

MINUTES of a meeting of the CABINET held in the Board Room, Council Offices, Coalville on TUESDAY, 10 DECEMBER 2013

Present: Councillor R Blunt (Chairman)

Councillors R D Bayliss, T Gillard, T J Pendleton and N J Rushton

In Attendance: Councillors J Geary, R Johnson, J Legrys and T Neilson.

Officers: Mr S Bambrick, Ms C E Fisher, Mrs M Meredith, Mr P Padaniya and Miss E Warhurst.

65. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A V Smith MBE.

66. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor N J Rushton declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 7 – General Fund and Special Expenses Revenue Budgets 2014/15 to 2015/16, as an owner of car parking facilities in Ashby de la Zouch.

67. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

None received.

68. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2013.

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2013 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Reason for decision: To comply with the Constitution.

69. STRATEGIC RAIL FREIGHT INTERCHANGE (SRFI) UPDATE

The Director of Services presented the report to Members. He advised that the Strategic Rail Freight Interchange scheme would be regarded as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project, and ultimately the decision would rest with the Secretary of State for Transport. He added that the applicant's view was that the opinion of the Council, Leicestershire County Council and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership would be important factors when the application was considered, hence the report to Members seeking their views in principle.

The Director of Services drew Members' attention to the summary of the proposal outlined at section 2.1 of the report. He referred to the significant benefits, and acknowledged that there would be substantial impact locally. It was recommended that 'in principle' support should be offered to the scheme as it was considered that the benefits outweighed the impacts.

The Chairman invited Councillor T J Pendleton to comment as Regeneration and Planning Portfolio Holder.

Councillor T J Pendleton welcomed the additional jobs that would be created in the District. He expressed concerns regarding the highways impact and the infrastructure

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arrangements, particularly as there was a lack of detail in respect of the Kegworth bypass, which would increase noise for residents if it was located too close to the village. He felt that a full traffic analysis had yet to be undertaken.

The Chairman invited Councillor T Gillard to comment as Business Portfolio Holder.

Councillor T Gillard welcomed the additional jobs that would be created in the District. He acknowledged that there was a lot of work to be done.

In response to a question from Councillor R Blunt, the Director of Services advised that the phasing of the works would be discussed as part of the application process. He advised that the proposal would be subject to a public consultation in January, followed by the application in April 2014.

It was moved by Councillor T Gillard, seconded by Councillor R D Bayliss and

RESOLVED THAT:

Cabinet supports 'in principle' the East Midlands Gateway Strategic Rail Freight Interchange proposal.

Reason for decision: To provide assurance of the Council's in principle support of the Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) proposal.

70. PREVENTION OF HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2013 - 2018

The Housing Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members. He reported that there were currently no families residing in bed and breakfast accommodation.

It was moved by Councillor R D Bayliss, seconded by Councillor T J Pendleton and

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) The Prevention of Homelessness Strategy 2013 – 2018 be approved.
- b) Authority be delegated to the Director of Services (in consultation with the Housing Portfolio Holder) to approve any associated action plans.

Reason for decision: To comply with government legislation.

71. GENERAL FUND AND SPECIAL EXPENSES REVENUE BUDGETS 2014/15 AND 2015/16

Having declared a disclosable pecuniary interest, Councillor N J Rushton left the room during consideration of this item and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

The Chief Executive presented the report to Members, which was an update following the feedback which had been received. A final report would be brought to Cabinet in February for recommendation to Council.

The Chief Executive outlined the feedback which had been received on each of the proposals, and any changes to the recommendations made in the report received at the meeting in September 2013 as follows:

- No feedback had been received on the three proposals outlined at Appendix 1. It was therefore recommended that the proposals be implemented as previously outlined.

- Appendix 2a – Green Waste Collection. The greatest level of feedback had been received in respect of these proposals.
 - Recommendation 1 remained unchanged.
 - Recommendation 2 was a new recommendation as a result of the consultation.
 - Recommendation 3 had been amended with a later collection date.
 - Recommendation 4 was a new recommendation as a result of the consultation.
- Appendix 2b – Car Park Charges. Feedback had been received in respect of these proposals.
 - Recommendation 1 remained unchanged.
 - Recommendation 2 reflected the ongoing conversations between the Coalville Town Centre Team and the Belvoir Centre owners. Further information would be brought to the meeting in February.
 - Recommendation 3 was a new recommendation which had been suggested by staff. Further information would be brought to the meeting in February.

Councillor R Blunt referred to the Royal Hotel car park in Ashby de la Zouch. He felt that all car parks that were branded as Council car parks should charge the same rates and should be in line with the charges levied by the Council. He asked that this be included in the recommendations.

The Chief Executive agreed that this be considered further and more information be brought to the meeting in February.

- Appendix 2c – Concessionary Fees and Charges. Consultation responses had been received. There were no changes to the recommendations as previously outlined.
- Appendix 2d – Community Partnership Grants. Consultation responses had been received. There were no changes to the recommendations as previously outlined.
- Appendix 2e – Vision Magazine. Minimal feedback had been received and the recommendation remained to cease the magazine. The last issue had recently been published.
- Appendix 2f – Chairman's Function. Discussions had taken place with past Chairmen and the officers supporting the Chairman on a practical way forward. As a result, more detailed recommendations had been included.
- Appendix 2g – Service Efficiencies/Staffing. More detailed recommendations had been included.
- Appendix 2h – HRA Costs. Consultation responses had been received. There were no changes to the recommendations as previously outlined.
- Appendix 2i – Coalville Special Expenses. The recommendation in respect of the £25,000 reallocation from the General Fund had been maintained. A new recommendation in respect of the consultation regarding Remembrance Day had been included.
- Appendix 3 provided an update on the work to date and the direction of travel. Progress was to be noted.
- An update sheet had been tabled in respect of Appendix 3, with a response from Castle Donington Community College. The options would be discussed and a recommendation would be brought to the February meeting in respect of the Community Leisure Schemes, CCTV and Ashby Toilets.

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The Chief Executive reported that the autumn statement had been announced and it had been indicated that the New Homes Bonus would not be reduced as previously suggested. She advised that the targets would be altered accordingly once the settlement figure was known.

It was moved by Councillor R Blunt, seconded by Councillor R D Bayliss and

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) The budget proposals contained within Appendix 1 be agreed.
- b) The budget proposals and amended recommendations contained within Appendices 2 to 2(i) be agreed.
- c) The direction of travel as contained within Appendix 3 be noted.
- d) The proposed preparatory work regarding the 2015 - 2016 budget as outlined in paragraph 3.4 of the report be endorsed.
- e) Recommendations 1-4 be reconsidered as part of the full budget report on 11 February 2014.

Reason for decision: To enable the Council to set a balanced budget as required by law.

Councillor N J Rushton returned to the meeting on the conclusion of this item.

72. DRAFT HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2014/15 AND RENT INCREASE

The Housing Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members, drawing their attention to the proposed rent increase of 5.8%, which equated to an average increase of £4.30 per week per dwelling. He advised that the increase was in line with the present formula and convergence factor. He stated that a surplus was currently being accumulated, which would be utilised for future loan repayments. He added that an additional saving of £40,000 per annum had been made due to staff restructuring.

The Corporate Portfolio Holder added that the level of increase followed the business plan and the previous Government's policy on the convergence of rents. He stated that surpluses must be generated to deal with maintenance tasks, and residents were better served by maintaining a high standard of housing stock.

Councillor T Gillard asked how the rent increase compared with other Local Authorities. Councillor R D Bayliss advised that he would provide this information in writing. He added that until 2002, rents in North West Leicestershire had been lower than other Local Authorities.

In response to a question from Councillor T J Pendleton, Councillor R D Bayliss advised that other Local Authorities were working to the same formula and aiming for convergence in 2015/16.

It was moved by Councillor R D Bayliss, seconded by Councillor N J Rushton and

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) The assurance statement by the Section 151 Officer be noted.
- b) The draft Housing Revenue Account Budget as detailed in this report and associated appendices be approved for consultation.

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Reason for decision: To enable the Council to set a balanced Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2014/15.

73. INTRODUCTION OF MOBILE WORKING WITHIN THE HOUSING SERVICE

The Housing Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members, referring to the tendering process which had been undertaken. He advised that the benefits would outweigh the cost of implementation.

In response to a question from Councillor R Blunt, the scope and benefits of mobile working were outlined.

It was moved by Councillor R D Bayliss, seconded by Councillor N J Rushton and

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) Contract Procedure Rule 5 be waived for the purposes of this procurement; and
- b) The award of the contract for mobile working be delegated to the Director of Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Reason for Decision: To ensure the Mobile Working Programme is delivered in an effective and efficient manner.

74. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2014/15

The Corporate Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

It was moved by Councillor N J Rushton, seconded by Councillor T Gillard and

RESOLVED THAT:

The maximum level of Council Tax support available be reduced from 91.5% to 85%.

Reason for decision: To comply with legislative requirements and approve details for calculating the Council Tax Base for 2014/15.

75. LEICESTERSHIRE PARTNERSHIP REVENUES AND BENEFITS JOINT COMMITTEE - APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS

The Corporate Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

Councillor R D Bayliss confirmed that the Partnership had worked well, and changes in legislation had impacted upon the projected savings. He added that the collection rates were comparable, if not improved, and there had been no loss in quality of service.

The Chief Executive advised that a review was currently underway and service efficiencies would be considered as part of this review.

It was moved by Councillor N J Rushton, seconded by Councillor R Blunt and

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) Councillors R D Bayliss and T J Pendleton be appointed as Members of the Leicestershire Partnership Revenues and Benefits Joint Committee.
- b) Councillors T Gillard and A V Smith be appointed as Substitute Members of the Leicestershire Partnership Revenues and Benefits Joint Committee.

Reason for decision: To comply with the Constitution of the Leicestershire Partnership Revenues and Benefits Joint Committee.

76. MINUTES OF THE GRANTS REVIEW WORKING PARTY

The Regeneration and Planning Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members.

It was moved by Councillor T J Pendleton, seconded by Councillor N J Rushton and

RESOLVED THAT:

The recommendations made by the Grants Review Working Party as detailed within the minutes attached at Appendix 1 be approved.

Reason for decision: To enable community and voluntary organisations in the District to receive financial assistance for projects that meet the Council's priorities.

77. FORMER TENANT RENT ARREARS, CURRENT TENANT RENT ARREARS, COUNCIL TAX, NON DOMESTIC RATES AND SUNDRY DEBTOR WRITE-OFFS

The Corporate Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members. He reported that there were no debts over £10,000 to be written off, and referred Members to the debts written off under delegated powers as outlined in the report.

It was moved by Councillor N J Rushton, seconded by Councillor T Gillard and

RESOLVED THAT:

The amounts written off under delegated powers be noted.

Reason for decision: To comply with proper accounting practices.

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 5.40 pm