



POLICY, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

PARKSIDE, STATION APPROACH, BURTON STREET, MELTON MOWBRAY

11 JULY 2017

Present:-

Councillors J. Orson (Chair), L. Higgins (Vice-Chair), R. de Burle, M. Glancy,
E. Holmes, E. Hutchison, A. Pearson, B. Rhodes, J. Wyatt

Chief Executive, Strategic Director,
Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods, Head of Regulatory Services,
Central Services Manager, Committee Support Officer (KW)

P1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies.

P2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 April 2017 were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the chair.

P3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Rhodes declared a personal interest in any items relating to Leicestershire County Council due to his position as a County Councillor. Councillor Rhodes also declared a personal interest in the urgent item as he is Chair for East Midlands Shared Services and left the room for this item. Councillor Rhodes further declared a personal interest in item 18- Small Sites Study due to his position on the Planning Committee and left the room for this discussion. A personal and non-pecuniary interest was also declared in item 17- Potential Disposal of Land Embankment Off Asfordby Road due to his position on the Planning Committee.

Councillors Orson and Pearson declared a personal interest in any items relating to Leicestershire County Council due to their positions as County Councillors.

Councillors Cumbers, Glancy and Holmes declared personal interests in item 17- Potential Disposal of Land Embankment Off Asfordby Road and item 18- Small Sites Study due to their involvement on the Planning Committee and left the room for this debate

Councillor Wyatt declared an interest in item 17- Potential Disposal of Land Embankment off Asfordby Road and item 18- Small Sites Study due to his

involvement on the Planning Committee. He left the room for item 18 and took part in the debate in item 17.

Councillor Higgins declared an interest in item 17- Potential Disposal of Land Embankment off Asfordby Road and item 18- Small Sites Study due to his involvement on the Planning Committee but took part in the debates.

P4. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

There were no recommendations from other committees.

P5. UPDATE ON DECISIONS

The update on decisions were noted.

P6. RECONSTITUTE TASK GROUPS

The previous Members of the Transformation and Efficiency Board were specified and it was agreed that only Members on the Policy, Finance and Administration Committee should be on the Transformation and Efficiency Task Group.

RESOLVED that:

1) The Transformation and Efficiency Board be renamed the Transformation and Efficiency Task Group to reflect the governance of the committee.

2) Reconstitute and appoint the following Members to the Transformation and Efficiency Task Group; Councillors Glancy, Higgins, Holmes, Hutchison, Orson, Pearson and Wyatt.

3) The terms of reference were considered and agreed.

P7. SUBSCRIPTION TO THE LIGHTBULB PROJECT

The Head of Regulatory Services submitted a report to explain the progress made with regard to “the Lightbulb Project” for transforming practical housing support in Leicestershire and to seek approval for the details of the Council’s involvement.

The Head of Regulatory Services explained that the ‘Lightbulb’ project was considered by this Committee on the 30 November 2017 and reiterated that the project is about bringing together all support to a “one stop shop” for customers. The full project has approximately 20 participants and this report is about how we apply the project to Melton Borough Council. It was highlighted that the start date of the project would be 1 October 2017 and that recommendation 2 relates to providing delegated authority to the Head of Regulatory Services in consultation with the Solicitor to the Council, to sign not just the Service level agreement but also a legal agreement relating to the project.

The Head of Regulatory Services explained that Melton currently has one part time employee running the DFG’s, this employee is employed just two days a week which means that this project would take him away from his normal role for just one day a week and leave him only one day working for MBC. Therefore it is requested that additional costs of £30k per annum are approved with part year

costs of £15k for 2017/18 to contribute to the project. The Head of Regulatory services highlighted other options that are available in paragraphs 5.3, 5.5 and 5.6 of the report.

A Member raised concerns about the financial situation of the Council and asked if the option presented in paragraph 5.5 would be an option. A Member highlighted that the 'Lightbulb' project had been around for some time but was concerned that some Members did not fully understand the project. It was explained that the project will provide a service to the community and enable changes to happen in peoples homes to allow them to live there, this would prevent people from going into hospital or care homes and therefore increase savings in health and social care.

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

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) Participation in the project to start from 1 October 2017 on the basis set out in paras 3.8 - 3.11.
- 2) Delegated authority be granted to the Head of Regulatory Services in consultation with the Solicitor to the Council to sign the legal agreement as required and Memorandum of Understanding relating to the project.
- 3) The additional costs of £30,000 per annum be approved with the part year costs of £15,000 for 2017/18 being met from existing resources.

P8. ONE COUNCIL DELIVERY & DEVELOPMENT PLAN – ANNUAL UPDATE

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a report to provide a performance update for Members on the Corporate Plan which has been termed the "One Council Delivery and Development Plan" (OCDDP)

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods explained that the Council's approved it's revised Corporate priorities in July 2015 which were organised under the Place, People and Agile themes and from then the One Council Delivery Development Plan was approved in July 2016 which built upon the Council's previous successes. The plan and achievements were shown in appendix A of the report.

It was highlighted that there are changes proposed to the 2017/18 "One Council Plan" and this includes amendments to the Cattle Market project, LCTS and Transformation. The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods also explained that Commercialisation was not included in the report but recommends that this be incorporated into the recommendations.

It was also explained that the Chief Executive designate may, as appropriate, review the One Council Delivery and Development Plan and will bring a report back to this Committee at a later date with amendments.

Members made comment about the font size on appendix A being too small, the Officers noted these comments.

A Member had explained that she had received comments from some older farmers regarding the Cattle Market and they are disappointed that there is no seating in the ring and the rings are too small. The comments were noted.

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

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that:

1) The One Council Delivery Development Plan performance update on actions be approved.

2) The changes to the One Council Delivery Development Plan for 2017/18 as highlighted in para 3.10 and the inclusion of the commercialism programme be approved.

P9. DIGITAL STRATEGY ROADMAP

The Strategic Director submitted a report which followed on from the approval in principle of the Phase 1 Digital Strategy in April 2017 and provided a more detailed roadmap and resourcing plan for this phase.

The Strategic Director explained that in April 2017 Members of this Committee approved in principle a phase 1 Digital Strategy which would mean that to be successful the Council will need to rapidly embrace and implement a more digital culture across the whole organisation. This will mean massive changes as the Council will only be able to make the most of digital technology if it is able to change and move away from the normal way of doing things.

The key issues for this phase are:

- To support the development of a digital workforce for Melton Borough Council.
- To support people in the Borough to be more digitally included and independent.
- To promote an excellent digital infrastructure for the whole Borough, particularly through moving towards being 5G ready as a Borough.
- To comply with the Local Government Digital Standards for Council Services.

To enable the Phase 1 Strategy to progress the Strategic Director explained that an initial one-off budget of £40k would be required, to cover an improved test environment, digital inclusion initiatives and marketing of new digital services.

It was clarified to a Member that an online chat facility is available and is used however the resources are not currently available, but as the demand on other channels is reduced then this may free up resources for online chat.

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

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The Phase 1 Digital Strategy at Appendix A be approved.
- 2) The Phase 1 Digital Strategy Roadmap and Resource Plan at Appendix B be approved.
- 3) An initial one-off budget of £40K, to be funded from the Corporate Priority Reserve, be approved and that it is noted that any annual costs will need to be built in as growth items as part of the normal budget setting process.

(The Head of Regulatory Services here left the meeting.)

P10. REVENUE BUDGET 2016/17 – PROVISIONAL YEAR END

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 2016/17 and to provide Members with information on the implications for the Council's balances and reserves.

The Central Services Manager explained that he would take the report in two parts to split the revenue outturn and the reserve position at provisional year end, which would be in the form of a presentation.

The net position against the year end position for the main funds was highlighted and the General Fund General Expenses has an underspend of £417,046. The Special Expenses (Melton Mowbray) has a net transfer after surplus/deficit of £25,534 and the Housing Revenue Account has an underspend of £127,023.

The carry forwards previously approved at the Committee on 12 April 2017 which totalled £302,760 for general expenses and £15,830 for Special Expenses has been reduced to £278,380 and £11,900 respectively, once the final accounts have been completed and the actual underspends are known. As such this reduces the underspend against the estimated year end position on general expenses from £417,046 to £138,666 and net transfer to the reserve from £25,534 to £13,634 on Special Expenses. The key variances are on:

- Project work – mainly relating to the commercialism pilot which straddles 2 financial years with the underspend being carried forward and funds provided to support the Cattle Market redevelopment which are also being carried forward.
- Benefits- there has been an underspend on both rent rebates and rent allowances of circa £94k.
- Information Technology- there has been a number of saving initiatives achieved.
- Reduced Costs – In general there have been a number of savings such as a refund in Internal Audit Fees, reduced use of professional fees for legal services as well as additional income generated for legal work.
- Staffing – there has been a number of vacancies across services areas which has resulted in a underspend.

- Income – the Council has seen an increase in some key income streams such as development control, rents and services at Parkside and investment income.
- Transformation – there is still an identified sum of £65k to be saved which will carry forward into 2017/18
- Additional costs - along with the reduced costs, savings and additional income generated, these have been partly offset by some additional costs elsewhere. These include staffing costs and loss of contributions for supporting people and reduced income from Land Charges.

Overall despite continued funding pressures the Council as a whole has managed its budgets prudently which is evident in the underspend position for the year.

A Member was not happy with the figures and feels that the Council are overspending and running reserve balances down.

The Central Services Manager distributed a paper copy of a presentation and a Statement of Revenue and Capital Reserves which he talked Members through the reserves section of the report and to address the concerns on the reserve balance position.

A Member stated that it is nice to do things if we have money but the Council does not and stated that the Council needs to be savvier with spending. It was agreed that tough decisions need to be made but the Council has the opportunity to maximise funding through the Leisure Vision and Commercialisation programmes.

It was confirmed that the Public Conveniences will be paid for from the capital receipts but the revenue payback period would be 5 years to get the money back through the revenue account. A Member queried if it is anticipated that the same number of people would pay for the toilet as they do now. It was explained that the Public Conveniences will be semi-automatic and not fully automatic and it is anticipated that visitors to the town will use the facilities more than the residents, however the new facilities would be more accessible and it is felt they will be well used particularly with the increase in footfall to the town.

Concerns were raised by Members about the tourism in Melton and the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods explained that the Officers recognise the importance of the economics in Melton and are looking at enhancing the Tourism Officers role.

Members also raised concerns about 7 King Street and highlighted that it is empty again and no one has looked at the roof since the refurbishment. Officers explained that they are actively looking for a rental income and restrictions on the disposal were put in place as part of the grant conditions of the refurbishment.

The Central Services Manager reassured Members that the council was in relatively stable financial position and was well placed to meet the financial challenges ahead. The Council has set a balanced budget for a number of years now without the need to use reserves to balance the budget. The level of the corporate priorities reserve was at a similar balance to 3 to 4 years ago. It was highlighted that the efficiency plan is in place to help meet the medium term financial challenges however this comes with caution and we need to be mindful to work together to achieve the savings required.

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

The motion was carried with a majority vote.

RESOLVED that:

1) The provisional year end position, variations to the 2017/17 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) In line with the principle established last financial year a contribution of £138,000 to be made to the Spending Pressure Reserve to help meet future funding pressures as outlined in para 3.8 will be funded through a transfer from the Corporate Priorities Reserve.

3) Supplementary estimates for those services which are overspent against the approved budget as attached at Appendix A and outlined in para 3.12 be approved.

P11. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL UNDER FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES

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

The Central Services Manager explained that 11 requests for virements totalling £140,180 had been made since the last Committee meeting and more detail of those in excess of £10k can be found in appendix A.

A request has been made to this committee from the Town Area Committee for the required capital funding of £18k for play areas to be funded from the Play Areas Repairs and Renewals Fund.

Additional monies were requested from the Leisure Vision Working group for £35k to be funded from the earmarked Leisure Vision capital receipts reserve for full procurement and project management support through to the final tender stage. Requests for a further £13k for project administration and community stakeholder engagement to be funded from existing resources have been made.

A Member emphasised that recommendation 2.4 was vital to be approved and it would send a clear message to bidders.

A request was made from the Community and Social Affairs Committee to use £21k held in a Wheels to Work contributions reserve to help mitigate the anticipated shortfall for 2017-18

It was also said that some Officers feel that Wheels to Work has a business case of its own as they have ideas about a viable case that could lead to a stream of income.

It was said that there is value in ensuring that the Leisure Vision Project is managed properly and it was stated that the Community and Social Affairs Committee have scrutinised this programme to ensure value for money.

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

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The virements approved under delegated powers be noted.
- 2) The budget reductions approved under delegated powers be noted.
- 3) The business case discussed in para 5.1 be approved and a supplementary estimate of £18,000 be approved from the Play Areas Repairs and Renewals Fund to replace equipment on Kirby Fields and Honeysuckle Way.
- 4) Additional monies required to support the procurement phase of the Leisure Vision project until the final submission phase be approved being £35k for project management and legal costs funded from the earmarked Leisure Vision capital receipts reserve and £13k for community engagement to be funded from existing resources, as recommended by the Leisure Vision Working Group and outlined in paragraph 6.1.
- 5) The £21k held in the Wheels to Work contributions reserve is used towards offsetting the 2017-18 Wheels to Work shortfall as recommended by the Community and Social Affairs Committee and outlined in paragraph 7.1.

P12. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2016-17

The Head of Central Services submitted a report to submit the Statement of Accounts for 2016-17 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 Central Services Manager explained that the Statement of Accounts for 2016-17 is attached at Appendix A and the Narrative Statement is attached at Appendix B. It was said that the accounts have to be signed by the Section 151 Officer and the unaudited accounts have been published by 30 June 2017, as required. It was highlighted that the accounts are still subject to audit and therefore amendments could be possible.

The Central Services Manager highlighted that the Council has achieved the accounts availability for sign-off before the 31 May 2017, a month before the deadline in preparation for the new sign-off date. The Central Services Manager took time to thank the team for this achievement. Attention was drawn to the Narrative Statement and it was explained that this is provided separately to the Statement of Accounts and is similar to the old Annual Report.

A Member explained that recommendation 2.3 gives Members the option of amending the timing on future meetings to note the Statement of Accounts and the Narrative Statement, but it was felt that the timings should remain how they are.

A Member stated that he feels irritated by the rules requiring the Council to have a separate account for housing but then to have to report on the combined position of the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account and feels that a representation should be made through the Local Government Association to not consolidate these accounts, and it was also felt that the deadlines are difficult. The Chair stated that he will speak to the Chief Executive about this representation.

A question was raised about how the Parish Councils precepts and it was explained that the Parish Councils set the precept which Melton Borough Council gives to the Parish then Melton Borough Council collect from the bills.

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

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The Statement of Accounts for 2016-17 as attached at Appendix A be noted.
- 2) The Narrative Statement as attached at Appendix B be noted.
- 3) Members expressed that the timings of future meetings should remain in July which note the Statement of Accounts and the Narrative Statement as at paragraph 3.6.

P13. MELTON EXTENDING TO EXCELLENCE (ME2E)

The Chief Executive submitted a closure report on the ME2E bringing to a close the Programme which was scheduled to run for approximately two years.

The Chief Executive explained that ME2E is a record of the changing culture of Melton Borough Council following the Turning the Tanker "TTT" initiative. The programme has picked up training requirements and issues have been taken forward such as the digital agenda. There have been several successes in ME2E and it is embedded within the culture of the Council, however the new Chief Executive will start in September 2017 and has new ideas.

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

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The report and actions be noted.

2) The revised and amalgamated Council Learning and Development Programme be approved and implemented with a review at the close of its first year of implementation to consider impact and effectiveness.

3) The draft Melton Managers Pledge be noted for implementation following a review by the new Chief Executive.

P14. CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE ANNUAL REVIEW (YEAR ONE)

The Chief Executive submitted a report to advise Members of the outcome of the recent review of the Council's Customer Service Excellence Standard by the appointed Assessor.

The Chief Executive explained that the first Customer Service Excellence assessment was very pleasing for the Council with 57 standards within the framework, the Council was compliant with 50 of those standards and 'compliant plus' in 4 of those 50 standards. Since the review there are only four 'partial compliant' elements and an additional 2 'compliant plus'

The Chief Executive suggested that T3 Managers be asked to examine all service standards in relation to compliance, timeliness and quality of response and that separate service reports are made to the PMITG for consideration and recommendations made to this Committee as required.

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

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that:

1) The contents of the report be noted.

2) The Performance Management Information Task Group (PMITG) be requested to consider a report from T3 and Management Team reviewing standards, performance targets, timeliness and quality of service as relevant to the areas of reference in the Customer Service Excellence Report.

P15. 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 explained that this would be her last Corporate Issues report to this Committee before she retires.

The Chief Executive informed Members that the Head of Regulatory Services was arranging a MAG briefing for Members in 2 to 3 weeks time.

It was highlighted how well the Elections team did and emphasised that the accounts balanced perfectly in the County and by-elections and were only one vote out at the general election.

It was stated that the Chief Executive designate was arranging one-to-ones with the Heads of Service and a meeting has been arranged with Members before the new Chief Executive takes up post.

Members expressed their thanks to the Elections Officer and the Elections team and also congratulated the Chief Executive as her role in acting returning Officer during the Elections.

Members also thanked the Chief Executive for all her work and wished her well in her retirement.

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

All Members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that:

1) Briefing session in connection with the Strategic Growth Plan be set up for all Members during July 2017.

2) The content of the report be noted, in particular the performance of the Councils Election Team in relation to the recent County, By and General Elections.

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 Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3.

P16. **CRITICAL/SEVERE THREAT LEVEL MANAGEMENT IN MELTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

The Chief Executive submitted a report to seek Member's guidance upon the Council's resilience and ability to respond to critical threat levels and other relevant responses to government and national incidents.

RESOLVED that all recommendations within the report be approved.

P17. **MINUTES OF THE POLICY, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION SUB COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy, Finance and Administration Sub Committee be noted.

(Councillor Rhodes here left the meeting.)

P18. **URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chairman, in exercising his statutory powers, has agreed that the attached item be considered as a matter of urgency due to the issue being raised following despatch of the agenda.

DELEGATED PAYROLL SERVICE

The Head of Central Services submitted a report to seek Members approval in principle to pursue an agreement with Leicester City Council to provide a delegated payroll service to Melton Borough Council.

RESOLVED that all recommendations within the report be approved.

(Councillor Rhodes here re-entered the meeting. Councillors Holmes, Cumbers and Glancy here left the meeting.)

P19. POTENTIAL DISPOSAL OF LAND EMBANKMENT OFF ASFORDBY ROAD

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a report to seek Member's guidance on a potential disposal of embankment land off Asfordby Road Melton Mowbray to a private investor.

RESOLVED that all recommendations within the report be approved.

(Councillors Rhodes and Wyatt here left the meeting.)

P20. SMALL SITES STUDY

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted the Small Sites Study report and to seek Member's approval on a way forward.

RESOLVED that all recommendations within the report be approved.

The meeting which commenced at 6.30 p.m., closed at 8.55p.m.

Chair