



POLICY, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

PARKSIDE, STATION APPROACH, BURTON STREET, MELTON MOWBRAY

26 JANUARY 2016

Present:-

Councillors J.B Rhodes (Chairman), P.M. Posnett (Vice Chair),
M.Glancy, T. Greenow, L. Higgins, E. Holmes, E. Hutchison, D.R. Wright, J. Wyatt

As Substitute:-

P. Chandler for R. De Burle

Chief Executive, Strategic Director (KA), Head of Central Services,
Head of Communications, Manager of HR and Communications,
People and Place Manager, Committee Support Officer (KW)

P48. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor De Burle.

P49. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 01 December 2015 were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the Chairman.

P50. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Rhodes and Posnett declared personal interests in any items related to Leicestershire County Council due to their positions as County Councillors.

(The Strategic Director here entered the meeting.)

P51. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

There were no recommendations from other committees.

P52. UPDATE ON DECISIONS

There were no updates on decisions.

P53. CORPORATE COMPLAINTS POLICY

The Head of Communications submitted a report to update the findings of a review of the Corporate Complaints Policy, and to introduce a new, revised policy along with additional guidance and support for managers in dealing with customer complaints.

The Manager of HR and Communications explained that many changes have taken place since the last policy review in 2012 and although this policy is still largely fit for purpose, it has been amended to make it more customer focused. The language used within the policy has been amended so that the policy reads better for the customer and there are more ways for the customer to express their concern. Complaints will continue to be monitored as a way to improve service.

A Member expressed that they felt the language used within the policy was much better. The format of the documents was requested to be amended so that the main headings stand out more than the sub headings.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The revised Corporate Complaints Policy at Appendix A, to be implemented with immediate effect be approved.

P54. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL UNDER FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES

The Head of Central Services submitted a report to submit requests for approval of this Committee under Financial Procedure Rules and to provide information on amounts approved under delegated powers and to report the impact of these on the Council's reserves and balances.

The Head of Central Services explained that this is a regular report that is written for this Committee to put forward items that require approval under the Council's financial Procedure.

A Member discussed appendix and believes that it could be written differently as he feels that it is confusing. It was agreed that the Member and Head of Central Services would discuss this detail after the meeting.

It was explained that the income for Leisure vision is coming from Membership fees.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Rhodes and Councillor Wyatt seconded.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The virements approved under delegated powers (para. 3.1.1 refers) be noted.
- 2) The supplementary estimates approved under delegated powers (para. 4.1.1 refers) be noted.
- 3) Changes to the OJEU threshold due to currency fluctuations, with Contract Procedure Rules, Financial Procedure Rules and the Scheme of Delegation to Officers documents to be updated in accordance with the Head of Central Services' delegation (para 6.1 refers), be noted.

P55. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET PROPOSALS 2016/17

The Head of Central Services submitted a report to outline the key budget issues that will be going forward to the Council's budget setting meeting on 10th February 2016 and provide the opportunity for Members to comment on these in advance of the meeting.

The Head of Central Services explained that this report brings together the proposals made at the Budget Away Day for Members information before they are formally submitted for discussion and approval at Full Council.

A great deal of detail has been provided in the report on the revenue budget around the finance settlement, it was explained that this does remain provisional as there has been no details received of when the final figures will be available. Much of this was included in the briefing note issued in December. With regard to the general expenses revenue budget the proposal from the Away Day is for an overall 1.9% council tax increase to keep within the referendum limit. To fund growth set out in Appendix A and to take the saving proposal relating to customer services. The balance to be transferred to the Corporate Priorities Reserve to assist with the required savings in later years.

With regard to the Special Expenses Melton Mowbray one growth item for admin support for the Town Area Committee is proposed for funding.

Capital schemes proposed for funding are set out in Appendices D, E and F. Any comments made by Members will be incorporated into the report to Full Council.

It was discussed and is believed that the settlement figure will be due around the 3 February, although this could be later. Updates will be confirmed verbally or if the settlement figure is not confirmed then the report will be written to incorporate this.

The Chair explained that there is a loss of £933,000 representing a 42% reduction so there are significant changes to funding, this will also be tight with the reduction of the New Homes Bonus.

A Member explained that there are talks regarding a reduction of the New Homes Bonus and that Counties share could be higher. The dissatisfaction from a Member was expressed as it is felt that the Council is being put into an impossible situation by Government because when a scheme is turned down in planning then the Council will not receive the funding. The chair explained that there are some

suggestions about how the New Homes Bonus will be received. The first is that the funding will not be received after appeal. The second being that a threshold will be set i.e. 57 homes need to be built before funding is given and the third is that there will be a bid for funding, however no decision has been made regarding this and it is still under consultation. It was suggested that reducing the time scale of getting planning permission to the build starting may encourage more homes to be built; it is currently set at three years. It was explained that the political impact on planning may be removed.

It was clarified that risk number one on the risk table is a Corporate Risk and the impact will be huge and critical. Concerns were raised that RSG will go negative and a Member suggested that the costs are recovered from the service users and the taxpayer.

No comments were made by Members on the revenue and capital budget proposals for submissions to the Council meeting on the 10th February 2016.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Higgins and Councillor Posnett seconded.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The establishment be varied to include the extension of the 0.5 FTE GIS Technician post to the 31st March 2019.

P56. CORPORATE ISSUES

The Chief Executive submitted a report to brief members upon the development of certain Corporate Issues since the last meeting of the Committee.

The Chief Executive updated the Members on Melton Extending to Excellence and explained that it is moving towards a corporate approach and that action plans have been developed in relation to specific areas.

It is expected that the decision around the Combined Authority will be made in October. Discussions regarding future opportunities are taking place.

Visits have been made to Havant and Hampshire Councils and from Bath and North East Somerset Councils to discuss Me and My Learning and integrated working and both Councils have expressed an interest to continue link working.

The Chief Executive has been asked to be a Member of the Centre of Excellence for Information Sharing Chief Executive's group.

A visit from a Civil servant has taken place and he has expressed an interest in returning to the Council. It was suggested that he may be able to meet the Leader at the return visit. The Chair stated that he has connections with another District Council and they have expressed an interest in visiting Melton Borough Council.

The Chair stated that the Combined Authority has an issue with membership and the Economic Development Board has invited the chairman of the LLEP onto the

board which has raised controversy on voting rights for him. The Chief Executive is preparing a report for Full Council which Members will be invited to vote on.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Posnett and Councillor Higgins seconded.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The report and the progress reported therein, be noted.
- 2) An Efficiency approach for the Council be presented to the June cycle of committees.

P57. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

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

P58. **CUSTOMER SERVICES**

The Head of Communications submitted a report to review how the Council will deliver front facing customer services from 1 April 2016.

RESOLVED that all recommendations in the report be approved.

P59. **ME AND MY LEARNING**

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a report to gain Member approval for interim management arrangements for a Me & My Learning service 2016/17.

RESOLVED that all recommendations in the report be approved.

The meeting which commenced at 6.30 p.m., closed at 7.30p.m.

Chairman