



POLICY, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

PARKSIDE, STATION APPROACH, BURTON STREET, MELTON MOWBRAY

16 April 2014

PRESENT:-

Councillors J.B. Rhodes (Chairman), M. Barnes, G.Bush,
M.M. Gordon, E. Hutchison, P.M. Posnett,
J.Simpson, D.R. Wright, J. Wyatt

Chief Executive, Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods,
Central Services Manager, Head of Regulatory Services,
Corporate Property Officer, Environmental Protection & Safety Manager,
Senior Democracy Officer, Committee Support Officer (JR)

P85. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor O'Callaghan, Head of Communications and Head of Central Services.

P86. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2014 were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the Chairman.

The minutes of the ad hoc meeting held on 11 March 2014 were confirmed and approved to be signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendment being recorded:

Minute P79 Declarations of Interest regarding:

Minute P80 – Recommendations from other Committees

Green Waste Club Subscriptions

Councillor Gordon declared a personal and pecuniary interest in matters relating to the above item as she is a subscriber to the Garden Waste Service. Councillor Gordon chose to leave the room when this item was discussed even though she could have remained and participated in the meeting, as it was a matter she had in common with a large number of people in the Borough. Councillor Gordon was not involved in a previous discussion concerning the above, but had left the room on the same basis at another previous Council meeting.

P87. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Rhodes declared a personal and pecuniary interest in any matters relating to Leicestershire County Council due to his role as a County Councillor.

Councillor Posnett declared a personal interest in any matters relating to Leicestershire County Council due to her role as a County Councillor.

Councillor Moncrieff declared a personal and pecuniary interest in Exempt Item 18, Recommendation 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 due to his role as Asfordby Ward Councillor.

Councillor Simpson and Councillor Bush declared personal and pecuniary interests in Exempt Item 19 due to their roles on the Planning Committee.

Councillor Barnes declared a personal interest in Item 14 due to his role as a supplier to a local cheese production company.

P88. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

There were no recommendations from other committees.

P89. UPDATE ON DECISIONS

The Chief Executive submitted an update on decisions from previous meetings of the Committee.

RESOLVED that the Update on Decisions document be updated to reflect progress and work completed.

P90. RECORDING OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Head of Communications submitted a report to provide options for Members to consider with regard to recording, filming and webcasting Council and Committee meetings. The Committee was also asked to approve a policy for public recording of meetings in accordance with the DCLG Guidance. Members gave their support and indicated a preference for option A.

Councillor Simpson proposed the recommendations which were seconded by Councillor Wright.

A vote was taken and Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that the following recommendations be referred to Full Council for approval :-

- a) a six month trial of audio recordings be taken of Full Council meetings and these be uploaded to the website within 48 hours of the meeting and at the end of the trial, feedback on quality and public interest be reported to the next available Policy, Finance and Administration Committee;
- b) a Protocol for Audio Recording of Meetings and other documentation be developed for reference in future and for training.

P91. PRIORITIES CONSULTATION

The Head of Communications submitted a report to provide initial feedback from the

consultation with the public on Corporate Priorities and Budget Setting 2013/15 and beyond.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Rhodes and seconded by Councillor Posnett.

RESOLVED

- a) that the consultation results be used to inform the wider consultation on the priorities planned for 2014/15.

(7.40pm. Councillor Barnes here entered the meeting during discussion of the previous item)

P92. **TRANSPORT MODELLING**

The Head of Regulatory Services submitted a report to request funding to invest in the development of an effective robust and up to date transport modelling solution for Melton. This will be used to test and inform options for development to be tested through the Local Plan as well as made available for developers to use bringing forward development in Melton. The Leicestershire & Leicester Integrated Transport Model (LLITM) was discussed and praise was given for it's effectiveness in showing the possible outcomes of any proposed local planning. More detailed analysis is required for the Local Plan and PARAMICS software has been recommended to provide detailed reporting of key measures of effectiveness. This analysis would be specific to Melton and would provide information to design efficient, economical, driver and pedestrian friendly transportation infrastructure.

Councillor Wright moved the recommendations and Councillor Simpson seconded. A vote was taken and Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that funding be approved from the corporate priorities reserve of £49000 to support the development of robust up to date transport modelling solution for Melton. This is broken down as:

- a) an estimate of an additional £10,000 be invested in an update of the LLTIM model
- b) an estimate of £25,000 invested in detailed PARAMICS modelling
- c) an estimate of £14,000 contributed towards Leicestershire County Councils administration and project management in accordance with the LLITM Procurement Framework.

P93. **BUSINESS RATES REOCCUPATION RELIEF SCHEME**

The Head of Central Services submitted a report requesting Members to approve a Reoccupation Relief Scheme following a new discretionary power available to Local Authorities to support retail businesses throughout the whole Borough. A 50% Business Rates discount will be provided by the Government for businesses moving into previously empty retail premises between 1/4/14 to 31/3/16. This aims to encourage the occupation of empty premises so that the number of vacant shops

decreases. The timescale was queried with regard to the change of ownership that may occur within the period. Advice was given that continuous occupation by different owners is possible and that relief is calculated on a day to day basis.

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

RESOLVED

- a) the Business Rate – Reoccupation Relief Scheme as set out at Appendix A be adopted by Melton Borough Council for financial years 2014/15 and 2015/16.
- b) delegated authority be granted to the Head of Central Services in consultation with the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods to make any necessary changes to the Retail Relief Scheme, in accordance with further guidance from Central Government, consultation with partners across Leicestershire and to improve the scheme based on experience resulting from ongoing delivery of the new scheme.

P94. PARKSIDE CIVIC SUITE – OPTIONS APPRAISAL

The Head of Central Services reported back to Members on the findings from the option appraisals on usage and the service operation of the Civic Suite. Members were requested to agree a budget for promoting the Civic Suite locally under existing arrangements with the aim of increasing paid usage of the suite as a venue for public sector and local business conferences. Members discussed the catering arrangements within the Civic Suite and the practicality of the kitchen to support large events. Support was given for the room hire charges which were deemed competitive.

Councillor Posnett moved the recommendations and Councillor Wright seconded. The vote was unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED

- a) that the outcome of the review of options be noted and that the promotional advertising of the Civic Suite as a public sector and local business venue, as set out in paragraph 7.2, at a cost of £3,000 be approved.

P95. CAPITAL PROGRAMME PROVISIONAL YEAR END POSITION 2013/14

The Head of Central services submitted a report to provide information on the provisional Capital Programme year end position for 2013-14, including a range of performance measures and to give consideration to requests for carrying forward unspent budgets in 2013-14 to 2014-15 in respect of specific schemes. Enquiries were made as to where the extra funding of £4k would be found for the Working Dog Sculpture project. It was advised that the Funding Officer has this in hand and the project will still be funded on a 50% amount from external support.

Councillor Rhodes moved the recommendations and Councillor Posnett seconded. The vote was unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED

- a) that those schemes in the 2013-14 Capital Programme totalling £2,588,000 and shown in the column headed "Amount C/Fwd to 2014-15 Scheme Specific" at Appendix A be carried forward and included in the Capital Programme as funded schemes.
- b) that delegated authority be granted to the Head of Central Services to vary the amount of the agreed carry forward on any scheme subject to the spending on any scheme not exceeding the total approved amount.
- c) the Business Case attached as Appendix B be approved together with the Dog Sculptures project in respect of the 2014/15 capital programme and the cost to be increased by £4,000 after considering the financial implications highlighted in section 5.2, the Council's contribution to the additional cost (£2,000) be met from Capital Receipts.

P96. REVENUE ESTIMATES CARRY FORWARD REQUESTS

The Head of Central Services submitted a report for approval of requests from Budget Holders to carry forward under spent budgets from 2013/14 to 2014/15.

Councillor Wright moved the recommendations and Councillor Posnett seconded. The vote was unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED

- a) that the requests set out in Appendix A for budgets to be carried forward from 2013/14 to 2014/15 be approved and;
- b) the Head of Central Services be given delegated authority to amend the actual amount carried forward once the final year end position is known and the actual under spend is compared to the amount requested.

P97. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL UNDER FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES

The Central Services Manager circulated a revised report at the meeting to submit 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.

A Member enquired as to the purpose of the HRA supplementary estimate and was advised that the monies contribute towards the cost of the rent arrears pilot and the early intervention of rent arrears before major debt is incurred.

Councillor Rhodes moved the recommendations and Councillor Posnett seconded. A vote was taken with the majority in favour and therefore carried.

RESOLVED

- a) the virements approved under delegated powers (para. 3.1.1 refers) be noted;
- b) the budget reductions approved under delegated powers (para. 4.1 refers) be noted;
- c) a supplementary estimate of £50,000 from the Corporate Priorities Reserve be approved to enable detailed plans for the Cattle Market and Food enterprise Centre as outlined in paragraph 5.1 and as requested by the Rural Economic and Environmental Affairs Committee;
- d) a supplementary estimate be approved of an additional £30,000 from the Corporate Priorities reserve as a subsidy towards the Green Waste Subscription Service as detailed in paragraph 5.2;
- e) a supplementary estimate be approved of an additional £20,000 from the Special Expense Reserve for the works at the Cemetery Lodge;
- f) a supplementary estimate of £38,500 from the HRA working balance to the HRA for the extension of the rent arrears pilot for a further 12 months and 20% of the cost of a sundry debt collector as noted in paragraph 5.4 be approved.

(Councillor Barnes declared a personal interest in the following item due to his role as a supplier to a local cheese production company.)

P98. ARTISAN CHEESE FAIR

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a report to seek approval to underwrite up to a maximum of £6,000, as a one-off contribution towards the Artisan Cheese Fair 2014.

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods advised that an evaluation of the Artisan Cheese fair event and submission of the accounts will be made before any monies are contributed. Members supported this approach.

Councillor Posnett moved the recommendations and Councillor Barnes seconded. The vote was unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that a one off contribution to a maximum of £6,000 in 2013/14 from the Corporate Priorities Reserve be approved towards the Artisan Cheese Fair. Delegated authority is given to the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods in consultation with the Head of central Services to determine the final contribution following analysis of the event's accounts for 2014.

P99. THE AGILE COUNCIL

The Chief Executive submitted a report which gave an update on the Council's position in relation to 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 Environmental Protection and Safety Manager, on behalf of the T3 Officers presented the report and drew Members' attention to the approach to delivery of "The Agile Council" promoted by PWC.

A Member commented on how the new website looked impressive but was disappointed to note that there was no option to make payment through Paypal. The Environmental Protection and Safety Manager will communicate a note to Members regarding the use of Paypal payments. Members were very impressed with the approach set out within the report and commended T3 for their work.

RESOLVED

- a) the work of T3 attached in the Appendix to this report be noted.

P100. **CORPORATE ISSUES**

The Chief Executive submitted a report to update Members on the progress of certain corporate issues and to brief on emerging developments.

Councillor Rhodes moved the recommendations and Councillor Posnett seconded. All members were in favour.

RESOLVED

- a) a further report be brought to this Committee upon the opportunity for further integrated locality services;
- b) the report be noted in general.

P101. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business.

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.

A member of the public here left the meeting.

(Councillor Moncrieff here left the meeting as he had previously declared a personal and pecuniary interest in Exempt Item 18, Recommendation 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 due to his role as Asfordby Ward Councillor.)

P102. **DISPOSAL OF LAND**

The Head of Communications and Neighbourhoods submitted a report to seek Members' approval for Officers to progress the sale of 2 small pieces of Land and declare them surplus to requirements. The Chairman advised that this report would be taken in two parts to allow Councillor Moncrieff to return to the meeting after Recommendations 2.1 and 2.2 had been discussed.

Councillor Rhodes moved recommendations 2.1 and 2.2 and Councillor Wright seconded.

All members were in favour.

(Councillor Moncrieff here returned to the meeting)

The second part of the report was discussed and subject to amendment, recommendations 2.3 and 2.4 were moved by Councillor Barnes and seconded by Councillor Wright.

All Members were in favour.

RESOLVED that recommendations 2.1 and 2.2 be approved and that subject to amendment recommendations 2.3 and 2.4 also be approved.

(Councillor Simpson and Councillor Bush here left the meeting having previously declared personal and pecuniary interests in Exempt Item 19 due to their roles on the Planning Committee.)

(Councillor Rhodes here left the meeting having previously declared a personal and pecuniary interest in any items relating to Leicestershire County Council due to attending Finance meetings in his role as a County Councillor. Councillor Posnett here took the role as Chair.)

P103. DISPOSAL OF LAND – FOYER PROJECT

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a report to seek Members' approval for Officers to progress the Housing Foyer Project.

RESOLVED that all recommendations in the report be approved.

The meeting which commenced at 6.30pm, closed at 8.25pm

Chairman