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Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 15 October 2012

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 15 October 2012
5.00 - 8.40 pm

Present: Councillors Brown (Chair), Rosenstiel (Vice-Chair), Birtles, Boyce, Ashton, Benstead, Herbert, Tucker and Blackhurst

Executive Councillors:

Leader of the Council: Councillor Bick

Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources: Councillor Smith

Also Present:

Executive Councillor for Housing: Councillor Smart

Executive Councillor for Planning and Sustainable Transport: Councillor Ward

Officers Present:

Chief Executive - Antoinette Jackson

Director of Customer and Community Services - Liz Bisset

Director of Environment - Simon Payne

Director of Resources - David Horspool

Head of Legal Services - Simon Pugh

Head of Customer Services - Jonathan James

Head of Planning Services - Patsy Dell

Head of Corporate Strategy - Andrew Limb

Head of Property Services – Richard Egan

Strategic Procurement Advisor - Debbie Quincey

ICT Client Manager - Tony Allen

Asset Development Project Manager - Dave Princep

Senior Sustainability Officer - Emma Davies

Safer Communities Section Manager - Lynda Killkely

Committee Manager – Toni Birkin

Others present:

CBbid Development Manager - Luke Crane

Managing Director, Instinctively Green - Adam Broadway

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

12/67/SR Filming Request

The Chair explained that a request to make a video recording of the meeting had been received. All present at the meeting were given the opportunity to request that their contributions were not recorded. No objections were received.

12/68/SR Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Tucker. Councillor Blackhurst was in attendance as an alternate.

12/69/SR Declarations of interest

Councillor	Item	Interest
Benstead	12/75/SR	Personal: Brother-in-law lives close to and overlooks proposed site.
Blackhurst	12/83/SR	Personal: Employee of Cambridge University

12/70/SR Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting for the 9th July 2012 were approved and signed as a correct record.

12/71/SR Public Questions

Mr Taylor addressed the committee regarding the Shadow Police and Crime Panel.

What happened at the secret meeting(s) of the Cambridgeshire Shadow Police and Crime Panel which had been held behind closed doors?

What did Councillor Bick say on behalf of the people of Cambridge in relation to matters on which decisions were reportedly made in relation to:

- Not meeting formally until January 2013.
- The recruitment of non-councillor members.
- Continuing to meet in secret, and in private, and not to pro-actively publish meeting papers.

Would Councillor Bick make the copy of the panel papers he holds on behalf of the council and the people of Cambridge available on the City Council website?

Councillor Bick stated that the panel does not exist until January 2012 and the Shadow Panel was currently educating itself about it's powers. There would be no formal meeting until January 2013. The recruitment of non-councillor members was on-going and the panel would be looking for individuals with suitable experience, particularly of working with young people.

Councillor Bick shared Mr Taylor's sentiment that the meetings of the panel be open to the public. Publication of the papers would be discussed in October and Councillor Bick would support their publication. However, he would respect the decision of the body and would not publish any papers without the panel's agreement.

Jannie Brightman addressed the committee regarding the CBbid Business Improvement District.

- Why are the minutes of the CBbid meeting not yet available?
- The decision and advice at that meeting appeared to pre- judging the realities of the bid.
- The consultation process was flawed.
- Business were not fully consulted or given clear information.
- The case presented was one sided.
- Businesses were told how to vote and were misleading about the gains to be made.
- Ballot papers had been sent to head offices of businesses and local branches were not consulted on the matter.
- The 60% consultation response rate is disputed.

Councillor Bick stated that it was to be expected that shops would need to consult their head offices. He further stated that the veto process was not to address the conduct of the ballot.

The CBbid Development Manager stated that the bid regulations covered breaches where the businesses had not received the papers. However, this was not believed to be the case. The regulations would only cover cases if breaches can be demonstrated.

The Head of Legal Services confirmed that there were two conditions that had to be met before the veto could be applied.

1. Conflict to a material extent with any policy formally adopted by and contained in a document published by the local authority; or
2. The Bid places a significant disproportionate financial burden on any person or class of persons (as compared to the other non-domestic rate payers in the BID area) and;
 - That burden is caused by the manipulation of the BID area or by the structure of the BID levy; and that burden is inequitable.

In addition, the power to declare the ballot void rested with the Secretary of State.

A further public question was asked by Mr Taylor. Full details can be found at minutes item 12/80/SR.

A public question was asked by Mrs Blair. Full details can be found at minutes item 12/79/SR.

12/72/SR Record of Urgent Decisions taken by the Leader of the Council and the Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources

The committee noted the decisions.

12/73/SR Customer Access Strategy 2012 - 2015

Matter for Decision:

The report presented and recommended the approval of the Customer Access Strategy 2012 - 2015.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources:

Approved the Customer Access Strategy 2012 –2015 and accompanying action plan.

Reason for the Decision:

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The Committee received a report from the Head of Customer Services regarding Customer Access Strategy 2012-2015.

Members suggested that the Customer Access Strategy could be seen as a success story. However, concerns were raised about equality issues. Members questioned how well the needs of disability groups and those without Internet access were being met. The officer confirmed that a detailed equalities impact assessment had been carried out and that there was a commitment to maintain opportunities for face-to-face interactions.

The Director of Customer and Community Services stated that foot-fall at the two area housing offices were being monitored to inform decision regarding future provision. Making better use of alternative locations, such as the kiosk at the Citizens Advice Bureau, were also under consideration. The kiosks currently only able to provide information and a pilot was planned for the near future on an interactive, self-help option.

The Committee resolved unanimously to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

Not applicable.

12/74/SR Procurement Strategy 2012-15

Matter for Decision:

The Council's current Procurement Strategy was due to come to an end in November 2012 and therefore needed to be renewed. A draft strategy covering the period December 2012 to March 2015 was attached, as Appendix 1 of the Officer's report. The Scrutiny Committee was asked to consider the draft.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources:

Approved the draft Procurement Strategy appended to the Officer's report for publication and implementation.

Reason for the Decision:

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The Committee received a report from the Strategic procurement Advisor regarding the Procurement Strategy 2012-17.

Members welcomed the reference to opportunities for local suppliers.

Councillor Herbert requested an update on social value legislation on the living wage.

The Committee resolved unanimously to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

Not applicable.

12/75/SR Disposal of 7 Severn Place Cambridge CB1 1HL**Matter for Decision:**

The report recommended the disposal of an Housing Revenue Account property at 7 Severn Place Cambridge. The proceeds of sale would be reinvested for the provision of additional affordable housing. The sale was to

be facilitated by the Council having vacant possession of the dwelling, following relocation (by agreement) of the existing tenant.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources:

Approved the disposal of 7 Severn Place on the terms as detailed in the report and the reinvestment of the capital receipt in the provision of additional affordable housing.

Reason for the Decision:

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The Committee received a report from the Head of Property Services regarding the sale of 7 Severn Place.

Members made the following comments in response to the report.

- i. Concerns were raised that the property could be left empty until the developer has a larger pocket of land to develop.
- ii. Members expressed satisfaction that the receipts would be used for affordable housing provision.
- iii. Some concerns were raised that the property value had not been tested on the open market.
- iv. Members agreed that the property in question, a semi detached house, was not best suited to it's location.

The Committee resolved unanimously to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

Not applicable.

12/76/SR Siemens Maintenance Contract - Project Appraisal

Matter for Decision:

Procurement of essential telephone switch, contact centre call management and call recording maintenance, business continuity and planned maintenance framework contract.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources:

Financial recommendations –

The Executive Councillor agreed to recommend this scheme (which is not included in the Council's Capital & Revenue Project Plan) for approval by Council, subject to resources being available to fund the capital and revenue costs.

- i. The total capital cost of the project is £75,000, funded from Customer Service Centre's repairs and renewals fund. This is split between Siemens (£49,000) and Serco (£26,000)
- ii. The ongoing revenue costs of the project are £60,000 per annum for 2 years, funded from existing revenue budget resources.

Procurement recommendations:

The Executive Councillor approved the carrying out and completion of the procurement of Siemens Maintenance and Business Continuity (£60k pa for 2 years) and upgrades (£49k) contract to the value of £169,000.

Subject to:

- iii. The permission of the Director of Resources being sought prior to proceeding if the quotation or tender sum exceeds the estimated contract.
- iv. The permission from the Executive Councillor being sought before proceeding if the value exceeds the estimated contract by more than 15%.

Reason for the Decision:

The Council receives between 44,000 to 52,000 external calls per month and makes around 35,000 outgoing calls per month. Telephone contact accounts for around 80% of the contact with our customers. The Council's telephone systems provide services to all the major Council office sites and several smaller sites. Therefore having effective maintenance contract in place is vital for communication with customers.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The Committee received a report from the ICT Client Manager regarding the Siemens Maintenance Contract.

Members questioned the age of the equipment and were assured that it was reliable and relatively problem free.

The amount spent on professional/consultancy fees was also questioned. This was explained as the resources actually required to build and commission the upgraded system by Siemens and Serco, and was not being used for consultancy.

The Committee resolved by 4 votes to 0 to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

Not applicable.

12/77/SR Core Switch Upgrade - Project Appraisal

Matter for Decision:

The project was part of ICT's planned replacement strategy and was to be funded from Repairs and Renewals. The core network switch within the Mandela House computer room provides connectivity for all ICT services (e.g. access to business systems, network and internet) and end users. This switch had now past it's end of service date and required replacing.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources:

Financial recommendations:

The Executive Councillor approved the commencement of this scheme, which is already included in the Council's Capital & Revenue Project Plan (PR020).

- i. The total cost of the project is £84,000, funded from IT Infrastructure Replacement Repairs & Renewals fund.
- ii. There were no ongoing revenue implications arising from the project.

Procurement recommendations:

The Executive Councillor approved the carrying out and completion of the procurement and implementation of a core network switch to the value of £84,000

Subject to:

- iii. The permission of the Director of Resources being sought prior to proceeding if the quotation or tender sum exceeds the estimated contract.
- iv. The permission from the Executive Councillor being sought before proceeding if the value exceeds the estimated contract by more than 15%.

Reason for the Decision:

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The Committee received a report from the ICT Client Manager regarding the Core Switch Upgrade Project Appraisal.

Members asked for clarification of an undefined spend of £8,000 noted in the report. The information would be supplied outside the meeting.

The Committee resolved by 4 votes to 0 to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

Not applicable.

12/78/SR Appointment to the County Archives and Local Studies Advisory Group

Matter for Decision:

To appoint a Council nominated representative to the County Council Archives and Local Studies Advisory Group.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources:

Agreed to appoint Councillor Rosenstiel to the County Council Archives and Local Studies Advisory Group.

Reason for the Decision:

This appointment is appropriate under the following criteria of the Council's Policy on appointments:

- i. the Council is a member.
- ii. it is in the interests for the Council to be a member.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The Chief Executive introduced the item and requested nominations.

Councillor Rosenstiel and Councillor Herbert were nominated.

The Scrutiny Committee voted four in favour of Councillor Rosenstiel and four in favour of Cllr Herbert. The appointment of Councillor Rosenstiel was endorsed on the Chair's casting vote.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

Not applicable.

12/79/SR Options for Site K1, Orchard Park

Public Speaker Mrs Blair

- Orchard Park is a thriving new community.
- It has 800 homes, a school and strong local partnerships.
- The land at site K1 is important to the neighbourhood. It was the last large parcel of land and would have a strong visual impact on the area.
- Co-housing offers the best option for quality build and design.
- Sale of this site to a volume house builder, without a detailed plan in place, could have a detrimental impact on the community.

Councillor Smith confirmed that continuing with the community co-housing approach was the preferred choice subject to viability.

Matter for Decision:

Site K1 was approved for disposal in November 2004.

The Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Committee on 29th March 2010 approved investigation for a community co-housing scheme. This is the provision of houses in partnership with an established developer and a group of 'self-builders' with outright ownership of the houses and collective ownership of the communal areas/public realm.

The information available from the initial marketing of a co-housing scheme is considered inconclusive as to the viability of such a scheme. A decision is needed on whether to proceed with the community co-housing approach or re-market the site on the open market.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources:

Approved that the Council dispose of Site K1 by one of the following options:

- i. Continue with the community co-housing approach if sufficient interest allowing for a 6-month marketing period and that the risks in paragraph 1.3 of Appendix A of the Officer's report can be mitigated, failing which the site will be disposed of as in ii below.
- ii. Re-market the site on the open market to achieve a quality scheme reflecting the Council's desire for good sustainability, good design, high values and integration with the wider Orchard Park Community.

Reason for the Decision:

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The Committee received a report from the Asset Development Project Manager regarding the Options for site K1 Orchard Park. Adam Broadway, the Managing Director of Instinctively Green, was also present to answer questions.

Members discussed deliverability of the scheme. It was suggested that the initial low take up was not uncommon and that current expressions of interest would generate further interest. It was believed that the project was both innovative and deliverable.

Members expressed the hope that the scheme would generate high quality designs.

The Committee resolved unanimously to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

Not applicable.

12/80/SR Review Of Use Of The Regulation Of Investigatory Powers Act

Public Speaker Mr Taylor

- How often are RIPA surveillance authorised by other bodies and why is this not listed in the report?
- Why does the Council own covert equipment that could be used in private homes?
- Is there a protocol for working with the Police?

Councillor Brown stated that the recently reported case of RIPA use, in a case of extreme domestic violence, had happened over a year ago at the request of the householder.

Councillor Bick stated that the report covered Cambridge City Council authorised use of RIPA. Authorisation by other bodies happened vary rarely and had not happened on the last twelve months. He supported the idea of reporting such use to this committee and would request that officers do so in future. He confirmed that the council did not own any covert bugging equipment.

The Head of Legal Services added that all RIPA requests would be subject to scrutiny and could be refused.

Matter for Decision:

A Code of Practice introduced in April 2010 recommends that councillors should review their authority's use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) and set its general surveillance policy at least once a year. The Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health and

Community Services Scrutiny Committee last considered these matters on 12 October 2011.

The report set out the Council's use of RIPA and the present surveillance policy. The report also set out some changes to the RIPA regime being introduced by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

Decision of the Leader:

- i. Approved the general surveillance policy in Appendix 1 of the Officer's report.
- ii. Noted the Council's use of RIPA set out in paragraph 5.1 of the Officer's report.
- iii. Noted and endorse the steps described in paragraph 7.1 and in Appendix 1 of the Officer's report to ensure that surveillance is only authorised in accordance with RIPA.

Reason for the Decision:

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The Committee received a report from the Head of Legal Services regarding review of the use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act.

The Committee resolved unanimously to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

Not applicable.

12/81/SR Localism Act 2011: Implementation of the Community Right to Bid

Matter for Decision:

The Leader and Scrutiny Committee considered a report summarising the new Community Right to Bid on 9 July 2012.

The Leader is asked to agree the Council's approach to this duty.

Decision of the Leader:

- i. Agreed the Council's approach to the Community Right to Bid duty as set out in the Officer's report;
- ii. Delegated responsibility for determining compensation applications and appeals against compensation decisions to the Director of Resources
- iii. Delegated responsibility to the Director of Environment to determine reviews (appeals) against listing of assets by the owners; and
- iv. Delegated responsibility for the implementation and operation of the provisions of the Localism Act relating to assets of community value to the Head of Planning Services.

Reason for the Decision:

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The Committee received a report from the Head of Planning regarding the implementation of the Community Right to Bid.

Members expressed concerns about how skilled officers would be at assessing social capital. The Head of Planning confirmed that senior officers would consider such issues and that the Head of Legal Services would be heavily involved while a skills and knowledge base was established. The criteria would be established and tested as the first cases progressed. Members were assured that the process would be open and accountable.

The Committee resolved by 4 votes to 0 to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

Not applicable.

12/82/SR Local Government Resource Review - Business Rates Retention Pooling Options

Matter for Decision:

To decide whether to support the proposed 'Growing Cambridgeshire' pooling scheme.

The report presented coverage of updated information since the publication of the September 2012 MTS, where recommendations were required.

Decision of the Leader:

- i. Agreed to support the proposed 'Growing Cambridgeshire' pooling scheme, subject to scheme details requiring consensus decision-making.
- ii. Delegated responsibility to the Chief Executive, through Cambridgeshire County Council as lead authority, to engage with DCLG on the final detail of the proposed pooling scheme and to submit the final proposal in time for the 19 October deadline.

Reason for the Decision:

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The Committee received a report from the Director of Resources regarding the Local Government Resource Review - Business Rates Retention: Pooling Options.

Councillor Bick reminded the committee that when the matter was last considered in July, they had expressed a preference for pooling. Councillor Bick further stated that he was now content with the proposals on how the pooled resources would be used.

Councillor Bick confirmed that the strategic investment pot would involve a large sum of money. Concerns had previously been raised about how much leverage individual members authorities would have over the spending of this shared resource. It had now been agreed that a consensus would be needed. Paragraph 5.1 of the draft proposal would be re-worded to reflect this requirement.

Councillor Herbert asked for an assurance on the openness and transparency of decision regarding the new spending structures. The Chief Executive confirmed that the decision making body would meet in public.

Members suggested the recommendations were not clear and suggested the following amendments.

The Leader is asked to:

- ~~Decide whether~~ To support the proposed 'Growing Cambridgeshire' pooling scheme.
- ~~In the event that the Leader decides to support the scheme,~~ To delegate responsibility to the Chief Executive, through Cambridgeshire County Council as lead authority, to engage with DCLG on the final detail of the proposed pooling scheme and to submit the final proposal in time for the 19 October deadline.

The amendments were agreed unanimously.

The Committee resolved unanimously to endorse the amended recommendations subject to the additional wording to paragraph 5.1 of the draft proposal regarding the requirement for consensual decisions.

The Executive Councillor approved the amended recommendations.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

Not applicable.

12/83/SR District Heating Scheme

Matter for Decision:

Cambridge has limited options on how it can demonstrate low carbon leadership and stimulate significant reductions in carbon emissions within the built up city. Recent studies have shown that a Joint Venture between the City Council and the University of Cambridge and using the Local Authorities ability to prudentially borrow could create an economically viable combined heat and power (CHP) operation that will deliver return on investment producing a new income stream, reduce carbon emissions and protect parts of the Cambridge community against significant future energy price increases.

It is proposed that further work is undertaken in collaboration with the University of Cambridge, with the potential to draw down on available funding from the Intelligent Energy Europe programme and LCDI.

Decision of the Leader:

- i. Agreed to support the City Council's continued involvement in the Cambridge District Heating project subject to the approach set out in this report;
- ii. Agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Environment to make a final decision on the Intelligent Energy Europe 'opt out' issue as set out in paragraphs 3.4 and 3.5 of the report following consultation with the Leader and Executive Councillor for Strategy, Chair and Opposition Spokespersons.

Reason for the Decision:

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The Committee received a report from the Director of Environment regarding the project to investigate the potential of Implementing District Heating in Cambridge City Centre.

Councillor Herbert suggested that overall this was a good idea and asked for more information on the funding. The Director of Environment stated that, subject to the proposal being agreed, a bid for funding would be included in the budget setting report.

Concerns were raised about the lack of a suitable location. The Senior Sustainability Officer confirmed that consultancy firm AECOM had been commissioned to assess the suitability of a range of sites. If no single site were identified, it would be possible to split in infrastructure over two sites. There would be an additional cost associated with a split site.

The split between the University and Colleges was discussed. The officers confirmed that the University was a partner to the project and the Colleges were potential customers. Both form important components of the project. Currently five colleges had expressed an interest and there was a potential to extend this to other colleges, or other bodies, once the core proposal was established.

Councillor Bick welcomed the project and an opportunity for like-minded bodies to work together. Learning from this project would be used to inform future schemes and had a potential for domestic applications.

The Committee resolved unanimously to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

Not applicable.

12/84/SR Review of Streetlife Anti-Social Behaviour

Matter for Decision:

The report reviewed the profile of street based anti-social behaviour in Cambridge City; the current approach to support and enforcement; and suggested areas where policy and practice should be reviewed.

The Leader and Executive Councillor for Housing were jointly asked to note of the review of street-based anti-social behaviour, the services and enforcement measures in place to address problematic behaviour, and to agree to hold three multi-agency workshops.

Decision of the Leader and the Executive Councillor for Housing:

The Leader and the Executive Councillor for Housing jointly:

- i. Noted the review of street-based anti-social behaviour and the services and enforcement measures in place to address problematic behaviour;
- ii. Agreed to hold three multi-agency workshops, open to all Cambridge City Councillors, on the topic areas proposed in section 5 of the officer's report.

Reason for the Decision:

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The Committee received a report from the Director of Customer and Community Services regarding the Review of Street-life Anti-social Behaviour.

Members questioned why the overall numbers of rough sleepers remained consistent while the profile had shifted towards higher numbers with a local connection. The Director of Customer and Community Services stated the reasons behind this were complex and would be further investigated.

Concerns were raised over the safety of rough sleepers. Officers reported that violent incidents were few and appeared to be opportunistic rather than targeted. The Police were praised for the way they handled such incidents.

Daytime indoor provision and wet centres were discussed. Concerns were raised about what such provision would achieve and members were not supportive of an approach that would merely “tidy up” the streets. Members agreed that any solutions must be outcome focused. Members requested comparative national data to be included in future reports.

Improved use of licensing powers was suggested as a way of resolving some of the problems associated with street-life. Cumulative Impact Zone powers had achieved some results. It was further suggested that members of the public were not aware of the powers to request a review of a premises license. Councillor Bick confirmed that the licensing dimension would be covered in the workshops.

The Committee resolved unanimously to endorse the recommendations.

Both the Leader and Executive Councillor Housing approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

Not applicable.

12/85/SR General Debts Write Off

The Committee received a report from the Director of Resources regarding the General Debts Write Off relating to the Folk Festival debt.

Councillor Herbert stated that in his view this item had been poorly titled on the agenda and that not enough notice had been given to allow full debate of the issues or to inform the public of the decision. The Director of Resources stated that the write off item was a standard agenda item and had been on the Forward Plan for the required period.

Councillor Herbert suggested that the Council's money had been asset stripped in 2009 and insufficient effort had gone into tracing it and the Council had not conducted an independent inquiry using Price, Waterhouse and Cooper. Writing off the money would send the wrong message and would suggest the matter was closed.

The Chief Executive stated that Price, Waterhouse and Cooper had been part of the Members Inquiry that reported in 2009. It was inaccurate to say insufficient effort had gone into chasing the debt. Advice had been taken and the Council had been diligent in its pursuit of the money using the avenues open to it. However, the latest advice was that further expenditure on pursuit of the debt was unlikely to yield any return.

The Head of Legal Services stated that civil action against the directors was planned for November. Should any funds come to light by this action, they could still be pursued.

Councillor Bick concluded that all members wanted the return of the money. However, a judgement needed to be made regarding spending more to pursue the lost funds. The advice given by professionals was to write the money off. This was a technical accounting measure. The case could be re-opened in the future, should there be any possibility of recovering any of the funds.

The Committee resolved by 4 votes to 4 and Chair's casting vote to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)

Not applicable.

The meeting ended at 8.40 pm

CHAIR

