



**MEETING OF THE
RURAL, ECONOMIC & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

07 MARCH 2012

Present:

Councillors J. Orson (Chairman), P. Baguley, M.W. Barnes, G.E Botterill, M Gordon,
E. Hutchinson, M. O'Callaghan, J.B. Rhodes, J. Simpson

As Observers:

Councillor M.C.R. Graham, MBE
Councillor E Holmes

Strategic Director (KA),
Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods,
Chief Accountant, Head of Regulatory Services,
Waste and Environmental Maintenance Manager,
Administrative Support Officer

R49. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Sheldon and Councillor L Horton.

R50. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2011 were not approved. Councillor Gordon asked that para 3, Item 42 be removed and that the following text be recorded to replace this point:

“Councillor Gordon, after listening to young people at McDonalds say that there was nothing to do in Melton, recommended that McDonalds is approached with a request to ascertain if they would distribute information on activities to their young customers.

It was agreed that the Head of Communities & Neighbourhoods would pass this on to the Community and Social Affairs Committee.

As Chair of the Committee, Councillor Orson stated that he would ensure this matter was followed up with the Community and Social Affairs Committee”

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2012 were approved subject to Councillor Horton’s apologies being noted.

R51. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

R52. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

There were no recommendations from other committees.

R53. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING APRIL 2011 TO JANUARY 2012

The Chief Accountant 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 January 2012. It was noted that car park expenditure had been deferred.

RESOLVED that the progress made on each capital scheme be noted.

R54. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING APRIL 2011 TO DECEMBER 2012

The Chief Accountant 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 period 01 April 2011 to 31 December 2011.

In response to a member's question regarding an overspend on building control, the Head of Regulatory Services responded that work load is not reducing in line with income reduction.

After discussion it was agreed that there is currently no need to make contingencies in case of a possible spread of the Schmallenberg virus which affects sheep.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the financial position on each of this Committee's services to 31 December 2011 be noted, and that
- (2) utilisation of the Local Development Framework (LDF) Reserve in the sum of £130k be allowed to fund Local Plans

R55. LEICESTERSHIRE MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY UPDATE 2011

The Waste and Environmental Maintenance Manager presented a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) to inform Members of the Leicestershire Municipal Waste Management Strategy Update 2011.

Several Members endorsed the strategy and commented favourably on increased recycling within the Borough.

Councillor O'Callaghan expressed a concern that impending changes to the recycling and green waste within the Borough may have a detrimental effect on recycling figures

RESOLVED that the Leicestershire Municipal Waste Management Strategy (LMWMS) Update 2011 be endorsed and agreed upon.

R56. £240M WEEKLY FOOD WASTE COLLECTION FUND

The Head of Regulatory Services presented a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to members) to advise members of the opportunities available under the recently announced Central Government '£240,000,000 weekly food waste collection fund'. An addendum to this report was circulated which set out revised recommendations to reflect the rapidly developing nature of this item.

The Head of Regulatory Services explained that this was a reflection of the pace of change which was being experienced and the need therefore for revised recommendations. In response to member questions he clarified that there was no limit to the number of expressions of interest that could be submitted. However, the deadline date for any such submissions was 09 March 2012. This would be followed by an invitation to submit a bid and announcements in Autumn 2012 of successful bids.

Councillor Rhodes spoke in support of the Government view that there should be a weekly waste collection. Statistics suggest that 40% of waste is food waste. The introduction of separate food waste bins and/or smaller bins could be considered to facilitate this weekly collection.

A request for clarification of the 5 year commitment outlined in the report and whether this was dependent on Melton bidding as a individual authority or with partners.

The Waste and Environmental Maintenance Manager confirmed that, if a successful bid was made either solely or with partner authorities, funding would be available for years 1, 2 and 3 but funding would have to be found for years 4 and 5.

Councillor Orson expressed enthusiasm for a cross County partnership option.

Several Councillors including Councillors Botterill, Graham, O'Callaghan and Barnes spoke against the idea of reverting to weekly waste collections.

Councillor O'Callaghan felt that far greater priorities could be found if £240m became available.

Following a question from Councillor Simpson it was confirmed that this item would come back to committee for further consideration should an expression of interest from Melton be successful and taken to bid stage.

Members considered the addendum but rejected the proposals contained within it.

A vote on the original proposals gave a result of 5 for and 1 against (Councillor O'Callaghan) with 2 abstentions.

Resolved that:

- (1) support be given to the Expression of Interest (EOI) regarding the Government's current £240m Weekly Food Waste Collection Fund;
- (2) notification of the outcome of the EOI's, or any subsequent bid, be given to Members.

R57. TOWN CENTRE PERFORMANCE AND THE PORTAS REVIEW

The Head of Communities & Neighbourhoods submitted a report (copies of which had already been circulated) for Members to note and comment on the 'The Portas Review' and after considering the recommendations identified in the report suggest areas of focus that would inform future projects and the Economic Development Strategy.

With regard to performance it was noted that Melton is currently performing well when compared with other East Midlands towns

The presentation of this report prompted a lengthy discussion regarding reasons for the current success of the town centre and what areas of focus should be promoted to achieve improvements.

It was agreed that the Cattle Market, considered to be the most successful in the Midlands, was instrumental in bringing people into the town. The Head of Communities & Neighbourhoods confirmed that the views of market traders, from both the cattle market and the street market, would be included in the final submission to the proposed Portas pilot scheme.

A key area of focus was considered to be the Night Time Economy and suggestions including encouraging more town centre dwelling ie. above existing retail business and improvements to transport in order to make it easier for the rural community to become involved with town centre evening events were voiced. Councillor Rhodes wondered whether more cafés and restaurants could be encouraged to extend their business outside to adjacent pavement areas.

Councillor O'Callaghan asked whether legislative changes, for example to support start up businesses, would help. He also felt that abolishing car park charges as outlined in the Portas review would greatly reduce MBC's income. He was supportive of focussing on the Night Time Economy, but, whilst

declaring an interest as Chair of the Food Partnership, also felt that new ways to promote Melton's Food industry should be explored and suggested that other 'food' oriented business might be encouraged to the town, ie a chocolatier or bakery.

Councillor Gordon expressed concern that at times of local evening events, such as the Christmas Light Switch On, local shops and cafes fail to extend their opening hours to offer a service to people coming into the town.

Councillor Simpson drew attention to the Sunday car boot in the Cattle Market and pointed out that although the town is fairly quiet on a Sunday, this event, is invariably very busy.

The Strategic Director (KA) reported that, following the implementation of the BID, a meeting of the Town Centre Councillors had brought forward many good ideas. A suggestion that a small amount of money could be made available to hold an event, including a buffet, for key parties to explore some of these ideas is being considered.

Resolved that:

- (1) the Annual Town Centre Benchmarking report be noted;
- (2) the 'Portas Review' be noted;
- (3) the area of focus for projects and strategic development be the night time economy and the expansion of the food 'brand' imaging;
- (4) delegated authority be granted to the Head of Communities & Neighbourhoods to make the final application submission to DCLG on the 'Portas Pilot' scheme.

R58. TOURISM PERFORMANCE

The Head of Communities & Neighbourhoods to submit a report outlining the 2010/11 tourism performance.

Melton Borough Council are actively involved in the Tourism Review, currently being conducted by Leicestershire County Council and due to be reported on in May 2012.

It was noted that many tourists visiting the area are currently electing to stay with family or friends rather than in hotels. Councillor O'Callaghan expressed concerns regarding the hotel occupancy figures, which he believes have not been collected for some time. He is aware that hotels are currently suffering a down turn in occupancy and need to look at ideas for encouraging people to stay.

It is expected that many visitors to Melton come for the food and drink experience, however, it is not possible to see Stilton cheese being made and there are few opportunities to see pork pies being produced. There are now several well established food fayre events and a new weekend 'pie fest' is being considered.

In response to concerns voiced by Councillor Barnes that the MBC website does not link to local events, the Strategic Director said that he is aware of this and that solutions are being sought.

RESOLVED that the Melton Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM) performance for 2010 be noted.

R59. JOINT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES SERVICE

The Strategic Director presented a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which detailed an opportunity for the Council to enter into a Joint arrangement with other Leicestershire Councils for the provision of a Joint Economic Development Initiatives Service.

A request had been received from Leicestershire Conty Council to consider this as a matter of urgency. A vote was taken following discussion regarding the cost of what was considered to be effectively 1/5 of a post. All voted against the proposal.

RESOLVED that the proposal to enter into a joint economic development initiatives service be not approved.

R60. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chairman, in exercising his statutory powers, agreed that the following item be considered as a matter of urgency due to its immediate relevance to the Core Strategy.

DELIVERING THE CORE STRAEGY INFRASTRUCTURE

The Head of Communities & Neighbourhoods advised Members that, following the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 15 February 2012, the substantive motion approved by the Council on the Core Strategy Development Plan Document, included an amendment which asked that:

- Best efforts be made to seek finding, not directly attributed to the SUE, for the infrastructure requirements.

Members were asked to note that the Head of Communities & Neighbourhoods will present a 6 monthly report on progress which will include updates on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

It was noted that from time to time reporting on this item may need to be exempt as bids for funding may be in progress.

All were in favour of the recommendations with the exception of Councillor O'Callaghan who declared he was unable to give his support.

RESOLVED that, in relation to resolutions 6 & 7 of the Core Strategy Development Plan document, the Head of Communities & Neighbourhoods presents a report at 6 monthly intervals on progress including updates on the Community Infrastructure Levy and progress made towards other funding and delivery mechanisms.

The meeting closed at 8.25 pm.