



RURAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

10 NOVEMBER 2010

PRESENT:-

Councillors N.R.G. Angrave (Chairman)
P. Baguley, G.E. Botterill, A. Freer, M.C.R. Graham MBE, E. Holmes
R.F. Moore-Coltman, D.E. Orson, J.B. Rhodes

As Observer
Councillor P.M. Chandler

Corporate Director (CM), Head of Social & Economic Development
Head of Regulatory Services, Chief Accountant,
Principal Policy Officer, Democracy Officer (EG)

R25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Moncrieff and Slater.

R26. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 8 September 2010 were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the Chairman.

R27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Minute Number R28(b) Task Group Updates

Councillor Rhodes declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in the above item related to the Melton Local Development Framework due to his role as a Leicestershire County Councillor.

R28. (a) RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

There were no recommendations from other Committees.

(b) TASK GROUP UPDATES

The Principal Policy Officer updated the Committee on the actions from the minutes of the Melton Local Development Framework Task Group meetings held on 8 July 2010 and 9 September 2010.

RESOLVED that the progress on the Melton Core Strategy be noted.

R29. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2010

The Chief Accountant submitted a report on behalf of the Head of Financial Services (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which updated the Committee on the progress of schemes within the Capital Programme to 30 September 2010.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the progress made on each capital scheme be noted.
- (2) the changed phasing of the Burton Street car park lighting scheme and its funding, as outlined in paragraph 5.2 be submitted to the Policy, Finance and Administration Committee for approval

R30. PARTNERSHIP SCHEMES IN CONSERVATION AREAS

The Head of Regulatory Services submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which updated Members on progress to date on the Partnership Scheme in Conservation Areas (PSICA) for Melton Mowbray and sought authority for the expenditure of this year's allocated capital sum.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the progress made to date be noted;
- (2) the Business Case at Appendix A be approved.

R31. FEES FOR PRE-APPLICATION PLANNING ADVICE

The Head of Regulatory Services submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which presented to the Committee potential options for the charging of pre-application advice and considered their respective impact and desirability.

Councillors discussed the options available and raised the following issues and points:-

- There was an opportunity for revenue but there was concern that pre-planning advice would take up a great deal of officers' time.
- Formalisation of any pre-planning consultation where a fee was payable would result in bureaucracy.
- Pre-planning advice could be viewed as predetermination whereas an informal conversation would be justified.
- Option one was preferable as Option two had too many downsides.

Councillor Chandler spoke in her capacity as Chair of the Development Committee. She informed Members present that she had spoken informally with the Development Committee about this matter and reported they were of the following opinion on fees for pre-application planning advice:-

- Whilst they were looking for revenue they were not convinced it would be cost effective due to the amount of officers' time involved in the process.
- They had no objection in respect of major applications.
- The current informal approach used for minor applications was a public relations exercise which people valued.
- There was a need to be careful as applications cost money and these costs would increase.

A Member enquired if a professional view could be obtained from another authority who had already adopted the procedure. The Head of Regulatory Services stated that he had already investigated this when making the report and other authorities had reported they were not getting the income expected and they had seen a reduction in the number of pre-applications being received.

In answer to a Member query on staffing implications, the Head of Regulatory Services stated that at the moment they would cope as they currently offered frequent advice however future capacity would be affected.

It was suggested that Option One be pursued and fully worked up scheme be presented to the Committee for further consideration. All Members were all in favour of this approach.

RESOLVED that Option One of Appendix B of the report be pursued and a fully worked up scheme be presented for further consideration by the Committee, on the basis of a cost recovery approach.

R32. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

The meeting which commenced at 6.30 p.m., closed at 7.10 p.m.

Chairman