OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 9 October 2012 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs Blacklock, Boad, Brookes, Copping, Ms Dean, Edwards, Mrs Falp, Gill, Guest, Mrs Higgins, Weber and Wreford-Bush.

Councillor Wreford-Bush substituted for Councillor Gifford.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Davies and Mrs Gallagher.

45. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

RESOLVED that Councillor Boad be appointed as Chair for the meeting.

46. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

47. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2012 were amended to reflect that Councillor Mrs Higgins had sent apologies for absence, and agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record once they.

48. **COMMENTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE**

The Committee considered a report from Civic and Committee Services which informed it of the responses the Executive gave to their comments regarding reports submitted to the Executive in September. The Committee had no comments to make.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

49. **FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee considered the Forward Plan which had been published for October 2012 to January 2013.

The Committee asked for a progress update on the Climate Change Programme (ref 413) and was informed by the Deputy Chief Executive, Bill Hunt, that it was being wrapped up in with the Sustainability Delivery Plan. The intention was that the Delivery Plans would be submitted to Executive in early 2013.

In respect of the Evening Economy (ref 362), the Members were informed that it would form part of the Job Skills Delivery Plan. Members of the Committee were willing to help with the Delivery Plans if it was required.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

50. REVIEW OF THE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a report from Civic and Committee Services on the Committee's work programme from October 2012 to March 2013.

The Deputy Chief Executive informed the Committee that the Safeguarding Children Action Plan would be ready in November.

51. DOG CONTROL ORDERS – TASK & FINISH GROUP

The Committee considered a report from Civic and Committee Services to agree the scoping document for the Task and Finish Group for Dog Control Orders and to determine the membership of the Task and Finish Group.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer, Graham Leach, had made a suggestion in respect of the scoping document and had asked whether the document should clarify if the orders had achieved their original aims. The Committee decided that this was implicit within the items covered already on the scoping document. Another suggestion to gather basic statistics on fines issued was also felt to be implicit too.

The Committee asked the Committee Services Officer, Lesley Dury, to request volunteers to join the Task and Finish Group as per the terms of the scoping document and to organise the site visits for the October schools' Half Term holiday.

RESOLVED that the scoping document be approved and volunteers be sought to join the Task and Finish Group as per the terms of the scoping document.

52. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN – MONITORING OF ACTION PLAN

The Deputy Chief Executive informed the Committee that this report would be ready for the November meeting.

53. EXECUTIVE AGENDA (NON CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS AND REPORTS) – WEDNESDAY 10 OCTOBER 2012

Item 4 – Fees and Charges 2013/14

The report detailed the proposals for Fees and Charges in respect of the 2013 calendar. It also showed the Fees and Charges income budgets for 2012-13 and original 2013-14.

Two service areas (Markets and Building Control) had made some amendments to their Fees and Charges for 2012-13 that had not previously been reported to Executive and approval for these charges (which took place in April 2012) was sought.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the report prior to its discussion at the Executive meeting the following day. The Committee was

pleased to see that parking charges were not going to be increased in this year.

After a wide ranging discussion on the merits and possible contents of a strategic approach to car parking provision, enforcement activity and potential impacts on economic development and town centre sustainability, members agreed that it would be helpful to ask an officer from Parking Services to attend a future Committee meeting to discuss the issues further.

Having considered the report, the Committee decided that it would make a formal recommendation to the Executive. It reinforced its previous comments in respect of 13.1.2 of the report as it felt that residents should receive a concession on the crematorium fees and charges.

Item 5 – Use of G4 Powers for Chase Meadow Community Centre Funding

The report advised Members of the use of the Chief Executive's G4 powers of the Constitution to permit funds of £215,000 to be used in respect of the development of the Chase Meadow Community Centre.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee members felt that what was meant by a community facility needed to be defined. Additionally, the question of funding these facilities needed to be addressed. Buildings needed to be flexible enough in their use so that if later, it was no longer required for its original purpose, its use could be changed. Members were asked to consider whether this was an area that could be considered by Scrutiny, especially in respect of ensuring that a sustainable model was defined, which would mean identifying the key ingredients for a successful community centre. Suggestions made by Members in respect of this were:

- scrutiny of the Council's current commission process – this could be widened out to find out what was happening at community centres that did not receive any funding; and
- how the Council would provide community provision in the future. What models already existed and how the Council could engage with the community to find out what their needs are, producing a lifecycle for children and following this as they age into adulthood.

The Committee decided that a future agenda item should be to bring in people to discuss the issues raised above to determine if there was a need for further scrutiny.

The Committee felt that there was no need to pass on any comments or recommendations to the Executive in respect of the report.

Item 7 – Outcome of Warwick District Council's Peer Challenge

The report provided the Executive with details of the outcome of the recent Peer Challenge.

Councillor Mrs Higgins left the meeting.

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee decided that the Executive should be made aware that the Committee was concerned that

the proposals in the Action Plan were insufficiently robust to tackle silo working.

The Committee also wanted to see how the Council could develop community forums and to have their role clarified. Members felt that the report did not fully reflect the range of issues relating to community forums and that the Action Plan should include a review of their role, including an assessment of the outcome of the Warwickshire County Council review of their effectiveness.

The Committee also decided to make a formal recommendation to the Executive. It requested that the Executive included any necessary proposals to address the highlighted concerns in respect of the capacity to deliver the Fit for the Future programme within the Action Plan. Alternatively, if this was not an issue, then there should be a statement saying this.

Item 8 – Review of Planning Committee – Issues Paper

The report provided an update on the review of the Planning Committee that Full Council agreed should be undertaken by the Chief Executive and presented an Issues Paper on which Members' views were sought.

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were uncomfortable with some of the wording in the report.

Councillors Mrs Falp and Weber left the meeting.

Following consideration of the report, the Committee decided that in respect of item 3.6 on the report, it would ask the Executive to satisfy itself that the arrangements to engage with external stakeholders were sufficiently robust to inform the review. Furthermore, it requested that the Executive should satisfy itself that the Planning Committee was sufficiently involved in the Peer Review.

The Committee also made a formal recommendation to the Executive. In respect of Appendix 1 "Attitudes and Behaviours", point three, the Committee requested that the wording in this point be changed to:

"What is the cause of the divergence of views between officers and members?"

Item 9 – Play Area Improvement Programme

Council officers had recently carried out a survey of all of the Council play areas which was used to develop the Play Area Improvement Programme. The report to the Executive detailed this rolling programme, the funding requirements and the need to release the Play Equipment Renewal Reserve.

Members of Overview and Scrutiny questioned whether the needs of the wider community should be addressed in respect of parks but were informed that the Play Equipment Renewal Reserve fund specifically dealt with children's equipment requirements and that was why the report only addressed this age group. The Deputy Chief Executive informed Members

that issues around the provision of facilities for adult exercise would be considered as part of the Green Space Strategy.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

(The meeting finished at 8.35 pm)