

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD  
ON 30 JULY 2013 HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, PARADE, LEAMINGTON SPA**

Present: Councillors Ann Morrison (Chairman), Roger Copping (substituting for Cllr S Boad), Bill Gifford, David Greenwood, Sue Ingleby and Alan Wilkinson.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sarah Boad and Sue Ingleby

In attendance: Mr Jeremy Ireland (Portas Project Team) and Ms Olwyn Ditchburn (WCC Children's Services)

**14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

**15. PUBLIC FORUM**

There were no members of the public present.

**16. OLD TOWN "PORTAS" BID**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Jeremy Ireland of the Portas Project Team to the meeting and invited him to outline progress in relation to the Portas Project as set out in the Report (Report No. 7).

Mr Ireland indicated that the Old Town team had placed considerable emphasis on engaging with the various stakeholders and encouraging activity on behalf of those with influence in the Old Town area. In this regard he referred to contact the landlords and owners of buildings with a view to generating improvements to existing built assets. He also referred to ongoing discussions with regard to setting up an online radio station which would provide a further opportunity for business and the public to exchange ideas and talk about their projects.

In answer to questions, Mr Ireland confirmed that, at present, very little of the funding allocated by the Government to the project had been utilised. This was consistent with the team objective of encouraging third parties to come forward with ideas for improvement and to volunteer expertise and help in kind. A lease had been taken on premises in the High Street and assistance rendered to a retailer setting up in the vicinity of the Canal side. He also confirmed that the Team had received project assistance and advice from the District Council and Town Centre Management team.

With regard to the potential for a subsidised car parking offer, the opportunity to assess the impact on Old Town through a trial exercise was noted.

**RESOLVED** that the report of the Portas Project Team is welcomed and the Town Council's support for the project is emphasised to the Team Executive Board.

The Chairman thanked Mr Ireland who then left the meeting.

**17. WARWICKSHIRE CHILDREN'S CENTRES**

The Chairman welcomed Olwyn Ditchburn to the meeting to present the view of Warwickshire County Council Children's Services in relation to the proposals of Warwickshire County Council for the review of the Children's Services. The Committee was advised of the financial savings being sought by the County

Council which required all services to make a contribution towards a spending reduction of approximately £70m in 2013-14. Ms Ditchburn outlined the benefits of the Children's Centres indicating that following the previous review exercise the service had experienced a 7.9% reduction in total funding which had been absorbed mainly through reductions in staffing levels.

A number of options had been defined for consideration and these were as follows:

Option 1

Early Years offer provided through groups and collaborations of Children's Centres. No Children's Centres would close under this proposal.

Option 2

Early Years offer provided through groups and collaborations of Children's Centres. Six Children's Centres would close or cease to provide the offer under this proposal.

Option 3

Early Years offer provided through 33 single centres. Six Children's Centres would close or cease to provide the offer under this proposal.

Option 1 is the County Council's current preferred option but this may change as a result of public consultation.

During discussion it was noted that there was a significant disparity between levels of spending per participant between the North and South of the County, with the Children's Centre at Milverton being the most cost effective of all the Centres. The Committee considered that none of the suggested options would necessarily secure an appropriate level of service and that the County Council should undertake a more strategic review based on longer term needs rather than short term savings.

In answer to questions, Ms Ditchburn confirmed that the services in Warwickshire were highly regarded having been complimented by Ofsted and that best practice was shared between the various centres. The opportunity to operate centres as "clusters" with close collaboration and the integration of all Perinatal and Children's Services in one location offered a potential way forward.

**RESOLVED** that Warwickshire County Council is advised of the following response to the consultation on Operation of the Children's Centres:-

- (i) the Town Council recognises the vital role of Children's centres in supporting the personal, social and emotional development of children. The contribution to the well-being of Society as a whole is so significant that the development and funding of the service must be addressed in a strategic review, taking account of the long term demands on the service and the funding available to it. This will not be achieved by a short term review based on the narrow horizon of a single round of spending cuts;
- (ii) this Council acknowledges the difficult financial choices faced by Warwickshire County Council. However, the three options which are currently under review are considered unduly prescriptive.

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The Council endorses the recommendations of the All Party Parliamentary Sure Start Group with regard to the use of pooled budgets to allow for the commissioning of a range of Perinatal and Children's Centre services, taking a more holistic and preventative approach to working with families; and

- (iii) the Council sees merit in the collaborative approach between Centres, building on the nationally recognised success of the Warwickshire Centres and the sharing of good practice within the service. The "clustering" of Centres is an option that merits further consideration.

The Chairman thanked Ms Ditchburn who then left the meeting.

### 18. **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 4 June 2013 are confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### 19. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

#### Town Plan / Area Action Plan (Minute No. 8)

The Chairman referred to the apparent slow progress in relation to discussions with the District Council on the preparation of the Town Plan. It was acknowledged that this was influenced by the current workloads connected with the consolidation of the revised development strategy and that the matter needed to be kept under review.

**RESOLVED** that the Town Plan / Area Action Plan is included on the Agenda for future meetings.

### 20. **COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

Consideration was given to a report (Report No. 8) regarding the Community Governance Review announced by Warwick District Council. The Committee noted the implications of the review particularly in terms of potential changes to the boundary between Leamington and the Parishes of Old Milverton and Cubbington.

#### **RESOLVED**

- (i) that a working group is composed to consider the principal issues arising within the Community Governance Review and that a report is prepared for consideration at the next meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee; and
- (ii) that the report is received.

### 21. **WARWICK DISTRICT SHOP MOBILITY**

Consideration was given to a report (Report No. 9) setting out progress in relation to matters concerning the Shopmobility scheme.

The Committee commended the activity of the Trust and the working groups it had established which had commenced the task of implementing

recommendations of the Town Council service review and addressing areas of current service.

The Town Clerk referred to the option of utilising funding within the Mayor's Reserve Charity Fund to assist with the acquisition of three new mobility scooters which were urgently needed in view of the age and condition of the current stock.

**RESOLVED**

- (i) that a contribution of £3,000 is made to Warwick District Mobility from funding within the Mayor's Reserve Charity Fund to acquire three new mobility scooters; and
- (ii) that the report is received.

**22. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

Consideration was given to a Report (report No. 10) setting out the Council's expenditure and income in relation to the period April-July 2013.

**RESOLVED** that the Report is noted and received.

**23. WAR MEMORIAL**

The Town Clerk advised that following resolution of the Council he had contacted the Council's insurers – Zurich – with the aim of obtaining a quotation for all-risks cover for the War Memorial. He reported that to insure the War Memorial to a value of £60,000, the annual premium would increase by £271 and that the pro rata premium from now until the date of renewal was £206.

**RESOLVED** that the payment of an additional insurance premium to indemnify the War Memorial for all-risks cover is approved in the annual sum of £271.

**24. ACCOUNTS**

Consideration was given to a schedule of accounts arising for payment since the last meeting had been circulated at the meeting and a copy is filed with the Minutes.

**RESOLVED** that the schedule of accounts is approved for payment.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and ended at 8.05pm