

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Policy & Finance Committee** held in the Civic Suite, Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, Notts NG24 1BY on Thursday, 20 September 2018 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor D Lloyd (Chairman)
Councillor K Girling (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor R Jackson, Councillor P Peacock, Councillor D Staples,
Councillor T Wendels and Councillor N Mison (substitute for Councillor
B Laughton)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor B Crowe, Councillor R Crowe, Councillor B Laughton and
Councillor D Payne

27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS AND AS TO THE PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest.

28 DECLARATIONS OF INTENTION TO RECORD THE MEETING

The Chairman advised that the proceedings were being audio recorded by the Council.

29 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes from the meeting held on 28 June 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

30 FORWARD PLAN OF POLICY & FINANCE ITEMS

The Committee noted the Forward Plan items to be considered by the Committee over the next 12 months.

31 PAY AND GRADING ARRANGEMENTS 2019 FOR EMPLOYEES ON NJC TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

The Director – Safety presented a report which sought delegated authority for the Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to negotiate any changes to the current pay and grading arrangements which were required in order to implement the 2019 NJC pay award. It was proposed that the negotiations were conducted through the Joint Consultative Committee.

AGREED (unanimously) that delegated authority be given to the Head of Paid Service and/or his designated deputies, in consultation with the Leader (or, in his absence the Deputy Leader) to negotiate and agree changes to the current pay and grading arrangements with the recognised Trades Unions through the Joint Consultative Committee.

Reason for Decision

To agree revised pay and arrangements that meet objectives detailed in the report and in so doing enable the Council to implement the national scale points with effect from 1 April 2019.

32 82 MILLGATE, NEWARK - PROPOSED DISPOSAL

The Director - Safety, presented a report concerning the disposal of 82 Millgate, Newark. The property which was managed by Newark and Sherwood Homes, on behalf of the Council, was currently used to provide 6 units of bed-sit type accommodation for single persons with additional needs.

At its meeting on 28 June 2018, the Committee resolved to support the proposed disposal of 82 Millgate. This proposal was supported taking into account the high costs of managing the building. Since the last meeting, officers from Newark and Sherwood Homes had consulted with each tenant over the future of the property. All tenants were keen to be rehoused and suitable alternative accommodation for them in Council properties had now been secured. As such the property was now empty, had been secured and the utility supplies capped off to ensure that it was safe pending a final decision regarding disposal.

The sale of the property would generate a capital receipt which would be ring-fenced to the Housing Revenue Account.

AGREED (unanimously) that the disposal of 82 Millgate, Newark in its current condition on the open market with vacant possession be approved.

Reason for Decision

To effectively manage the Council's assets to deliver a viable 30 year HRA Business Plan.

33 CLEANER, SAFER AND GREENER - ENFORCEMENT POSTS

The Business Manager – Environmental Health and Licensing presented a report concerning the creation of new community based Enforcement Officers to support the Cleaner, Safer, Greener Strategy. The Strategy which was agreed by the Full Council on 17 July 2018 set out key objectives relating to littering, graffiti, dog fouling and other environmental offences.

One element of the strategy was to ensure appropriate enforcements penalties for environmental crime. At their meeting held on 26 June 2018, the Leisure & Environment Committee refreshed and set new maximum charges for fixed penalty notices issued in relation to environmental crimes. It was proposed that four posts were created to provide a dedicated function for the issuing of fixed penalty notices and promoting a responsible approach to the environment. It was proposed that the new posts would be titled Neighbourhood Wardens with a wide variety of responsibilities as detailed in the report.

As set out in the report, costs for these posts in 2018/19 were estimated at £45,687 with sufficient reserves having been set aside to cover these costs. The costs for 2019/20 onwards would be built into the base budget.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the creation of four new posts of Neighbourhood Wardens be approved;
- (b) the additional revenue budget as shown in the report for 2018/19 and 2019/20 be approved; and
- (c) a review of these posts be undertaken after six months of operation with the results of the review being reported to the Leisure & Environment Committee.

Reason for Decision

To support the Cleaner, Safer and Greener Strategy with dedicated community based advice, education and enforcement posts.

34 OLLERTON HALL

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive which set out the recommendations of the Ollerton Hall Task & Finish Group for disposal of Ollerton Hall. The Task & Finish Group met on 6 September to consider options around the disposal of Ollerton Hall and a process for disposal. The unanimous recommendations of the Task & Finish Group were set out in the report.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) open market disposal of the property be approved on the basis of a long leasehold disposal with an option to purchase the freehold on satisfactory completion of the renovation works;
- (b) the successful purchaser be selected on the basis of best satisfying the range of criteria set out in the report to the Task & Finish Group with price not being the overriding consideration and the property be marketed accordingly;
- (c) Innes England be instructed to undertake the marketing of the property; and
- (d) delegated authority be given to the Deputy Chief Executive, following consultation with a Member Panel comprising Councillors Girling, Lloyd and Wells, to select the preferred bidder in accordance with the criteria agreed by the Task & Finish Group.

Reason for Decision

To dispose of Ollerton Hall and secure the long term future for the building.

35 GENERAL FUND AND CAPITAL PROJECTED OUTTURN REPORT TO 31 MARCH 2019 AS AT 31 JULY 2018

The Business Manager – Financial Services presented a report which compared the Revised Budgets with the Projected Outturn forecast for the period to 31 March 2019. The forecast to the year end was based on the four months performance to 31 July 2018 on the Council’s revenue and capital budgets. The accounts showed a projected over spend of £0.048m on service budgets, and a total projected adverse variance of £0.094m. The report detailed the small variances projected in service areas and other budgets. It was noted that the forecast position would be kept under review to ensure at least a break-even position at the end of the financial year. Non-Service expenditure was expected to have an adverse variance against the revised budget by £0.046m. This was due to the delay in the delivery of corporate savings target of £0.084m allocated to the Council’s Commercial Project Team.

The report also summarised the first four months position for the Capital Programme. Additions and amendments to the Programme for April to July 2018 were detailed in Appendix B to the report. The reported variations totalled £1.473m which if approved would increase the revised budget to £32.410m. Details of how this would be financed were set out in the report.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the General Fund projected outturn variance of £0.094m be noted;
- (b) the variations to the Capital Programme of £1.473m be approved; and
- (c) the Capital Programme projected outturn of £32.410m be noted.

Reason for Decision

To advise Members of the projected outturn monitored against service budgets for the period ending 31 March 2019, as at 31 July 2018.

36 COUNCIL'S ANNUAL BUDGET 2019/20 - OVERALL CORPORATE STRATEGY

The Business Manager – Financial Services presented a report which set out the Budget Strategy for 2019/2020 prior to detailed work commencing on preparation of the budget. The Council’s Constitution required that the Council’s Section 151 Officer present a report on the overall Budget Strategy to the Policy & Finance Committee for approval. The budget process would result in the setting of the budget and the Council Tax for 2019/20.

The strategy took into consideration agreed policies on budgeting and council tax, reserves and provisions, value for money and also a set of budget principles which set out the approach to be taken to the budget process. These policies had been reviewed and updated as appropriate and were attached as appendices to the report.

The current Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was approved on 29 June 2017. It was reported that with the change in the Leader of the Council and appointment of

the new Chief Executive, the revision of the MTFP would occur slightly later than originally planned. This would be brought to the Policy & Finance Committee on 21 February 2019 with the budget for 2019/20. The report set out a summary of the financial forecast identified within the current MTFP assuming that Council Tax at average Band D would increase by the same rate as the previous three financial years, namely 1.94%. These figures suggested that over the next two financial years between £650,000 and £700,000 of savings would need to be generated to balance the budget.

The report also set out a number of underlying assumptions which would be applied in compiling the draft budget for 2019/20 including staff costs, provision for inflation and fees and charges.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the overall budget strategy be approved;
- (b) budget officers continue work on the assessment of various budget proposals affecting services for consideration in setting the Council's budget; and
- (c) budget managers work with finance officers in identifying further efficiency savings, increasing income from fees and charges and in identifying new income.

Reason for Decision

To enable the Council's budget process to proceed encompassing agreed inflation and salaries and wages rates for 2019/20 to 2021/22.

37 BUSINESS RATES PILOT 2019

The Deputy Chief Executive / Director – Resources presented a report which sought approval for the submission of a joint application with the other eight Nottinghamshire Councils and the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service for the 2019 Business Rates Pilot scheme.

The current Business Rates system was for 50% of the total business rates collected to be retained locally with the other 50% being paid over to central government. Councils were being invited by the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government to bid to become part of a 75% Business Rates Pilot scheme. This scheme, which would last for one year and would begin 1 April 2019, would see a larger proportion of money generated within the County retained locally. A prospectus was issued on 24 July 2018 and applications needed to be submitted by 25 September 2018.

The Director - Resources, with external support from LG Futures, had been working with the Nottinghamshire Chief Finance Officers and the Nottinghamshire Chief Executives to review the existing pooling arrangements and comparing this to the forecast growth under the terms of the 2019 Pilot. It was considered that Nottinghamshire as a whole would gain just under £10m from participating in the 2019 pilot with the District Council's share being £0.6m.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the participation of the Council in preparing a joint application for the 2019 Business Rates Pilot, together with the other six Nottinghamshire District Councils, Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service, be approved;
- (b) delegated authority be given to the Deputy Chief Executive / Director - Resources, in consultation with the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council, to agree the detail of the application to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government; and
- (c) delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to approve the application together with the Chief Executives of the six Nottinghamshire District Councils, Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service.

Reason for Decision

Selection to be a pilot for 2018/19 would mean additional funding across Nottinghamshire of just under £10m, with £0.600m for Newark & Sherwood District Council.

38 EXTENSION AND IMPROVEMENT OF NEWARK LORRY PARK

The Business Manager – Environmental Health & Licensing presented a report which detailed proposed changes to the extension scheme for Newark Lorry Park and the provision of additional funding as had been considered by the Economic Development Committee.

In March 2017 the Economic Development Committee agreed the scheme for the extension of Newark Lorry Park. Since the Economic Development Committee reached that decision detailed work on preparing a planning application had been undertaken and it had become apparent that the scheme developed by the external consultants was not as comprehensive as it should have been with the omission of a number of key features that had an impact on both the visual aesthetics of an important gateway to Newark and on the overall costs of the project. At their meeting held on 20 June 2018 the Economic Development Committee considered a further report which detailed the additional works and the additional funding required. The Committee also considered the provision of an above ground fuel bunker on the site as an additional facility.

It was noted that currently the capital programme scheme for the extension project had been agreed at £792,000. The additional costs identified in the report would add an additional £347,021 to the capital costs of the scheme.

AGREED (with 5 votes for and 2 against) that:

- (a) additional capital expenditure of £347,021 for the extension of Newark Lorry Park be approved, for inclusion in the Council's Capital Programme; and
- (b) the Newark Lorry Park budget be amended as per paragraph 5.0 of the report as part of the 2019/20 – 2022/23 budget process.

Reason for Decision

To enable the Council to commence construction of the extension to the Newark Lorry Park and associated developments.

39 INFORMATION REQUESTS, COMPLAINTS AND RIPA UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Director – Safety which detailed the activity in relation to requests made to the Council during 2017/18 under the Data Protection Act 1998, Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004. The report also advised of the complaints made to the Local Government Ombudsman and the use by the Council of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) during 2017/18.

AGREED (unanimously) that the report be noted.

Reason for Decision

To keep Members informed of activities in relation to information requests, complaints made to the Local Government Ombudsman and the use of RIPA in 2017/18.

40 URGENCY ITEM - NEWARK AND SHERWOOD HOMES - MANAGEMENT FEE VARIATION

The Committee noted the decision to approve a variation in the Management Fee to Newark & Sherwood Homes by £57,525.

AGREED (unanimously) that the urgency item be noted.

Reason for Decision

To enable a resource to be put in place to enable Newark & Sherwood Homes to deliver immediate commencement of the resident liaison function to support the Yorke Drive estate regeneration project.

41 URGENCY ITEM - FUNDING FOR SECURITY WORKS AT NEWARK LORRY PARK

The Committee noted the decision to approve an additional capital budget of £40,000 to fund the installation of a barrier and entry control system to Newark Lorry Park and additional revenue funding for security staff for an interim period.

AGREED (unanimously) that the urgency item be noted.

Reason for Decision

To improve the security at Newark Lorry Park.

42 URGENCY ITEM - IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Committee noted the decision to create a capital scheme of £200,000 to fund the purchases of the licences and the implementation of a new Financial Management System.

AGREED (unanimously) that the urgency item be noted.

Reason for Decision

To refresh the Council's Financial Management System which has been in place since 2004.

43 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

AGREED (unanimously) that, under section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

44 TRUCK CARTELS LITIGATION

The Committee considered the exempt report of the Deputy Chief Executive regarding ongoing litigation.

(Summary provided in accordance with 100C(2) of the Local Government Act 1972).

45 FORMER ROBIN HOOD HOTEL - PROPOSED JOINT VENTURE SCHEME WITH MF STRAWSON LIMITED

The Committee considered the exempt report presented by the Deputy Chief Executive regarding a proposed joint venture scheme with MF Strawson Ltd for the former Robin Hood Hotel.

(Summary provided in accordance with 100C(2) of the Local Government Act 1972).

46 CASTLE GATEHOUSE - REVIEW AND PROPOSALS

The Committee considered the exempt report presented by the Director- Customers regarding proposals for the Castle Gatehouse.

(Summary provided in accordance with 100C(2) of the Local Government Act 1972).

Meeting closed at 7.28 pm.

Chairman