



POLICY, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

PARKSIDE, STATION APPROACH, BURTON STREET, MELTON MOWBRAY

07 DECEMBER 2011

PRESENT:-

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

As Observer
Councillor P.Chandler

Chief Executive, Strategic Director (KA), Strategic Director (CAM),
Head of Central Services, Head of Regulatory Services,
Head of Communications, People Manager,
Committee Support Officers (LS) and (JR),
Guest: Richard Evans, Chief Executive,
South & West Leicestershire Citizens Advice Bureau.

P47. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J.B.Rhodes
Councillors Holmes and Orson joined the meeting at 7.05pm.
Councillor Wright joined the meeting at 7.10pm.

P48. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2011 were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the Chairman.

The Chief Executive gave an update regarding her meeting with the Chief Executive of Leicestershire County Council.

P49. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

The Chairman, in exercising his statutory powers, agreed that the following item be considered as a matter of urgency due to the Council giving an immediate reaction to the closure of the Citizens Advice Bureau and the establishment of the service again from January 2012.

(Councillors Holmes and Orson here joined the meeting at 7.05 pm.)

Councillor Orson declared a personal and non- prejudicial interest in any matters relating to the Leicestershire County Council due to his role as a County Councillor.

P50. URGENT BUSINESS

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a report which provided information on the actions taken to mitigate the services lost following the recent closure of the Citizen Advice Bureau office in Melton Mowbray and which sought approval on the next steps proposed both in the short and long term.

(Councillor Wright and the Place Manager, Ronan Browne, here joined the meeting at 7.10pm)

The Strategic Director (KA) outlined the background of, and the key issues regarding, the closure of the Melton office of the Citizens Advice Bureau. Council Officers had been working with the National CAB Network Manager and Officers from the South & West Leicestershire CAB, who currently provide services to 5 out of 7 Leicestershire districts. Progress was good and a draft short term proposal would provide a service for Melton residents from January 2012. A more sustainable service would be provided from April 2012, with an expanded service from September 2012. Further developments were required to these draft proposals.

Richard Evans, Chief Executive of South & West Leicestershire Citizens Advice Bureau, advised Members that it was part of his role to speak of the work involved for the CAB and the robust governance arrangements of previous years. The CAB workload was being prioritised and matters of urgency were being dealt with. Officers were congratulated for getting this arrangement to the table so swiftly. Flexibility on sites and service delivery was required. There was encouragement for Parkside to be used for the CAB service.

The short term proposal would deliver a basic service for Melton residents through the existing telephone system and provide services to any Melton resident that could visit one of the existing Leicestershire offices. In January 2012 outreach sessions would commence at the suggested sites of Parkside, The Cove Children's Centre and The Edge Children's Centre. Two desk spaces would be provided, at Parkside, for back office services.

The medium term proposal would deliver face to face advice in an outreach setting. Eight fixed desks would be required to accommodate a countywide contact centre for CAB services who would respond to initial contact being made and arrange appointments for those needing full advice. The expanded service was to be developed with most initiatives supporting a full service available from 2013.

RESOLVED that

- (1) Members noted the actions taken to mitigate the loss of services following the closure of the CAB office in Melton.

- (2) Members approved the short term service solution proposed by the South and West Leicestershire CAB, which will begin in January 2012, which includes the provision of 2 desk spaces for back office services at Parkside.
- (3) Members noted the longer term proposals identified to begin in April 2012, and September 2012 respectively and authorised Officers to work with the CAB and appropriate stakeholders to develop these proposals further and bring back to an appropriate meeting of the Community & Social Affairs committee, but no later than the end of March 2012.
- (4) Members approved that the remaining amount of the 2011/12 CAB grant (£16,667) be earmarked for the South and West Citizen Advice Bureau, on the basis of:
 - (i) Payment of 50% to support the short term service as described above.
 - (ii) In principle Members approved 50% as a contribution to the capital investment needed to implement the longer term proposals, following successful conclusion of the longer term proposals as above.

P51. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

There were no recommendations from other committees.

P52. 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.

P53. HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES

The Head of Regulatory Services submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which sought approval for a number of Health and Safety policies.

RESOLVED that subject to an amendment to the wording in the Alcohol and Substance Abuse Policy and Procedure which should read:-

“Employees must inform their Line Manager regarding any prescribed or self administered medication that may have an effect on their ability to carry out their work safely, and must follow any instructions subsequently given. Drugs that cause drowsiness must not be used whilst at work without Line Manager approval.”

- (1) The policies were approved with immediate effect.
- (2) The Head of Regulatory Services be given delegated authority to amend the policies in line with Health & Safety legislation and best practice guidance.

P54. UPDATE ON PLANS FOR WEB SITE DEVELOPMENT

The Head of Communications submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which advised Members of the plans to improve and update the Council web site as requested at the July PFA Committee meeting. The Head of Communications reported that some changes had already been made and that the process was ongoing.

RESOLVED to note action taken to date and further options being considered to improve and update the website.

P55. MAYORAL ROLE: OSA REVIEW

The Head of Communications submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which advised Members on the recommendations from the OSA Review of the Mayoral Role. A discussion around the administration of the Mayor's Charity suggested that this was a valuable assistance from the Supporting officer and should be encouraged. Each Mayor had the flexibility to work as they wished whilst using the Information Pack as a guide. Minor amendments to some details referred to in the Information Pack were agreed.

RESOLVED to approve the recommendations of the OSA Committee subject to:

- Recommendation (e) is deleted.
- Recommendation (f) be amended to read:
"The Mayor may accept such invitations as he/she considers appropriate, however the Council will expect that the Mayor will not exceed the budget allocation set by the Council"
- Recommendation (i) is deleted.
- Recommendation (j) is deleted
- Recommendation (o) is amended to read:
"Corporate or Borough Gifts – personalised calligraphic, high quality, framed certificates be investigated as well as gifts."

P56. DRIVING POLICY FOR MEMBERS

The Head of Communications submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which sought approval of the Driving Policy for Members. Driving documentation e.g. Driving Licence, Insurance, MOT certificate, etc provided by Members would be recorded by Communication Services to comply with the policy. A discussion regarding using private vehicles for travelling to planning sites and other Council functions raised the issue of insurance cover for business use. The Head of Communications advised that assistance will be given to Members, to check documentation submitted, to see if they are covered for business use.

It was proposed and seconded to approve the recommendations contained within the Head of Communications' report.

Following a vote there was an equality of votes for and against the motion; the Chairman exercised his casting vote in favour of the motion.

Councillor Holmes requested that her vote against the motion be recorded.

RESOLVED that

- (1) That the Driving Policy was approved.
- (2) Any changes required to the policy due to changes in legislation, best practice or other circumstances are to be delegated to the Head of Communications in consultation with the Chair of the Committee.

P57. CORPORATE COMPENSATION POLICY

The Head of Communications submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which requested Members to consider and approve a Corporate Compensation Policy for the Council.

RESOLVED that

- (1) That the Corporate Compensation Policy be approved.
- (2) A report be made to the PFA Committee annually at the first meeting following the close of the financial year setting out the use of the policy.

P58. CORPORATE ISSUES

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which updated Members upon Corporate Issues including the regular review of the Improvement Plan, Performance Management Update, Countywide issues and a report back on the discussions with the Rural Community Council (RCC).

The Chairman advised that he was no longer a Trustee of the Rural Community Council and therefore has no personal or prejudicial interest to declare.

RESOLVED that

- (1) The progress report upon the Improvement Plan be noted.
- (2) The Committee review the Improvement Plan on or before its meeting in June 2012 to update it in line with current Council aspirations and requirements following the move to Parkside, work with Partners and the Countywide position.
- (3) The Performance update be noted.

- (4) The recommended area of activity with the Rural Community Council was agreed and a Grant Award equal to 1/3 of the previous Annual Award is to be made. (£1,430)

P59. 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 sought approvals for and information on amounts approved under delegated powers and to report 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 reductions approved under delegated powers be noted.
- (3) The supplementary estimate of £10k be added to the Legal Services Professional Fees budget from the working balance to support legal advocacy work in a planning application appeal inquiry.
- (4) The virements of £8k each from the Burton Street Regeneration Scheme and the Wilton Road Car Park Improvement Scheme to install car park ticket machines at both the Burton Street Car Park and the Cattle Market site to be approved.

P60. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING TO 31 OCTOBER 2011

The Head of Central Services submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which updated the Committee on the progress of schemes within the Capital programme to 31 October 2011.

RESOLVED that

- (1) The progress made on each capital scheme was noted.
- (2) Members noted the increase in the authorised cost of the new build project for 2011/12 as reported to the Council Business & Development Sub-Committee on 28 November 2011.

P61. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2011-2012 to 2015-2016

The Head of Central Services submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which determined the Committee's capital programme for 2011-2016 based on a review of spending in the current year's programme and schemes included in the programme for later years. This process was the start of the budget setting process of the capital programme. The Head of Central Services reported that some IT projects had been removed, but two new projects have been added to the 2012/13 programme. No further IT projects were included, at this

stage, as the IT strategy was awaiting review and was part of the unfunded element of the SOCITM work. £262k of schemes was submitted for consideration for funding.

RESOLVED that

- (1) The Capital Programme for 2011-2016 be noted.
- (2) The schemes being submitted in 2011-2016 for funding as part of the budget setting process to ensure they meet the Council's priorities be noted.
- (3) The Project Mandates for Electronic Working for Members and the Web Site be approved for inclusion in the Capital Programme.

P62. LATEST POSITION – REVENUE BUDGET 2011/12 AND 2012/13

The Head of Central Services submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which reported on the activity of the Budget and Strategic Planning Working Group with regard to the scrutiny of the 2011/12 estimated year end position and the 2012/13 estimates. The report advised the latest position on the current year's revenue budget (2011/12) and the current position with regard to 2012/13.

The Head of Central Services reported that the budget has been scrutinised by Management Team and BSPWG and the latest position on the estimates was £287K for the General Fund and a surplus of £56k on Special Expenses MM. These estimates contained some assumptions and areas of uncertainty, some of which should be resolved as the budget process continued. It had been assumed that the Formula Grant would be received soon. Regarding the take up of Council Tax Freeze Grant the Head of Central Services advised that if members wished to increase Council Tax income by 2.5% over current levels in 2013/14, then Council Tax would have to rise by 5% to achieve the associated income level. The funding provided for 2011/12 would not be provided after 2014/15 which will result in a similar position.

The capital receipt from the sale of the Nottingham Road site has not been allowed for as there were different options to be considered for its use. More investigation was required to fully understand all the implications of various options which could include repaying all General Fund debt and transferring the residual debt to part fund the borrowing need on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), in addition there could be the option to provide further internal borrowing to the HRA to the benefit of both funds. The Head of Central Services explained that the receiving of the capital receipt has been raised now to indicate how important the receipt was to the capital spending plans and the core revenue budget. The figures at this early stage were in draft form and, would change as the budget process progressed.

RESOLVED that

- (1) The estimated year end position for 2011/12 as set out in the report be noted.

- (2) The position with regard to the 2012/13 estimates at this stage in the process and the issues yet to be resolved be noted.

P63. FEES AND CHARGES – CIVIC SUITE, PARKSIDE

The Head of Central Services submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which advised Members of the new proposed Civic Suite charges referred from the Council Development Sub-Committee held on 28 November 2011.

Examples of fees and charges at other establishments were discussed and the promotion of possible discount if bookings were to be made at Parkside for some events. The Head of Central Services advised that there were discounted costs available to Charities or those affiliated to Melton Borough Council. These formed part of the Booking Protocol for Parkside.

Subject to amendments to reflect the hire fee includes one setting up of a serving of tea and coffee and that guests must have vacated the premises by 12.30am. It was **RESOLVED** that

- (1) The charges be approved and delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Head of Central Services and the Chair of this committee, to vary these rates in the future should it be considered necessary.
- (2) A copy of the Room booking protocol be circulated to all members of PFA.
- (3) An interim analysis report on room usage and bookings be made to the Committee with details of bookings up to the end of the current financial year.

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED that the Public be excluded during the consideration of the following 2 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).

P64. MAJOR PROJECTS UPDATE

The Strategic Director (CAM) and Corporate Property Officer submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which gave an update on major projects for the Council.

RESOLVED that the recommendations contained in the report be implemented.

P65. REVIEW OF CHILDREN CENTRE SERVICES

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which noted and reviewed the recommendations arising from the Children Centre Review.

RESOLVED that the recommendations contained in the report be implemented.

The Chairman gave thanks to Members and Officers as it was his last meeting as Chairman.

The meeting which commenced at 7 p.m., closed at 9.25 p.m.

Chairman