

Minutes

Meeting name	Corporate Committee
Date	Monday, 9 July 2018
Start time	6.30 pm
Venue	Parkside, Station Approach, Burton Street, Melton Mowbray, LE13 1GH

Present:

Chair Councillor J. Orson not present –
Councillor L. Higgins (Vice Chair)
in the Chair

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

Observers

Officers Chief Executive
Deputy Chief Executive
Director for Corporate Services
Director for Legal and Democratic Services
Administrative Assistant (JR)

Minute No.	Minute
C1	<p>Apologies for Absence Apologies were received from Councillors Orson, Pearson and Holmes.</p>
C2	<p>Minutes The minutes of the meeting held on 11 April 2018 (previously Policy, Finance and Administration Committee) were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the vice chair.</p>
C3	<p>Declarations of interest Councillor Rhodes declared a personal interest in any items relating to Leicestershire County Council due to his role as a County Councillor. The Chief Executive declared, on behalf of all Officers present, a personal interest regarding agenda item 5. Workforce Strategy re staff car parking.</p>
C4	<p>Annual Staff Review The Director for Corporate Services submitted a report to brief members on the current staffing structure as at 1 April 2018 and to provide information on changes to the structure since April 2017. A number of reviews had taken place in the 2017/18 financial year and changes made to the establishment under delegated authority by the Chief Executive in consultation with Senior Management Team.</p> <p>A member requested that officer's contact numbers be updated and that the "Meet the Services" booklet also updated with current contact information.</p> <p>A member proposed that an event be arranged for Councillors to meet new key officers as there had been many staff changes this year. The Chief Executive advised that this was in hand with arrangements to be made for such an event possibly to be held in September when recruitment is complete to key roles.</p> <p>It was commented that the increase in Planning fees resulting in additional staff being recruited should assist planning applications being processed in a more timely manner. It was also noted however that recruiting planning staff was challenging within the sector generally currently.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u> that the report be noted.</p>
C5	<p>Workforce Strategy The Corporate Director submitted a report to seek approval for the new Workforce Strategy following staff engagement and the refresh of the corporate mission, vision, values and priorities. The strategy looks to understand employee aspirations and to promote MBC as a great place to work and build a career. MBC needs to be an employer of choice to attract and retain workforce.</p>

A member highlighted that at 3.5 in the report that the wording requires clarification. This section should have additional wording added and therefore read as “*Given the perceptions of inequality and burden to administrate, the potential infrastructure costs to address and the frustrations felt by staff, it is proposed that to support the launch of the new strategy the parking charge for staff using the privately owned parking spaces in the sidings **be discontinued***”.

Following a series of workshops with staff it was highlighted that the staff car parking arrangements in the sidings car park at Parkside was a frustration due to the burden and inconsistent application of the staff parking charge. Manual enforcement and administration is a lengthy process and time consuming. The release of this administration time would be of benefit to the service area. This matter has been taken to the Joint Staff Working Group (JSWG) meeting held 4th July 2018. The JSWG did raise concern regarding the number of available car parking spaces if a charge is not made. If the ‘sidings’ area was to become unavailable in the future a revised arrangement would need to be made.

A member suggested that all staff wanting to use the sidings car park should pay a set charge of £2 per week regardless of salary banding and whether part time or full time working.

To support the launch and aspirations set out in the new strategy members supported the recommendation to cease the staff parking charge with immediate effect. A review will be made in 6 months time.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Glancy and seconded by the Vice Chair.

All members were unanimously in favour of recommendations 1, 2 and 5. One member abstained from voting in favour of recommendations 3 and 4.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the Workforce Strategy and action plan be approved for implementation with immediate effect.
- 2) that delegated authority be granted to the HR and Communications Manager to make minor amends to the strategy in line with employment legislation and best practice and to keep the action plan updated and refreshed.
- 3) in recognition of the potential costs of addressing the inequality in the current system, coupled with the ambitions articulated within the Workforce Strategy that the charges for parking in the non-public area known as “the sidings” behind Parkside be removed.
- 4) delegated authority be granted to the Director for Corporate Services to finalise the details and establish an appropriate method for implementing the removal of charges in the non-public area known as “the sidings” behind Parkside.
- 5) that the revised procedure for evaluating and grading a post be approved.

C6

6 Harby Lane - Sale of Land

The Director for Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report to notify

members of the exercise of delegated authority by an officer in respect of the transfer of land to rectify a discrepancy in the title plan for 6 Harby Lane, Stathern.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Rhodes and seconded by the Vice Chair.

All members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that the Committee noted that the Solicitor to the Council exercised her delegated authority under part 3b (Scheme of Delegation to Officers) of the Constitution to transfer a piece of land to rectify an error on the title Plan registered with the Land Registry with respect to the property.

C7

Revenue Budget 2017/18 Provisional Year End

The Director for Corporate Services submitted a report to provide members with information on the provisional year end position subject to external audit approval for 2017/18. With reference to the bottom line of the table on page 58 it was highlighted that the Approved Budget figure should read 543,670 and the Variance to Approved Budget figure should be a deficit of (259,811).

The key message advised to Members was that despite many pressures on the budget the council has underspent against the approved budget across all funds. The general expenses position against the estimated year end position is an underspend of £259,811k which when approved carry forwards are taken into account reduces to an underspend of £39,731k on General Fund and a net transfer to Special Expenses MM reserve of approximately £3k. This is a positive achievement and demonstrates that the hard line approach taken regarding supplementary estimates has worked well. This same approach will be followed again for the current financial year.

The key variances against the approved budget were highlighted and further detail supplied in Appendix A. Members' attention was drawn to the tables at 3.8 in the report which showed the impact on reserves and balances of the provisional year end position. The Director for Corporate Services concluded that the figures will remain provisional until the audit of the accounts is finalised but, at this stage, no changes are anticipated.

Councillor Rhodes moved the recommendation and Councillor de Burle seconded. All members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that the provisional year end position, variations to the 2017/18 estimated year end position and the resultant effect on the Council's balances and reserves as set out in the attached papers be noted.

C8

Statement of Accounts (subject to audit) 2017/18

The Director for Corporate Services submitted a report to submit the Statement of Accounts, Subject to Audit, for 2017/18, which have been prepared in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and to inform of the key issues

within the accounts.

The Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014 requires that local authorities publish an audited copy of their Statement of Accounts by 31 July, from 2017/18, instead of the previous date of 30 September. The Finance team have complied with this regulation and this has been a tremendous achievement and is testament to the hard work and dedication they have put in to achieve this as well as the support they have received corporately. There were challenges in getting all the transactions included prior to starting to compile the accounts. This has meant, however, that the closedown and accounts in some areas have to be produced based on the use of more estimates rather than waiting for more accurate figures. It is important for members to recognise this as it could result in more changes post audit or in the next financial year if carry forwards/accruals are not as accurate.

The earlier closedown date requires that the final audited version be presented to the Governance Committee on 24th July 2018 for approval. It is also a requirement for the Narrative Statement to be published with the audited accounts and this document contains information regarding the council and its operation alongside financial performance. The Corporate Improvement Team will be doing more work on presenting performance figures for the Narrative Statements in future years.

Councillor Rhodes moved the recommendations and Councillor de Burle seconded.

All members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the Statement of Accounts Subject to Audit for 2017-18 as attached at Appendix A be noted;
- 2) the Narrative Statement as attached at Appendix B be noted

C9

Items for Approval Under Financial Procedure Rules

The Director for Corporate Services submitted a report to submit 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.

It was highlighted that details of the requests in excess of £10k could be found in Appendix A.

Councillor de Burle moved the recommendation and Councillor Glancy seconded.

All members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that the virements approved under delegated powers (para. 3.1.1 refers) be noted.

C10

Annual Report on the Treasury Management Activities and Actual Prudential Indicators 2017-18

The Director for Corporate Services submitted a report to provide a summary of the Treasury activities in 2017-18. The report also covered the actual position on the

Prudential Indicators in accordance with the Prudential Code. Members were advised that it is a requirement for Treasury Management reports to be scrutinised prior to being submitted to Full Council for approval. Previously this was undertaken by the Budget & Strategic Planning Working Group. Under the new governance arrangements this responsibility has passed to the Corporate Committee.

It was proposed that a further recommendation be added to thank Councillor de Burle for his scrutiny work on Treasury Management through BSPWG. The Corporate Director welcomed Councillor de Burle to continue his work and invited him to contact herself or the Corporate Services Manager if there was anything he wished to discuss in the future regarding Treasury Management.

The Director for Corporate Services advised that this annual report focuses on activities for the last financial year in comparison to the Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators approved in February 2017 when the budget was set. Through more diversification and primarily the use of property funds the level of investment rates has improved over that achieved in 2116/17 despite the challenging period for investment returns. This increase in income has flowed into the budget for 2018/19 and has helped to reduce the pressure on the budget as a whole.

There has been a change to the codes and regulatory environment within which the Treasury Management function operates, notably the requirement to approve a Capital Strategy next year with the budget and Treasury Management Strategy which officers are working on. The Director for Corporate Services commented that she was pleased to advise members that the council has been able to demonstrate that it met the criteria to operate at a “professional” level which allowed it to access a full range of investments that it was already utilising. This status has to be demonstrated annually to achieve “professional” status. As well as the requirement to approve a Capital Strategy the council is also looking at a variety of commercial activities which could impact on its Treasury Management activities and notably the need to consider borrowing in order to invest in activities e.g. the creation of a housing company.

A member commented that the plan for the creation of such a housing company was not what he had originally envisaged. The Chief Executive advised that in May of this year the Corporate Development Plan approved the setting up of a housing company and further detail is to go the Policy Forum meeting next week. Member direction will be sought as to what may be required for MBC. To assist with costs and sharing expertise this council is to work with 4 other councils to create a collaborative development company but will also be delivering a Melton specific delivery company. Other councils will likely follow suit to ensure that delivery is determined based on local needs. A business case will be brought to this Committee in September this year.

John East, previously Interim Director for Growth and Regeneration, will be retained as a strategic consultant to maintain momentum on this venture drawing on his wealth of experience in successfully managing such projects in other parts of the country.

A member enquired whether local people could invest in the housing company and it was advised that this will all be considered as part of the project along with the possibility of extending into other areas; initially it will be important to keep things as simple as possible and build confidence in the approach before embarking on more creative options.

Councillor de Burle moved the original recommendations with the addition of the further recommendation and Councillor Illingworth seconded.

All members were unanimously in favour.

Resolved that:

- 1) the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2017-18 be approved for submission to the Council and;
- 2) the actual position on Prudential Indicators for 2017-18 be noted.
- 3) thanks to be given to Councillor de Burle for his scrutiny of Treasury Management through the now disbanded Budget & Strategic Planning Working Group.

C11

New Performance Reporting Dashboard for Corporate Committee

The Director for Corporate Services submitted a report to advise members of the current state of performance against the newly defined performance reporting measures for the new corporate structures, in relation to the organisational priorities theme under the Council's Corporate Priorities for the financial year 2017/18. This was the first report to this committee on the performance measures relative to the services and activities this committee is responsible for. A number of the indicators are new so comparative data is not available at this time but in the future comparisons will be made as more data is captured and performance can then be reviewed against priorities.

Members were advised of key areas in the report and the full suite of performance data was highlighted at Appendix A. A member commented on the data at OG4 regarding the 1.4 days sickness per FTE employee which is very good for the quarter. Council Tax collection efficiency was also mentioned as this is slightly better than the average collection profile over the last 7 years and contributes to the overall assessment for the Council's financial sustainability.

Councillor Higgins moved the recommendations and Councillor de Burle seconded.

All members were unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the contents of the report be noted.
- 2) the performance information for 2017/18 in the Performance Dashboard be used to help inform the Committee and assist Members and Officers with regard to the information of policy and oversight of the Corporate Services function of the Council be approved.

C12	<p>Leicestershire ICT Partnership Digital Strategy</p> <p>The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report to introduce and seek approval of the Leicestershire ICT Partnership Digital Strategy. He advised that this report was a follow up from last year and it gave an update of the work undertaken by MBC and the partner authorities to produce the strategy.</p> <p>Councillor de Burle moved the recommendation and Councillor Glancy seconded.</p> <p>All members were unanimously in favour.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u> that the Leicestershire ICT Partnership Digital Strategy at Appendix 1 be approved and adopted by Melton Borough Council.</p>
C13	<p>Urgent Business</p> <p><u>Strategic Growth Plan</u></p> <p>The vice chair advised that he wished to give his thanks to members for their support, which had been recently received, for the Strategic Growth Plan Further information will be shared with members at an appropriate time in the future.</p>

The meeting closed at: 8.00 pm

Chair