentions from the vote.

88. **MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES**

It was proposed by Councillor Barrott, duly seconded and

RESOLVED that

- (1) Councillor Mrs Knight replaces Councillor Ms Weed as a member of the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee;
- (2) Councillor Ms Weed replaces Councillor Mrs Knight as a member of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee; and
- (3) Councillor Mrs Knight be appointed as a substitute for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Councillor Ms Weed be appointed as substitute for the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee.

89. **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 two items by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the relevant paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

90. **REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE**

The confidential report of the Executive meeting of 11 December 2013 was proposed by Councillor Doody, duly seconded and

RESOLVED that the report be approved.

91. **KENILWORTH PUBLIC SERVICE CENTRE – CALL IN OF EXECUTIVE DECISION**

On 11 December 2013, the Executive had taken a decision regarding Kenilworth Public Service Centre. This decision had been called in and considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee who had referred it to Council for debate.

The Decision of the Executive had been called in by Councillors, Barrott, Gill and Wilkinson because they believed the strong views of the two Scrutiny Committees had been ignored, there were potential risks and costs to the District Council because of the uncertainty of the funding.

It was proposed by Councillor Mobbs, duly seconded and

RESOLVED that the matter be referred back to the Executive with no further comments.

(Councillors Mrs Goode, Heath, Mrs Higgins and Pittarello left during this item.)

92. **COMMON SEAL**

It was

RESOLVED that the Common Seal of Warwick District Council be affixed to such deeds and documents as may be required for implementing decisions of the Council arrived at this day.

(The meeting ended at 8.47 pm)

CHAIRMAN
26 February 2014