



POLICY, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

PARKSIDE, STATION APPROACH, BURTON STREET, MELTON MOWBRAY

12 JULY 2016

Present:-

Councillors P.M. Posnett (Chair), L. Higgins (Vice Chair), R. De Burle,
M. Glancy, J.T Orson, J. Wyatt

As Substitute:-

P. Chandler for J.B. Rhodes

As Observer:-

J. Illingworth
D.R. Wright

Chief Executive, Strategic Director (KA), Head of Central Services,
Head of Communications, Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods,
Head of Welland Internal Audit Consortium, People and Place Manager,
Committee Support Officer (KW)

P1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Rhodes, Hutchinson, Holmes and Greenow. The Chair stated that Councillor Holmes nominated Councillor Blase to substitute, however Councillor Blase is not a named substitute on this committee so could not substitute.

P2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 April 2016 were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the Chair.

P3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

P4. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

Communities and Social Affairs Committee: 22 June 2016 –Minute C11- Public Conveniences-Replacement Proposal

The Chair read out the recommendation. A Member asked about the demolition of the public conveniences and if there would be extra expense. The Head of Central Services confirmed that it would be subject to the findings of the architect.

All recommendations were moved by Councillor Wyatt and Councillor De Burle seconded.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that the Park Lane toilets property be declared surplus to requirements and the Corporate Property Officer be authorised to instruct architects to obtain planning consent for change of use and to seek to achieve maximum capital receipt for the freehold disposal of Park Lane toilets.

P5. UPDATE ON DECISIONS

The updates on decisions were agreed.

P6. REPLACEMENT CARETAKER VAN

The Corporate Property Officer submitted a report to seek approval for the business case for a replacement new caretaker van and disposal of the existing van and seek approval for the associated finances.

The Head of Central services explained that the spend had previously been approved at Full Council and the business case is presented to seek Members approval.

A Member questioned if the van was likely to be petrol or diesel. It was confirmed that the business case states that a diesel van would be obtained

All recommendations were moved by Councillor Wyatt and Councillor Glancy seconded.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that that the Business case of and associated capital budget of £13k for a replacement caretaker van attached at Appendix A be approved.

P7. COMMITTEE SOFTWARE BUSINESS CASE AND ICT PROTOCOL FOR MEMBERS

The Head of Communications submitted a report to request approval of a Committee Software Business Case and to progress the project including the associated costs and request approval of the revised ICT protocol for Members.

The Head of Communications explained that there are two recommendations to approve. The Committee Software package has previously been agreed at this committee but this report includes the business case with the purpose of the software

to reduce duplication of work and to move to a paperless committee system.. The second related to the data protection protocol which has been revised to meet the data protection legislation and also the legislation around the electronic delivery of agendas, called an e-summons which requires all Members to agree the roll out.

A Member explained that he has seen demonstrations of the software and is happy with these; however he is not convinced about recommendation 2.2 as he is doubtful the equipment required is in place and is not convinced all Members will agree to the e-summons.

Concerns were raised about the quality of the wifi signal within the building and the costs associated with the upgrade. The Head of Central Services explained that the Wifi in the building is due to be upgraded. It was also clarified that the documents can be downloaded before a meeting so that if there is low wifi signal then the documents can still be accessed.

There were also concerns from Members that as each individual learns differently they may find it difficult to absorb information on a tablet and would prefer a paper copy and an opt in arrangement for the scheme.

A Member stated that with a saving of £7,300 then the money can be moved and spent elsewhere and that a decision to go paperless needs to be made.

All recommendations were moved by Councillor Orson and Councillor Higgins seconded.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The Committee Software Business Case and the purchase of the Committee Software, Modern.gov, based on the associated costs set out at paragraph 5.1 be approved.
- 2) The revised ICT Protocol for Members be approved and refer the same to Full Council for adoption in the Council's Constitution, and delegated authority be granted to the Head of Communications to amend the protocol in line with best practice and changes to legislation.

(The Head of Communications here left the meeting)

P8. MELTON BOROUGH LOCAL AUTHORITY LOTTERY

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a report to gain agreement from Members to the establishment and management of a local authority lottery for the Borough of Melton that would support the voluntary and community sector also easing the financial strains on the Council and to enable good causes to raise funds directly.

The People and Place Manager presented the report, he highlighted the incorrect numbering on the recommendations on the report and apologised for the mistake. It was highlighted that Aylesbury Vale District Council are going from strength to strength with the Lottery that they are operating.

It was explained that £100,000 is currently given to the voluntary sector by Melton Borough Council and as a result of the financial challenges faced the lottery will enable the Council to reduce the funding given without affecting the funding the organisations receive. The Lottery will enable the community to opt for organisations who receive the funding and when the box is not ticked for a specific organisation then the Local Authority can opt to spend elsewhere. The table on page 5 of the business case shows where the £1 spend on a ticket will be distributed.

A Member questioned page 4 of the business case and how the monthly figure of £4.33 was determined. It was explained that this would be a monthly direct debit payment and therefore the figure would be averaged out through the year.

There were concerns raised by Members that the rates in the table B6 of the business case were not high enough. The Officer clarified that the rates are based on Aylesbury Vale District Council's model and that a review will be undertaken in a year's time and a report be presented to this Committee with an update.

A Member explained that a meeting with Gatherwell had taken place and lotteries within other authorities are going well. With the Council's financial position and funding reduction to organisations, the Lottery would be a way to get funding for organisations and possibly more than the Council could offer and the lottery is a way that the local people can raise money and influence the spend in the community.

Concerns were raised about the £5,000 of Officer's time and where the budget is for this as it is not reflected in the table B6. Officers clarified that the funding would come from other budgets and the time of the Officers will be reallocated from helping gain funding for organisations to administering the Lottery and talking to organisations about how they can raise their own funds. This could be achieved by marketing the Lottery themselves and so it is believed that £3,000 budgeted for marketing in the first year will be adequate.

All recommendations were moved by Councillor Glancy and Councillor Posnett seconded.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The implementation of a Local Authority Lottery that will be operated by Melton Borough Council for which an external company will be appointed to manage it on behalf of the Council be approved.
- 2) The business case as detailed in Appendix A, be approved.
- 3) Delegation be granted to the Head of Communities & Neighbourhoods to act as the responsible officer in relation to the lottery licence with the Gambling Commission.
- 4) Delegation of the final arrangements of launching the lottery be granted to the Head of Communities & Neighbourhoods in consultation with the Solicitor to the Council..

- 5) Contract procedure rules be waived enabling the Council to enter into a contract with Gatherwell Limited who are a private company who also operate the only two other local authority lotteries nationally.

(The People and Place Manager here left the meeting)

P9. APPROVAL OF BUSINESS CASES – PLAY EQUIPMENT & FRONTLINE EMT MOWERS

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a report to seek Members approval of two business cases relating to Play Equipment and Frontline Environmental Maintenance Team (EMT) Mowers.

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods presented the report and explained that he is aware that the two business cases should have gone to other Committees before being presented to this Committee. It was explained that by approving the recommendations on this report then a annual revenue saving of £10k could be made.

A Member congratulated officers on the savings; however it was questioned about how the equipment was selected and sourced. It was also commented on by a member that some of the play equipment had been installed. The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods reiterated that it should have been presented at other committees; however the specifications are available in the business cases.

(Councillor Illingworth here left the meeting)

A Member expressed that they were impressed with the disabled play equipment.

(Councillor Illingworth here re-entered the meeting)

All recommendations were moved by Councillor Orson and Councillor Chandler seconded.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The Business Case attached as Appendix A in regards to Play Equipment for 2016/17 be approved.
- 2) The Business Case attached as Appendix B in regards to the front line EMT Mowers for 2016/17 be approved.

P10. BOTTESFORD FOOTBALL CLUB PROJECT – COMMUNITY FACILITY GRANT

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a report to seek Members approval to award a Community facility Grant of £25,000 to Bottesford Football Club, to support their Pavilion Project.

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods presented the report. It was explained that Bottesford Football Club have shared their vision with the Council

regarding the Community Facility Grant for over a year. Now that external funding has been confirmed and was a requirement of the Community Facility Grant, this will enable Melton Borough Council to move forward and bridge the gap of £25k the club requires. Appendix A was highlighted and shows the outline of the business case.

The Chair explained that this has been going on for a while and will put another part of the leisure vision in place in the rural area in addition to that which is progressing in the town.

A Member stated that the club have done all they can to raise money, they are a very active club and have done a lot to raise funding for themselves.

It was felt that the term "Helping to provide homes" on item 4.1 could be misleading. However it was explained that they are not providing homes but are providing a community and the term has been lifted from the Corporate Priorities.

All recommendations were moved by Councillor Chandler and Councillor Higgins seconded.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The Business Case attached as Appendix A outlining a Community Facility Grant of £25,000 to Bottesford Football Club for their Pavilion Project and include it into the capital programme for 2016/17, be approved.
- 2) A supplementary estimate from capital receipts which will increase the overall mandate for Community Facilities Grants to £50k, be approved.

P11. REVENUE BUDGET 2015/16 – PROVISIONAL YEAR END POSITION

The Head of Central Services submitted a report to provide Members with information on the provisional year end position subject to external audit approval for 2015/16 and to provide Members with information on the implications for the Council's balances and reserves.

The Head of Central Services presented the report and explained that despite the many pressures on the budget the Council has underspent against the estimated year end position which is the position reported to Members when the budget is set in February by the amounts set out in paragraph 3.2.

With regard to general expenses the position against the estimated year end position is an underspend of £679k. When approved carry forwards are taken into account the underspend reduces to £46k. This is a positive achievement and as the level of the underspend is at a much lower amount than in previous years demonstrates that the approach taken in 2015/16 to meet as many supplementary estimate requests as possible that have traditionally gone to Members early in the financial year from other areas that are underspent at the year-end has worked well. Whilst this could have meant a number of requests being submitted later in the year for decisions already taken should savings not have materialised, this was not the case.

For special expenses Melton Mowbray the provisional position is an overspend of £13k and for the Housing Revenue Account an underspend of £196k. The Housing Revenue Account position has been reported in detail to the Communities and Social Affairs Committee.

The impact of this on the reserves is set out in paragraph 3.7 where the position on the Corporate Priorities Reserve is estimated to be £72k higher at 31 March 2017 than reported to Members when the budget was set and special expenses Melton Mowbray £4k more. It is recommended that a Spending Pressure Reserve is established using the £72k to help meet the future spending pressures.

Appendix A shows budget holder performance and compares the provisional outturn with the approved budget that budget holders have control over. Explanations are included where the under/overspend is more than £10k.

It was stated that figures will remain provisional until the accounts have been audited which is scheduled to begin in August.

A Member stated that the Spending Pressure Fund is an “excellent idea”.

All recommendations were moved by Councillor Glancy and Councillor De Burle seconded.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The provisional year end position, variations to the 2015/16 estimated year end position and the resultant effect on the Council’s balances and reserves as set out in the attached papers be noted.
- 2) Supplementary estimates be approved for those services which are overspent against the approved budget as attached at Appendix A.
- 3) A Spending Pressure Reserve of £72,000 be approved to be established in 2016/17 to help meet future funding pressures as outlined in para 3.8 which will be funded through a transfer from the Corporate Priorities Reserve.
- 4) A principle is established for future years that any overall net underspends on General Expenses at the end of the financial year are transferred into the Spending Pressure Reserve as outlined in para 3.8.

P12. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2015-16

The Head of Central Services presented a report of the Statement of Accounts for 2015-16 for approval which have been prepared in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and inform the Committee of the key issues within the accounts.

The Head of Central Services presented the report and stated that the accounts presented are subject to audit and therefore could change as a result, however this should be a material change and the accounts will be brought back to Members at

the September meeting.

The accounts are in line with financial standards and codes of practice therefore the covering report draws out the key areas to aid understanding for Members. With regard to the balance sheet and in particular the table on page 3 of the report shows the Council was slightly under borrowed against its need when comparing capital expenditure and the use of other forms of funding. With regard to the working capital and comparing creditors and debtors as shown on page 4 shows a slight reduction in the ideal position at the balance sheet date with the excess of debtors over creditors increasing whereas ideally creditors would exceed debtors but it should be noted that this is a snapshot on a particular day.

The Head of Central Services made Members aware that from the 2017/18 financial year that it will be a requirement that a signed copy of the accounts will be produced by the end of May each year which is a month earlier than present. This year the team has successfully managed to do this on a voluntary basis which has enabled issues to be seen with continuing such performance moving forward. This has been a tremendous achievement for the finance team and is a testament to the hard work and dedication they have put in to achieve this. This has highlighted some challenges with getting all of the transactions included prior to even starting the actual statements. What this may mean is that the closedown and accounts may have to be produced based on the use of more estimates rather than waiting for more accurate figures and this will be important for Members to recognise as it could result in more changes post audit or in the next financial year if carry forwards/ accruals are not as accurate. In addition to this earlier closedown this is the first year we have been required to produce a narrative statement which is attached at appendix B. The policy team had provided support in producing this and the Head of Central Services thanked them for their input. It was also explained that this is the first year with Ernst Young as the external auditors which naturally takes up an increased amount of time as they come to grips with the Council's systems and staff.

A Member stated how impressed she was at bringing the closure forward a whole month. The Chair echoed this and commented on how small our team was and therefore how proud she was to be the leader of a council with staff who show such commitment and dedication.

All recommendations were moved by Councillor Glancy and Councillor De Burle seconded.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The Statement of Accounts for 2015-16 as attached at Appendix A, be noted.
- 2) The Narrative Statement as attached at Appendix B, be noted.

P13. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL UNDER FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES

The Head of Central Services submitted a report to provide 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.

All recommendations were moved by Councillor De Burle and Councillor Posnett 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 budget reductions approved under delegated powers (para. 4.1 refers) be noted.
- 3) The business cases discussed in para 5.1 be approved and a supplementary estimate of £25,000 be approved from capital receipts to fund the community grants project.
- 4) The use of £10,000 from the Corporate Priorities Reserve to proceed with a business case for the toilets and to obtain planning permission for alternative use on the Park Lane public conveniences as discussed in paragraph 6.1 be approved.
- 5) The use of £20,000 from the HRA Working Balance to commission feasibility work to explore options for the future development of Gretton Court as discussed in paragraph 6.2, be approved.
- 6) The use of £25,000 from the HRA Working Balance to deliver improvement projects in the Housing Repairs & Maintenance service as discussed in paragraph 6.3, be approved.

P14. ONE COUNCIL AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Chief Executive submitted a report to seek Members approval to the new Corporate Plan which has been termed the "One Council Delivery and Development Plan" (OCDDP).

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods presented the report and stated that this report is based on the Corporate and Service plan which Members are familiar with. This report demonstrates the plans merging together as a "One Council" approach. It was explained that there may be slight adjustments to the plans but colleagues will work together and implement the standards.

Appendix B shows the training plan and identifies areas where improvements can be implemented. Members noted that the plan would be further developed over the period and any necessary training added as the need may arise.

A Member expressed that he found the report to be very positive.

Questions were raised about the budget for training and it was clarified to the Member that the training budget will be used, courses have been costed and the funding required is available. One Member suggested that if the Members training

budget has not been allocated then it could be used to train Officers.

All recommendations were moved by Councillor Orson and Councillor De Burle seconded.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The One Council Delivery Development Plan be approved for implementation by the Council.

- 2) The Melton Extending to Excellence Training and Support Plan be approved for implementation during the years 2016/17 and 2017/18.

P15. EFFICIENCY PLAN

The Chief Executive submitted a report to update members on the progress made towards the development of the Council's Efficiency Plan as a first step in consideration of submission of the plan together with supporting documents as the Councils Efficiency Statement to Government.

The Chief Executive presented the report and explained that savings of £900,000 are to be made and Members have previously agreed to move forward as a whole council. It was explained that there are two ways to move forward to ensure the target of £900,000 is met, firstly being the traditional money saving way by cutting funding to service areas and secondly, the "Melton Way" by business change and expansion, and learning new skills for commercialisation. The Spending Pressure Fund was described as an excellent way to smooth out and manage the savings and if Officers can continue to make savings then this will build up the Fund.

Appendix A sets out the estimates and savings of around £700,000 without commercialisation and with savings from partners but a more formal plan will be put forward by the Transformation and Efficiency Board.

The Chair nominated Councillors Orson, Rhodes, Higgins, Pearson, Illingworth and Lumley to be put forward for the Transformation and Efficiency Board task and finish group. The Chief Executive advised that the independent group nominated Members would be subject to confirmation of the committee Member.

All recommendations were moved by Councillor Higgins and Councillor Orson seconded.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The draft Efficiency Plan be approved for further work and submission for final approval to this committee at its meeting on 30th September.

- 2) The Terms of reference of the Transformation and Efficiency Board as a task and finish group of this committee together with allocation to its membership be approved .

P16. CORPORATE ISSUES

The Chief Executive submitted a report to bring Members up to date with Corporate activities and issues which have occurred in the intervening period since the last report.

The Chief Executive updated members on the Combined Authority and explained the likely next stages for which delegated authority had been granted if required to be used.

There has been a slight confusion on the guidance of the Disabled Facilities Grant and there is suggestion that the processes could be administratively cumbersome. To ensure the Council is agile, it has been put forward that the delegated authority for this is up for discussion as per recommendation 2.2.

The Chief Executive also updated Members on the three applications made to the IRRV (Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuations) awards and was pleased to state that all of the applications have been shortlisted.

All recommendations were moved by Councillor De Burle and Councillor Chandler seconded.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The progress towards the establishment of the Combined Authority be noted.
- 2) Delegated Authority be granted to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of this Committee and the Opposition Spokesperson to enable and facilitate the Council's strategic approach to Disabled Facilities Grants be approved.

P17. URGENT ITEMS

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.

P18. LEISURE VISION FINANCES

The Head of Welland Internal Audit Consortium reported on the budget position regarding the Leisure Vision Project.

RESOLVED that all recommendations in the report be approved.

The meeting which commenced at 6.30 p.m., closed at 8.12 p.m.

Chairman