



POLICY, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

BOARDROOM, PHOENIX HOUSE, MELTON MOWBRAY

5 JULY 2011

PRESENT:-

Councillors M.C.R. Graham (Chairman)
M. Barnes, G. Bush, S. Dungworth,
E. Holmes, J.T. Orson, P.M. Posnett,
J.B. Rhodes, D.R. Wright

Chief Executive
Strategic Director (CAM), Strategic Director (KA)
Head of Central Services, Head of Communities & Neighbourhoods,
Head of Communications, Corporate Property Officer,
Environmental Protection & Safety Manager; Principal Planning Officer,
Senior Accountant, Administrative Assistant

P1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Angrave.

P2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2011 were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the Chairman.

P3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Posnett and Rhodes declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in any matters relating to the Leicestershire County Council due to their roles as County Councillors.

[Councillor Barnes here entered the meeting at 6.32 p.m.]

P4. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

Council Business Development Sub-Committee: 31/05/11: Minute CB4
Provision of ICT Services from Leicestershire County Council.

RESOLVED To approve the proposals for a shared service agreement with

Leicestershire County Council to provide specific ICT solutions for Parkside, the Council and its partners and to approve an extension to the existing contract of up to 4 months in order to facilitate this arrangement taking the contract from May 2011.

P5. TASK GROUPS

The Committee was asked to reconstitute the Award of Merit Task Group and appoint Members thereto. The Committee was advised that following the request from the Chair of Overview, Scrutiny & Audit Committee and earlier comments from the Task group concerning the links with scrutiny, members proposed Efficiency issues lay with the Overview, Scrutiny & Audit Committee (OSA). The Overview, Scrutiny & Audit Committee agreed this approach and the Committee had set up a Task Group to take this forward.

Concern was expressed that the OSA Committee would be the parent committee for this area as there could be the potential for conflict. The view was put that the Task Group ought to report direct to the Policy, Finance and Administration Committee (PFA) and if those recommendations were accepted, then they would be passed to the OSA Committee for scrutiny. A discussion ensued during which advice was received from the Chief Executive concerning one of the key roles of OSA being policy development. A comment was made that it was useful for the Council to have an scrutiny arm which examined the implementation of policy rather than the policy itself. Several Members indicated that they supported the Task Group reporting back direct to PFA. This was moved and seconded and carried following a vote. The Chief Executive advised that the name of the Task Group revert back to the Extraordinary Efficiency Task Group due to this change in reporting lines.

RESOLVED To reconstitute the Award of Merit Task Group and to

(1) agree the following terms of reference in respect of the Award of Merit Scheme:-

- To consider nominations and select up to 5 persons/organisations to receive an Award of Merit and a Young Citizen Award
- To select from the nominations, the recipient of the 'Councillor Robert Hyslop Most Outstanding Service to the Community Award'

(2) agree the following terms of reference in respect of the Melton Borough Award :-

- To consider nominations and select up to 3 persons to receive a Melton Borough Award. This award being for those who do not meet the criteria of the Award of Merit but deserve recognition

(3) appoint Councillors Barnes, Bush, Cumbers, Freer (Mayor), Holmes, Illingworth, and Slater to serve on the Award of Merit Task Group;

(4) that the Task Group set up by the Overview, Scrutiny & Audit Committee to deal the with Efficiency agenda report direct to the Policy, Finance and Administration Committee and be renamed the Extraordinary Efficiency Task Group.

[The Strategic Director (KA) entered the meeting during consideration of the preceding item at 6.35 p.m.]

P6. CORPORATE ISSUES

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which sought Members' approval for the Council's Service Standards for 2011/12 and 2012/13 subject thereafter to review and to receive updates on the development of the Council's Performance Management Framework, the Improvement Plan and other related County wide initiatives. She pointed out that the score cards for the performance indicators circulated with the report were only indicative at this stage.

Clarification was sought on a number of the Service Standards and in response officers confirmed:

- applications for improvement grants would be processed within 4 weeks, not 4 months (EH service standard 6);
- reference to recovering missed bins within 24 hours of reporting meant emptying missed bins (waste management & recycling service standard 1);
- 95% of all appointments for housing repairs would be kept (people service standard 3);
- Shrub bed maintenance would be done as required, the service standard set being a minimum base line and would be subject to annual review (place service standard 5);
- the information from monthly vacant unit audits in the town was used by the Revenues section to align their database to ensure NNDR was collected. It also served as a macro indicator as a town centre health indicator (place service standard 11);
- if necessary the service could use a third party to respond to a report of a rat inside a home within 24 hours if the Pest Control Officer was unavailable (place service standard 6);
- removal of fly tipping within one working day of notification could be achieved. The reporting of incidents was encouraged across all service areas so that prompt action could be taken (place service standard 3);
- ASB complaints were responded to within 1 working day but not necessarily resolved within that time frame (place service standard 9);

Following comments about the standard that 80% of all customer queries would be dealt with at first point of contact and some difficulty experienced in being able to get through on the customer services number using the number option to indicate the caller was a Councillor the Head of Communications replied that this had been a fault with the telephony system which had been logged. She undertook to investigate the problems encountered.

Concern was also raised at the quality of the Council's website and negative feedback that Members had received about it. It was suggested that it should be a priority of the Council to improve the website. The Chief Executive advised that IT resources were currently concentrated on the new build but consideration could be given to costing additional resources to improve the website. The Chairman suggested that this be considered after the move to the new offices. Members

agreed and asked for a report on options to achieve this at the next meeting.

RESOLVED

(1) that the Service Standards set out in Appendix 3 to the report be approved for the years 2011/12 and 2012/13;

(2) to note the progress towards implementation of the revised Performance Framework and that a report will be made by the Overview, Scrutiny and Audit Committee Performance Management Task Group to this Committee at its next meeting;

(3) the update presented to the Improvement Plan “Leadership and Vision” be noted;

(4) a report be made to this Committee at its next meeting on the Countywide activities concerning the “Big Society” including development of the Melton position;

(5) a report be presented to this Committee following consideration by the Melton Community Partnership of the local implications of the changes to the Leicestershire Together Management Framework.

(6) a report be made to this Committee at its September meeting to consider options for improving the Council’s website and the associated resource implications.

P7. SERVICE PLANS 2011/12

The Head of Communities & Neighbourhoods submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which provided Members with an opportunity to comment on, and agree, Service Plans for 2011/12. Appended to the report were the service plans for Communications, Central Services, Communities & Neighbourhoods, and Regulatory Services.

Members went through each service plan in turn during which a number of queries were raised on some of the key service risk assessments. The Lead Member for Risk expressed concern that the impact of some risks had been rated as catastrophic which he felt could be lowered to a critical level if mitigating action was taken. Both the Head of Central Services and the Head of Communities & Neighbourhoods responded to the points raised confirming that a reappraisal could be carried out on those particular risks.

The increased use of the BACS system for paying suppliers contained within the Central Services service plan was welcomed but disappointment expressed that this was not included within the Communities & Neighbourhoods service plan for the payment of benefits. The Head of Communities & Neighbourhoods stated that he would be working with the Head of Central Services to add this to his service area’s “next steps. The Head of Central Services commented on the practical and test implications of such a move and advised that if successful, progress would be on a piecemeal basis. After further questions had been put and responses given by the officers, the service plans were approved subject to a reappraisal of the identified key service risks and this being agreed by the Lead member for Risk.

RESOLVED that subject to

(1) the key service risks in the Service Plans being reappraised and agreed with the Lead Member for Risk, and

(2) the Head of Communities & Neighbourhoods amending his Service Plan to include provision for payment of benefits by the BACS system and that Councillor Posnett be updated on progress

the Service Plans for 2011/12 be approved.

[The Head of Communities & Neighbourhoods, the Head of Communications, the Environmental Protection & Safety Manager and the Principal Planning Officer here left the meeting.]

P8. **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT AND STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL**

The Monitoring Officer and S.151 Officer submitted a joint report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which explained the requirements for the Council to produce an Annual Governance Statement (AGS). The purpose of AGS process was to provide a continuous review of the effectiveness of the Council's internal control and risk management systems, so as to give assurance of their effectiveness and/or to produce a management action plan to address identified weaknesses in either process.

The Strategic Director (CAM) and Monitoring Officer drew Members' attention to Appendix A to the report which set out a summary of the systems of internal control across the Council and provided an opinion on the standards achieved. The action plan of matters arising from the previous year was attached at Appendix B. A Member pointed out an amendment to the (AGS) at paragraph 5 to delete reference to the Local Area Agreement. At Appendix B she confirmed that a "topo survey" was an abbreviation for topological survey.

RESOLVED that

(1) to approve the Council's Annual Governance Statement (AGS) as set out in Appendix A to the report subject to the deletion of the sentence at paragraph five relating to the Local Area Agreement;

(2) to note the progress made with the actions from last year as set out in the action plan at Appendix B to the report.

P9. **REVENUE BUDGET 2010/11 – PROVISIONAL YEAR END POSITION**

The Head Central Services submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which

- (a) provided information of the provisional year end position subject to external audit approval for 2010/11
- (b) provided information on the implications for the Council's balances and reserves.

The Head of Central Services highlighted the key points of the report and Members welcomed the good news it contained having regard to the Council's tight financial control. The Chief Executive commended the cash flow management which had worked well for two years running. The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the Head of Central Services and her team.

RESOLVED

- (1) to note the provisional year end position, variations to the 2010/11 estimated year end position and the resultant effect on the Council's balances and reserves as set out in the report, and;
- (2) that supplementary estimates be approved for those services which are overspent against the approved budget.

P10. **ANNUAL REPORT ON THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AND ACTUAL PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2010/11**

The Head of Central Services submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which stated that

- (a) the Annual Treasury Report was a requirement of the Council's reporting procedures and provided a summary of the Treasury activities in 2010-11. The report also covered the actual position on the Prudential Indicators in accordance with the Prudential Code;
- (b) the report met the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital finance in Local Authorities. The Council was required to comply with both codes through Regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003.

The Head of Central Services drew Members' attention to the main issues within the report including the challenges posed by the current economic position. She responded to a Member's question on loans and fixed and variable rates.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Treasury Management Annual Report 2010-11 be approved;
- (2) the actual position on Prudential Indicators for 2010/11 be noted;
- (3) the investment strategy is reviewed at a future meeting of this Committee should there be any significant change to the Council's balances available for investment.

P11. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL UNDER FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES

The Head of Central Services submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which submitted requests for approval under Financial Procedure Rules and provided information on amounts approved under delegated powers and reported the impact of these on the Council's reserves and balances.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the virements approved under delegated powers be noted;
- (2) the budget reduction approved under delegated powers be noted;
- (3) the following business cases be approved:
 - (a) Uniform Public Access
 - (b) Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas (PSICA);
 - (c) Purchase and installation of an I-Play Unit;
- (4) the virement of £15K from the Uniform Public Access project to the proposed new PSICA project be approved and;

P12. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2010/11

The Head of Central Services submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) appended to which was the Statement of Accounts for 2010-11 for approval. The accounts had been prepared in accordance with the Audit Commission Act 1998 and the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 and informed the Committee of the key issues within the accounts.

The Head of Central Services explained that a considerable amount of work had gone into the production of the accounts as they now had to comply with international reporting standards. This meant that the 2009/10 accounts also had been restated in line with the new standard. She wished to place on record her thanks to the Financial Services team for meeting the deadline. Members noted an amendment to the report to delete reference to the basis for allocation of costs for fax machines. After the Senior Accountant had responded to questions on the HRA income and expenditure statement, Members added their thanks to the Head of Central Services' Financial Services team.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Statement of Accounts for 2010/11 be approved and signed by the Chairman;
- (2) the Financial Services Section be thanked for providing the Statement of Accounts within the statutory deadline.

P13. INSURANCE POLICY RENEWALS 2011/12

The Head of Central Services submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which sought approval to renew the council's various insurance policies with the Council's current insurer, Zurich Municipal (ZM), with effect from 1 July 2011. Members were advised that initially this would be for a one year period with an option to extend the contract for the remaining three years of the long term agreement entered into on 1 July.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Council's various insurance policies be renewed with ZM for a one year period commencing 1 July 2011 at the annual cost shown in the report;
- (2) the contract be extended for the remaining three years of the long term agreement commencing 1 July 2012 subject to this being on the same terms and conditions as 2011/12.

P14. PROPOSED CHARGES FOR THE NEW CIVIC SUITE AT PARKSIDE

The Corporate Property Officer submitted a report on behalf of the Head of Central Services (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which set out the proposed charges for the civic suite at Parkside. Initial draft booking leaflets and forms were being developed for the marketing and promotion of the suites and copies of these had been appended to the report. The Corporate Property Officer advised that the proposed scale of charges were in line with commercial rates charged by similar venues across the county and the Midlands.

Members considered the draft booking documents and it was suggested that reference to customers telling their friends if they had enjoyed their time and if not, contacting the Council only need to appear on the leaflet once not twice. The Chairman stated that free Wifi would be available to users and therefore this should be included on the list of equipment. The Corporate Property Officer clarified that use of the Wifi would be password controlled.

Some concerns were raised about the lack of full kitchen facilities in the building and if caterers were reliant on a mobile oven this could add considerably to the cost of a function. The Corporate Property Officer replied that there were hot plate facilities and caterers would be able to access the rear of the building to park and unload. In agreeing the proposed charges, it was acknowledged that time would tell if the charges had been pitched at the right level.

RESOLVED that

- (1) to approve the proposed scale of charges for the hiring of the new Civic Suite rooms at Parkside;
- (2) subject to the guide to booking a room being amended to remove the duplicated reference to inviting customer feedback, and the inclusion of free Wifi under equipment hire, the initial draft booking leaflets and forms being developed for the

marketing and promotion of the suites be noted;

(3) delegated authority be given to the Head of Central Services and the Corporate Property Officer to let civic suite rooms during normal working hours free of charge or at reduced rates to charities and partners if rooms are not let within 14 days of the proposed letting date.

P15. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

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

P16. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL UNDER FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES

The Strategic Director (CAM) submitted the exempt appendix C to the report by the Head of Central Services requesting an amendment to the capital programme for the Community & Social Affairs Committee.

RESOLVED that the Capital Programme for the Community & Social Affairs Committee be amended in accordance with the recommendation contained in exempt Appendix C to the report submitted by the Head of Central Services at minute P.11 above.

P17. MAJOR PROPERTY UPDATE

The Head of Central Services submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which updated the Committee on the progress with the exempt matters relating to the New Council Offices and other major projects. Recent developments since the last meeting were covered in the report.

RESOLVED that

- (1) to note the progress update on Parkside;
- (2) to note the update on the Nottingham Road disposal and the action taken by the Chief Executive acting under urgent delegated powers;
- (3) to approve the dedication of the footpath that runs along the railway embankment adjacent to the disposal site as shown on the plan attached to the report subject to the Leicestershire County Council undertaking public consultation;
- (4) to note 7 Whitlock Way, Asfordby was entered for Savills auction on 30 June 2011 and the previous approval for the receipt from the disposal be allocated to the

Housing Revenue Account;

(5) to note the update on the cattle market agreement;

(6) to note the remaining major property update report and agree the recommendation.

The meeting which commenced at 6.30 p.m., closed at 8.30 p.m.

Chairman