



POLICY, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

PARKSIDE, STATION APPROACH, BURTON STREET, MELTON MOWBRAY

30 September 2015

PRESENT:-

Councillors J.B Rhodes (Chairman), P.M Posnett (Vice Chair), R De Burle,
T. Greenow, L. Higgins, E. Holmes, E. Hutchison, D.R Wright, J. Wyatt.

As substitute:-

A. Pearson for M. Glancy

As Observer:-

P. Chandler

Chief Executive, Strategic Director (KA), Head of Central Services,
Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods, Manager of HR and Communications,
Third Tier Officer/ Environmental Protection and Safety Manager,
Committee Support Officer (KW and JR)

P19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Glancy.

P20. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2015 were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the Chairman.

P21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Rhodes, Posnett and Pearson declared personal interests in any items relating to Leicestershire County Council due to their positions as County Councillors.

Councillor Greenow declared a personal and pecuniary interest in agenda item 14: Free After Three Parking Initiative, due to him being an employee of the Cattle Market. Councillor Greenow left the meeting when the discussion moved to extending the initiative to the fat stock sale at the Cattle Market.

P22. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

There were no recommendations from other committees.

P23. UPDATE ON DECISIONS

P10. 2015/16 – Recording of council meetings – way forward.

The update was noted.

RESOLVED that item (P10) will go forward to the Policy, Finance and Administration Committee on 1 December 2015.

P24. AGILE COUNCIL

The Tier Three (T3) Officer submitted and presented a report to Members to provide an update on the Council's position in relation to the delivery of "The Agile Council."

The report is the third update on the Council's position in relation to Price Waterhouse Coopers' 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 T3 officer highlighted the five themes of the report to Members and gave a summary of the work being undertaken in each one.

The Third Tier Officers are working, both individually and collectively, to place the Council's work in relation to the proposition set out within the "Agile Council" approach. The Council can track a significant history of service redesign, modernisation of service and service rationalisation based on up to date processes and customer requirements, together with an increasing use of customer insight and process redesign to bring further efficiencies into the Council's service delivery. This makes evident that the Council can demonstrate that it is "Agile".

Members confirmed that they thought Melton Borough Council could be an Agile Council as they believe this concept is now embedded into working practices and is naturally part of the culture at Parkside.

A Member queried the system of taking payments at Parkside as a member of the public had reported to him that they had been unable to do so. The Chief Executive gave a brief explanation of the payment system now in use as Parkside is a cashless office. The Manager of HR and Communications is to feed back to the customer service team that customers are to be directed to online payment screens available in reception, as an option for making payments at Parkside.

The Chair requested that periodic updates regarding the Agile Council and work of T3 officers continue.

All members were unanimously in favour

RESOLVED that

- 1) The work of T3 attached in Appendix 1 of the report be noted.

P25. **ANNUAL STAFF REVIEW**

The Head of Communications submitted a report to brief members on the current staffing structure as at 1 April 2015 and to provide information on changes to the structure since April 2014.

The Manager of HR and communications explained that the delegation has not been used and all posts allocated had adequate budgets available.

All members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The report be noted.

P26. **DISPOSAL OF OPEN SPACE LAND**

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted and presented a report to seek Members' approval to dispose of a small area of open space to Ab Kettleby Parish Council, to be used as open space for community use.

Ab Kettleby Parish Council has been consulted in this process, and consultation with local residents has been undertaken. The local community are supportive of this proposal.

All recommendations were moved by Councillor Posnett and Councillor Wyatt seconded.

All members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The small open space, identified in the plan attached at Appendix A, be declared surplus to requirements, and the disposal thereof be approved.
- 2) The transfer of ownership to Ab Kettleby Parish Council for £1 and that the special assumptions are incorporated into any transaction be approved.
- 3) Delegated authority be given to the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods in consultation with the Head of Central Services, to negotiate the disposal in line with s123 of the Local Government Act 1972 be approved.
- 4) Approval be given for delegation to the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods to respond to any comments resulting from the required consultation and any objections considered contentious by the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods will be reported to the appropriate Committee for consideration.

P27. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL UNDER FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES

The Head of Central Services submitted a report setting out requests for approval under the 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.

All recommendations were moved by Councillor Higgins and Councillor Wright seconded subject to amendments to recommendations 2.4 and 2.5.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The virements approved under delegated powers (para. 3.1.1 refers) be noted.
- 2) The budget reductions approved under delegated powers (para. 4.1 refers) be noted.
- 3) The business case discussed in para 5.1 be approved, with a supplementary estimate of £8k for Cattle Market health and safety works be approved, to be funded from capital receipts as recommended by the Rural, Economic and Environmental Affairs Committee and outlined in paragraph 5.2.
- 4) The use of £30,000 from the Local Development Framework (LDF) Reserve to fund local plans expenditure in 2015-16 as outlined in paragraph 6.1 be approved.
- 5) A supplementary estimate of £87,000 as a one-off allocation from the corporate priorities reserve to invest in initiatives that will maximise the opportunities for and targeting of vulnerable people and families to engage with Me and My Learning be approved. The aim being to get more people and families living their lives independently or more independently in the future, thereby contributing positively to us dealing with our anticipated budget pressures.

P28. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING APRIL – AUGUST 2015

The Head of Central Services submitted a report to update Members on the progress of schemes within the Capital Programme to 31 August 2015.

The detail for individual schemes is set out in Appendix A with key variances highlighted in paragraph 5.2. Actual expenditure is low although budget holders are saying funds will be spent by the year end with the exception of the footbridge off Asfordby Road where further inspections have revealed this is not required at this time. This will be formally removed when the programme is reviewed at the next meeting.

Further work to the Market Place, as part of the Market Place Enhancement scheme, is being undertaken and it is expected that all work be completed soon.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The progress made on each capital scheme be noted.

P29. **BUGET MONITORING APRIL – JUNE 2015**

The Head of Central Services submitted a report to set out the financial position for all Council services as well as the committees own services to the end of June 2015. This information has previously been communicated to Members in the Members' Newsletter.

Those budgets which are high risk are also subject to more scrutiny on a monthly basis and the position of these budgets to the end of July is attached at Appendix B. The overall predicted position at the year-end based on the end of June 2015 is an overall underspend of £108k.

The table provided at 3.2 does show a Year End Variance of an underspend of £128k on General Expenses as at the end of June 2015 and this figure was queried by Members. A request was made by Members that the figures presented, in future, could be made a little clearer. The key variances for this committee's service are set out in paragraph 3.8.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The financial position on each of this Committee's services to 30 June 2015 be noted along with the year-end forecast.

P30. **REVIEW OF CHARGES 2016/17**

The Head of Central Services submitted a report which sets out for consideration the level of charges to be applied for this committee's services from 1 April 2016 where the increase proposed is above or below inflation.. The various charges and proposals are set out in Appendix A and are based on budget holder's recommendations. These will feed into the budget setting process for 2016/17.

Members felt that the charges for a party event from 10am until midnight set out in Appendix A was too high compared to other local venues and that the use of the Civic Suite is underutilised. The Head of Central Services is looking at different ways of promoting the use of the rooms. Work is being done on the website search tool options so that Parkside is more likely to appear on search results. Advertising options are being progressed in liaison with the Economic Development Officer. However as the Council does not have an Event Organiser there is a strain on current resources to fully promote Parkside as a very favourable venue and limits its marketability..

It was also discussed that the rooms do not have the facilities required, such as a

kitchen when organising events e.g. parties. Food has to be brought in as there are no cooking facilities and the present kitchen is not suited to catering preparation. It was felt that this is a problem when trying to encourage bookings. It was suggested that a kitchen could be placed in the area to the side of Council Chamber 1 in the storage area.

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

The motion was carried by a majority vote.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The level of charges for 2016-17 for each of the services set out in the attached table to operate from 1 April 2016 be approved.

P31. BUDGET FRAMEWORK 2016/17

The Head of Central Services submitted a report to set out some key issues that will be incorporated into the MTFs and the budget process which has now commenced.

The latest information on the finance settlement is included following the announcements in July that non protected departments would be required to find savings of between 25% and 40% by 2019/20 with the profiling of this unclear with much speculation. Until the spending review is announced in November followed by the settlement in December the impact will remain unclear. Against the Council's current MTFs a 25% reduction over the period would be consistent with that already estimated. A 40% cut would represent a further reduction in grant of £360k over the period. The profiling of these savings over the period could result in further variation over the current MTFs. Another key issue and area of uncertainty is future of council tax freeze grant for prior years that is included in the settlement and whether this is built into core funding. The future of NHB also remains unclear.

It is proposed that no inflation be provided for non-pay costs even by way of a contingency but that 1% be included in the estimates for pay and pay related costs.

The other key issue considered is the review of the working balances. The current working balance of £820k has been in place since 2012/13. Appendix B shows that the current midpoint based on a risk based assessment is £645k. Therefore there is an opportunity to reduce the target working balance and move any surplus to the corporate priorities reserve or retain it for future financial pressures.

It was suggested by a Member that perhaps the working balance needs to be readdressed in light of the new Town Area Committee being formed. In reply it was explained that there will be no change in special expenses and general expenses provision with only some areas overlapping e.g. the skate park and allotments. The Town Area Committee will be responsible for how services are provided in the town but all financial decisions will still come back to the Policy, Finance and Administration Committee for recommendation to Full Council.

The new homes bonus annual income is on an annual increase and for the current

year is £900k. In 16/17 it is anticipated to increase to £1m.

It was asked if the sports village at King Edward VII was taken into account along with the living wage. The Head of Central Services explained that there are currently financial implications in buying the land at King Edward VII by way of the interim running arrangements but not to the redevelopment of the land as a business case has not yet been put forward, it is believed in 2017/18 there will be more information available. The Manager of HR and Communications explained that the Council already pay a living wage, which is more than the national rate of £7.25 per hour. The calculations are complicated but are being worked through.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Rhodes, subject to the amendment to recommendation 2.4 and Councillor Posnett seconded.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The proposed corporate planning and budget framework timetable for 2015/16, in respect of the 2016/17 financial year, set out at Appendix A be approved.
- 2) No inflation be provided for in the 2016/17 budget at service budget level, other than fees and charges which has been provided for at the rate of 2%, unless adjusted for known prices by budget holders and 1% for pay as reported to Members as part of the budget setting process for 2016/17 be approved.
- 3) The Council retains its objective of setting a balanced budget for 2016/17.
- 4) The target working balance be reduced to £645k and any surplus be transferred to the corporate priorities reserve subject to the budget process and Full Council.
- 5) The existing target levels of working balance be retained for special expenses (Melton Mowbray) at £50,000 and the Housing Reserve Account (HRA) at £750,000, be approved.
- 6) The relative priority of schemes continue to be determined by programme board for members to consider and allocate funding based on the information set out in the project mandates.
- 7) The key dates for the budget process be noted.

P32. FREE AFTER 3 CAR PARK INITIATIVE

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a report to seek Members' approval for Melton BID's proposal to pilot a Free After Three car parking initiative at Burton Street Long Stay town centre car park over a two month period in November and December 2015.

It was discussed that the campaign will seek to promote and support the town's early evening economy; leisure and culture e.g. theatre and family dining and also support the town's retailers, promoting a click and collect opportunity for customers. Members supported this initiative as footfall should increase and the benefit should

be felt by local retailers.

(Councillor Greenow here left the meeting after declaring a personal and pecuniary interest in the next item as he is an employee of the Cattle Market.)

An enquiry was made as to whether the Fat Stock Show day held at the Cattle Market on 1 December 2015 could also be included in the initiative.

As an outcome of discussion the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods is to assess the impact of extending the pilot scheme to the Fat Stock Show day (1 December 2015) and for the report to be presented at the next Rural, Economic and Environmental Affairs Committee meeting scheduled for 4 November 2015.

All members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The Melton BID's proposal to pilot a Free After Three car parking initiative at Burton Street car park over a two month period (November and December) in 2015 be approved.

(Councillor Greenow here re-entered the meeting)

P33. CORPORATE ISSUES

The Chief Executive submitted a report to brief Members on issues that have developed and upon which Officers have been working since the last meeting of this committee. An update on the Melton Extending to Excellence (ME2E) programme was also included.

The Chief Executive updated Members on the progress of the proposal for a Combined Authority. Consultation is required and a draft document, attached as Appendix 1, gave further detail. The results of the consultation will be taken into account by the partners when the final submission is prepared.

The work of the Third Tier Officers was reiterated and the Chief Executive expressed how pleased she was with their approach.

The Champions 2 (C2) Group have also looked at opportunities which can be created from the ME2E programme and have worked to create a management development and learning package for staff at other levels in the organisation.

The Council is to undertake a joint Investors in People and Customer Service Standard Assessment in mid- October. Concerns were raised about costs and if the awards are valuable. The Manager of HR and Communications explained that the Council will save money by doing the two awards at the same time and that it is a valuable assessment tool for improving services within the Council and externally.

The Chief Executive commented on the level of interest, from other organisations, in the Council's ethos and approach. Some had made visits to Parkside to see for themselves how shared partnership working was part of the culture here. The

parties involved were keen to remain in touch with the Council to see if further working arrangements may be beneficial and whether, in some cases, further integration of services could be achieved. After a visit from the Improvement & Efficiency Social Enterprise (IEsE) a representative wished to use the Council's way of working as a case study on certain models of working relating particularly to the integration of services. This information is to be used for a project report being produced by the IESE later in the year.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Wyatt and Councillor Higgins seconded.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The progress with respect to the development of a proposal for a Leicester, Leicestershire Combined Authority be noted.
- 2) Progress and commitment of Officers within the Council to the development of the Melton Extending to Excellence be endorsed.
- 3) The report be noted.

P34. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no 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).

P35. **FINANCE TEAM REVIEW**

The Head of Central Services submitted a report for Members to consider changes to the approved Central Services Team establishment to take effect in this financial year. It also outlined the next steps required to implement the changes.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Wyatt and seconded by Councillor Wright.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The changes to the structure of Central Services finance team be approved in accordance with the new structure shown at Appendix A.

- 2) The financial implications set out in section 5 be noted.
- 3) The redundancy for one Senior Accountant 0.6FTE be approved.

The meeting which commenced at 6.30 p.m., closed at 8.10 p.m.

Chairman