



RURAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

8 SEPTEMBER 2010

PRESENT:-

Councillors N.R.G Angrave (Chairman)
P. Baguley, G.E. Botterill, A. Freer, M.C.R. Graham MBE,
T. Moncrieff, R.F. Moore-Coltman, D.E. Orson, N. Slater

As Observer
Councillor M. O'Callaghan

Corporate Director (CM), Assistant Chief Executive (CW)
Head of Financial Services, Head of Social & Economic Development,
Strategic Regeneration and Projects Officer,
Democracy Officer

R12. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Holmes and Rhodes.

R13. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 26 May 2010 were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the Chairman.

R14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

R15. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

There were no recommendations from other committees.

R16. LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE STRATEGY FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH
2011 – 2014 PRIORITY ACTIONS – CONSULTATION

The Head of Social and Economic Development submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) for Members to note the Strategic Commissioning Framework for Economic Growth 2011 – 2014 (Leicester & Leicestershire) and its Priority Actions and to make comments in

response to the formal consultation associated with the Framework.

The Head of Social and Economic Development informed Members that the Leicester & Leicestershire Strategy for Economic Growth 2010-2020 was undergoing a formal consultation which would end on Monday 30 September 2010, and not 15 March 2010 as previously advised under item 11.1 of his report.

The Head of Social and Economic Development further stated that the centre of excellence for food and drink was absent from the new performance framework.

Councillor O'Callaghan here declared a personal interest in this item as Chairman of the Melton Mowbray Food Partnership. He considered that food and drink should be rated as a priority and included as a separate item under section 1.4 of the performance framework entitled 'Growth in the sub-regional priority sectors'

Councillor Freer enquired if higher levels of education were being obtained under section 2. The Head of Social and Economic Development stated the City qualifications were not relevant to Melton whose focus should be retained around section 2.3 'Everyone aspires to gaining a qualification at NVQ Level 1. Councillor Freer stated that the majority of Government funding would be around high level qualifications (NVQ2).

The Head of Social and Economic Development informed Members that all comments would be taken on board.

RESOLVED that Members delegate to the Head of Social and Economic Development in consultation with the Chair of REEA to respond to the framework questionnaire.

(Councillor Baguley here entered the meeting.)

R17. REVOCATION OF REGIONAL STRATEGIES

The Assistant Chief Executive (CW) submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which advised the Committee of the Government's decision to revoke, and its intention to abolish Regional Strategies. The matter was considered by the Melton Local Development Framework (MLDF) Task Group at its meeting of 8 July 2010, and the conclusions and recommendations of the Task Group were also reported.

Councillor Moncrieff enquired if the Government had given Parish Councillors a mission to provide up to 20,000 developments. The Assistant Chief Executive (CW) stated that there were proposals for a Community Right To Build which was in the early stages of preparation. Details would be brought to the MLDF Task Group.

Following a Member query the Assistant Chief Executive (CW) stated that a gypsy and travellers needs assessment had been undertaken to inform the Regional Spatial Strategy. Although the RSS had been revoked the evidence would be used would feed into the core strategy.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the abolition of regional strategies and the transfer of regional housing and planning powers to local planning authorities be welcomed;
- (2) in the interim the East Midlands Regional Plan housing provision for Melton of 3,400 dwellings (170 dwellings per annum) between 2006 and 2026 should continue to be used;
- (3) the Assistant Chief Executive cooperate with other local planning authorities in the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area on this matter.

R18. MELTON MOWBRAY SUSTAINABLE URBAN EXTENSION MASTERPLANNING

The Assistant Chief Executive (CW) submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which informed Members of the arrangements to prepare a masterplan and delivery statement for a sustainable urban extension to Melton Mowbray and to invite approval of those arrangements.

RESOLVED that the Governance Structure and Terms of Reference for the Melton Mowbray Sustainable Urban Extension Masterplanning be approved.

R19. BUDGET MONITORING APRIL TO JUNE 2010

The Head of Financial 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 2010 to 30 June 2010.

Councillor Angrave suggested that the Overspends be put to the Task Groups or put to Management Team to investigate in order to maximise income and minimise outgoings.

The Head of Financial Services stated that the Budget and Strategic Planning Working Group would devote a whole day for scrutiny of the budgets.

Councillor O'Callaghan pointed out that the Cattle Market was the 3rd major contributor to the Borough.

RESOLVED that the financial position on each of this Committee's services to 30 June be noted.

R20. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING TO 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 July 2010.

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

R21. REVIEW OF CHARGES 2011/12

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

- (i) provided information on the various fees and charges that were made by this committee;
- (ii) recommended changes to these charges to operate from 1 April 2011, with the exception of Building Control fees as new legislation required these to be implemented by 1 October 2010.

Councillor Moncrieff suggested that the amounts shown in the Review of Charges be rounded up to whole pounds.

Councillor Graham enquired if Control of Dogs should be moved up the list. The Head of Financial Services stated that income was not generated to cover the cost of service as there were other requirements such as policy setting and noise control in addition to the dog warden. She further stated that with regard to efficiency savings, proposals would be put forward at the appropriate time.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the level of charges for 2011-12 for each of the services be approved;
- (2) delegated authority be given to the Head of Regulatory Services in consultation with the Chair of the Committee and Head of Financial Services to implement the new building Control charges on 1 October 2010;
- (3) a full options appraisal in relation to a new income stream from pre-application discussions be approved.

R22. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2010-15

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 Committee noted the Capital Programme for 2010-2015;
- (2) Members considered the schemes being submitted in 2010-2015 for funding as part of the budget setting process to ensure they met the Council's priorities and;
- (3) the Project Mandates be approved for inclusion in the Capital Programme;

- (4) the business case discussed in para. 3.2.4 be approved;
- (5) the project mandate and business case discussed in para 3.2.5 be approved for inclusion in the capital programme for 2010/11 and a request for a supplementary estimate of £11k be referred to the Policy, Finance & Administration Committee for approval.

R23. CAR PARKING: UPDATE REPORT

The Head of Street Scene and Environment submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) which

- (i) updated Members on current car park income and proposed a number of changes to the charging policy in order to address a possible shortfall on budget and also reflected the increase in the VAT rate.
- (ii) set out a number of proposals to increase the current hour and weekly charges and for consideration of a charging policy for buses and coaches using the Wilton Road service facility to offset the costs of opening the Wilton Road toilets.

Councillor Graham stated that it would be tempting to increase charges to generate more income but suggested more people would come into the town if prices were reduced.

Councillor Freer suggested it would be an option to put Short Stay tariffs up and decrease Long Stay in order to encourage people to stay longer. Councillor O'Callaghan considered that if the price was reduced it would encourage trade into the Borough and suggested a trial. The Chairman stated that he did not wish to delay a decision however he considered that all options should be reviewed.

The Corporate Director stated that the balance between Long Stay and Short Stay was considered previously and the Car Park Strategy would analyse costs in the long term and any future decisions would be made at any point through the policy processes.

Councillor Graham enquired about a suggestion which was being considered for a 'Free Friday' in relation to parking in the town where traders were looking to subsidise costs for one day a week. The Head of Social and Economic Development stated that this would not be implemented until 2012.

The Head of Financial Services stated that all charges were inclusive of VAT and part of the revenue would be lost if VAT increased.

Members were totally opposed to any charges for coach and bus parking. The Head of Financial Services stated that when the bus park was moved to St. Mary's Way they were not able to charge as it was a highway however since then coaches had drifted back to Wilton Road to park. The Strategic Regeneration and Projects Officer stated that there was potential for coaches who parked regularly to have an out of town base and there would be an opportunity at that time to start charging at Wilton Road.

The Chairman considered that tourist buses would be welcome to park for free but it was a different matter for those that used the car park as a regular stop.

Councillor O'Callaghan stated that there would be a risk for bus companies to use this as an excuse to stop one of their services. He considered that it was well known amongst tourist companies that Melton had free parking facilities and if charges were imposed then word would soon get around. He suggested that a clear, welcoming message should be put out to encourage tourism.

Councillor Freer expressed concern about school buses as parents were already being charged extra and she considered that bus companies, if charged for parking, may pass the charge on.

RESOLVED that

- (1) Weekly Charges: the tariff be changed from the current charge of £5 per week to £7 per week with tickets to cover a full week period and apply to Long Stay car parks;
- (2) One hour charge: no change be made to the existing charge however charges be reviewed as part of the Melton Car Parking strategy to be brought forward in the Work Programme;
- (3) Coach & Bus parking charges:
 - (i) no charge be imposed for tourist coaches;
 - (ii) further information to explain the possible implications of charging local buses to give Members more information on which to base their decision on whether or not to charge and also to advise what the charge should be, to be brought back to the Committee for their further consideration;
- (4) Conversion of Mill Street to Long Stay: the designation of the Mill Street Car Park to a Long Stay car park be approved with the additional option of a Short Stay tariff of 60p for those wishing to stay up to 1 hour;
- (5) Introduction of residential Parking Permits: discussions with Leicestershire County Council be noted with proposals from County anticipated in September 2010.

(Councillor Botterill here left the meeting.)

R24. URGENT BUSINESS

BRIEFING PAPER – LEICESTER & LEICESTERSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP PROPOSAL AND LEICESTER & LEICESTERSHIRE REVIEW OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DELIVERY

The Head of Social and Economic Development submitted a report which updated and informed the Committee of recent developments affecting the delivery of Economic Development and other growth projects in the City and County.

(Councillor Moore-Coltman here left the meeting).

Councillor O'Callaghan commented as follows:-

- The structure worried him as part of it was set up by Prospect Leicestershire.
- He had attended Prospect Leicestershire meetings.
- Prospect Leicestershire were an expensive organisation and were in severe financial difficulties
- Leicestershire Promotions had worked well with Melton Promotions
- Leicestershire Promotions should remain independent
- £64 million was generated in the Borough with no major attractions
- He considered that it should be suggested to both the Leader and City and County that Leicestershire Promotions remain independent on tourism

(Councillor D. Orson here entered the meeting).

The Chairman suggested that the emphasis was on Leicestershire Promotions and suggested the Committee highlight their concerns to the MAA Leadership Board and the County Council. The Head of Social and Economic Development confirmed he would draft a response to be issued from the Chair with the Committee recommendations.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the contents of the report be noted;
- (2) the Head of Social & Economic Development draft a letter on behalf of the Committee for submission to the County Council and the MAA Leadership Board to highlight their concerns relating to Leicestershire Promotions not remaining an independent body and the impact on tourism.

The meeting which commenced at 6.30 p.m., closed at 7.50 p.m.

Chairman