



TOWN AREA COMMITTEE

PARKSIDE, STATION APPROACH, BURTON STREET, MELTON MOWBRAY

22 SEPTEMBER 2016

PRESENT:-

Councillors T. Greenow (Chairman), M. Blase, T.Culley, J. Douglas,
J. Illingworth, A. Pearson, J. Wyatt

Head of Central Services
Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods
Town Centre Manager
Administrative Assistant Communication and Member Support

T9. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bains, Beaken, Cumbers, Glancy, Hurrell, Lumley, Manderson and Posnett.

T10. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 11 April 2016, 25 July 2016 and 22 August 2016 were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the Chairman.

T11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Pearson declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the County Council due to his role as a County Councillor.

T12. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

There were no recommendations from other Committees.

T13. RENEWAL OF MELTON BID (BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT) 2016

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) that provided an update on the business consultation and renewal of the Melton BID (Business Improvement District) in October 2016.

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods provided a brief overview of the

report, highlighting the importance that the BID Business Plan and Renewal met with Members aspirations for the Town Area.

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods confirmed that he, Councillor Posnett and Councillor Pearson had positions on the current Melton Bid Board:-

- Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods – Lead Officer
- Councillor Posnett - Melton Borough Council Representative
- Councillor Pearson - Leicestershire County Council Representative

The Town Centre Manager stated that in May 2016, BID businesses were sent a BID Fact Sheet (Appendix B), summarising the delivery of the Melton BID's Business Plan 2011-2016 and three key projects, which highlighted the success of Melton BID's first five years:-

- Think Melton Shop Melton - sought to encourage local residents and employees to shop locally, through targeted marketing campaigns. Successful projects have included the Town Centre App, Springboard Footfall Counter, Car Parking Campaigns, Shopping Survey, Business Directory and funding Support of CCTV, SMART and Pubwatch
- BID for Business Scheme - reduced business costs through schemes such as the Free Trade Recycling Scheme, £250 Business Support Grant Schemes, Free Business Utility Audits and Free Social Media Training
- Visitor Enhancement Scheme - enhanced and promoted Melton's heritage and visitor experience. Town Centre enhancements have included new town centre planters, Market Place feature, retail hanging basket scheme, window dressing scheme and blue plaque scheme

A Member queried how the Council was interacting with BID partner, Melton Mowbray Town Estate, who he suggested, may have different priorities and goals to the Council.

The Town Centre Manager confirmed that the Council worked closely with Melton Mowbray Town Estate as well as other key partners and would continue to do so over the next five years.

The Town Centre Manager advised Members that in May 2016, BID businesses were sent a consultation survey, to assess business views on the projects and schemes delivered and to identify potential new projects for the next five year Plan. The aim was to capture their vision for the Town Centre over the next five years. In addition, the consultation revealed that overall, 68% of businesses surveyed felt that Melton BID represented good value for money and almost 60% of respondents felt the performance of BID had been Excellent or Good. Hard copies of the BID Business Plan for 2016 – 2021 would be circulated to BID businesses on Monday, 26 September 2016.

The Town Centre Manager advised on the BID ballot, which would be conducted independently by Electoral Reform Services on behalf of the Melton BID. Ballot papers will be posted to BID businesses on Wednesday, 28 September 2016 and the ballot will close on 26 October 2016. Declaration of the result would be made on 27 October 2016.

She further explained that in order for the Melton BID to secure a Yes vote, two

conditions must be met:-

- of the votes cast, more than 50% must vote in favour
- of the businesses that vote, the Yes vote must represent more than 50% of the total rateable value of all votes cast.

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods drew Members' attention to the legal implications and powers of Melton BID, stating that if a Yes vote was secured, the Melton BID Business Plan would become a legally binding document, during the next five year period (2016 – 2021) and all businesses within the BID area would continue to be required to pay a BID levy. The levy would be collected by Melton Borough Council. If businesses vote No, Melton BID would cease on 30 November 2016.

The Council expected BID funds to be used efficiently and had already ensured a strategic BID Business Plan was in place, whereby businesses and Members had received sufficient information periodically. The Business Plan had a good mix of short and long term vision.

A Member advised that in the past, it was felt there was a lack of strategic vision but now agreed with the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods on what had been achieved through BID. He also highlighted the importance of working to maintain the character of the town centre and the positive elements that have been recognised, concerning the town centre at night.

Members noted the change to the BID map in that the BID area encompassed more streets than before.

Members commented on the excellent work that had produced the BID Business Plan and the high quality of the Plan and photographs within the Plan. It was noted that there were errors at 3.1 of the Report, where "June 2016" should read "June 2011" and at page 12 of the BID Business Plan where "Elgin Street" should read "Elgin Drive" and "Raynes Walk" should read "Bickley Avenue" and these were highlighted for amendment.

RESOLVED that the following recommendations be referred to the Policy, Finance and Administration Committee:-

- (1) to delegate the responsibility for voting in the BID ballot to the Head of Central Services, in consultation with the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods;
- (2) to vote in support of the BID's renewal in October 2016.

T14. BUDGET MONITORING APRIL TO JUNE 2016

The Head of Central Services submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which provided information on actual expenditure and income incurred on this Committee's services compared to the latest approved budget for the period 1 April 2016 to 30 June 2016.

The Head of Central Services gave a brief overview of the report and summarised that an underspend of £13,590 was forecast and advised Members that she was able to provide further information and clarification upon request if necessary.

RESOLVED that the financial position on each of this Committee's services to 30 June 2016 and year end forecast be noted.

T15. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING TO 31 JULY 2016

The Head of Central Services submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) that provided an update on the progress of schemes within the Capital Programme to 31 July 2016.

The Head of Central Services highlighted the progress of the Melton Country Park Pavilion and the Play Equipment Schemes. Members were advised that this was the latest available information at the date of agenda distribution and that a further report on the Melton Country Park Pavilion would follow in November 2016.

A Member queried where the Play Equipment was situated. The Head of Central Services confirmed the play equipment was situated at the rear of the Redwood Avenue area.

RESOLVED that Members note the progress made on each capital scheme as shown in Appendix A of the report.

T16. CORPORATE REVIEW OF CHARGES 2017-18

The Head of Central Services submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) that provided information on the fees and charges made by this Committee and recommended changes to operate from 1 April 2016.

The Head of Central Services advised that only new proposed charges or charges that were proposed to be increased above or below inflation were to be considered by the Committee.

The Head of Central Services advised Members that she has delegated authority to approve charges that were increased in line with inflation. Statutory charges were not included for consideration by Members.

The current Charging Policy was under review and would be presented to the Policy, Finance and Administration Committee in September 2016. This report had incorporated the proposed changes in the new proposed Policy.

The Head of Central Services highlighted that Melton Country Park car park was a service currently provided free of charge as set out in Appendix B. She reminded Members that the Council had certain limited freedoms to charge for services it provided at its discretion but chose not to do so in this case, as introducing charges was likely to deter usage.

Members raised considerable concerns over the proposed increases, particularly those relating to cemeteries and open spaces and stated that they felt there was a lack of consistency. The Head of Central Services responded that the service provision of cemeteries was heavily subsidised and this raised the question of whether the service user or tax payer should pay towards the costs. The budget

holder had provided assurance that the increase in charges was in line with research, benchmarking results and inflation. She further advised that the Council may not be able to continue to subsidise services and the Council had fallen behind in charging for some of its services, whilst others were in line with other service providers. This resulted in some services seeing a higher increase in charges than others.

A Member raised a possible discrepancy with some of the figures within the report and used cremated remains as an example of this. The Head of Central Services clarified that the Council budget worked to the nearest £10 not the nearest £1 when budgeting, which accounted for the apparent error in the figures.

Members stated they wished to see more consistency in the charges to be able to understand and explain these to the public and help their decision making. To help achieve this, it was suggested implementing a gradual percentage increase in charges, over several years, in order to mitigate the effect a large immediate increase may have and reviewing the figures, so the overall charge increase was achieved but in a less painful way.

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods stated that the last eighteen months had made the Council more astute about how these charges were developed and he felt this was a reasonable increase. With regard the maintenance of playing fields the Council was undertaking more in relation to service delivery and as a result this would increase the cost.

Members recognised this may be the case but highlighted that any decision to increase the charges had to be fair to the public, so this information should be included in the report.

Members also highlighted that caution must be exercised in relation to increased charges involving physical activity, as those who most required this service were often those who were not able to afford it and felt that physical activity related services should be more affordable.

The Head of Central Services and the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods advised that the football clubs had requested an enhanced service with regard to playing fields and the Council was being urged to be more commercial to address the funding shortfall it had in the future. The Council was required to take a structured approach to pricing matters in line with the current market and these were informed by the service charges of a range of local authorities, parish councils and private sector companies.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the level of charges for 2017-2018 for each of the services set out in Appendix A of the report, excluding those charges in respect of cemeteries and open spaces be approved;
- (2) a further report in respect of cemetery and open spaces charges, detailing the reasons for the increase be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

T17. PUBLIC CONVENIENCES - REPLACEMENT PROPOSAL

The Head of Central Services submitted a report on behalf of the Corporate Property Officer (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which enabled Members to be consulted on proposals for the replacement of the public conveniences prior to the business case being developed and submitted to the Community and Social Affairs Committee for approval.

The Head of Central Services gave an overview of the report, including costs, advising that the provision of these public conveniences were a discretionary service provided by the Council but it was recognised as a service “close to the hearts” of Members and the public.

The Head of Central Services confirmed that she was Project Sponsor and the Corporate Property Officer was the Project Manager. She highlighted the locations for the public conveniences and confirmed that designs had gone before the Public Conveniences Task Group for comments. She advised that the Public Conveniences Task Group was not in favour of the Wilton Road location, due to its close proximity to the main road. However, preliminary discussions with consultants had revealed that to move the public conveniences further back off the road and into the car park would limit public and wheelchair access into and out of the public conveniences, raising safety issues.

Members noted that at its current proposed location, the public conveniences at Wilton Road required the disabled bay at the car park to be relocated. Options to site them at the front corner of the car park would result in them being too near the road, which was an “accident hotspot”. They felt that placing them at a suggested point further into the car park would result in a loss of four coach parking bays, which was not good for tourism.

Members advised that they were not comfortable with the recommendations and wanted feedback from the Conservation Officer and suggested that the Public Conveniences Task Group revisit this proposal before consulting on it again.

The Head of Central Services informed Members that the budget of £10,000 was already expended and if re-designs were needed, this would increase the cost of this element of the project and the project may run over the desired time frame.

RESOLVED that the design and location of the public conveniences be referred back to the Public Conveniences Task Group, with Town Area Committee being consulted on the revised proposals, via the Chair of the Task Group. The focus of the revisions to be on the location of Wilton Road and the Conservation Officer comments.

T18. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

The meeting which commenced at 18:30, closed at 19:35.

Chairman