

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 11 March 2014 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 pm.

**PRESENT:** Councillor Mrs Blacklock (Chairman); Councillors Boad, Mrs Bromley, Brookes, Copping, Ms Dean, Edwards, Mrs Falp, Mrs Gallagher, Gifford, Gill, Guest, Mrs Higgins, Illingworth, Kinson and Weed.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor Mobbs (Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance), and Councillor Shilton (Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services).

## 111. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

## 112. NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER UPDATE

The Committee received an update from the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services, Councillor Shilton.

In response to questions from the Committee, Councillor Shilton explained that:

- In respect of street cleansing, the partnership between the Council and the contractor was working well, and if there were any complaints, the contractor dealt with these very quickly.
- Grounds maintenance:
  - the contractor agreement was set at 14 grass cuts per year in the parks, weather permitting, with the interval between cuts set out in the agreement;
  - additional cuts could be arranged when necessary; and
  - the speed at which grass grew could not be predicted.
- Recycling:
  - the amount of paper tonnage collected for recycling had dropped, in line with the reduction in paper waste created; and
  - as the money generated by recycling paper had not been shared between the Council and the contractor, the effect of the loss in income from the paper recycling had not affected the Council.
- Councillor Shilton would ask the Head of Neighbourhood Services to provide more information in respect of fly tipping.
- Councillor Shilton would pass on Councillor Mrs Gallagher's complimentary comments about the service provided by the Fast Response Team in rural areas.
- After the review of parking arrangements in Warwickshire, Warwickshire County Council would be responsible for enforcement of on-street parking and residents' parking zones. Councillor Shilton felt that Warwickshire County Council could be surprised at the volume of work involved, but Warwick District Council was working to try to protect what happened in this District. Warwick District

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

Council would control totally the parking arrangements in its own off-street car parks.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Shilton for answering questions.

### **113. FINANCE PORTFOLIO HOLDER UPDATE**

The Committee received an update from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Mobbs. He had also undertaken to answer any questions he could on the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in his role as incoming replacement for Councillor Caborn on the LEP.

In response to questions from the Committee on his Finance Portfolio, Councillor Mobbs explained that:

- In respect of "Concurrent Services" (item 4 in his report), the current scheme would be reviewed with parish and town councils. Historically, concurrent services caused issues and it needed to be reviewed. His approach was to enter the review with a "blank piece of paper".
- Councillor Mobbs explained that to achieve the 2.5% reduction in the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, he had reviewed all portfolio areas and through a process of communication, he had helped all areas trim their budgets.
- He confirmed that some local clubs had been informed that they would have to pay full Council Tax in the coming new financial year. The Clubs had been informed of this increase three years ago to give them a chance to increase their income to meet the additional costs when the business rates relief subsidy ended.
- He would inform Committee Members whether community based clubs were liable for council tax.
- The Council had taken steps to notify the public through various media initiatives that the increase in the council tax was not due to the Council but to other authorities whose budgets also formed part of the calculation to fix the level of the council tax.

Councillor Mobbs also answered Members' questions on the LEP and the various issues it faced that had impacted on progress, not least the difference between the ways a public authority operated compared to a private business. He had identified communication issues between the various councils. He had addressed this by inviting the Leaders to meet. He undertook to give regular progress updates to Warwick District Council councillors.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Mobbs for answering questions.

(Councillor Mobbs and Shilton left the meeting.)

### **114. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings held on 11 February 2014 and 26 February 2014 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to a slight change to the wording on item 96 of the minutes 11 February 2014 in respect of the declaration of interest Councillor Mrs Bromley made about the 2<sup>nd</sup> Warwick Sea Scouts' Headquarters.

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

### **115. SUMMARY OF COMMENTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE**

The Committee considered a report from Civic and Committee Services which detailed the responses the Executive gave to the comments the Overview and Scrutiny Committee made regarding reports submitted to the Executive in February.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

### **116. EXECUTIVE AGENDA (NON CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS AND REPORTS) – WEDNESDAY 12 MARCH 2014**

The Committee considered the following non-confidential items which would be discussed at the meeting of the Executive on Wednesday 12 March 2014.

#### **Item 5 – Housing Strategy 2014-17 Delivery Plan**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee welcomed the report, commended it to the Executive and thanked the Housing Strategy and Development Officer for answering Members' questions.

#### **Item 6 – Hackney Carriage Fare Increase – Request from Drivers**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended to the Executive that it delayed any decision in respect of fare increases pending a complete review of the taxi drivers' code of conduct to improve standards of service and vehicles.

The Committee thanked the Regulatory Manager for answering Members' questions.

### **117. FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee considered the Forward Plan which had been published for March 2014 to June 2014.

Members were informed that there would be a briefing on Riverside House offices – relocation options report (reference 528) in two weeks' time. The Health Strategy report (reference 576) had been delayed for another month. Members also enquired whether there were plans to include Warwick within the Local Air Quality Management report (reference 562).

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

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

The Committee considered a report from Civic and Committee Services on the Committee's work programme.

#### **Health Scrutiny Working Party**

Councillor Mrs Falp, Chairman of the Working Party reported that the Group had met and agreed the recommendations it would be making in its report that was anticipated to be presented to the Committee in April. The Group

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

had expressed disappointment that the Health Strategy report that was to be presented to the Executive had been delayed and Councillor Mrs Falp asked the Committee to urge the Executive to receive the report soon.

### Children's Champion

The Deputy Chief Executive (BH) would be speaking with both Councillors Mrs Falp and Mrs Gallagher before the next Scrutiny meeting.

### Task & Finish Group – SEVs

The Committee was pleased to note that progress had been made and the consultation would start on 24 March, ending on 12 May. It was hoped that the Committee would hear an indication of results to-date at its April meeting. Councillor Brookes undertook to ensure all Members of Overview and Scrutiny would be sent a copy of the consultation survey and to inform them of the number of people to be surveyed.

### Review of the Volunteering Policy

Members agreed to review the policy in 12 months' time.

### HARP

It was hoped that a draft report would be ready for the meeting in April.

### Task & Finish Group – Staff Volunteering

Councillor Illingworth reported that this had not progressed. A motion to end the work of the Task & Finish Group was accepted and it was decided to review the position in 12 months' time to see if a Task & Finish Group should be formed to continue the work.

**RESOLVED** that the Task & Finish Group – Staff Volunteering be dissolved and the position be reviewed in 12 months' time.

### Task & Finish Group – Dog Control Orders

The Chairman informed Members that she had spoken to the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Coker, and he was looking at which recommendations could be actioned quickly.

### Other items

Members asked that Councillor Cross talk about the Spa Centre when he attended a Committee meeting to give an update on his portfolio.

The Chairman explained that it was intended that a joint briefing would be provided to both Scrutiny Committees on the Social Value in Procurement, but as yet, a date had not been set.

Members asked for the LEP to be put on the Work Programme to ensure regular updates on progress.

**RESOLVED** that the work programme be amended to include an item for a regular update on the LEP.

(Councillor Copping left the meeting whilst the Work Programme was being discussed.)

## 119. **PUBLIC & PRESS**

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

**RESOLVED** that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items, by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, as set out below.

Minute No.	Para Nos.	Reason
120 - 122	3	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

### **120. MINUTES**

The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2014 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **121. SUMMARY OF COMMENTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE**

The Committee considered a report from Civic and Committee Services which detailed the responses the Executive gave to the comments the Overview and Scrutiny Committee made regarding confidential reports submitted to the Executive in February.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

### **122. EXECUTIVE AGENDA (CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS AND REPORTS) – WEDNESDAY 12 MARCH 2014**

Item 12 – Proposed Housing Development on Bowling Green Street / Theatre Street, Warwick

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report which it believed would benefit Warwick.

(The meeting finished at 8.38 pm)