Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 1 November 2016 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Boad (Chairman); Councillors Bromley, Davison Edgington, Gallagher, Margrave, Naimo, Parkins, Mrs Redford, Mrs Stevens and Weed.

Also Present: Councillors Butler, Coker, Cross and Mobbs.

37. **Apologies and Substitutes**

Councillor Gallagher substituted for Councillor Mrs Cain, Councillor Mrs Stevens substituted for Councillor Miss Grainger and Councillor Weed substituted for Councillor D'Arcy.

38. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

39. **Minutes**

(a) The minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2016 were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

(b) The minutes of the Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting held on 24 August 2016 were noted.

40. **Shakespeare's England**

The Committee welcomed two representatives from Shakespeare's England (SE); Ms Helen Peters - Chief Executive and Ms Jo Lloyd – Chair. They explained that the Council had given funding of £75,000 to SE this financial year, conditional on key performance indicators being met. Part of the terms was that SE should give six-monthly reports to Overview & Scrutiny Committee, and this first report would be in the form of a presentation. Both Ms Peters and Ms Lloyd then explained their backgrounds and their roles within SE.

The presentation gave information about:

- the current value of tourism and its importance;
- recent activity undertaken by SE;
- upcoming events and ongoing projects; and
- the Destination Management Plan update.

Ms Peters explained that SE was the destination management organisation for Warwick, Stratford-upon-Avon, Royal Leamington Spa, Kenilworth and the surrounding areas. It was a public/private sector partnership that had been launched in 2013. It currently had 107 members, including Warwick Castle, RSC, Eden Hotels, English Heritage, Birmingham Airport, Bicester Village and Chiltern Railways. Its purpose was to promote tourism in Warwick and the wider area, both domestically and internationally. Ms

Peters gave details of the work being done to promote tourism and the fee scales being charged to its member organisations, which would benefit from this work. She gave details of markets yet to be fully captured, such as promoting the area to Chinese tourists.

In response to questions from Members, Ms Peters replied that:

- The intention was to approach National Trust properties within the area to see if they would consider paying for membership.
- Work was being done on looking at the transport infrastructure in the area and to ensure that tourists could travel to areas of interest easily from London and Birmingham. A feasibility study was in progress looking at routes between Stratford-upon-Avon and Warwick Parkway. It was recognised that transport between Warwick and Stratford-upon-Avon could be improved.
- Priorities regarding where to concentrate efforts to promote tourism were determined through consultation and this gave rise to the Destination Management Plan. SE would work with other Destination Management Organisations to provide itineraries for the tourist to travel around the UK.

Members thanked Ms Lloyd and Ms Peters and requested that future updates included information on the return for the investment.

(Councillor Mobbs left the meeting during the course of the presentation. Councillor Butler left the meeting at the end of the presentation.)

41. **Portfolio Holder Update – Cultural Services**

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

- All efforts were being made to provide alternatives to school users and the general public whilst swimming pools were closed for refurbishment. It was recognised that it would not always be possible to provide an alternative facility near enough to the schools concerned, but once the refurbishment works were completed, the District would have two very good swimming pools. It was felt that communication of the works had been adequate and a further bulletin was to be released on 16 November. Adverts would also be placed in local newspapers, via media and social media and at schools.
- He would ensure that parish councils were informed of the refurbishment works.
- It was necessary to have a good mix of acts at the Spa Centre, including headline acts, to ensure the continued success of the Centre.
- He was happy to authorise the repair of the leaking roof at the Pump Rooms.
- The Council had operated a GP referral service for about 30 years whereby GPs could refer patients to the Council to receive fitness training. However, not all GPs were aware of the scheme.
- Bowls England had reported that the event run during the year had gone extremely well and were very pleased with the work done by

the Council.

The Committee noted the comments about the GP referral scheme and requested that the Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee should scrutinise the wider aspects of this and its effectiveness.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Coker for attending the meeting to answer questions.

(Councillor Coker left the meeting at the end of this item.)

42. An update on the pre-application charging regime for development proposals

The Committee considered a report from Development Services which provided a further update on the progress with the pre-application advice scheme.

Since February 2016, the scheme had included a financial charge for advice. The report advised the Committee of a small number of minor changes to the scheme, which would be recommended to the Executive in January 2017, in order to assist with its smooth running.

The Development Manager informed Members that:

- After difficulty recruiting someone to give pre-application advice, the department now had filled the vacancy.
- Indicators were good that the costs of the pre-application advice service would be covered by the fees received.
- More thought would be given to applicants who repeatedly returned for advice and to "cost avoidance" (the costs that would be incurred if the service was not provided).
- The Department was now achieving refusal rates of just 2%, and it was contended that the pre-application advice given had had some part in this success.

(Councillor Cross left the meeting at the end of this item.)

43. Annual Feedback on Outside Appointments

The Committee considered a report which detailed the annual statement of work undertaken by Outside Bodies, written by the Councillors who represented the Council on these Outside Bodies.

Members noted that certain Outside Bodies had a "nil response" recorded against them in the report and were informed that where this was the case, the Councillor responsible had not submitted a report.

Councillor Bromley apologised for not submitting a report for Hill Close Gardens and stated that he would do so if required. However, he gave a short summation of his work and felt it was useful to have representation on this Outside Body.

The Committee noted that Councillor Shilton had not submitted reports either. Both the Committee Services Officer and the Deputy Chief Executive

(AJ) informed the Committee that Councillor Shilton had told them that he had not attended any of the relevant Outside Body meetings because he felt that officers' attendance was sufficient. The Committee felt that the Waste Management Forum was, in particular, an important Outside Body and the Deputy Chief Executive (AJ) stated that he would speak to Councillor Shilton.

The Committee felt that in order to properly scrutinise which Outside Body appointments were valuable, more information was required on matters such as:

- Whether or not the Council appoint representatives to any Outside Bodies concerned with land owned by the Council (if was felt that this was necessary).
- The nature of the Council's requirement to appoint a representative to an Outside Body.

The Deputy Chief Executive (AJ) agreed that he would liaise with the Committee Services Officer to produce an appropriate report in advance of the annual appointments being made to Outside Bodies in 2017. This would be scrutinised by the Committee.

The Committee also felt that in future, any Councillor who failed to respond to the annual report would be called to Committee to give an explanation.

44. **Review of the Work Programme & Forward Plan**

The Committee considered its work programme for 2016/2017 and the Forward Plan.

Task & Finish Group – Houses in Multiple Occupation Interim Report

Councillor Naimo reported that subsequent to the last report given to the Committee, the Government had produced a report with proposals to extend the scope of properties to be licensed as HMOs. She felt that the changes were very likely to come into effect. The Committee agreed to the Task and Finish Group setting this issue aside until a clear direction was established, and instead dealing with the other items on the Scoping Document, with recommendations for these being brought forward in March 2017. The aspects concerning licensing HMOs would be dealt with after this.

Task & Finish Group – Off-Street Parking Charges Review

The Chairman advised Members that the Task & Finish Group had held discussions with Warwickshire County Council (WCC) staff about Park and Ride proposals. They had sought information on why the Stratford-upon-Avon scheme had not been successful at first and why officers at WCC felt that such a scheme would work in the District. The Task and Finish Group was also looking at the absence of parity in the parking fees charged in the different towns in the District.

Other items on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

- 4 January 2017 – An update on the pre-application charging regime for development proposals:

  It was agreed that this could be removed from the Work Programme, but when the Executive Report went forward in January it would be scrutinised by the Committee.

- 4 January 2017 – Interim Update HQ Relocation – Outcome of Phase 1:

  The Committee agreed that a verbal report could be given, providing a short briefing note was circulated with the agenda for studying prior to the meeting.

- Future of Community Forums; and Recommendations from the One Stop Shop Review:

  It was agreed that these reports could be removed from the Work Programme, but when the Executive Reports went forward the Committee would scrutinise them.

Concern was voiced about Children's Champions. It was felt that an initiative suggested by the previous Children's Champions to provide contact details had not been pursued, and the Committee was unclear as to the work the Council was doing towards Child Safety. Councillor Parkins also informed the Committee that her offer to undertake the role of Children's Champion alongside Councillor Grainger had not received a response. The Committee agreed that a report should be given at the end of November to give clear indication of what was happening.

Resolved that:

(1) a report on the work currently being done at the Council by Children's Champions be brought to the 29 November meeting;

(2) Forward Plan Reference 812 – Recommendations from One Stop Shop Review be removed from the Work Programme but discussed by the Committee when the report to the Executive is produced;

(3) Future of Community Forums be removed from the Work Programme, but discussed by the Committee when the report to the Executive is produced;

(4) a verbal report with a briefing note be sent out with the agenda for the Work Programme 4 January 2017 "Interim Update HQ Relocation – outcome of Phase 1";

(5) an update on the pre-application charging regime for development proposals on the Work Programme 4 January 2017 be removed, but

discussed but the Committee when the report to the Executive is produced; and

(6) written reports or notes must be provided ahead of meetings; verbal reports alone are not conducive to proper scrutiny work.

(The meeting finished at 8.15 pm)