

# **RESOURCE MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP**

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 26 JULY 2011**

**Councillors Present:** Roger Croft, Richard Crumly, David Holtby (Vice-Chairman), John Horton (Substitute) (In place of Andrew Rowles), David Rendel, Garth Simpson (Substitute) (In place of Jeff Beck), Tony Vickers (Chairman) and Laszlo Zverko

**Also Present:** Andy Green (Maintenance Manager - Property Services) and Stuart Powling (GIS Development Manager) and Robert Alexander (Policy Officer)

**Apologies for inability to attend the meeting:** Councillor Jeff Beck and Councillor Andrew Rowles

### **PART I**

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Andrew Rowles, and Councillor Jeff Beck. Councillor John Horton substituted for Councillor Rowles and Councillor Garth Simpson substituted for Councillor Beck.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

#### **3. Actions from Resource Management Select Committee**

The Working Group considered a report (Agenda Item 3) which provided information, and updates on actions arising from the Resource Management Select Committee as well as from the minutes for the last meeting which had been disbanded following the end of the 2010/11 Financial Year.

Councillor David Rendel raised a problem with the wording relating to point 2.4 (4), page 3 of the agenda. Councillor Rendel mentioned that it said "residents are simply not using local bus services to the extent that was envisaged". Councillor Rendel suggested that certain areas of the district did not have access to bus travel, and this was why the numbers were perhaps lower. Councillor Rendel also informed the Working Group that 4500 residents had opted not to receive travel concessions.

*Councillor Richard Crumly joined the meeting at 6:38pm*

Councillor Rendel asked when it was known that the Economic Downturn provision would not fully fund staff redundancy costs. It was agreed that officers would be asked to provide this information outside of the meeting.

Councillor Tony Vickers brought Members' attention to the gold papers which indicated Part II reports. Councillor Vickers informed the Working Group that the gold papers referred to matters relating to Parkway and a parking subsidy, which was why they were gold. Councillor Vickers said that he had no intention of discussing the gold papers as he had spoken to Councillor Brian Bedwell about holding a discussion at the September Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission relating to the Parkway development.

Councillor Rendel said that the questions he had relating to the papers were not contained in the confidential papers. Councillor Rendel said that he did not think pages

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24-27 should be on gold paper as they related to information that was already in the public domain.

Councillor Rendel requested that further information be provided relating to the details on page 24 which outlined the number of Season Tickets issued in 2009/10. Councillor Rendel wanted to know how many were quarterly and how many were annual. Councillor Rendel also asked if information could be supplied concerning the total number of Charge Certificates issued.

Councillor Rendel's second question related to the higher and lower level of penalty charges. Councillor Rendel said that on page 26 it detailed the number of higher and lower level contraventions. Councillor Rendel informed the working group that the total of these was £316,000 however the table on page 27 only showed that £260,000 had been received from parking charge notices. Councillor Rendel therefore asked where the missing £50,000 had gone to. Councillor Rendel did admit that he was assuming that page 27 related to the same financial year 2009/10.

Councillor Rendel's final question was why was such a large amount had been budgeted for off street and on street parking, when the return was not anywhere near the target. Councillor Rendel mentioned that off street parking had gone from £300,000 (budget) down to £100,000 (return).

Councillor Richard Crumly said that he was of the understanding that charging income could drop because people were being more careful, as these were penalty charge notices. Councillor David Holtby echoed this, and said that before the Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) were appointed residents were less concerned about adhering to parking restrictions, however now that the CEOs were out and visibly on the street, people were being more careful. Councillor Rendel responded that in his opinion this might be true for on street parking, but not for off street.

Councillor Roger Croft said that to resolve the discussion, it might be best to see the previous year's budgets for penalty notices, and the forecast and assumptions that could be made.

Councillor David Holtby said it was noticeable that in Hungerford, the visibility of CEOs was having a positive impact on parking behaviour. Councillor Vickers said it could be worthwhile for the Working Group to examine changes in behaviour following the introduction of the CEOs.

Councillor Holtby asked why page 8 of the agenda mentioned that 2% of parking provision should be allocated for disabled parking, however on page 24 it appeared to suggest that there were in fact 4% of spaces available for disabled badge holders.

Councillor John Horton raised a question relating to the Maintenance Provision for West Street and West Point House; he questioned whether the £200,000 for installation of LED lights would give a big enough return. Andy Green responded that LED lights were very efficient, and that grants were available for their installation. Andy Green projected that the savings would be around 30%, and informed the Working Group that currently a test was underway at John O'Gaunts School. Councillor David Rendel mentioned that the current expenditure on electricity was £39,000 and said that it was a great idea, but Members should not expect huge savings straight away. Andy Green agreed, but mentioned a grant and loan could be received from the Cleaner Greener Group which could off set some of the cost.

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### Resolved that:

1. Robert Alexander would contact relevant officers regarding questions raised in Agenda Item 3, and would provide answers to Members before the next meeting, as well as providing a summary report.

#### 4. Report on Geographical Information Systems (GIS)

The Working Group considered a report (Agenda Item 4) outlining Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and how the Council used such information.

Councillor Tony Vickers informed the Working Group that he felt information was a valuable resource, and therefore thought it was key for a report on GIS to be brought to the Resource Management Working Group.

Stuart Powling introduced Members to GIS, and explained that there were currently only two people in the Council working on GIS specifically. Stuart Powling explained that GIS was the visual tool, compared to the LLPG (Local Land and Property Gazetteer) which was the linking tool. Stuart Powling notified Members of the potential uses of GIS, by stating it was used in a variety of services in the Council such as land charges, democratic services, planning, housing and waste. Stuart Powling stated that the merits of it being used in the planning process was pivotal, as it saved a large amount of time. For example it could tell you if an application was in a Conservation Area. Councillor Vickers informed the Working Group that page 30 showed a list of applications that GIS was being used for.

Councillor Roger Croft said he thought GIS was a magnificent idea, and questioned how the outputs were promoted to services and clients. Councillor Croft said his only concern was that promotion to clients did not appear to be taking place. Stuart Powling responded that currently the website was undergoing a revamp. Once this work was completed he hoped to extend the number of services using the product. Promotion to external services would be undertaken after that. Stuart Powling also mentioned that the increase of metadata for the item would be favourable, so that it appeared higher on the Google search engine.

Councillor Croft said that it was important to see how people used this kind of service and therefore how to get more people using it. Stuart Powling commented there were already 15,000 people a month using it.

Councillor David Rendel said that he felt GIS was a very useful application, and hoped that Officers were aware of what was going on elsewhere at other Local Authorities. Councillor Rendel said it was important to avoid duplication. Councillor Vickers also felt it was important to avoid duplication and further asked how the Officers kept up to date with other local authorities. Stuart Powling responded that there were meetings that were held to review other local authorities and other ICT companies' products and applications. Stuart Powling mentioned that two years ago the Council were commended on their ICT application. He further mentioned that there were constant reviews underway for best practice and other data so that there was no duplication.

Councillor David Holtby asked whether the Council was maximising its income with the GIS service. Stuart Powling responded that unfortunately this was very hard to do, and that charging estate agents to use the service had been considered, however, it had proved to be difficult. Councillor Vickers mentioned that for every person that found their

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Council information out on the computer, rather than speaking to an officer, could save the Council £4.50.

Councillor Holtby then asked how West Berkshire compared to other Berkshire unitaries. Stuart Powling responded that West Berkshire was better than the other Local Authorities with a number of ICT applications, such as GIS and Uniform. Councillor Holtby asked if there was anyway that a shared service might be possible. Stuart Powling responded that there was merit in shared service for GIS, but there were also problems that it was engrained within other applications. Councillor Vickers noted that there was a sense GIS might be a candidate with other authorities for shared services.

Councillor Holtby's final question related to paragraph 7.1 of the report, and asked what would be top of the "wish list". Stuart Powling said that it was only a list of possible priorities, but mentioned that "Better exploitation of the NLPG" was perhaps the most important, closely followed by "Better management of assets" to help officers in their search for what was owned by West Berkshire Council.

Councillor John Horton questioned the table under paragraph 2.1 detailing the services areas which the GIS system helped out with. Councillor Horton questioned whether there was duplication when creating crime and disorder data with the National Crime Mapping database launched recently. Stuart Powling responded that the Safer Communities Partnership was multi-agency, and therefore incorporated other information, not just crime and disorder information.

Councillor Vickers asked what was meant in paragraph 6.1 when it stated that "supporting other applications in ICT..." Stuart Powling responded that there was only a group of 10 officers supporting all applications. Councillor Vickers said that this appeared to support the idea of entering into shared services.

Councillor Vickers asked if Members would be interested in seeing the GIS Strategy detailed in paragraph 5. All Members agreed that they would.

### **Resolved that:**

1. The Report be noted
2. The GIS Strategy would come to the RMWG after it had been to the ICT Strategy Board.

## **5. Establishment Report for Quarter Four 2010/11**

The Working Group considered a report (agenda item 5) on the changes in the establishment.

Councillor Tony Vickers informed Members that this was the same report that had gone to Executive the previous week.

Councillor David Rendel said that he had asked why the turnover of voluntary leavers was higher, and Robert O'Reilly had replied that this was because of the state of the economy improving. However, Councillor Rendel questioned the difference in growth rate, and requested that this information be provided to him.

Councillor Vickers proposed that the Establishment Report was brought before the Working Group every quarter. All Members agreed.

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Councillor Rendel requested that Robert O'Reilly provided information relating to why it appeared to take 20 months to recruit into a vacant post. This information was available in paragraph 6. Councillor Garth Simpson also felt this was a considerable amount of time. Councillor Rendel suggested if a post had been vacant for 20 months, then there was a possibility there was no need or requirement to fill the post. Councillor Vickers asked whether information could be gathered on the time scales of the average person leaving and a new person being recruited.

### Resolved that:

1. The difference in financial growth be gathered prior to the next meeting and circulated to members.
2. The quarter 1, 2, 3 and 4 reports will be brought to Resource Management Working Group.
3. Robert Alexander to find out why the time between a Member of staff leaving, and recruitment to that post was taking (on average) 20 months.

## 6. Work Programme

The Working Group considered the Work Programme (agenda item 6). Members were asked for suggestions for items to be included on the Work Programme.

Councillor David Rendel proposed the following items:

- Timelord
- Energy Saving
- Individual Items on the Risk Register (such as Business Continuity)
- Medium Term Financial Strategy

Councillor Tony Vickers responded they were all good ideas; however he mentioned that they would have to be approved by the Overview Scrutiny Management Commission.

Councillor Laszlo Zverko requested that the procedure for blue badge holders was examined, including the criteria and rules of use.

Councillor Vickers suggested the Legal and Electoral Service Budget (which was already on the work programme) should be considered at the next meeting. Councillor Vickers also suggested that the Highway Asset Management Plan (which was present on the work programme), should also be looked at before the end of the year.

## 7. Future Meeting Dates

The next meeting was decided for Tuesday 27 September 2011.

It was agreed the following meetings would be as below:

- Tuesday 8 November 2011
- Tuesday 17 January 2012
- Tuesday 28 February 2012
- Tuesday 24 April 2012

*(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.40 pm)*

**CHAIRMAN**

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**Date of Signature** .....