NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

ECONOMIC AND CORPORATE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINITY PANEL

6th February, 2013

A meeting of the Economic and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel was held at the Town Hall, Nuneaton, on Wednesday, 6th February, 2013.

Present

Councillor B. Hawkes – Chair
Councillor K.D. Wilson – Vice Chair


An apology for absence was received from Councillor G. Smith.

331 Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 5th November, 2012 be confirmed.

332 Declarations of Interest

The Chair, together with Councillor R. Copland declared that all Labour Group members of the Panel present had been whipped in respect of Work Programme suggestions, ‘Hiring out of the Town Hall for Weddings and other Occasions’, ‘Use of Banners and Advertising to increase revenue’ and ‘German Christmas Market’. This also included Councillor C.M. Watkins who was present and spoke at the meeting under Item 5.

Councillor R.G. Copland also declared an Other Interest by reason of him being employed by Coventry City Council.

Councillor K.D. Wilson declared an Other Interest in any relevant item by reason of him being an employee of Nuneaton County Court and Warwickshire Family Proceedings Court and also in Agenda Item 6 by reason of him being a Trustee of Advice Rights.

Councillor B.J. Longden declared an Other Interest in any relevant item by reason of him being a member of Warwickshire County Council and also by reason of him being a ‘Blue Badge’ holder.

Councillor A.A. Lloyd declared an Other Interest in any relevant item by reason of him being a Governor of George Eliot Hospital and also be reason of being the Council’s representative on the Hospice Charity.
Voluntary and Community Sector Monitoring Reports for the First and Second Quarter of 2012 - 2013

The Director – Housing and Communities submitted a report outlining the first and second quarter performance relating to Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations with which the Council has entered into Service Level Agreements (SLA) during 2012 – 2013.

Mike Bannister of Warwickshire Employment and Advice Rights and Jane King of the Volunteer Centre were present at the meeting to answer questions from Members.

Members asked various questions and acknowledged the excellent value for money provided by the Voluntary and Community organisations supported by the Council.

RESOLVED that

(a) the performance reports for the first and second quarters, 2012/13 be noted;

(b) a further report to include information relating to ‘food banks’ be submitted to a future meeting; and

(c) Mike Bannister and Jane Kimberley be thanked for their attendance at the meeting.

Operational Integrated Performance Report Third Quarter 2012 - 13

The joint report of the Director – Finance and Procurement and Performance and Quality Manager providing appropriate performance measures and financial budget information for service areas within the scope of the Panel and providing the Panel with appropriate information to monitor performance, finance information to address issues arising was considered.

The various items marked “Red” were considered and the following concerns discussed:

- low turn out in local elections.
- will Individual Electoral Registration (IER) be monitored.
- when IER is introduced, maintaining current levels of registration.
- there was insufficient information provided regarding complaints to indicate whether performance was good or bad.
- complaints from Members to Officers or those made by the public via Members were still not recorded.

RESOLVED that

(a) the Operational Integrated Performance Report - Third Quarter 2012 - 2013 and Performance Indicators attached to the report be noted;
(b) the Principal Officer Democratic Services (Elections) be requested to submit a report to a future meeting of this Panel when more information concerning IER is received;

(c) the Head of Human Resources be requested to submit a report to the next meeting of this Panel, scheduled for 5th March, 2013, providing an update on sickness absence and to include information regarding the performance of Diagnostic Health Solutions in relation to reducing sickness levels; and

(d) the Director – Business Improvement be requested to submit a report to the next meeting of this Panel, scheduled for 5th March, 2013 outlining the procedure for how complaints are processed and explaining the poor performance in dealing with complaints within 10 days.

335 Review of the Strategic Risk Register Update

The Audit and Governance Manager provided a verbal update on the Strategic Risk Register.

The following concerns were raised:

- the difficulty in recognising whether the ‘net risk’ was green or red.
- some of the information provided was out of date.
- no information was provided explaining why a ‘risk’ had been deleted.

RESOLVED that

(a) the Strategic Risk Register be noted; and

(b) the risk codes be distinguished more clearly on future reports to members.

336 Review of Blue Badge Charging Arrangements

The Director – Assets and Street Services submitted a report providing the Panel with the results of a survey undertaken in late 2012 providing people with the opportunity to comment on the changes the Council made to blue badge parking in its car parks in November 2011.

The following concerns were expressed:

- there appeared to be widespread abuse of the blue/badge system in general and also in the use of blue/badge parking spaces both on and off-street.
- the design of the blue badge made enforcement difficult, especially when the photograph on the badge faced the interior of a motor vehicle.
- blue badge parking permits were apparently being used fraudulently.
- improper parking in Queens Road at it’s junction with Dugdale Street was a particular problem.
RESOLVED that

(a) the content of the report be noted; and

(b) the Director – Assets and Street Services be requested to forward a letter to the Social Services ‘Blue Badge Team’, Warwickshire County Council expressing the concerns of the Panel and in particular the design of the blue badge and the position of the photograph.

337 Out of Hours Response to Weddington Flood

The Communications, Events and Emergency Planning Manager submitted a report outlining the emergency response to the Weddington Flood which occurred on 25th November, 2012.

The following concerns were raised:

- the advice given in Appendix A to the report, that sandbags should be obtained from local builders merchants was impractical when emergencies occur outside normal trading hours.
- that this Council was not alerted to this emergency at any time during the entire event.
- the apparent lack of co-ordination between the Emergency Services, Coventry, Solihull, Warwickshire Resilience (CSWR) and District Council’s across the region.

RESOLVED that

(a) the report be noted;

(b) a further report be submitted to a future meeting of this Panel when a reply is received from the Head of CSWR in response to the letter forwarded to Warwickshire County Council by the Leader of this Council;

(c) the Communications, Events and Emergency Planning Manager be requested to advise Members of the Panel on the outcome of the meeting to be held with Galley Common Community Group in relation to the future provision of sandbags in emergency situations; and

(d) Matt Jeffes and Michael Green of the Flood Risk Management Team, Warwickshire County Council be invited to attend a future meeting of this Panel.

338 Work Programme 2012/13

The Principal Democratic Services Officer (Committees) verbally updated the Panel on the current issues relating to the Work Programme 2012/13.

RESOLVED that
(a) the following items be added to the Work Programme 2012/13

- Use of Banners and Advertising to increase revenue.
- Increasing Democracy and Electoral Uptake.
- German Christmas Market.

(b) an email be forwarded to members of all three Overview and Scrutiny Panels for expressions of interest in being a member of the Increasing Democracy and Electoral Uptake Working Group;

(c) it be noted that Councillors R.C. Copland and K.D.W. Wilson expressed an interest in being a member of the Democracy and Electoral Uptake Working Group:

(d) the Principal Democratic Services Officer (Committees) be requested to forward a letter to Warwickshire County Council Highways Department expressing the Panel’s concerns regarding the poor state of the block paving outside the Ropewalk Shopping centre and the lack of maintenance and repair; and

(e) the amended Work Programme 2012/13 be approved.

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Chair