



POLICY, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

PARKSIDE, STATION APPROACH, BURTON STREET, MELTON MOWBRAY

02 DECEMBER 2014

PRESENT:

Councillors J.B Rhodes (Chairman), P. Posnett, J. Wyatt, M.M Gordon,  
M. O'Callaghan, J. Simpson

Chief Executive (LA), Strategic Director (KA), Strategic Director (CM),  
Head of Central Services (DG), Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods (HR), Head of  
Communications (AT), Manager of HR and Communications (SJO), People and Place  
Manager (RB), Corporate Property Officer (DB), T3 Officer – Environmental Protection and  
Safety Manager (VC), Solicitor to the Council (VW), Committee Support Officer (DS),

As Guest: Consultant Advisor (RT)

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P29. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bush, Hutchinson and Wright.

P30. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2014 were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the Chairman.

P31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Rhodes and Posnett declared personal interests in any matters relating to the County Council due to their positions as County Councillors.

Councillor Rhodes declared that he would leave the room at Item 19 and Councillor Posnett would chair that Item due to his personal and pecuniary interest as the Leicestershire County Council lead on finance.

Councillor Gordon declared a personal and pecuniary interest in Item 12, recommendation 2.3 due to her receiving council tax support.

Councillor Simpson declared a personal interest in any items pertaining to Melton Borough Council Staff because she has a son who is an employee of Melton Borough Council.

Councillor O'Callaghan declared a personal interest in matters relating to the Cattle Market due to being on the Melton Mowbray Food Partnership.

P32. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

There were no recommendations from other committees.

P33. UPDATE ON DECISIONS

There were no updates on decisions pending from the previous meeting.

*The Chairman here moved to go into Exempt Session to discuss Item 18 – Leisure Vision as Consultant Advisor (RT) was attending the meeting. A vote was held and all Members unanimously elected to move to Exempt Session for this one item.*

*Before heading into Exempt Session, Councillor O'Callaghan expressed his disappointment that this item was made Exempt. He felt that particular aspects of the report could have been made public.*

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

**RESOLVED** that the Public be excluded during the consideration of the following item(s) of business in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (Access to Information: Exempt Information) under Paragraph 3.

P34. LEISURE VISION

The Head Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a report for Members to consider the Leisure Vision Business Case.

**RESOLVED** that all recommendations in the report be approved.

*Here the Committee Meeting returned to Public Session. The following people left the room and did not return for the duration of the Committee Meeting: Corporate Property Officer (DB), Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods (HR), Consultant Advisor (Guest) (RT).*

P35. RESERVED FORCES TRAINING AND MOBILISATION POLICY

The Head of Communications submitted a report which provided Members with the opportunity to comment on Reserve Forces Training and Mobilisation Policy.

The Head of Communications advised Members that the Policy was written in mid-2014 in response to closer working relationships with the Armed Forces and work on the Armed Forces Community Covenant. The report confirms Melton Borough Council's support for reservist forces and employing those persons.

The Policy was discussed at the Joint Staff Working Group (JSWG) in June 2014 and was accepted by Members as a positive way forward.

All recommendations were moved by Councillor Rhodes and Councillor Posnett seconded.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

**RESOLVED** that:

- a) that the Reserve Forces and Mobilisation Policy be implemented with immediate effect.
- b) the Head of Communications be given delegated authority to make minor amendments to the policy in order to address any recommendation from the Equality Impact Assessment or to ensure it remains fit for purpose and in line with best practice and legislation.

#### P36. SERVICE STRATEGY FOR CUSTOMERS

The Head of Communications submitted a report for Members which set out the service strategy for customers from 2015 for the next five years. The strategy aims to improve services for the customer while also increasing customer satisfaction across services through increasing and embedding a customer focused culture across the authority and its partners.

The strategy sets out the vision for the future, with service users at the heart of how the Council works. Officers' expectations are to ensure that there is a high level of customer satisfaction across all services from the Council.

The Head of Communications advised Members that the strategy is designed to support the delivery of the Corporate Priorities stemming from "A Well Run Council"; this theme links in with the aims of the Transformation Programme.

The strategy aims to help customers with digital channels run by the Council, such as self-service through the main website.

Questions were taken from Members regarding issues such as planning applications and how that will filter into the Customer Service Strategy. Officers explained that target waiting times for planning applications are of a national standard in line with governmental policies.

Discussion with regard to the nature of waiting times from phone-calls to the Council took place with Members requesting that Officers look into the message played for customers on hold to be more detailed. An example of a change being to let customers know what number in line they are rather than what the average waiting time for the week has been.

Officers responded that this aspect of the phone system for customers will be looked into, while also explaining the nature of the phone system at the Council is that calls are routed to different advisors dependent on the nature of the query and sometimes lower level queries, those which can be dealt with more easily may go through faster than those which are more in-depth and require more detail to complete.

All recommendations were moved by Councillor Rhodes and Councillor Wyatt seconded.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

**RESOLVED** that

- a) the Committee approved the new Service Strategy for customers in order that it may be communicated and incorporated into the main business of the Council.
- b) that delegation be given to the Head of Communication to make minor amendments to the strategy to ensure it remains current and up to date.

***The following people left the room prior to the discussion for the Pay Award (Item 8): Head of Central Services (DG), People and Place Manager (RB), Head of Communication (AT) and Councillor Simpson (due to having previously declared an interest in the Item).***

#### P37. PAY AWARD 2014-16

The Manager of HR and Communications submitted a report giving Members an update on the Local Government pay award and which outlines the financial impact for the Authority in applying the enhancements.

The Manager of HR and Communications advised Members that an agreement was made to increase salaries by 2.2% up to March 2016. The original negotiations for salary increases was 1%.

Additionally, non-consolidated payments will be made to the lowest paid staff, which is a lump sum of £325 in the December pay. This would only apply to staff employed with Melton Borough Council on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2014. No backdated payments will be made to employees who leave employment before that date.

The national SCP goes up to point 49, however, at Melton, locally extended points go up to point 60. Employees on points 50-60 do not currently attract the lump sum on 0.45%, only the 2.2 on offer for all points. Should the lump sum payment be made to these extended points also the financial implication would be a one off payment of approximately £2000.

An additional revised recommendation c) deals with apprentices employed by Melton Borough Council. The same principles of pay being awarded to the lowest paid staff (lump sum of £325) is proposed to be given to them in the December pay.

All recommendations including the additional recommendation (c) were moved by Councillor Rhodes and Councillor Wyatt seconded.

5 Members voted unanimously in favour with 1 abstention.

**RESOLVED** that

- a) the Committee noted the arrangements for the pay award
- b) that the 0.45% on pay beyond spinal point 49 to include the locally extended points 50-60 be extended.
- c) the extension of the non-consolidated payment to employees on apprentice contracts therefore not the NJC spinal points be approved. The payment will be based on the equivalent of the lower spinal points which is £325 lump sum paid in December 2014.

***Prior to discussing Item 9 – Staff Car Parking Discount Scheme and Charges, the following people returned to the room: Head of Central Services (DG), People and Place Manager (RB), Head of Communications (AT).***

***Councillor O'Callaghan declared that he is a Member of GMB and remained in the room.***

#### P38. CAR PARKING

The Manager of Human Resources and Communications submitted a report for Members to consider extending the discounted staff car parking scheme for another two years and then review it again.

In September 2011, Unison submitted a proposal to the Policy, Finance and Administration Committee requesting car parking charges for staff be reduced to mitigate any potential financial impact on the workforce. The proposal was agreed to be reviewed in a years' time. It was then reviewed in September 2012 and charges frozen until September 2014.

The Joint Staff Working Group supported the September 2014 decision to have staff car parking charges linked to the long stay parking charges for the public, with a discount for 2 years and then reviewed again.

A discussion took place with Members agreeing that the scheme works well, however concerns were raised regarding staff abusing the car park located in front of the Parkside Offices (front car park). A suggestion was raised by Members to withdraw parking privileges from repeat over-stayers. Officers will look into how the hours will be decided for parking and how partner organisation parking hours would also work as well as dealing with repeat car park over-stayers.

A Member raised a question regarding how many parking spots are available to staff at any one time, with the answer being approximately 200, with 400 staff registered on the parking scheme. In the sidings car park there are only 80 car parking spaces and there are 70 spaces in the front including parking for

motorcycles, provision of two family spaces and four mobility access spaces which is shared with the public.

Recommendation 2.1 was not accepted and recommendations 2.2 and 2.3 were moved by Councillor Wyatt and Councillor Rhodes seconded.

**RESOLVED** that

- 2.2) the extension of the discounted scheme for two years be approved, but any increase in car parking charges is made as set out in recommendation (c) below;
- 2.3) Staff car parking charges are linked to long stay car parking charges and the Head of Communications in consultation with Management Team have delegated authority to increase the staff car parking charges in line with increases to long stay car parking charges at appropriate times as described in para 3.6.

***Here Councillor Simpson returned to the room***

P39. **AGILE COUNCIL**

The T3 Officer submitted a report to Members giving an update on the Agile Council. The report provides an update on the Council's position following a PWC analysis of the steps a Council may need to take to meet the current financial, social and technical change, to "create and operate a change ready organisation".

The new Melton Borough Council website has gone live, and officers are pushing ahead with initiatives for self-service web applications for customers. One of the new developments includes the 'web-chat' that is being tested in discreet areas of the site. Customer Service advisers will offer help through a 'pop-up' web chat option. It has been developed to help those people making slower progress with the applications they are using. The feedback from initial tests indicates that customers are happy with the electronic self-service forms, including job applications, waste, and fly tip reporting. Customers are able to report back on incidents at a time which suits them. Forms are also being used to register for events, such as those run by the Me and My Learning Programme.

The Oracle system has also gone live (Core Financial System), and this has led to improved reporting. It has helped reduce the IT systems being maintained.

The T3 Officer explained to Members that the new Corporate Plan will help generate Customer Intelligence and develop a knowledge base through the collection and compilation of internal and external data and evidence to ascertain the priority needs in the borough. The use of focus surveys, interviews, etc. for customers will mix both qualitative and quantitative elements to analyse and provide feedback.

The main objective of collecting such data is to get interviews across generations to showcase a story of change. It is part of the Melton Observatory Project and at the present time, the Council wants to be more proactive in generating this type of information and to present the results in a meaningful manner. The Council is working towards creating a Melton Observatory which will be validated through an 'internal' information hub which will integrate with the EDM system, and will provide intelligence for the Council.

In May 2014, Melton Development Control achieved national "Smarter Planning Champion" accreditation. Melton was acknowledged for its high level of electronic processes and procedures in the service. Melton is 1 of 41 authorities to be recognised with this achievement and the first in Leicestershire to achieve it.

In regards to the Customer Insight Project, it has been determined that 11 individuals contacted the council more than 100 times, accounting for 1297 interactions. The top 11 customers were wardens from residential accommodation dealing with the needs of multiple residents. All these cases are now being handled by the wardens themselves and the remainder have been broken into age groups of retired and working age people being managed by the Me and My Learning Programme, Sure Start and Older People's Services/ Vulnerable Adults.

The Tanker has now turned, and grants have been given in the region of £1.25 million. In terms of Transformation, the Me and My Learning Programme is tackling worklessness, and out of the 380 people signed up, 22 people gained employment with 189 still actively engaged with the project.

Me and My Learning is fully operational and all partners are working from Phoenix House, and the services are not just about getting employment but is also about becoming more independent, and helping people to manage their own lives. Melton was also awarded the Silver IRRV awards in Excellence for Social Inclusion.

The Chief Executive advised Members that The Leader Programme has received approximately £1.75 million in grants to support the Rural Development Programme up to 2020.

In regards to Melton Town Centre, the Town Centre App is now live and this will assist in maximising visitor potential and increasing foot traffic to the high street, etc. It is a way to get local businesses in contact with local consumers using the latest technology in a simple way.

The Council will use Social Media applications such as Twitter and Facebook to determine the public's appetite for communication via social media. Facebook is best for person to person messages and Twitter is best for communication and engagement between local businesses and professionals.

Members expressed how proud they were of the work done especially with compliments to the Me and My Learning Programme.

All recommendations were moved by Councillor Rhodes and Councillor Simpson seconded.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

**RESOLVED** that

a) the work of T3 in the attached Appendix be noted.

P40. REVENUE BUDGET COMMITTEE ESTIMATES 2015-2016

The Head of Central Services submitted a report giving Members an update on the latest position with regard to this Committees estimates

Section 3.5 shows a budget of about £1.8 million, and is less than the current year's budget. This is due in part to the accounting changes for business rates grants.

**RESOLVED** that

a) the latest position on this committee's revenue budget estimates be noted.

***Here Councillor Gordon left the room due to previously having declared Personal and pecuniary interest in Item 12.***

P41. SUMMARY OF REVENUE ESTIMATES AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Head of Central Services submitted a report to Members on the latest position regarding the estimates for 2014/15 and 2015/16 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) following the Budget and Strategic Planning Working Group (BSPWG) meeting held on 12th November 2014.

A revised recommendation (2.5) has been included with a slight change of details from the Solicitor to the Council (VW).

The current year's position is detailed in 3.2, which shows an estimated underspend of £242,000

The variation is due in part to it being estimated that only a portion of the inflation contingency monies will be used to cover a portion of the pay award and also additional income from , Planning, car parking, Land charges and reduced costs of Wheels to Work as well as additional grant income.

Costs are offset by reduced income estimated on the Cattle Market, additional waste contractor costs and reduced income from co-mingled waste.

3.3 shows the Proposed Budget Proposal for 2015/2015. General expenses sees a shortfall of £100,000 and special expenses a surplus of £60,000.

The Head of Central Services advised that paragraph 3.3.6 explains that Management Team have worked closely to see where savings can be found, and will work those potential savings up into something more detailed for Members. Currently Officers are awaiting the finance settlement which may come out around 17<sup>th</sup> December 2014.



The MTFs look forward a further three years, and the austerity cuts will continue over the next few years. Reducing costs and savings is dependent on what a new government will do.

All recommendations were moved by Councillor Rhodes and Councillor Posnett seconded.

All members were unanimously in favour.

**RESOLVED** that

- a) the estimated year end position for 2014/15 as set out in paragraph 3.2 be noted.
- b) the position with regard to the 2015/16 estimates and the forward projections for 2016/17 to 2018/19 at this stage in the process and the issues yet to be resolved as in paragraph 3.3 be noted.
- c) as part of the budget setting process, The Council approve that the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2014/15 (Year 2) remain unaltered for 2015/16 (Year 3) and applicable amounts to be adjusted for inflation in line with the Government's Adjudication and Operations Circular;
- d) the payroll element of the contingency budget be removed and the salary estimates updated accordingly as set out in paragraph 3.3.4

**RESOLVED** *that the following revised recommendation be approved:*

- e) delegated authority be given to the Head of Central Services in consultation with the Chief Executive and the Chair, Councillors Bush and Hutchinson being the political groups' nominated consultees for the Policy, Finance and Administration Committee, and Solicitor of the Council to sign up to or withdraw from the Leicestershire pool for business rates should the modelling demonstrate a financial benefit to Melton and enter into a new legal agreement accordingly.
- f) That members recommend to Council as part of the budget proposals the creation of a Business Rates Equalisation Reserve as set out in paragraph 3.3.12.

***Here Councillor Gordon came back into the meeting.***

#### P42. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING APRIL TO OCTOBER 2014

The Head of Central Services submitted a report to Members which provided an update on the progress of schemes within the Capital Programme to October 2014.

The Head of Central Services advised Members that the forecast is generally in line with the budget with schemes progressing although expenditure has yet to be incurred. There is an anticipated year end variance on the Development of Transformational Change Programme as it has no further expenditure this year.

The Oracle Upgrade is expected to overspend due to additional User Acceptable Testing support for receivables and the Patech Helpdesk.

All recommendations were moved by Councillor Rhodes and Councillor Wyatt seconded.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

**RESOLVED** that

- a) the progress on each Capital Scheme be noted.
- b) supplementary estimates for the capitalisation of salary costs of £39,260 for the Website, £25,030 for the Enterprise Document Management (EDM) System and £23,500 for My Account in 2014/15 from capital receipts be approved.

P43. **CAPITAL PROGRAM 2014-2019**

The Head of Central Services submitted a report to Members to determine the Committee's Capital Programme for 2014-19 based on a review of spending in the current year's programme and schemes included in the programme for later years.

Changes to the Programme for the current and future years are set out in Appendix B. The £10,000 reduction shown in the current year is due to the Transformation Project which was unfunded and has been removed from the Programme.

Section 3.2.2 details the new scheme set out in Appendix C and D, which has been submitted for approval for inclusion in the Capital Programme. £59,000 has been requested for improvements to the footbridge off Asfordby Road. Members have been requested to determine whether the expenses should be General or Special Expenses.

The Capitalisation of salaries which was agreed by this Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2014 as such it is recommended that £9,690 to be added to the EDM Project in 2015/2016, which will account for 20% of the Systems Analysts time, to be funded from Capital Receipts.

A discussion took place and Members were unsure about the role of the Parish Council in regards to disused railway expenses. It was determined that the expenses for the improvements to the Footbridge would be General Expenses.

All recommendations were moved by Councillor Rhodes and Councillor Posnett seconded.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

**RESOLVED** that

- a) the Capital Programme for 2014-2019 be noted
- b) the schemes being submitted in 2014-2019 for funding as part of the budget setting process to ensure they meet the Council's priorities be noted.
- c) the Project Mandate as summarised in Appendix C be approved for inclusion in the Capital Programme.
- d) The addition of the capitalisation of salaries to the Enterprise Document Management System (EDM) project be approved.
- e) the new scheme submitted in paragraph 3.2.2 be approved as General Expenses.

P44. **ITEMS FOR APPROVAL UNDER FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES**

The Head of Central Services submitted a report to provide requests for approval of this Committee under Financial Procedure Rules and to provide information on amounts approved under delegated powers and to report the impact of these on the Council's reserves and balances.

Since the last meeting, the Head of Central Services approved thirty four requests for virement within the same service totalling £362,540, and requests for virement between services totalling £204,900. More details can be found in Appendix A.

Subject to approval at a Special Meeting of the Rural, Economic and Environment Affairs committee on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2014, a request has been made to this committee for a supplementary estimate of £200,000 to enable the Cattle Market project to proceed to full planning.

At the Community and Social Affairs Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2014 it was approved that an annual grant of £30,000 be made towards the running costs of the Foyer project, and this has been included in the revenue budget for 2015-16

A Member raised concerns that the writing of Appendix B1.1 could be clearer as the wording is currently confusing to readers.

All recommendations were moved by Councillor Posnett and Councillor Wyatt seconded.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

**RESOLVED** that

- a) the virements approved under delegated powers (para. 3.1.1 refers) be noted;
- b) the business case discussed in para 4.2 be approved and additional funding of £2,000,000 towards the Cattle Market Redevelopment project be approved from Capital Receipts and included in the capital programme;

- c) the updated business case for the Foyer Project as discussed in para 4.3 be approved and a one off capital contribution of £400k from Capital Receipts be approved for inclusion in the capital programme;
- d) a supplementary estimate of up to £200,000 to enable the Cattle Market Redevelopment project to proceed to full planning and detailed preparation prior to any funding announcements as detailed in paragraph 5.1 be approved. Delegated authority be given to the Head of Central Services to determine the source of this funding as of part the year accounts closedown process as requested by the Rural Economic and Environmental Affairs committee and;
- e) the annual grant of £30k towards the Housing Foyer Project has been included in the 2015-16 budget as requested by the Community and Social Affairs Committee as detailed in paragraph 5.2 be noted.

#### P45. CORPORATE ISSUES

The Chief Executive submitted a report to brief Members and explained why the Turning the Tanker Initiative has reached its objectives as well as advice on other Corporate Issues.

In 2012, the Council wanted to refocus, placing an emphasis to ensure 'Places' Services operated at as high a standard as 'People' Services. The Council needed to move forward all services to seek greater efficiency/ effectiveness while not losing its customer focused approach. The Transformation Programme developed out of this emphasis and a Channel Shift began.

This has included the development of the Economic Development support for Local Businesses, and over £1.5 million has been drawn down and out to support those businesses.

There has been continued emphasis on developing the Town Centre Programme, and there has been success as Melton is a finalist in the Revive and Thrive Programme as well as being selected as one of the four pilot towns for an intensive examination to develop an Asset Based Support Approach to the Town Centre Provision.

The Major Capital Programme is being developed to include the Foyer Project which will assist young people on their first journey to independence, the completion of the Burton Street Car Park and initiatives around the Cattle Market and the development of the Leisure Vision. With the approval of the Housing Asset Management Plan (HAMP), the Council has developed proposals to improve key parts of its stock including Beckmill and Granby House using housing funding arrangements as well as providing ten new council homes, the first of which to be built by the Council in decades.

Supporting these "Place" based services, is the activity around the development of the Melton local Plan (MLP). The Council has set itself a plan to replace the former Core Strategy with a new Local Plan and is adhering to the timetable while creating innovative ways of engaging local people.

The approach to the Transformation of the Council through its programme has reached Phase 2 in that the early development of key activities which promote the Channel Shift, such as the website and self-service Achieve forms have been implemented and continue to be developed. The Council is now moving towards developing its E-Services through 'My Account' which will enable safe and secure self-service access to personal and other website services. The first three 'E-Services' are Revenues, Benefits and Planning.

The 'People' Services are being embedded throughout the authority during this period. The Council has transformed its Family Intervention Project to be part of the Supporting Leicestershire Families and the Council continues to manage the Children's Services and making links through our own integrated service offer.

The initiative bringing all the aspects of the Council's Turning the Tanker programme together is the Me and My Learning. This links people, place and transformation agendas by improving the employment and skills opportunities for local people, working to meet the needs of local businesses for skills and workers as well as promoting and supporting the behaviour change amongst those most in need to enable independence.

In order to illustrate the staff success of the Turning the Tanker Programme, a Market Place was held in November to showcase the three strands of the programme. The event was led by the T3 Group and the Market Place was successful in advising staff of the success of the Turning the Tanker Programme and the impact on our services and illustrated the stronger base from which the Council now has to move forward.

All recommendations were moved by Councillor Rhodes and Councillor Posnett seconded.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

**RESOLVED** that

- a) the exercise of delegated authority by the Chief Executive be noted;
- b) the successful conclusion of the Turning the Tanker Initiative be noted;
- c) a further report be made to this Committee at the next Policy, Finance and Administration Committee Meeting be noted.

## **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** that the Public be excluded during the consideration of the following item(s) of business in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (Access to Information: Exempt Information) under Paragraph 3.

*Here the following people left the room: Councillor Rhodes and Councillor Simpson due to having previously declared Personal and Pecuniary interests in the Item.*

*Councillor Posnett took over as Chairman for Item 19 (P46) and declared her role as the chair of MENCAP.*

*Councillor Simpson did not return for the remainder of the Committee Meeting.*

### P46. **SURE START SERVICES**

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a report to Members to seek approval for changes to Sure Start Services.

**RESOLVED** that all recommendations in the report be approved.

*Here Councillor Rhodes returned to the room and resumed his position as Chairman.*

### P47. **PAYMENT FRAUD**

The Head of Central Services submitted a report to update Members on the Fraudulent Payment.

**RESOLVED** that all recommendations in the report be approved.

The meeting which commenced at 6.30 p.m., closed at 8:50p.m.

Chairman