



POLICY, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

PHOENIX HOUSE, MELTON MOWBRAY

29 SEPTEMBER 2010

PRESENT:-

Councillors M.C.R. Graham MBE (Chairman)
N.R.G. Angrave, R. Marks, M. O'Callaghan,
J.T. Orson, P.M. Posnett, D.R. Wright

As Observer
Councillor Wyatt

Chief Executive
Corporate Director (CM)
Head of Financial Services, Head of Regulatory Services
Senior Democracy Officer

P26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jackson and Rhodes.

P27. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2010 were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the Chairman.

P28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors J.T. Orson and Posnett each declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in any items relating to the Leicestershire County Council due to their roles as County Councillors.

P29. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

There were no recommendations from other Committees.

P30. UPDATE ON DECISIONS

The Chief Executive submitted an update on decisions from previous

meetings of the Committee.

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

P31. **PROPOSAL FOR DELIVERY OF EMERGENCY PLANNING SERVICES**

The Head of Regulatory Services submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which provided information on proposals for the delivery of emergency planning services, and seek the Committee's authority to join the Leicestershire Resilience Partnership.

RESOLVED that the Committee authorises the joining of the proposed Local Resilience Partnership at the beginning of the next financial year.

P32. **WAIVING OF CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES – ALLPAY CONTRACT**

The Head of Financial Services submitted a report on behalf of the Assistant Chief Executive (AT) (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which

- (a) stated the contract for Allpay expired in September 2010;
- (b) requested that the contract procedure rules are waived in order for the contract to be extended for a six month period in order to consider an alternative arrangement available through the Welland Procurement Unit which was not available immediately.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the financial procedure rules be waived on this occasion to allow the Allpay Contract to be renewed for a six month period;
- (2) the Northern Housing Consortium framework be considered as an alternative option to Allpay. (If the Northern Housing Consortium contract is cheaper but offers a lower level of service and options to customers then it will be referred back to Members for a decision.)

P33. **E-PETITIONS – OPTIONS**

The Senior Democracy Officer

- (a) submitted a report on behalf of the Monitoring Officer (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which requested that software options for an E-Petitions facility be considered in the context of the following :

At the Meeting of the Council held on 14 July 2010, Minute CO24/10 resolved that :-

'With regard to the request for a supplementary estimate of up to £7,000 to purchase an E-Petition facility to meet the 15 December 2010 deadline, this be investigated as to whether absolutely necessary and if so, refer to the Policy, Finance and Administration Committee for further consideration.'

- (b) circulated at the meeting a letter from the Department of Communities and Local Government dated 24 September 2010 which gave some doubt to the future of the scheme although it explained that the duty to comply by 15 December 2010 still applied and the government was to provide a grant to assist in providing the facility of £4,221;
- (c) advised that as an alternative arrangement, since the despatch of the report the Council had approached the County Council to request that they host our petitions and Melton provides a link from its website and the County Council receive Melton's petitions on their website – the County Council was looking into whether this was feasible in terms of security, the supplier and practicality. This would probably be the cheapest option although no costs had been discussed yet apart from it being stated that if this arrangements was put in place, the cost would need to be less than any other supplier.

RESOLVED that

- (1) mysociety.org be the approved supplier of an e-petitions facility at a cost of £1,999 for the 1 year required;
- (2) the funding be provided by the area based grant.

P34. FOOD PROVISIONS AT MEETINGS

The Senior Democracy Officer submitted a report on behalf of the Assistant Chief Executive (AT) (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which

- (a) considered the Extraordinary Efficiency Task Group's recommendation that buffet refreshments at meetings be no longer provided for Members in order to make budgetary savings;
- (b) noted that staff who attended meetings at venues that are away from their normal place of work at relevant times are entitled to subsistence upon production of a receipt under the NJC terms and conditions.

Members considered that to remove food provisions at meetings would prejudice Members who had other commitments such as coming to meetings straight from work, other meetings or had caring responsibilities. Also it was felt that there could be health implications for Members with certain health issues. Therefore it was proposed and carried that buffets continue as currently provided at meetings.

It was suggested and agreed that the ordering of buffet quantities could be reviewed and varied for each meeting according to requirements and to

ensure there was no waste.

RESOLVED that

- (1) buffet refreshments continue to be provided for Members/Officers at meetings;
- (2) the quantities ordered be reviewed and varied for each meeting to ensure no wastage and capture any potential savings.

P35. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2010-11 TO 2014-15

The Head of Financial Services submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which determined the Committee's Capital Programme for 2010-2015 based on a review of spending in the current year's programme and schemes included in the programme for later years.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Capital Programme for 2010-2015 be noted,
- (2) the schemes being submitted in 2010-2015 for funding as part of the budget setting process were considered to ensure they meet the Council's priorities;
- (3) the Project Mandates as summarised in the report be approved for inclusion in the Capital Programme.

P36. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING TO 31 JULY 2010

The Head of Financial Services submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which updated the Committee on the progress of schemes within the Capital Programme to 31 August 2010.

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

P37. REVIEW OF CHARGES 2011/12

The Head of Financial Services submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which

- (a) provided information on the various fees and charges that were made by the Committee;
- (b) recommended that changes to these charges were to operate from 1 April 2011 with the exception of Local Land Charges for which the present fee(s) would be reviewed later in the year to ensure that costs cover budgeted expenditure in accordance with statutory guidance.

Members were concerned at the reduction in income on Local Land Charges

and requested the review to return to the next meeting of the Committee. It was noted that this was partly due to the change in legislation relating to personal searches.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Committee determined the level of charges for 2011/12 for each service as set out in the report;
- (2) a review on the Local Land Charges position be undertaken and reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

P38. **BUDGET MONITORING APRIL TO JUNE 2010**

The Head of Financial Services

- (a) 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 2010 to 30 June 2010;
- (b) circulated to Members at the meeting an amended Appendix B which reflected the financial position on Key Service Areas to 31 August 2010.

Councillor Angrave, as the Chair of the Rural, Economic and Environmental Affairs Committee, advised that with regard to the waste management budget, he had requested that the relevant officers provide an update on the factors involved and it was agreed that this item be considered at the Waste Management Task Group the following week.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the financial position on each of this Committee's services to 30 June 2010 and the Key Service Areas to 31 August be noted;
- (2) the latest position on the inflation factors involved in the waste management budget be considered at the Waste Management Task Group in the following week.

P39. **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 provided information on amounts approved under delegated powers and reported the impact of these on the Council's reserves and balances.

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) the business cases be approved;
- (5) the budget for the Fairmead Capital Programme project be transferred from capital to revenue.

P40. UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO EQUALITIES

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which updated Members on the revised approach by the Council to make resources available to meet the relevant requirements of the Equality Framework and the new Equality Act 2010 by way of a shared service between the seven District Councils in Leicestershire.

RESOLVED that the Council's approach to equalities be approved and that a report be made to this Committee updating progress on an annual basis.

P41. EXTRAORDINARY EFFICIENCY TASK GROUP

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which briefed Members on the work of the Extraordinary Efficiency Task Group (the Task Group) and requested the Committee to consider its recommendations.

It was agreed that a letter of thanks be sent to Councillor Ross Grant of Leicester City Council for demonstrating the iPad at the meeting of the Task Group held on 3 September 2010.

The Chairman requested that the recommendations be considered individually.

Recommendation 2.1

The Chairman requested Members view on whether to lobby now or wait until the Members were in a stronger position with electronic working.

It was considered that Members wished to reduce paper and an email should be sufficient notice of a meeting and that the Council should advise that it is in favour of this way of working to save money. It was felt that it fitted with the government's drive for decentralisation and providing information quicker.

There was a discussion on the cost of iPads and the proposed savings by moving to the use of this tool. It was noted that it was not always about cashable savings but there were efficiencies to be gained for Members by working electronically in terms of saving time and energy, providing a larger pool of information and possibly enabling Councillors to do their jobs better and this type of evidence would hopefully come from a Member trial of the iPads.

2.1 was agreed.

Recommendation 2.2

The Chief Executive advised that this would require instant implementation of electronic working for task groups and working groups and paper and postage savings would be monitored. Laptops would be supplied at the meetings for Members who did not already have one with the information already loaded on to the PC via a data stick or CD and the agenda would be displayed on the wall.

Members discussed this and did not feel ready to commit to full electronic working with the current tools available to them. They still felt some need for paper copies to be able to be prepared for meetings. There was also some debate regarding accessing the Council's network although this was not required currently due to the continuing offer of data sticks/CDs to transfer information to Councillors' laptops.

The current printing costs involved was mentioned and Members requested the financial breakdown of the project.

It was agreed to maintain the status quo until after the Member iPad test and the costs involved in the project were to be supplied.

Recommendation 2.3

In order to receive the best feedback from an iPad trial, it was suggested that 5 iPads be purchased – 3 for the Conservatives, 1 for Labour and 1 for the Independents and these be distributed to Members with varying ICT competencies.

It was noted that the iPad was a lighter, more portable tool than a laptop and would suit those who did not wish to carry a laptop to meetings.

It was agreed to purchase 5 iPads that were not linked to the Council's network and they be distributed as follows :-

- 3 x Conservative – Councillors Angrave, Marks and Wright
- 1 x Labour – Councillor O'Callaghan
- 1 x Independent – to be advised

The trial to be for 4 months as indicated in the report with Members providing interim and final reports.

With regard to running a parallel test on the existing laptops, Councillor O'Callaghan indicated that he would be happy to report also on the use of his laptop.

RESOLVED that

- (1) officers be instructed to lobby strongly to promote a change in legislation relating to the dispatch of agenda and reports to Members on decision making bodies;

- (2) Working Groups and Task Groups remain as they are in terms of electronic working until after the iPad trial;
- (3) the financial breakdown of the project be supplied to Members;
- (4) Leaders of the 3 larger Political Groups be asked to nominate 3 Conservative Members, 1 from Labour and 1 from the Independents to trial the iPad and mirror the trial with a similar number for current laptops;
- (5) reports from Members' tests be made to this Committee at a future meeting;
- (6) Councillor Ross Grant of Leicester City Council be thanked by letter for demonstrating the iPad at the Extraordinary Efficiency Task Group on 3 September 2010.

P42. SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

The Corporate Director (CM) submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which allowed the Committee to view and comment on the proposed Sustainable Procurement Strategy which would replace the Council's current Procurement Strategy as approved in November 2004.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the proposed strategy be approved;
- (2) the Corporate Director (CM) be granted delegated authority to amend the strategy in line with best practice, government guidelines/changes and as required following CSR announcements in October 2010.

P43. COUNCIL OFFICES AND NEW WAYS OF WORKING (NWW): UPDATE ON PROGRESS

The Corporate Director submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which updated Members on the progress with the New Council Offices project inclusive of progress of the New Ways of Working programme.

It was requested that with regard to the manifestation ideas, the word 'Heritage' replace 'History' and 'Environment' replace 'Nature' when referring to these concepts.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the detail within the report be noted;
- (2) it be noted the interior design scheme is proceeding through a final consultation process with Members, Partner organisations and other

Stakeholders;

- (3) it be noted the Council Business Development Sub-Committee will work with Officers to recommend the Memorabilia which is chosen for display in the building's first year;
- (4) the proportions allocated to work settings defined within the net internal area of the building be noted;
- (5) the agreed and prospective desk numbers indicated from the Partners who show strong indications of wishing to be include their Melton based teams in a integrated co-location be noted;
- (6) the initial interest in occupying the building and scheduled meeting in October with key representatives from another agency be noted;
- (7) the development of a work package which seeks to measure the impact and identify the mitigations of a shift in the sharing ratio of MBC flexible desks to 3:1 be noted;
- (8) the creation of a Task Group reporting to Community and Social Affairs Committee to oversee the development of both an Access Strategy and Customer Service Strategy be noted.

P44. BUDGET FRAMEWORK 2011/12

The Head of Financial Services submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which considered a number of key items which would feed into the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the 2011/12 budget and service planning preparation process.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the proposed service and financial planning timetable for 2010/11 in respect of the 2011/12 financial year be approved;
- (2) no inflation be provided in the 2011/12 budget for non pay costs and pay and related costs unless adjusted for known prices by budget holders;
- (3) the Council retains its objective of setting a balanced budget for 2011/12;
- (4) the target working balance on general expenses remain at £640,000, special expenses (Melton Mowbray) at £50,000 and the Housing Reserve Account (HRA) at £250,000;
- (5) the Programme Board determine the relative priority of schemes for Members to consider and allocate funding based on the information set out in the project mandates;
- (6) the key dates for the budget process be noted.

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.

P45. **COUNCIL OFFICES AND OTHER MAJOR PROJECTS : UPDATE ON PROGRESS**

The Corporate Director submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which updated the Committee on the progress with the exempt matters relating to the New Council Offices project. Recent developments since the last meeting were covered in the report.

RESOLVED that

- (1) Members note that the programme which has already been reported as tight may be impacted upon due to some delays as outlined in the report. However, our project managers are liaising with Hallams to understand and agree the full implications to the programme and trying to find ways of achieving the contract date for completion and or occupation of the building;
- (2) Members note that detailed monthly reports are prepared by EC Harris and reported to the Council Business Development Sub-Committee and are available for Members' inspection;
- (3) Members note the provisional sums in the contract are starting to become known prices in the next few months and these will continue to be closely monitored;
- (4) Members note that there is a system in place for approving matters relevant to contract that are required to deliver the project which include change requests, variation enquiries and drawings;
- (5) Members note the urgency associated with the finalisation of the Wide Area Network (WAN) order and its cross linkages to the Access to Services Review underway and delegate authority to the Corporate Director (CAM) in consultation with the Chairman of Policy, Finance and Administration Committee, Head of Financial Services, Head of ICT and Corporate Director (KA), with a view to finalising these arrangements and note the potential impact on the 2011/12 budget as outlined in the body of the report;
- (6) Members note that the Council is now in discussion with other potential Partners with a view to further sharing of space and associated efficiencies at the new Council Offices;
- (7) Members note the progress update on other major projects;

- (8) Members delegate authority to the Corporate Director, in consultation with the Head of Legal Services and the Strategic Regeneration and Projects Officer to agree an extension of the contract referred to as outlined in the report.

(Councillors Angrave and J.T. Orson left the meeting during the consideration of the preceding item.)

The meeting which commenced at 6.30 p.m., closed at 8.07 p.m.

Chairman