

Minutes

Meeting name	Policy, Finance and Administration Committee
Date	Wednesday, 29 November 2017
Start time	6.30 pm
Venue	Parkside, Station Approach, Burton Street, Melton Mowbray LE13 1GH

Present:

Chair Councillor J. Orson (Chair)

Councillors L. Higgins (Vice-Chair) R. de Burle
P. Cumbers M. Glancy
E. Hutchison B. Rhodes
J. Wyatt

Observers

Officers Chief Executive
Deputy Chief Executive
Corporate Director
Learning, Skills and Healthier Communities Manager
Business Partner (DM)
Administrative Assistant (KW)

Minute No.	Minute
P35	<p>Apologies For Absence Apologies were received from Councillors Holmes and Pearson.</p>
P36	<p>Minutes The minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2017 were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the Chair.</p>
P37	<p>Declarations of Interest Councillors Orson and Rhodes declared a personal interest in any items relating to Leicestershire County Council due to their positions as County Councillors.</p> <p>It was decided that Councillor Rhodes did not have an interest in item 13, Payroll Service but as he is Chairman of an organisation that provides a payroll service he abstained from voting.</p>
P38	<p>Recommendations From Other Committees There were no recommendations from other committees.</p>
P39	<p>Update On Decisions The Chair updated Members on item P.16 2017/18 Exempt Report -Critical/ Severe Threat Level Management in Melton Borough Council and stated that an update on this will be taken to the ad hoc Policy, Finance and Administration Committee meeting on 7 December 2017.</p> <p>The Chair explained to Members that item P.34 2017/18 Exempt report – Commercialism Pilot may be reported at the April meeting of this committee.</p> <p>The update on decisions were noted.</p>
P40	<p>Me and My Learning - End of Year Report The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a report to seek Member's comments and approval of the Me and My Learning End of Year report for 2016/17.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Learning, Skills and Healthier Communities Manager and the Business Partner (DM) for the presentation that had taken place to all Members prior to this committee meeting.</p> <p>A Member asked for figures around those of pension age who do not wish to work but need support and also enquired as to whether there is more capacity in Me and My Learning for more referrals. The Officers clarified that there have been nine referrals for the over 65's who have been helped with digital independence. The referrals were not proactively sought but there is capacity to take on more referrals.</p>

A Member questioned the number of people coming to the front desk. It was explained that officers have done some analysis but the ages of the customers would only be known if they had further interaction with the Council.

Another Member thanked the Me and My Learning team and highlighted the help that that the team provides which is life changing and said that this is why Melton Borough Council should be providing funding.

Another Member stated that Me and My Learning is the best thing that the Council had done however, the net cost is £250k per year and is a non statutory service. It was said that there are pressures on the budget and if the Council is not successful in reducing the costs of the waste collection then cut back will be required so this service could be at risk.

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the report does not contain details of the demand reduction the service makes and the savings made from this. If this service is not around then the demand on services will increase. Me and My Learning tackles the root causes of the demand issues rather than creating a silo and the scheme focuses on the long term reduction of demand.

A Member stated that he hopes that funding is found as Me and My Learning has been a major success and if the service stops and restarts in the future then the costs to do this would be more than continuing with the service.

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

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that Members commented on and approved the Me and My Learning End of Year Report, as attached at Appendix A of the report.

(The Deputy Chief Executive, Learning, Skills and Healthier Communities Manager and the Business Manager (DM) here left the meeting)

P41

Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedures for Statutory Officers

The Solicitor to the Council submitted a report to update the committee on the position with regards to the recently adopted Disciplinary Policy with respect to the councils statutory officers and the consequential amendments required to the Council's substitute policy.

The Corporate Director explained that this report is concerning the Governance of the Committee and therefore neither the Chief Executive or the Corporate Director have an interest to declare. The Corporate Director highlighted that the report recommends that there is a change in Governance which would need to be recommended to Full Council, it was explained that there may be issues with

membership of the committees in this committee cycle however this would be organised for the next committee cycle in 2018/19.

A Member highlighted that the report does not say how much notice would be required to substitute. The Corporate Director explained that this will be clarified at the Governance Committee.

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

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that the Governance Committee recommend to Council that its substitute policy be amended to reflect the restriction on a member of Policy, Finance and Administration Committee from being a substitute on the Appeals Committee and visa versa. And that there is a requirement for members of the Policy, Finance and Administration Committee to undergo appropriate training prior to sitting as the Investigating and Disciplinary Committee.

P42

Items for Approval Under Financial Procedure Rules

The Corporate Director submitted a report to request 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.

A Member questioned recommendation 2.5 and the element surrounding the replacement of vans. It was stated that the current vans are five years old and it was asked if it would be sensible waiting a couple of years to acquire more environmentally friendly vehicles. Another Member thought that the Mercedes engines were designed well and could last ten years.

Another Member argued that the new vehicles would be euro 6 emissions standard whereas the old would be euro 4 emissions standard therefore the current vans are very polluting compared to new ones. It was stated that the electric vans are often very expensive and currently they do not represent the best value.

One Member explained that he does not have the knowledge to say if the vehicles will last another two years and favours replacement to reduce the risk. It was stated that the tax will only apply to cars and not vans.

The Corporate Director explained that there have been complaints previously regarding concerns over the level of the grass cutting service therefore a replacement programme was compiled which ensured vehicles and equipment was replaced in a timely manner ready for the start of the cutting season. It was explained that one option is to defer the purchase of the vans but this could have an impact on the cutting season which starts in March and the replacement programme could be revised.

Councillor de Burle proposed a recommendation that a review of the replacement programme should be included in the budget management strategy. Councillor Rhodes moved the recommendation and Councillor Wyatt seconded.

A Member commented that she is happy a study is being done on the Country Park.

Recommendations 2.1 to 2.5 were moved by Councillor Rhodes and Councillor Wyatt seconded.

All Members were unanimously in favour of the original and additional recommendations.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the virements approved under delegated powers be noted.
- 2) the supplementary estimates approved under delegated powers to be funded from budget reductions be noted.
- 3) a request from the Community and Social Affairs Committee for £10k towards and ecological study at the country park is to be funded from excising resources but if officers are unable to, a formal request will come back to this committee at a future date for approval, be noted.
- 4) the budget reductions approved under delegated powers be noted.
- 5) the business case for Environmental Maintenance equipment be approved to be funded by £81,000 from the Repairs and Renewals Fund as approved at MEEA.
- 6) Officers to incorporate a review of the Environmental Maintenance front line mower renewal and replacement programme in to the budget management strategy.

P43

Revenue Estimates 2018/19 & Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Corporate Director submitted a report on the latest position regarding the estimates for 2017/18 and 2018/19 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) following the Conservative Chairs Group meeting held on 13 November 2017.

The Corporate Director explained that the report sets out the latest position on the estimates for the Council as a whole for general and special expenses. The estimated year end position for 2017/18 indicates an underspend against in year approvals of £155k and the main variances set out in paragraph 3.2.3 which are ongoing and have been built into next years estimates, others are non recurring in nature. For special expenses Melton Mowbray an underspend of £7k is forecast.

It was explained that with regard to the 2018/19 latest position there currently is a deficit of £515k on general expenses and a contribution for the special expenses reserve for special expenses Melton Mowbray. This does not take into account any savings or growth proposals. Appendices A and B set out proposals for General Expenses and the net impact of those recommended by Management Team for approval would reduce the deficit by £66.5K in 2018/19 to £449K. It is proposed that this deficit be funded from the spending pressures and corporate priorities reserves.

It was said that with regard to special expenses Melton Mowbray whilst there is surplus on the revenue account of £25k there is also ongoing growth being recommended which is £50k this is being refined and options for funding to be shared with alternate sources are being explored.

The Corporate Director explained that with regards to the Autumn statement this was fairly neutral on local government finances and it is assumed that the 4 year settlement will remain as previously notified however there is no certainty until the finance settlement is released.

It was pointed out that it is not sustainable to continue to draw from reserves to balance the revenue budget going forward and therefore Management Team are developing a budget management strategy. One of the key factors to be resolved is the impact of the waste procurement and the green waste element which could have a significant impact on the bottom line for the Council and it would be prudent to see what the outcome of this is and the impact on the Council's forward projections.

The Corporate Director further explained that the report provides an update on the business rates pilot bid and the pool. Should the pilot not be successful it will still be necessary to assess the financial position of the pool following the announcement of the finance settlement and therefore delegation is again requested to withdraw from the business rates pool should the modelling across the country demonstrate this is no longer a financial benefit. However at the current time the pool is performing well in terms of surpluses estimated for the current financial year and the indications are that a pilot if successful would see additional funding being retained within the county area.

A Member highlighted a mistake in table 3.2.1 and the £155k should be a negative figure. The Member further explained that there is an issue with the £515k shortfall and is worried about the funding gap if the waste contract does not deliver, savings will have to be made elsewhere. It was said that he is in favour of charging parish councils for elections. He stated that he was happy with the paper but explained that the Council needs to be prudent as he does not anticipate any respite in the funding situation.

The Chief Executive explained that the Officers are looking to explore all options

before any service reductions are made and the commercial agenda for the Council is one option.

A Member explained that he supports the recharge to the Parish Councils but he queried the costs involved around this for the parishes. The Corporate Director explained that costs would be approximately £2-3k. The charges will not be implemented until 2019/20 to enable the Parishes to be able to take the impact into account when setting their precepts next year. It was said that the recharge could have a disproportionate impact on the smaller Parishes.

A Member questioned the internet costs in the children's centres. The Corporate Director explained that a larger internet line was initially required due to use by internal staff along with Leicestershire County Council and the back up for IT but as with the new IT service, this service is elsewhere and therefore a large line is not required. Melton Borough Council has negotiated with the provider for a better service and cost. The partners are to pick up their proportion of the costs involved with the line.

Another Member questioned how the Me and My Learning figures are projected. The Corporate Director explained that the budget is run like any other budget and scrutinised in the same way.

All recommendations were moved by Councillor Higgins and Councillor de Burle seconded.

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the estimated year end position for 2017/18 as set out in section 3.2 be noted.
- 2) the position with regard to the 2018/19 estimated and the forward projections for 2019/20 to 2021/22 at this stage in the process and the issues yet to be resolved as set out in section 3.3 be noted.
- 3) should the Business Rate pilot bid not be accepted by the Government delegated authority be given to the Corporate Director in consultation with the Chief Executive and the Chair to withdraw from the Leicestershire pool for business rates should the modelling demonstrate there is no longer a financial benefit to the Council and update the legal agreement with any changes that arise.

P44

Capital Programme Monitoring to 31 October 2017 and Capital Programme 2017-2022

The Corporate Director submitted a report to update the Committee on the progress of schemes within the Capital Programme to 31 October 2017. And to determine the Committee's Capital Programme for 2017-22 based on a review of spending in the current year's programme and schemes included in the programme

	<p>for later years.</p> <p>The Corporate Director presented the report and explained that the welfare reform scheme is recommended to be removed from the programme and the telephony upgrade deferred to 2018/19. One new project relating to an IT server was put forward for approval which subject to approval by the council as part of the budget setting process can be funded by the renewal and repairs fund.</p> <p>The Corporate Director explained to a Member that the telephony system is being upgraded and is delayed to ensure that the system links to the Customer Relationship Management system. One option that is being explored is Skype for Business which would mean further work around a new system would be required.</p> <p>A Member stated that he can support this upgrade but thought £50k was a small budget to upgrade a telephony system and stated that with a good system then it could reduce demand and the Council could benefit massively. It was clarified that the telephony upgrade was only for the contact centre and the IT client thought this was a large budget for what is required.</p> <p>All recommendations were moved by Councillor Orson and Councillor Higgins seconded.</p> <p>All Members were unanimously in favour.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u> that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the progress made on the capital schemes as attached at Appendix A be noted. 2) the revised Capital Programme for 2017-22 attached at Appendix B be approved. 3) the project mandate in relation to the Northgate Server attached at Appendix C be approved.
P45	<p>Urgent Business</p> <p>There was no urgent business.</p> <p><u>EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC</u></p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u> 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 Paragraphs 1 and 2.</p>
P46	<p>Minutes of the Policy, Finance and Administration Sub Committee</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u> that the minutes of the sub-committee meeting held on 25 July 2017 be noted subject to an amendment.</p>

P47	Payroll Service <u>RESOLVED</u> that all recommendations within the report be approved.
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The meeting closed at: 7.50 pm

Chair