



COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

PARKSIDE, STATION APPROACH, BURTON STREET, MELTON MOWBRAY

21 MARCH 2017

PRESENT:-

Councillors A. Pearson (Chairman) S. Lumley (Vice Chairman),  
P.M Chandler, J. Douglas, M.C.R. Graham MBE,  
T. Greenow, P. Posnett.

As Substitute:-

Councillor E. Holmes for ex-Councillor Culley

Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods, Strategic Director,  
Central Services Manager, Welfare, Housing & Revenue Manager,  
Environmental Services Officer, Administrative Assistant for Communities and  
Neighbourhoods.

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C53. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were given for Councillor Beaken.

The Chair referred to Councillor Culley's resignation on the same day as the meeting and that the Committee was very sad to see her go, they felt she has done an excellent job and she would be greatly missed.

C54. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Committee held on the 16 November 2016 were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the Chair.

The Minutes of the 24 January 2017 and 1 February 2017 were noted and would be presented to the June Committee for approval.

C55. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Greenow declared a disclosable pecuniary interest regarding the Waterfield Leisure Centre and King Edwards Sports Site/ Operation Fees and Charges report due to his membership with the Rugby Club.

C56. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

There were no recommendations from other committees.

## C57. UPDATE ON DECISIONS

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a report for Members to note the update on decisions from the previous meetings of this Committee.

The Chair requested that the officers circulate a date for the proposed Ad Hoc Committee in April.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) The Update on Decisions be noted.
- (2) Officers would circulate the date for the proposed April Ad Hoc Committee.

## C58. PETITION RECEIVED BY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC - HOUSING FOYER

Jane Horne presented a speech to the Members regarding the Housing Foyer project:

*'I think we all agreed in the initial working group that Myst Lodge is not able to give the high calibre support for vulnerable young people, often care leavers, which would be provided by a Foyer Scheme. It seems from the response that I received from Leicestershire County Council that there is a mismatch between the priorities that Melton Borough Council sought to address in the Foyer Scheme and what LCC saw as priority.*

*In The Government's recent Consultation White Paper "Funding for Supported Housing" of November 2016, one of the points in the introduction section (point 3) is that "doing nothing is not an option". This section (point 4) goes on to clarify that the Government will "defer the application of the Local Housing Allowance rates to supported housing until 2019/20, taking into account of plans on social rents".*

*As we are all aware, LCC has responsibility for children and young people's social care, drugs and alcohol, public health. MBC have responsibility for housing and there is a shared responsibility cohesion and community safety. The Foyer supports all these issues and it would seem that the benefits as well as the cost need to be calculated to give a fair picture.*

*The new Supported Housing Consultation gives both LCC and MBC the opportunity to work together to consider prioritising this scheme, making use of central government funds and thus not impacting on any local fund.*

*Given that this imaginative, well respected national and international Foyer project would be supporting vulnerable young people, such as care leavers, homeless young people and teenage parents it would be valuable if an approach from MBC to agree priorities with LCC can take place, so that an impartial look at the scheme, in the new context, can take place."*

### **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.**

(The discussion on the Housing Foyer here went into exempt session and returned to public session for the following agenda items.)

**RESOLVED** that the decision made during the 24 January 2017 Committee still stands.

#### C59. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING

The Central Services Manager submitted a report on behalf of the Head of Central Services to update the Committee on the progress of schemes within the Capital Programme to 28 February 2017.

The Central Services Manager gave an overview of the report, bringing Members attention to:

- 5.2 of the report showing the overall position for all capital schemes falling within this Committee, noting the Year End Variance Underspend of £90k for the General Fund and £1,733k for the HRA programme.
- 5.3 of the report noting the main underspends expected were in relation to Disabled Facilities Grants and Warm Homes Grants based on the demand to date and there not being any larger projects. The position would continue to be monitored and any underspend in relation to Warm House Grants only, would be carried forward into 2017/18.
- 5.4 of the report outlined the main reasons the HRA programme was expected to £1,733k underspent in 2016/17, highlighting the Beckmill Court Refurbishment and the Granby House Refurbishment.

A discussion was held regarding the £1,733k under spend with a Member noting that this was a very large underspend. The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods noted that some of this was due to the lengthy procurement of Granby House and Beckmill Court. However a refreshed Strategic Housing Asset Management report would be brought back to the April Ad Hoc meeting of this Committee, which would plan the next 5 years programme.

A discussion took place regarding the electric storage heaters in regards to them being very slow and that their conversion was expensive. The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods stated that the conversion of the electric storage heaters had now been procured and there would be more funding for this in 2017/18. It was also noted that more efficient ways were being used such as gas where appropriate.

A Member enquired as to what could be learnt from the large under spend. The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods stated that Melton Borough Council does need to manage the procurement more efficiently and carry out projects that can be done effectively with due regard to capacity.

A Member enquired as to whether the Granby House Refurbishment would start this financial year. The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods stated that it had already begun.

A discussion took place regarding Beckmill Court which the some Members felt is not being looked after correctly noting that was still full of supermarket trollies.

Councillor Greenow proposed to move all recommendations, Councillor Graham seconded. All Members were in favour.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) Progress made on each Capital scheme along with the year end forecast be noted.
- (2) The adjusted HRA capital programme be noted, as well as noting that the budgets are being adjusted between projects and the total programme has not changed.

**C60. BUDGET MONITORING APRIL TO DECEMBER 2016**

The Central Services Manager submitted a report on behalf of the Head of Central Services to provide information on actual expenditure and income incurred on this Committee's services compared to the latest approved budget for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016.

The Central Services Manager presented an overview of the report, bringing Members attention to:

- 3.3 table showing a summary of the income and expenditure for this Committee's services compared to the approved budget at December 2016, highlighting the Year End Variance Underspends of £28,440 for general expenses and the overspend of £1,340 for parish special expenses.
- 3.6 showing the forecast variations of +/- £10k. Bringing attention to the Overspends of Supporting People £34,140 and Leisure Vision £12,130. As well the Underspends of Rent Rebates - HRA of £52,110 and Customer Services £21,190.

Councillor Greenow stated that with regard to any discussion of 3.9 he would leave if needed.

Councillor Posnett moved that the recommendation be approved, Councillor Holmes seconded. Councillor Greenow refrained from voting.

The recommendation was approved by a majority vote.

**RESOLVED** that the financial position on each of this Committee's services to 31 December 2016 and the year end forecast be noted.

**C61. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT- BUDGET MONITORING 1APRIL 2016- 31 DECEMBER 2016**

The Head of Central Services and Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a joint report to provide information on actual expenditure and income incurred on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), compared to the latest approved budget for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 December 2016.

The Central Services Manager presented an overview of the report, bringing the Members' attention to:

- 3.3 table showing a summary of the income and expenditure for the Housing Revenue Account compared to the approved budget at December 2016.
- 3.5 Noting the minimum working balance, as agreed by PFA on 7 October 2013 remains at £750,000 for 2016/17.
- 3.6 Highlighting the more significant year end forecast variations +/- £10k. Bringing Members' attention to the Special Services underspends of £10,000

and the Repairs and Maintenance underspend of £23,000. Both of these underspend related to employee's costs which were due to vacant posts. Also highlighted was the Excess Income of £14,000 of which £11,000 related to the income from the sale of Council Houses which was much higher than budgeted.

A Member noted that it was very good that there were no worrying debts.

A Member enquired as how long it took to fill the vacancies causing the majority of the under spends. The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods noted that currently the Council were working on a review between sections and merging the HRA and General Property teams.

The Chair moved that the recommendation be approved. All Members were in favour.

**RESOLVED** that the financial position on the HRA to 31 December 2016 and the year end forecast be noted.

#### C62. HOMELESSNESS - PREVENTION AND AVOIDANCE PLAN.

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a report to provide a summary of some key issues facing the Council in relation to homelessness, and outlined the work required to prevent and alleviate homelessness and in particular: activities to support young people.

The Welfare, Housing & Revenue Manager presented an overview of the Homelessness report, bringing Members attention to:

- 3.3 noting although the housing register shows there are 81 young people households under the ages of 25 on the housing register, the table provided on page 2 of the report shows the majority of these house holds were young couples, lone parent or pregnant.
- 3.4 showing the breakdown of the 31 household who were single, noting 2 households are managing their own independent accommodation, 7 applications are inactive or historic, 6 applications are residents of supportive housing who are looking for a 'move on' independent housing and 2 of the remaining applicants are working full time, living with their family and have no clear need for support.
- 3.10 noting that there were just 12 potential single young people that would potentially benefit from a foyer type project, this particular group would be supported by the new officer.
- 3.14 noting the new legislative changes that are required to be implemented by the new Homelessness Prevention Bill.
- 3.15 noting that the new role will provide a dedicated focus on the housing choices for young people and ensure the Council meets it obligations of the new Homelessness Prevention Bill.

The chair noted that some of these young people with the right support and education would not be a problem, stating that although good idea to have an officer, there is a need for somewhere for training and support to help them move on. There could be potential for something smaller than the Foyer for those in need.

The Strategic Director noted the importance of trying to monitor the effectiveness the support may have had. Stating that dealing with not only the issue but also encouraging good tenants with low debt and low anti social behaviour will save a lot of money and resources in the long run.

A discussion was had regarding the overspend on B&B's with the Welfare, Housing and Revenue Manager noting this was due to 3 or 4 member families approaching MBC to find properties for them and being stuck in B&Bs whilst waiting. A Member noted that it would be helpful to have a place close to town and Me and My Learning for people to stay in for a short time instead of B&B's.

A Member noted that the £30k from the Housing Foyer scheme should be used to recruit a new person to solely focus on this problem, who is trained but also relatable to the people who need help. Noting this could be monitored to see if it helps. The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods noted that this was something that has had a lot of discussion and will be looked at.

A Member enquired as to how much the Homelessness budget is to which The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods noted that this was £105K.

A Member noted that they felt there is not enough information and no performance figures to base appointing someone with the £30k, which it has not been given full time to be looked at. The Member enquired as to whether the budget should just increase instead. The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods noted that the 24 January 2017 meeting did go over this is further detail, as this report was just to highlight the main information.

A Member noted that the report only mentions to create a role but not enough information regarding the responsibilities and aims of the job to which another Member noted they felt this was specified in 3.3 of the report. A Member noted that they did agree with the member and feels that there must be a clear job description for the role to work.

The Chair noted that a decision did need to be made and felt that the Councillors needed to trust the officers to employ the right person.

The Chair moved that recommendation 2.1 be approved. Councillor Greenow refrained from voting.

The recommendation was approved by a majority vote.

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods added the additional recommendation that Members instruct officers to undertake a feasibility exercise to determine longer term options to meet the on-going accommodation and support needs and present with a report to the this Committees meeting in June.

The Chair moved that the recommendation be approved, All Members were in favour.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) Members approved the re direction of £30k per annum previously identified for the Foyer project. This will be to support the Housing Options team with a new role providing housing support to young people and implement and manage the new requirements of forthcoming Homelessness Prevention Bill. With the addition of an annual review.
- 2) Members instructed officers to undertake a feasibility exercise to determine longer term options to meet the on-going accommodation and support needs and present with a report to the this Committees meeting in June.

Councillor Greenow left the meeting.

C63. **WATERFIELD LEISURE CENTRE AND KING EDWARD SPORTS SITE/OPERATION FEED AND CHARGES.**

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a report to seek approval on the fees and charges proposed for 2017/18 for the Waterfield and King Edward VII leisure centre.

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods presented an overview of the report, bringing Members' attention to:

- Appendix A table showing Waterfield Leisure Pools and Melton Sports village proposed fees and charges for 2017/18.
- Appendix B showing the Waterfield Centre and Melton Sports Village data from 2015 to 2017.

A discussion was held regarding the changes in fees, particularly the group sessions as these had gone up the most. The Chair stated that group sessions were run by external staff that would have set these prices.

A Member enquired as to whether members of MYST still received discount, the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods noted he would look into this.

The Chair moved that the recommendation be approved. All Members were in favour.

**RESOLVED** that the fees and charges relating to the Waterfield and King Edward VII Leisure Centres 2017/18 be approved.

C64. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

The Chair noted thanks to all Members, Officers and Clerks.

The meeting which commenced at 6.30 p.m. closed at 7.55 p.m.

Chairman