



POLICY, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
BAPTIST CHURCH, LEICESTER ROAD, MELTON MOWBRAY

21 APRIL 2010

PRESENT:-

Councillors M.C.R. Graham MBE (Chairman)
E. Holmes, R. Marks, M. Moore, R.F. Moore-Coltman
M. O'Callaghan, J.T. Orson, J.B. Rhodes, D.R. Wright

As Observer
Councillor M.R. Sheldon

Chief Executive
Corporate Director (KA), Corporate Director (CM)
Head of Financial Services, Head of ICT Services
Strategic Regeneration and Projects Officer
Democratic Services Officer, Democratic Services Clerk

P109. APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Angrave.

P110. MINUTES

(a) Minute P92 – Minutes : 3 March 2010

Minute P89/09 – Affordable Housing Project

(a) Councillor Wright requested that the word 'some' be added after the word 'but' in the following statement :-

'However he considered that not all garage sites were misused but some were used only for storage.'

(b) Subject to the foregoing the minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2010 were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the Chairman.

P111. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

P117 : Items for Approval under Financial Procedure Rules

Councillor Rhodes declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in the above item due to his role as a Leicestershire County Councillor.

Councillor Rhodes declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in any matters relating to the Leicestershire County Council due to his role as a County Councillor.

Councillor J.T. Orson declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in any matters relating to the Leicestershire County Council due to his role as a County Councillor.

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED that the Public be excluded during the consideration of the following item of business in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (Access to Information : Exempt Information) under paragraph 3.

P112. PROVISIONAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME YEAR END POSITION 2009-10

The Head of Financial Services submitted an exempt appendix to P115 (Provisional Capital Programme Year End Position 2009/10).

RESOLVED that the new arrangement and the budget changes involved in respect of the Town Station Site budget and the move of a private right of way be approved.

(The meeting resumed open session.)

P113. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

There were no recommendations from other committees.

P114. UPDATE ON DECISIONS

The Chief Executive submitted an update on decisions from previous meetings of the Committee (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members).

With regard to item 4 of the update, it was requested that the medieval wall be renamed the boundary wall.

RESOLVED that the Update on Decisions document be updated to reflect progress and work completed.

P115. PROVISIONAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME YEAR END POSITION 2009-10

The Head of Financial Services submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which provided information on the provisional Capital Programme year end position for 2009-10, including a range of performance measures and requested consideration for requests for carrying forward unspent budgets in 2009-10 to 2010-11 in respect of specific schemes.

RESOLVED that

- (1) those schemes in the 2009-10 Capital Programme totalling £523,000 and shown in the column headed "Amount C/Fwd to 2010-11 Scheme Specific" in the report be carried forward and included in the Capital Programme as funded schemes;
- (2) delegated authority be granted to the Head of Financial Services to vary the amount of the agreed carry forward on any scheme subject to the spending on any scheme not exceeding the total approved amount;
- (3) the revised phasing in respect of the new council offices as outlined in the report be approved;
- (4) the recommendation contained in the exempt Appendix B be noted as having been approved at Minute P112.

(Councillor Holmes entered the meeting during consideration of the preceding item.)

P116. **CARRY FORWARD OF REVENUE BUDGETS**

The Head of Financial Services submitted approval requests from budget holders (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which was to carry forward underspent budgets from 2009/10 to 2010/11.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the requests set out in the report for budgets to be carried forward from 2009/10 to 2010/11 be approved;
- (2) the Council be asked to approve those items shown in Appendix A which are in excess of £50,000 in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules;
- (3) once the final year end position is known the actual under spend be compared to the amount requested and the Head of Financial Services in consultation with the Chief Executive be given delegated authority to amend the actual amount carried forward subject to the approval of the Management Team.

P117. **ITEMS FOR APPROVAL UNDER FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES**

The Head of Financial Services submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which submitted requests for approval of this Committee under Financial Procedure Rules and to provide information on amounts approved under delegated powers.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the virements approved under delegated powers be noted;
- (2) the budget reductions approved under delegated powers be noted;

- (3) the supplementary estimates approved under delegated powers be noted;
- (4) delegated authority be granted to the Head of Financial Services to agree any amendments to the financial arrangements with Leicestershire County Council for payment of their contribution towards the cost of the new Council Offices.

P118. ELECTRONIC WORKING FOR MEMBERS

The Democratic Services Officer submitted a report on behalf of the Assistant Chief Executive (AT) with the Head of ICT Services (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which considered and responded to a range of issues concerning security and network access, use of Council laptops, ICT training for Members and electronic working generally linked to the Electronic Committees project. The report included reference to Members' specific concerns relating to logging into the Council's network and they were as follows :-

- Having to run two computers to pick up e-mails from different sources - one for Council work and one for all other business
- Small screen
- Having to book in with ICT Services for password change
- Seven minutes start up time when you can't leave the PC due to each new log in screen requiring an action during the start up process
- Automatic switch off if the PC is left alone for any length of time
- Difficulty in printing from the laptop
- Reading long reports
- Total security for all messages even though the majority are not confidential
- Cannot access the network when remote working ie. not at home or in Council buildings

Councillor J.T. Orson stated that the Extraordinary Efficiency Task Group was looking for efficiencies throughout the Council and electronic working was a starting point for this work. He explained that there were savings to be made in the copying, collating, postage and staff time involved in the agenda production process but also acknowledged that it was unrealistic for the Council to become paper-free. However he further stated that there were significant efficiencies to be had by the introduction of paper reduced ways of working.

As the Lead Member for the Electronic Committees project, Councillor Sheldon spoke in support of electronic working and stated that training was the key to successful implementation of the project. To move the project forward and help Members with their ICT problems, he mentioned the possible introduction of 'Officer Buddies' to assist Members with their logging on, changing passwords and remote working issues. He referred to the impact on the environment of the high usage of paper for committees and that in the future storage at the Council would be an issue for retaining so much paper.

Councillor Rhodes stated that the equipment and quality of software available was not of an acceptable standard to suit his personal requirements as his stage of life. He referred to the small size of the laptop screen and the complicated process of logging on to the remote system. For his own health and especially to preserve his vision, he advised that he avoided using a computer screen whenever possible and used it only for short messages, anything else he read in a printed format. He

advised that he did not wish for the law to be changed to force him to take up electronic working. He stated that he would vote against the recommendations.

Councillor O' Callaghan stated that he did not wish to access the Council's network with the current equipment as it was not suited to his way of working at home and he did not wish to use two computers to deal with his emails. He also stated that there was a health and safety issue with the laptops which were too small for comfortable reading for long periods which was why he considered a monitor should be available for home working. He advised that he was happy to continue to receive Council documents and information on his own computer and download committee information from the website for use at meetings. He advised that he did not wish to have his laptop encrypted as the logging in process was too long and complicated. With regard to requesting that the law be changed, this needed to be on the condition that Members could have a choice as to how they receive Council information and retain paper delivery if they so wished.

Councillor Wright stated that he agreed with the preceding comments and in his view the principle was 'spot on' but the hardware was not good enough. He considered that the logging in time was too long at 20 minutes and he much preferred to use his own computer.

Councillor Holmes considered that the Council needed to move forward on electronic working but all Members needed to be on board.

The Head of ICT Services advised that if Members were to self-serve Council and confidential information, then accessing the Council's network was the only way. He further stated that if Members did not need to access the Council's network then they did not need the encryption software.

Councillor Marks considered that the project had moved on too quickly and had not considered the user. He advised that in his view, additional equipment such as monitors and keyboards should be provided.

Councillor O'Callaghan suggested that for Members to work electronically they needed a stand-alone laptop with no network access and whatever ancillary equipment was required to meet their Council commitments eg. monitor, keyboard, mouse, broadband, dongle etc. He also considered that any health and safety issues needed to be addressed and connectivity to the Council's network be integrated in a slow and measured way.

The Head of ICT Services stated that he could provide whatever service Members required but could not give Members administration rights to the laptops. He advised that the government connect security was not user friendly and a 'blanket' approach to security of Council information had been applied, this was to ensure the highest level of secure access for confidential and sensitive information to meet the government's guidance. It was acknowledged that this level of security was not required for all Council information and he needed to reconsider the guidance to see if it was possible to have different levels of security applied across the Council.

The Chairman considered that Members did want to achieve electronic working but the current route chosen was not efficient. He stated that the Extraordinary Efficiency Task Group had a year to work on the project and get it right.

The Chief Executive stated that she understood from the debate that more consultation with Members as users was needed and the Extraordinary Efficiency Task Group was to work on addressing Members' concerns and report back to this Committee on its progress.

Councillor Rhodes stated that his preference would be to withdraw the report and refer this debate and the Members' concerns back to the Extraordinary Efficiency Task Group.

Councillor Orson expressed his disappointment that the Committee did not wish to pursue the route to electronic working for Members outlined in the report and stated that due to this the efficiencies would not be as great as anticipated.

The Chairman summarised that the Electronic Committees project be referred back to the Extraordinary Efficiency Task Group for further consideration as to how best to move forward and report back to this Committee on progress and Members be given the option to revert their Council emails access to their home email account if they so wish.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Extraordinary Efficiency Task Group be requested to consider other options to move the Electronic Committees project forward taking account of Members' comments expressed at this meeting;
- (2) the 9 Members who had transferred to the Council's network be contacted to ascertain their Council email access preference and reverting to home email accounts be offered as an option;
- (3) the Committee receive regular updates on progress of the Electronic Committees project.

P119. **AWARD OF MERIT TASK GROUP – UPDATE**

- (a) The Committee noted that the Award of Merit Task Group had agreed the following awards in 2009/10 :-
 - (i) **Melton Borough Award** – presented to the following at the Council Meeting on 16 December 2009 :-
 - David Cowell
 - Vera Foster
 - Tanya Mackley
 - (ii) in April 2010 the Task Group agreed the following :-

Award of Merit

 - Buckminster Gliding Club Community Group Executive Committee
 - Asfordby Tuesday Morning Coffee Club

Young Citizen Award

- Ben Atkinson

- Lucy Hatton
- Rosie Redfern
- Lisa Taggart
- Adam Tate

The Asfordby Tuesday Morning Coffee Club to receive the 'Robert Hyslop Most Outstanding Service to the Community Award' and Lisa Taggart to receive the 'Derek Sanders Cup'.

(b) With regard to the Melton Borough Award, the following terms of reference were noted :-

- To consider nominations and select up to 3 persons to receive a Melton Borough Award. This award being for those who do not meet the criteria of the Award of Merit but deserve recognition

RESOLVED that the Award of Merit update be noted.

P120. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

The meeting which commenced at 5.30 p.m., closed at 6.20 p.m.

Chairman