



COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

19 June 2013

PRESENT:-

Councillors D.R. Wright (Chairman) V.J. Manderson (Vice Chairman), P. Chandler, L. Horton, S. Lumley, J. Moulding, P.M Posnett, J.B. Rhodes, M. Twitney

As Substitute

Councillor J. Douglas (as substitute for M. Graham)

Strategic Director (CAM) Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods, People Manager, Head of Central Services, Principal Assistant (Environment) Community Policy Officer, Gail Jones (SO2 Military Civil Integration), Administrative Assistant for Communities and Neighbourhoods.

C1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Malise Graham.

C2. MINUTES

- a) C37. **RESOLVED** that £100 be paid per calendar month with review on an annual basis.
- b) C41. **RESOLVED** 3) with a view of bringing back a report to the June committee.

Subject to a) and b) the minutes of the meeting held on 20th March 2013 were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the Chairman.

C3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Rhodes declared a personal and non pecuniary interest in relation to any issues concerning the Leicestershire County Council by virtue of him being County Councillor as well as a interest in Item 13. Councillor Posnett declared a personal and non pecuniary interest in relation to any issues concerning the Leicestershire County Council by virtue of her being a County Councillor and declared an interest in Item 6 due to having a son in the armed forces.

C4. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

There were no recommendations from other committees.

C5. UPDATE ON DECISIONS

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted an update on decisions from the previous meeting of this committee.

RESOLVED that the update on decision be noted.

C.6 COMMUNITY COVENANT

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods presented a report seeking Members approval to sign up to the Community Covenant Pledge. The Community Policy Officer brought Members attention to para 3.6 and the Networking Groups terms of reference. Discussions took place concerning who should Champion the pledge.

A Member proposed to note 2.1 as per the recommendation in the paper but proposed that 2.2 should be amended to add a further sentence which reads:

'Members note Cllr Lumley's enthusiasm in wishing to be the community covenant Champion and thank him for this. However, Members agree that this community role is best fulfilled by Melton's First Citizen and Mayor, representing as they do all residents of our Borough and not one specific area. In passing this motion Members instruct officers to amend the Armed Forces Community Covenant to show the role of community Covenant Champion is to be undertaken by the Mayor of the Borough of Melton.'

The amendment to the recommendation was not carried.

The Chair asked the Armed forces Representative if there was anything that she would like to add to the discussion and Gail Jones (SO2 Military Civil Integration) explained to Members that the Community Covenant pledge is not designed to provide special treatment to Members of the armed forces but to ensure that they are not disadvantaged.

Recommendations 2.1 and 2.2 were proposed by Councillor Posnett and seconded by Councillor Twitney.

Councillor Horton and Councillor Moulding abstained from voting.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Further work to progress actions be noted which will support the delivery of the principles contained within the Community Covenant Pledge.
- 2) The sign up of the pledge and the network group to progress with the key areas of focus identified in para 3.6 of the report be approved.

C7. PROVISIONAL YEAR END POSITION- HRA

The Head of Central Services and the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods presented a report providing Members with information on the provisional year end position for 2012-13 which is subject to external audit certification, and the implications for the working balance on the HRA.

The Head of Central Services presented a revised report in which para 3.2 reads 'The provisional year end position show an actual surplus of income over expenditure of £353,079 (line 53); £239,109 above the approved budgeted surplus of £113,970 (line 53) and a resulting working balance of £1,080,151.

Discussion took place about savings from lower planned maintenance work and the change in contractors. A Member brought attention to line 43 of the appendix and the increase in provision for bad and doubtful debts to which the Head of Central Services explained that this increase is a national issue but that further analysis would have to be done to detect why this had increased so dramatically.

RESOLVED that the variations to the 2012-13 original estimates and the latest approved estimates as set out in the attached paper and the effect on the working balance be noted.

C8. MELTON COUNTRY PARK UPDATE

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods presented a report to update Members on a number of additions and enhancements to the Park, regarding its designation, its facilities and the activities it offers.

The Principal Assistant (Environment) updated Members on the community benefits of each enhancement and stated that a further report will be brought back to this committee as soon as the angling bylaws are changed. The Principal Assistant (Environment) drew Members attention to para 3.7 and announced that the Green Flag had been awarded to Melton Country Park for the second year running.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Posnett and seconded by Councillor Lumley.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The contents of the report and support of the Parks' continued growth and development be noted
- 2) The tree management policy be approved.

C9. EVENT EVALUATION REPORT 2012

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods presented a report to inform Members of the benefits to the town centre and the economy generated by the major annual town centre events.

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods presented Members with an document about the pie fest to gauge Members support. After discussion it was agreed that the Pie Fest is an event that the Members of the committee support in principle and a funding amount of £5,000 was suggested and that PFA committee consider this matter at its next meeting.

Discussion took place about ensuring that the whole of the borough is being promoted not just the town centre, and the Strategic Director suggested to Members that an event policy framework could be developed enabling events to be judged against criteria. It was also noted that there was a low return of the business surveys and that Officers needed to consider ways of improving on this.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The contents of the report be noted.
- 2) The support of events, as detailed in section 3.6 which fit within the Economic Development Strategy and the Tourism Blueprint to promote and develop Melton Mowbray as the Rural Capital of Food and Drink and show viability and economic value to the town centre, be noted.
- 3) An event funding strategy be developed.

C10. **SUB-REGIONAL CHOICE BASED LETTINGS POLICY**

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods presented a report for Members to consider and approve the proposal for a review of the Allocation Policy and make the necessary changes in line with guidance on the allocation of accommodation.

The People Manager brought Members attention to recommendation 2.3 asking Members to note that, if approved, every applicant will need to be re-assessed once the new policy comes into force and that with the amount of applicants currently, this may take some time.

A Member brought to Officers attention page 3 of appendix 4, stating that there is no disability register and suggested that the question was re-written to read 'Do you see yourself as disabled, as outlined in the Equalities Act.

It was clarified by the People Manager that para 3.4 drew statistics from a response of 353 customers.

A further recommendation 2.4 was suggested by a Member to ensure that the policy provides fair and just treatment.

All recommendations were proposed by the Councillor Posnett and seconded by Councillor Manderson.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the changes to the current Housing Allocation Policy be approved in order to:
 - incorporate government legislation which will enable Melton Borough Council to allocate social housing with a more flexible and responsive approach

- To ensure that applicants in the borough with a genuine need for social housing are given preference on the housing register
 - Have a more transparent policy as to exclude applicants from the housing register
 - Meet the impact of welfare reform on vulnerable tenants
- 2) It be noted that once the re-registration of applicants has been completed the new policy will come into force from 30th September 2013.
- 3) Officers be instructed to provide a full report to this committee on the impact of the recommended changes following a 6 month review. The report should provide a clear breakdown of the demographics to ensure fair and just treatment. Particularly in relation to home seekers who have been suspended from the scheme.

C11. LEISURE VISION UPDATE

The Strategic Director and the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a report to update Members on the progress that has been made in taking forward the development of the Leisure Vision Project, setting out potential next steps and seeking Members approval to recommend to the Policy, Finance and Administration Committee for the formal earmarking of £1,000,000 from the Capital Receipts Reserve, as a Melton Borough Council Contribution towards the development of his project.

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods advised Members that there had been 2,443 responses to the Leisure Vision Consultation and drew Members attention to the summary of findings in para 3.5. It was stated that further analysis of statistics is currently being undertaken.

It was raised by a Member that young people had not been sufficiently consulted leading to the People Manager stating that consultation within schools is taking place in September which can offer further insight into the Leisure requirements of this age group.

A Member requested that recommendation 2.5 be amended to Policy, Finance and Administration Committee.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the Leisure Vision be approved
- 2) the summary of results at Appendix C be noted from the borough-wide leisure Consultation as detailed in 3.5 which will be subject to further detailed analysis.
- 3) the initial Phasing Plan attached at Appendix D be considered.
- 4) the next steps in regards to the Open Space, Sports and Recreation Study as detailed in section 3.7 of the report be noted.
- 5) an earmarked capital receipts reserve be created containing £1,000,000

earmarked from General Fund Capital Receipts be recommended to the Policy, Finance and Administration Committee as the Melton Borough Council contribution towards this project.

- 6) Officers be requested to liaise with the Leisure Board for their views on the viability of appointing a Specialist Leisure Development Partner alongside other potential routes for developing this project and for those views to be reported back to the next meeting of this Committee.
- 7) a further allocation of £30,000 be recommended to Policy, Finance and Administration Committee from the Corporate Priorities Reserve to provide the necessary consultancy support to this project prior to a full business case and feasibility being submitted for consideration.

C12. HAMP UPDATE- AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEW BUILD

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a business case for approval, seeking resources to fund the Council led new build of 10 affordable housing units.

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods drew Members attention to Appendix A which outlines the full project costs.

A Member expressed gratitude to the County Council for the money provided from the New Homes Bonus.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the business case at appendix A be recommended to Policy, Finance and Administration Committee in order to progress the Council led new build of 10 affordable housing units and to include them into the 2013/14 capital programme, to be funded by HRA Development and Regeneration Reserve.

C13. LOCAL AUTHORITY MORTGAGE SCHEME (LAMS) UPDATE

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a report to consult Members on a proposal relating to the £1,000,000 capital contribution to LAMS.

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods reminded Members of the meeting of the 19th September at which Members approved the contribution of £1,000,000 to participate in the LCC LAM scheme and stated that since that time 17-20% of all County wide scheme mortgages in the scheme have been Melton Applicants. It was suggested that Members do not support recommendation 2.2 but to approve the progress of a Melton only LAMS scheme.

Councillor Posnett left the meeting

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods explained to Members that a Melton only scheme could be developed with the County Council as a lead partner, however if this were the case the scheme wouldn't be able to start until the County scheme had finished as two schemes cannot operate in the same area simultaneously.

Councillor Posnett returned to the meeting

A substitute Member on behalf of a Member of the committee outlined their concerns relating to the LCC scheme both in terms of risk and its ability to benefit Melton Applicants.

Discussion took place regarding the million pounds underwriting the mortgages and the encompassing of other postcodes within the Borough.

Councillor Posnett did not take part in the voting for this item.

RESOLVED that the capital contribution of £1,000,000 be approved for a Melton only Local Authority Mortgage Scheme and that this be progressed subject to Leicestershire County Council agreeing to be the lead partner in the scheme.

C14. TENANT PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT (COMPACT) 2013-2016

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a report to seek Members approval and agreement to adopt the Tenant Participation Compact 2013-16.

Discussion took place over the constitutions policy regarding forums.

RESOLVED that the Tenant Participation Compact 2013-2016 be approved and the policy of encouraging tenant involvement in the future development of the Council's housing services be supported.

C15. DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS POLICY

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods presented a report seeking Members approval of the adoption of the attached Discretionary Housing Payments Policy. The People Manager explained to Members that the policy has been developed to be as flexible as possible because of the variety of complex needs. The People Manager also stated that Supporting Leicestershire Families team are helping pick up the financial implications to tenants regarding the over occupancy tax.

A Member stated that the words 'bedroom tax' should not be used in the policy and should be replaced with 'under occupancy charge' in all instances.

Discussion took place around the policy in the event of a tenant requesting to move and the Council not being able to provide them with a smaller accommodation. It was decided that Officers would review the policy in 6 months, and investigate good practice across the country.

RESOLVED that the adoption of the Discretionary Housing Payment Policy be approved and a review be brought back in 6 months looking at good practice across the country.

C16. WHEELS TO WORK- BUSINESS CASE

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a report seeking Members approval of the Wheels to Work business case following a successful bid to deliver the Wheels to Work project as part of the Supporting Leicestershire Families Programme.

RESOLVED that the business case be recommended to the Policy, Finance and Administration Committee to be included into the 2013/14 capital programme

URGENT ITEM- WATERFIELD LEISURE CENTRE- CAR PARK EXTENSION

Councillor Chandler left the meeting due to an interest in this item.

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a report to update Members on the proposed Waterfield Leisure Centre (WLC) car park extension and seek Members support for the proposal.

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods stated that a full business case will go to the Policy, Finance and Administration committee in July and that the Corporate Property Officer suggests that this contract is value for money in significantly increasing the use of the Leisure Centre.

The Head of Central Services clarified that SLM will reimburse half of the money in the next financial year.

RESOLVED that the proposal to extend the Waterfield Leisure Centre car park be supported.

The meeting which commenced at 6.30p.m, closed at 9:06 p.m.

Chairman