



POLICY, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

PARKSIDE, STATION APPROACH, BURTON STREET, MELTON MOWBRAY

30 September 2014

PRESENT:-

Councillors J.B Rhodes (Chairman), P. Posnett, J. Wyatt, M.M Gordon, G. Bush.
E. Hutchinson, M. O'Callaghan, J. Simpson

As Substitute

Councillor J. Orson

Chief Executive, Strategic Director (KA), Head of Central Services, ICT Client Manager,
Corporate Property Officer, Committee Support Officers (JR and DS)

The Chairman introduced the ICT Client Manager to the Committee.

Paul Langham manages the ICT Shared Services through Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council.

P14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Wright.

P15. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 1st July were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the Chairman.

P16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Rhodes, Orson and Posnett declared a personal interest in any matters relating to Leicestershire County Council due to their positions as County Councillors.

Councillor Simpson declared a personal interest in any items pertaining to MBC Staff as she has a son who is an employee of Melton Borough Council.

P17. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

There were no recommendations from other committees.

P.18 UPDATE ON DECISIONS

There were no outstanding updates on decisions from the last committee meeting

P19. IT POLICIES

The Head of Central Services and the ICT Client Manager submitted a report which provided members with the opportunity to comment on a number of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) policies that have been reviewed and updated following recommendations made by Internal Audit.

The ICT Client Manager advised Members that the key changes relate to the Email Exchange Policy (Appendix H) and the change in delegation to Officers. The IT Policies are now to be reviewed on an annual basis. It is proposed that minor or technical amendments can be made by delegated Officers and that only fundamental changes should go forward to committee for approval.

The ICT Client manager explained that an amendment had been proposed for the recommendation at 2.1 (a) of the report in relation to Appendix H: Email Exchange Policy. Following new guidelines, the Auto-Forwarding feature would still be permitted, but limited to other .gov.uk accounts only.

Some Members queried what this proposal would mean to those who have their Melton.gov.uk forwarded to a home or work email address. The ICT Client Manager gave assurance that a workaround is possible and has been used by some Members already on a regular basis. Vasco tokens can be used to access the email boxes through the gateway and training will be given to Members. Other issues will be examined relating to the Data Protection Act and the sharing of sensitive client information.

All recommendations were moved by Councillor Rhodes and Councillor Posnett seconded subject to amendment to 2.1 (a) Appendix H.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that the Council be requested to approve

a) The ICT Policies (Appendices 1 – 18) subject to amendment to Appendix H in that under the heading “Auto-Forward” the current wording be replaced with:

“The Auto-Forward feature should be used with caution and only to .gov.uk accounts. Emails should not be auto-forwarded to any other account.”

b) A change in delegation to allow:

- The Head of Central Services to approve technical policies and minor changes to all policies.
- The Head of Central Services in consultation with the Management Team to approve procedural and advisory policies.
- The Policy, Finance & Administration Committee to approve user policies

P20. ICT DELEGATED SERVICE BID

The Head of Central Services and the ICT Client Manager submitted a report to update Members on the current delegated ICT Service and the proposed future tender for an outsourced provider. The ICT Client Manager also advised Members of the Transformation Challenge Award Bid.

The ICT Client Manager advised Members that the current Steria Ltd contract will expire on 31 March 2016 and not 2015 as in the report. Currently Melton has delegated its ICT Service to Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC) and joined a wider ICT Shared Service with Hinckley, Blaby and Oadby Council. The ICT Service to all four councils is provided by Steria Ltd and a Client Team from Hinckley. A procurement exercise will need to commence shortly.

The Shared ICT Service has also submitted a bid for Transformation Challenge Award Funding. If successful, the bid will enable Melton, Hinckley, Blaby and Oadby Councils to work together to improve ICT Infrastructure and electronic Customer Services. These improvements are expected to be delivered as part of the new contract but if the bid is successful they could potentially be delivered earlier.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Wyatt and Councillor Gordon seconded. All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that

- a) Members confirmed their commitment to the delegation of the IT service to Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council and that the Council will take a full and active role in the consultation on the future of the service and the proposed procurement exercise through the Head of Central Services as the lead officer.
- b) A recommendation be made to Full Council that the current delegation agreement be updated in line with legal advice.
- c) The Transformation Challenge Award Bid for ICT and Electronic Customer Services be acknowledged.

P21. BUDGET MONITORING APRIL TO JUNE 2014

The Head of Central Services submitted a report to provide Members with information on actual expenditure and income incurred on this Committee's services compared to the latest approved budget for the period 1st April 2014 to 30th June 2014.

The items presented in the report reflect all Council Services based on high-risk budgets which are reviewed on a monthly basis. Based on the high-risk budgets from July 2014 figures, an overspend of £73,662 was noted. The most significant year end variances come from the Cattle Market (£29k), Rent Allowances (£33k) and Rent Rebates HRA (£23k). The position is being monitored proactively by Management Team and it is anticipated that a balanced position will be reached by the end of the year.

Reference was made to Appendix A, which showed an incorrect figure of £581,785

for the Year-End Forecast for the Total Special Expenses Melton Mowbray. The Head of Central Services advised that this was an oversight on the transfer of figures from the appendix to the report and that the correct figure should read £586,785.

A request was made by Councillor Orson for the Head of Central Services to provide a breakdown of monies concerning the Special Expenses of Sproxtton and Frisby. The Head of Central Services advised that the majority of monies is allocated to administrative charges.

The recommendation was moved by Councillor Orson and Councillor Wyatt seconded.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that

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

P22. BUDGET FRAMEWORK 2015/2016

The Head of Central Services submitted a report for Members to consider a number of key items which will feed into the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the 2015/16 budget and service planning preparation process.

The Head of Central Services advised that the Government published a consultation paper on the 2015-16 Local Government Finance Settlement in July, which the Council has responded to. The outcome of the consultation should be available for the MTFS and an announcement on the Local Government Finance Settlement should be received in December 2014..

In relation to Business Rate retention, there has been a proposal within Leicestershire to review the potential for reforming the pooling arrangements for the 2015/16 financial year. Melton Borough Council has given its support to an expression of interest, being submitted by Leicestershire County Council to CLG by 31st October 2014 but this does not commit any authority to being part of a pool, but offers the opportunity to undertake further financial modelling following the settlement announcement to understand the potential benefits if the pool was re-established. If the modelling demonstrates a financial benefit to Melton then delegated authority would be required for Officers, in consultation with appointed Members, to sign up within the 28 day window.

The working balance is being recommended to be retained at £820,000, despite revised figures showing a mid-point of £555k. This is due to on the risk-factors in relation to on-going and future reductions in funding and the volatility of the business rates income. In order to better understand the figures, data regarding Business Rates will be collected and mapped to get a better idea of the overall position which can feed into future calculations.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Rhodes and Councillor Orson seconded. All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that

- a) The proposed corporate planning and budget framework timetable for 2014/15, in respect of the 2015/16 financial year, set out at Appendix A be approved.
- b) Delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive and Head of Central Services in consultation with the Chair, Councillors Bush and Hutchison being the political groups' nominated consultees for the Policy Finance and Administration Committee, and Solicitor to the Council to sign up to the Leicestershire pool for business rates should the modelling demonstrate a financial benefit to the Melton and update the legal agreement accordingly.
- c) No inflation be provided for in the 2015/16 budget at service budget level, other than fees and charges which has been provided for at the rate of 2.5%, unless adjusted for known prices by budget holders. Instead a contingency budget for inflation be determined at an inflation rate of 2% for costs and 1% for pay and reported to Members as part of the budget setting process for 2015/16.
- d) The Council retains its objective of setting a balanced budget for 2015/16.
- e) The target working balance on general expenses remains at £820,000 with existing levels also retained for special expenses (Melton Mowbray) at £50,000 and the Housing Reserve Account (HRA) at £750,000.
- f) The Programme Board continue to determine the relative priority of schemes for members to consider and allocate funding based on the information set out in the project mandates.
- g) The key dates for the budget process be noted.

P23. A CORPORATE REVIEW OF CHARGES

The Head of Central Services submitted a report to provide information on various fees and charges that are made by this committee and to recommend changes to these charges to operate from 1st April 2105. This is the first stage of the budget setting process for 2015/16. The Corporate Property Officer advised Members that tenants are being actively sought for the area of Phoenix House not already let but the market is not strong at present.

An enquiry was made regarding the charges for the rental of Snow Hill Industrial Units and the Member was advised that the Rural, Economic & Environmental Affairs Committee will be presented with those charges.

The recommendation was moved by Councillor Rhodes and Councillor Posnett seconded.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that

- a) The committee determined the level of charges for 2015-16 for each of the services set out in the attached table to operate from 1st April 2015.

P24. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING TO 31 AUGUST 2014

The Head of Central Services submitted a report to update the Committee on the progress of schemes within the Capital Programme to 31st August 2014.

The recommendation was moved by Councillor Rhodes and Councillor Wyatt seconded.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that

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

P25. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL UNDER FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES

The Head of Central Services submitted a report to provide requests for approval of this Committee under 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.

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

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that

- a) the virements approved under delegated powers (para. 3.1.1 refers) be noted;
- b) the reductions approved under delegated powers (para. 4.1 refers) be noted;
- c) the supplementary estimates approved under delegated powers (para. 5.1.1 refers) be noted and;
- d) the virement set out in para 6.1 within the Housing Revenue Account capital programme as requested by the Community and Social Affairs Committee be approved
- e) Full Council be requested to update the Financial Procedure Rules and Project Appraisal System to allow virements within the HRA capital programme without referral to this committee where this supports the requirement of the Housing Asset Management Plan.

P26. CORPORATE ISSUES

The Chief Executive submitted a report to update Members with Corporate activities and issues which have occurred in the intervening period since the last report.

Following the visit from the Public Services Transformation Network Panel to Leicestershire several other Districts and Counties have asked to visit Parkside to enquire about new services such as the Me and My Learning Project and to understand the integrated ways of partnership working. The Chief Executive is

working with two other Chief Executives to develop a Transformation Strategy for Leicester and Leicestershire under the city deal 'Asks'. Discussions are at an early stage but it is envisaged that these will provide the basis of the Transformation Strategy in partnership with Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Council.

The Council is continuing to support Rushcliffe Borough Council in its project to provide and refurbish new offices allied to a leisure provision. A variety of visits are to be arranged for Rushcliffe to see for themselves how an open plan working environment can work for all Partners within the building.

The Chief Executive provided Members with a verbal update on the Transformation Challenge Bids and advised that the Council has been successful in its first Bid to the PTSN Challenge Panel for a sum of £45,000. This bid was made for additional IT and facilities to assist with the running of certain types of training and courses for clients attending Me and My Learning. This provision was not allowed under the ESF award and therefore the PTSN grant gives added value to those using the Phoenix House facility.

The next stage of the Me and My Learning Bid will include Blaby District Council as a Partner who will develop the concept for rollout within their own locality with the support of Melton. The Council was also look to see if other Districts within the County would be willing to participate within the project and see if the Me and My Learning ethos could work into their Districts and Locality Partnerships. Currently three other councils are showing interest in the program.

The 'Lightbulb' project has also been worked up into a full bid for submission. This project involves the provision of 'low level' integrated services for older people who can be supported and encouraged to retain their independence and lifestyle within the community.

The Strategic Director (KA) advised that the 'Early Help Bid' has been renamed 'Can-Do Communities. The Chief Executive went on to advise that this project focuses on modernising community development. The outcome aims to develop capable communities with local people working together to deal with local problems for neighbourhoods, families and people. The Bid is moving towards its final stages before submission at the present time. If successful, Melton, Blaby and Hinckley have agreed to be full partners in the initial roll-out of the program.

An offer has been made by this Council to be 'mentioned' in Charnwood Borough Council's Asset Rationalisation and Development Bid. This would enable support to be given to any staffing/integration cultural aspects that may require development if the Bid is successful, but it is to be noted that Melton will not be a signatory to the Bid.

Congratulations were given from Members to all involved in the submission of these Bids and the process was described as "outstandingly positive".

The recommendation was moved by Councillor Orson and Councillor Posnett seconded.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that

- a) Support be given to the submission of the Transformation Challenge Bids, subject to approval of the Section 151 Officer as required by the process.

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 Paragraphs 3 and 5.

P28. **PROPERTY SERVICES REVIEW**

The Head of Central Services and the Corporate Property Officer submitted a report for Members' to consider changes to the approved property establishment.

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

All members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that all recommendations in the report be approved.

The meeting which began at 06:30pm closed at 07:25pm

Chairman