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**MINUTES OF THE SERVICE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD ON MONDAY 15 DECEMBER 2014 AT 7.30 P.M.  
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WEELEY**

- Present:** Councillors Challinor (Chairman), Aldis, R Callender and White
- Also Present:** Councillor M Platt (Culture, Tourism, Leisure Services and Events Portfolio Holder)
- In Attendance:** Corporate Director (Life Opportunities) (Paul Price), Democratic Services Manager (Colin Sweeney), Support and Development Manager (Sharon Harwood-Bee) and Democratic Services Officer (Janey Nice)

**30. WELCOME**

The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting and thanked the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Tourism, Leisure Services and Events (Councillor M Platt) for attending.

**31. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

The Democratic Services Manager informed the Committee that Councillor Nicholls had replaced Councillor Colbourne on the Committee however he had tendered his apology for this meeting. Apologies were also received from Councillor Talbot (substitute Councillor White) and Councillor D Oxley.

**32. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, held on 3 November 2014, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor White declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Agenda Item No.4 (Post Event Review of the Clacton Air Show 2014) by virtue of the fact he was past President and Member of the Clacton Rotary Club, which provided paid parking at the Air Show.

**34. POST EVENT REVIEW OF THE CLACTON AIR SHOW 2014**

The Council's Corporate Director (Life Opportunities) (Paul Price) said that the 2014 Air Show had been the biggest and best ever, with attendance levels over the two days estimated in excess of 200,000. He added that whilst the flight programme (which had included the Vulcan Bomber, the Red Arrows and the historic flight of the last two airworthy Lancaster Bombers in the world being a key highlight) had been expensive and given that the event had cost more to run than in previous years, the amount generated in the local economy had been significantly higher due to increased visitor numbers, many of whom had come from across the country and overseas.

Mr Price said that the income generated was just over £78,000, of which, approximately 55% had been collected through programme sales and bucket collections. He said that expenditure had amounted to just over £113,500, with the flight programme costing £58,000 and specific event insurance costing £20,000.

Mr Price said that Titan the Robot had been very popular having attracted large crowds over the two days in the event arena and because of a real growth in corporate hospitality, the sponsors' area had exceeded all expectations this year. He added that an extension tent had to be supplied for more sponsors and the hospitality area appeared to be an area for future growth.

With regard to getting visitors to the Air Show, Mr Price said that the popular Park and Ride scheme very nearly ran out of parking spaces with official off-street car parks completely full by 3.00 p.m. on both days.

The whole Council, he said, had been involved with the event with massive support from all Services, which had been reflected in the increased programme sales and bucket collection.

Councillors asked questions on future attractions visitors could expect to see at the Air Show and whether water activities could be included. In response, Mr Price said there was a difficulty in co-ordinating both water and air events and he was looking at more land based activity. When it was suggested that perhaps a military equipment display on the far side of the Pier could be considered, Mr Price said that was an idea for future consideration but not until such times as the Coastal Defence work had been completed.

In response to a question that the Air Show include more events across the District, such as bringing back the Powerboat Race at Harwich, Mr Price said that there were more events being lined up but he could not discuss them further at this time. Mr Price reminded Members that the Events Team consisted of two officers who worked on the Air Show full-time.

The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Tourism, Leisure Services and Events, Councillor Platt, said that, following a visit by him there, the idea of working with Southend Airport with some of the commercial air operators being involved (e.g. Flybee, Easyjet etc.) could be restricted due to air space and the additional costs of their involvement.

The Chairman suggested that perhaps a Messerschmitt air craft could attend next year and Councillor Platt said he was already looking at that type of aircraft could be attracted to the 2015 Air Show, in what would be a centenary year.

The Chairman offered her congratulations to all of the staff who, through their hard work had been responsible for the continued success of the Air Show.

### **35. LOCAL LAND CHARGES**

The Council's Support and Development Manager (Sharon Harwood-Bee) delivered a presentation on Local Land Charges and advised Members that when a property or piece of land was purchased anywhere in the Tendring District, buyers would wish to know the history of the site and whether or not there were any restrictions or outstanding planning matters associated with it. In order to facilitate this, she said, a solicitor would requisition a Local Authority Search, which was made up of two parts: (a) The Local Land Charges Register (Form LLCI) and (b) Enquiries of the Local Authority (Form CON29).

She explained that the LLCI had information held on the register that was legally binding on all successive owners of the property or land and was made up of 12 parts, some of which were:

- Planning Information;
- Tree Preservation Orders;
- Financial Charges;
- S.106 Agreements;
- Conservation Areas;
- Listed Buildings;
- Highway Agreements; and
- Grants
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She said that the CON29 form had been devised by the Law Society and asked questions regarding matters that were not on the Local Land Charges register, such as:

- Planning applications awaiting a decision;
- Building Control information;
- Breach of Conditions Notices;
- Information regarding roads, footways and footpaths; and
- Local Plan Policies

Together, she said, the LLC1 and CON29 made up the search and would give information possibly dating back to the 1930's and 1940's, which would enable a solicitor to know if there were any issues that needed to be addressed before the conveyance could be completed.

Miss Harwood-Bee gave the history of Land Charges and informed the Committee that up until the late 1990's, Local Authorities had been able to set their own fees and the income stream from these had been high. However, she added, that in the late 1990's and early 2000, a number of personal search companies set up in competition with the Local Authorities having realised some of the information sought was available free of charge via public registers. Other relevant information could also be obtained by undertaking a 'personal search' of the Land Charges Register. The personal search companies were, she said, able to undercut Councils by a considerable amount, which had over the years reduced the Council's market share down from 100%, to 70% to 50% and down further to 24%.

As a result of this loss of income to local authorities, Miss Harwood-Bee said new legislation had been introduced, which meant that a Council's Local Land Charges Section could only operate on a 'cost recovery' basis and as the personal search companies had been acquiring business at the expense of local authorities, a way to attract more users of the service needed to be identified. She said that this Council's Local Land Charges section had produced a newsletter, highlighting the professionalism and quality service provided and which encouraged potential customers to discuss their needs with the Council before submitting a search requisition.

Miss Harwood-Bee went on to say that the Local Land Charges also began returning searches electronically rather than by mail, which reduced print costs and ensured customers received their search results on the day of completion and that 100% of all searches were now returned that way. In addition, she said customers were now able to pay for the service by debit and credit cards.

Miss Harwood-Bee then informed Members that, during the last financial year, searches were up from 1,850 in 2012/13 to 2,500 in 2013/14 and Land Charges income was up by £50,000. She said that, up until the end of September 2014, Land Charges had received 300 more searches than this time last year.

Moving forward, Miss Harwood-Bee said, Land Charges now faced a difficult challenge in that Central Government was proposing that Land Registry took over providing the LLC1 form but consultation amongst local authorities indicated that 93% of them were against this proposal and that the Government had chosen to ignore this opposition. She added that the Land Registry did not wish to take over the provision of the CON29 part of the search and another consultation amongst local authorities would take place in the Autumn of 2015.

When asked if the fee depended upon the size of property or land Miss Harwood-Bee said that the standard flat fee did not take rateable value or size of property into account and gave an example of a block of 20 flats; a flat fee would be charged on the first flat, with an 'additional parcel' fee levied on each additional flat. She added that the majority of information would be the same for each flat, but that differing information would be supplied relating to, for example, gas and electricity installations. Miss Harwood-Bee went on to say that, in relation to the biggest purchase a person would usually make in their lifetime, a lot of information was provided for just £75. She then said that additional

questions could also be asked for an extra £10.00 e.g. to provide planning information on neighbouring land.

The Chairman thanked Miss Harwood-Bee for her very informative and interesting presentation.

The meeting was declared closed at 9.13 p.m.

Chairman