



RURAL, ECONOMIC & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

7 SEPTEMBER 2011

Present :-

Councillors N.R.G. Angrave (Chairman),
P. Baguley, M.W. Barnes, G.E. Botterill, M. Gordon,
L. Horton, S. Lumley, M. O'Callaghan, J.B. Rhodes

As Observer

Councillors Chandler, Simpson, Wyatt

Corporate Director (CM)
Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods
Head of Central Services, Head of Regulatory Services
Corporate Property Officer, Senior Planning Policy Officer
Waste and Environmental Maintenance Manager
Administrative Support Officer

R13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Graham, MBE and Councillor Orson.

R14. MINUTES

It was requested that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2011 be amended to confirm that Councillor P Chandler's membership of the MLDF Task Group was as a full member and not a standing observer as stated in the minutes. Subject to this amendment the minutes were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the Chairman.

R15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Rhodes declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in any items related to Leicestershire County Council due to his role as a Leicestershire County Councillor.

R16. CHAIR'S BRIEFING: MELTON LOCAL AREA DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

In response to a request from Burton and Dalby Parish Council the Chairman invited Mr Gerald Digby to address the committee regarding concerns that the Parish Council have about the workings of the MLDF Task Group.

Mr Gerald Digby of Burton and Dalby Parish Council had been invited to the meeting to give a presentation regarding the workings of the Melton Local Development Framework (MLDF) Task Group and its decisions. The Chairman asked that Mr Digby be able to give the presentation uninterrupted and that any questions regarding the presentation be asked after completion.

Mr. Digby thanked the Committee for the opportunity to address Members. Mr Digby expressed the view that issues regarding the MLDF had continued for a number of years. The trigger to his attendance at this meeting was a letter to the chairman asking if Burton and Dalby PC could attend a meeting of the MLDF Task Group. The decision to not allow this attendance has been challenged by the Parish Council who have a desire to know what is happening with regard to their area and indicated he wished to present his timeline concerns in order, as follows.

Mr. Digby also raised concerns regarding the transparency and openness of information and access to meetings cross referencing Mr. Bob Neil's recent letter on this issue.

2008: The Core Strategy preferred option was published.

2007: The Parish Council had been informed that they could expect a road coming to them.

April, 2009: Senior Planning Policy Officer had submitted a document favouring an option – Option A South. The Committee had decided that they would 'ask' a task group to consider extensive traffic modelling, including:

- 1) Cross country as well as town traffic
- 2) More focussed on town traffic

Their specific remit was to go away and study the modelling and decide between Option A South or Option C North and then take recommendations to Full Council.

Sept 08, 2009: Burton & Dalby Parish Council requested access to observe the workings of the MLDF Task Group. This request was denied.

Sept 22, 2009: The MLDF Task Group met to make a most important decision. Documents were circulated and received 3 days prior to this

meeting. No copies of the traffic modelling were amongst these papers. The information taken to this meeting was complex and detailed. The meeting finished at around 9 pm. A member of the Task Group contacted Burton & Dalby Parish Council and told them that it was to be Option C North. It had been decided that the road element of the decision could be taken from an alternative option and in effect a hybrid option be created.

After contacting another councillor, Mr Digby was assured that he was mistaken and that the chosen option was Option C North. The chairman of the task group went to Burton & Dalby Parish Council to talk to them. Prior to the task group meeting, Mr Digby had been told that as soon as the group had met, the traffic modelling report would be available. This did not happen. The Senior Planning Policy Officer said that the traffic modelling report would not be released until after the special meeting of Full Council in November.

October 2009: At a Parish Council liaison meeting the Senior Planning Policy Officer informed the Parish Council that the decision for Option C North and an extended bypass was unanimous and that members of the Task Group did not want to read documents, but preferred a presentation to be made.

November 18, 2009: The decision for Option C North was approved at Full Council by 14 votes to 4. Mr Digby cited statements from the minutes of this meeting including a statement by the Chair of the MLDF Task Group and a statement from the Deputy Leader of the Council which included the words “this decision will shape the future of the town for years to come” and a statement from the Assistant Chief Executive which stated that a viability assessment undertaken by Savills stated that the recommendations were achievable.

Mr Digby stated at this point that there had been no viability statement.

January 2010: The Parish Council asked for a meeting with the Chief Executive. The vice chairman of the MLDF Task Group was present at this meeting.

Mr Digby knew that when the decision was taken in September 2009 2 councillors had declared and another admitted that he was the 3rd member to declare and had thought that he had opted for Option C North. He asked that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee investigate and was promised in January 2010 by the Chief Executive that this would happen.

Burton & Dalby Parish Council took legal advice, at great cost, from Marron’s after 8 weeks had lapsed and no investigation had taken place. By 30 March 2010 the O&S review had still not taken place.

Melton Borough Council took advice from a legal counsellor. Burton & Dalby Parish Council will be putting a request to the monitoring officer to establish how much this advice cost.

In summation Mr Digby asked the committee that Burton & Dalby Parish Council are given access to meetings and that a new Task group study carefully the Ptolomey submissions and its impacts and that they compare Option C North with the chosen hybrid option. He also asked that councillors see all relevant documentation including the redacted Chapter 6 of the Ptolemy report.

Mr Digby expressed disappointment at the way that Burton & Dalby Parish Council had been treated.

In conclusion Mr Digby reminded councillors that they are elected to do a job on behalf of the electorate.

The Chairman thanked Mr Digby and assured him that representatives of Burton & Dalby Parish Council would be invited to a Task Group meeting where appropriate and that his concerns would be responded to.

Mr Digby was invited to stay for the remainder of the REEA Committee. However he chose to leave at 7.05 pm.

The Chairman asked for agreement that a response be given to Burton and Dalby Parish Council and it was agreed that this would be prepared by himself and the Corporate Director (CM).

R17. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

There were no recommendations from other committees.

Councillor M O'Callaghan entered the meeting at 7.05 pm.

R18. BUDGET MONITORING APRIL TO JUNE 2011

The Head of Central Services (DG) presented a report (copies of which had been previously circulated to Members) to provide information on actual expenditure and income incurred on this Committee's services compared to the latest approved budget for the 01 April 2011 to 30 June 2011.

RESOLVED that

The financial position on each of this Committee's services to 30 June be noted.

Councillor J Simpson left the meeting at 7.15 pm.

R19. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING TO JULY 2011

The Head of Central Services presented a report (copies of which had been previously circulated to Members) to update the Committee on the progress of schemes within the Capital Programme to 31 July 2011.

RESOLVED that

1. The progress made on each capital scheme be noted, and
2. The business case as outlined at para 5.3 be submitted to Policy, Finance and Administration committee for approval.

R20. REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES 2012/13

THE Head of Central Services presented a report (copies of which had been previously circulated to Members) to provide information on the various fees and charges that are made by this committee and to recommend changes to these charges to operate from 01 April 2012, with the exception of Building Control fees, these are to be implemented on 01 October 2011.

In response to a members question regarding the charges which were being considered by the committee the Head of Central Services reminded the committee that she had delegated authority to agree any changes which were in line with inflation.

In consideration of extending charges for pre-planning application advice to smaller developments several members questioned whether this might deter people from seeking advice and therefore lead to ill considered applications being made.

A proposed amendment to 2.2 of the recommendations to charge for any development of 2 dwellings or more but not for single dwellings was accepted.

In consideration of introducing charges for new and additional refuse and recycling bins and boxes several members felt that such a move might deter people from continuing to recycle waste. In view of the high cost of this service it was agreed that further investigation be carried out by the Waste and Environmental Maintenance Manager into reasons for replacements, longevity of bins and boxes and whether there are 'hot spot' areas requiring more replacements than others.

RESOLVED that

- 1 The level of charges for 2012-13 for each of the services as set out in the Committee Report be approved
- 2 The new income stream for pre-application discussions be continued in its current form with the addition of major and minor developments but excluding charges for applications for single dwellings.
- 3 Further investigation into the introduction of charging for new and additional refuse and recycling bins and boxes be carried out.

R21. CAR PARKING UPDATE REPORT

The Corporate Property Officer presented a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) to update on current car park income and propose a number of changes to the charging policy.

In response to a concerns expressed by several members regarding discouraging tourism coaches by introducing parking charges, the Head of Central Services clarified the position; the proposed charges for use of the car parks by coaches is for timetabled coaches and not tourism coaches.

A member expressed the opinion that no increase should be made in charges for parking on Tuesdays in order to reduce the differential and encourage shoppers into the town centre on market day.

RESOLVED that

1. The proposed review of charges for car parking be approved.
- 2 The introduction of season tickets in long stay car parks be approved.
- 3 The charges for timetabled coach and bus parking, but not tourist coach and bus parking, be reviewed
- 4 Charges for blue badges holders not be introduced
- 5 The variations to off street parking be approved

R22. BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID) UPDATE

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods presented a report to Members (copies of which had previously been circulated) to update on the BID project and to seek a nomination from members to the Melton BID Board.

The nomination of Councillor Angrave to the Melton Mowbray Bid Board was agreed.

RESOLVED that

- 1 The BID update be noted
- 2 Councillor Angrave be nominated to serve on the BID Board.

Councillor Horton left the meeting at 7.55.pm.

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

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

R23. **WASTE AND RECYCLING SERVICES**

The Head of Regulatory Services presented a report to Members (copies of which had previously been circulated) to inform on a range of options for the future delivery of waste and recycling services, and the opportunities, disadvantages, financial and other risks associated with each option.

A member proposed that any decisions about such a complex issue should be deferred for further work to be carried out around the various proposals.

The Chairman cautioned that changes may be needed in order to make financial savings and that it was necessary to have public support for any changes in order to maintain high levels of recycling to maintain revenue levels.

A member expressed the view that the majority of this item could have been debated openly.

A member voiced concerns that exempt papers are not circulated to non-committee Members in hard copy. The Corporate Director (CM) agreed to take this concern back to the Efficiency Task Group for reconsideration.

RESOLVED that

The range of options for the future of waste and recycling services be taken to the Waste Management Task Group, following legal advice regarding the contract, for further consideration.

R24. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

The meeting which commenced at 6.30 pm closed at 8.20 pm.

Chairman