

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE POLICY, FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES, WIGSTON
ON TUESDAY, 3 FEBRUARY 2015**

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chair: Councillor Mrs S B Morris
Vice Chair: Councillor D A Gamble

Councillors: G A Boulter, J W Boyce, Mrs J M Gore, Mrs E M Connell, J Kaufman
and Mrs L Kaufman

Officers in attendance: Ms A Court, J Dickson, K Garcha, J Guazzaroni, A Pathak-
Mould and A Thorpe

Also in Attendance: Anand Persaud (CW Audit Services) and Yola Geen (KPMG)

Min Ref	Narrative	Officer Resp
80.	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> Apologies for absence received from Councillors L Bentley, R Morris, B Dave, K Loydall, Mrs L Broadley and Mrs R Kanabar , Tim Ridout (CW Audit Services) John Cornett (KPMG)	
81.	<u>APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTES</u> None.	
82.	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u> Mrs J Gore in relation to Agenda Item number 13 declared she was a trustee of Age UK. G Boulter in relation to Agenda Item number 13 declared he was a trustee of Wigston Framework Knitters Museum	
83.	<u>PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS</u> None.	
84.	<u>MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</u> RESOLVED: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 October 2014 be taken as read, confirmed and signed.	
85.	<u>ACTION LIST</u>	

	RESOLVED: That the action list be noted.	
86.	<p><u>INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT 2014/15</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices of the Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) as set out in report pages 15 to 29, which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) explained the background to the report and recommendation sought.</p> <p>Members were informed that this is the regular progress report. The number of outstanding recommendations has reduced and that there was nothing untoward.</p> <p>Anand Persaud informed Members that since the last meeting four reviews had been completed as detailed on page 17.</p> <p>Anand Persaud stated that a detailed review of Street Cleansing and Ground Maintenance managerial processes was undertaken and the openness of staff was quite commendable.</p> <p>Members were informed that on the Recommendation Tracking system 14 actions are still to be completed. Pages 24 to 26 detail the management responses and the revised implementation dates.</p> <p>A Member asked why only 8 matters were listed on pages 24 to 26 and not 14 actions. The Member was informed that the table only lists those matters outstanding over 6 months.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the progress report for 2015/15 be noted.</p>	
87.	<p><u>EXTERNAL AUDIT - ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2013/14</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendix delivered by the Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) as set out in report pages 30 to 38, which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Chief Finance Officer explained the background to the report and recommendation sought. Members were informed that the annual audit letter for 2013/14 was an excellent letter.</p> <p>The KPMG Manager who produced the Annual Audit letter informed Members that KPMG issued their certificate on the 29 September 2014 and that the Audit fee had been agreed with the audit commission. Members were informed that the certification of grants and returns was still ongoing and a report would be presented to the next Policy Finance and Development Committee in March 2015.</p> <p>A Member said that he was pleased with the report and would like to pass his thanks on to the staff who worked with the auditors.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the report be noted</p>	

88.	<p><u>OVERALL GENERAL FUND REVISED FINANCIAL POSITION 2014/15 AND DRAFT BUDGET 2015/16</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices of the Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) as set out in report pages 39 to 62, which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Chief Finance Officer explained the background to the report and recommendations sought.</p> <p>Members were informed that the report and appendix contain detailed figures and the budget and council tax report will be presented to Council on 19 February 2015.</p> <p>The Leisure Centre Charges were included at Appendix 7 for Members to agree.</p> <p>Members were informed that the leisure contract allowed for fees and charges to be increased in line with the Retail Price Index on an annual basis.</p> <p>Bench marking has been done with neighbouring sites for comparison purposes.</p> <p>In relation to the draft budget Members were informed that local government still has to save money and provisionally we have a 5.8% reduction in spending power and pressure will be on Local Government Budgets for at least 4 years.</p> <p>Members were informed that the New Homes Bonus the Council received was the second lowest amount in the Country with an allocation of £313,000. This is due to the Borough's compact nature. In relation to business rates the Council don't have the land mass so miss out.</p> <p>Members were informed that the Council tax base figure has increased by £48,000 for 2015/16.</p> <p>Members were informed that the New Leisure Facilities contract will save the Council £3.6 million over the life of the contract compared to the previous contract.</p> <p>Members were informed that Reserves provide for when matters are not going to plan and that £300,000 had been moved to the Budget Equilibrium reserve.</p> <p>A Member asked with regard to recycling what does the Council have in the reserve. The Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) informed Members that a reserve had been created a couple of years ago as income was uncertain.</p> <p>The Director of Services explained that with regard to recycling the Council gets better rates than others. If the Council took over the recycling those businesses contract price will increase.</p>	

A Member raised concern with regards to Welfare Reform and the fact that six pilots for the universal credit were completed and reports suggest that Council Rent arrears levels in these pilots are running at between 10% & 20%.

The Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) agreed that Welfare Reform is a concern and the implementation date for the Council is 2019.

A Member queried the Leisure Centre charges and asked if contractors can change the prices.

The Director of Services stated that the core prices are the maximum they can charge but the contract allows for fees to be increased by the Retail Price Index. Other charges can be charged at prices deemed suitable by the contractors. If the contractors want to increase more than the RPI then a business case has to be brought before the Committee.

A Member raised a query regarding Note two on Appendix 4 – Oadby & Wigston Capital Programme 2015/16 – 2017/18 on page 58.

The Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) stated that a further report will be going to the next Policy, Finance and Development Committee in March on the Capital Programme to update members on the various schemes.

A Member raised a question on the Customer Service Centre figure of £142,000 on page 58 due to the fact that it seems different figures were presented on page 172 of the agenda.

The Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) informed Members that the difference is just looking at the year 2015/16 whereas the figure on page 172 relates to the total expenditure.

Overall, in general it's going to be circa £200,000. The Director of Services will provide Members with the Customer Service Centre cost breakdown.

The Leader commended the Council on maintaining a balanced budget with 0% Council Tax for the Council. He stated that we need to look at income generation and controlling costs. The Leader sought clarification regarding point 8 on page 55 of the agenda.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the overall revised General Fund revenue budget position for 2014/15 (Appendices 1 and 2) be considered and noted.
- (2) That Members recommend in principle to Council the overall draft General Fund revenue budget for 2015/16. This will be the subject of a further and full report to Council on 19 February 2015 (Appendices 1 and 3).

	<p>(3) That Members recommend in principle to Council the overall draft Capital Programme for 2015/16 and note the forward programme to 2017/18. This will be the subject of a further and full report to Council on 19 February 2015 (Appendix 4).</p> <p>(4) That Members approve a 300,000 transfer from the General Fund Reserve to the Budget Equilibrium Reserve in 2014/15.</p>	
89.	<p><u>RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices of the Chief Financial Officer as set out in report pages 63 to 72, which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the review of the Strategic Risk Register be noted</p>	
90.	<p><u>RESIDENTS FORUMS BUDGET POSITION</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices of the Chief Financial and Section 151 Officer as set out in report pages 73 to 77, which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Chief Finance Officer explained the background to the report and recommendations sought.</p> <p>A Member asked how the £200,000 still available to spend for the forums was allocated. Members were informed that it was split two fifths each for Oadby and Wigston forums and one fifth South Wigston forum.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) That the request made at South Wigston Residents Forum for the purchase of a mobile speed awareness sign, at a cost of £3,000, for use within South Wigston be approved. 2) That the following two requests made at Oadby Residents Forum be approved; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) a grant of £3,750 to Oadby Remembers to fund the first year of a three-year project commemorating the Oadby soldiers that died in the First World War. The grant will fund exhibitions, promotional materials and the development of a website. ii) Installation of a bench on Burtons corner at a total cost of £1,000 3) That the Council Priority Reserve containing £73,000, set up with the intention of funding improvements in line with the main priorities of the Council, in consultation with the local resident's forums be noted. 	

91.	<p><u>DRAFT HRA BUDGET AND HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2015/16</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices of the Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) and Head of Community as set out in report pages 78 to 103, which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Chief Finance Officer explained the background to the report and recommendation sought.</p> <p>Members were informed that the Housing Revenue Account business plan over a 30 year period was still sustainable.</p> <p>Members were informed that rents were to increase by CPI plus 1 % which results in an increase of 2.26%.</p> <p>The Head of Community stated that with regard to the land at Bennett's Way/Kirkdale Road site negotiations are on-going with Partners. With regards to the Compulsory Purchase Order of 41 Canal Street there is a little bit more work to do and is progressing.</p> <p>Members were informed that with regards to the Rent Setting the Government guidelines changed following a 10 year period of rent convergence. It is envisaged that the current rent setting guidance may remain for a further 10 years.</p> <p>The Leader stated that in relation to new build homes a report will come to this Committee in March with an action plan and this will be partially in public/partially in camera. There is a target to build five new homes a year over the next 30 years.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the Revenue budget forecast for the Housing Revenue Account in 2014/15 and the three forward financial years to 2018/19 be noted and recommended to Council for Approval (Appendix 2) 2) the proposed rent and service charge increases for 2015/16 as recommended by Service Delivery Committee (Appendix 2 and Appendix 4 Section 2) be recommended to Council for approval 3) the HRA capital programme for 2015/16 be noted and recommended to Council for Approval (Appendix 3) 	
92.	<p><u>DISCRETIONARY NON-DOMESTIC RATES RELIEFS</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report delivered by the Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) as set out in report pages 104 to 125, which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) explained the background to the report and recommendation sought.</p> <p>Members were informed that they need to declare an interest to this</p>	

	<p>item if applicable.</p> <p>Two Members declared an interest as detailed in the Declarations of Interest section of these minutes.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. the updated policy document for all discretionary non-domestic rate reliefs be approved 1.2. that, after review, no changes are required to the discretionary policy for charities and non-profit making organisations 1.3. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Financial Officer in consultation with the Chair of the Policy, Finance and Development Committee for determination of both applications and appeals as set out in the updated policy document 1.4. that all approved recommendations will have immediate effect 	
93.	<p><u>LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report delivered by the Planning Policy and Regeneration Manager as set out in report pages 126 to 153, which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Planning Policy and Regeneration Manager explained the background to the report and recommendation sought.</p> <p>Members were informed that the Local Development Scheme sets out the Council's proposals for the preparation of the Local Plan for the Borough of Oadby and Wigston.</p> <p>A Member asked if the name Local Development Scheme is likely to change as has been the case with the change in name from Local Development Framework to Local Plan. The Member was informed that the Local Development Scheme sets out the timetable for the delivery of the Local Plan and that name is unlikely to change.</p> <p>Members queried the availability of the Local Plan. Members were informed that it was free of charge to view at the Council Offices. If people wanted a copy of it, then a charge would be made to cover the cost of printing.</p> <p>A Member asked if the full URL could be added to the website address so as anyone looking on line could get the link straight to the Local Plan. The Member was informed that this would be done.</p> <p>RESOLVED: Members approved the Local Development Scheme for publication.</p>	

94.	<p><u>STOUGHTON GRANGE DEVELOPMENT BRIEF</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices delivered by the Planning Policy and Regeneration Manager as set out in report pages 154 to 169, which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Planning Policy and Regeneration Manager explained the background to the report and recommendation sought.</p> <p>Members were informed that the development brief relates to 'Stoughton Grange', land north of Gartree Road, which was previously the site of Stoughton Farm Park. The purpose of the development brief is to set out the Council's requirements and expectations in relation to the use of this site.</p> <p>A Member asked if the public consultation would be published to make people aware. The Member was informed that it would be placed on the Council's website and consultees would be written to.</p> <p>A Member asked if the Council could look at e mailing rather than writing to consultees as this provides evidence that they have been written to, also it is an effective way of communication. The Member was advised that this had been done previously and therefore emails will continue to be used in future, where possible.</p> <p>A Member asked if the proprietors on site were included in the list of consultees. He was informed that they would be included in the consultation.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That Members approve the Stoughton Grange Development Brief for the purposes of a period of six weeks public consultation from Friday 13 February 2015 to Friday 27 March 2015.</p>	
95.	<p><u>ADVERTISING ON TOWN CENTRE DISPLAY BOARDS</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices delivered by the Planning Policy and Regeneration Manager as set out in report pages 170 to 171, which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Planning Policy and Regeneration Manager explained the background to the report and recommendation sought.</p> <p>Members were informed that as part of Oadby and Wigston town centre improvement works the multicultural sign in Oadby was removed. Members agreed that this should be replaced with a digital display screen and that additionally, a digital display screen should also be installed in Wigston town centre. As a result, two digital display screens have been purchased and are awaiting installation.</p> <p>Members were informed that the Screens can be used for advertising Council notices, by businesses and community groups. They were also informed that a Policy was being formulated.</p> <p>A Member asked with regard to the costs of running the display</p>	

	<p>boards, whether or not they would be on for twenty four hours or switched off and also advised that the Council needed to create advertising literature in order to encourage people to use them.</p> <p>The Member was informed that costing of running the display boards was not to hand but will be reported to the Place Shaping Working Group but informed that it was a reasonably low cost. The display boards will be turned off at night and that the town centre manager will be liaising with the town centre retailers with regard to the use of the boards.</p> <p>A Member said that the Policy will be considered at the Place Shaping Working Group. The Member also advised that a Council ethical statement should be prepared advising what would and would not be allowed to be advertised on the display boards and that editorial control of the boards was required.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That Members:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the Council to sell advertising space on the digital display screens. 2. Agree that a Policy is prepared with the involvement of the Place Shaping Working Group prior to the formal approval of this Committee. 3. Agree that a proportion of the income generated is set aside to cover the electrical costs, routine maintenance and repairs of the digital display screens. 	
96.	<p><u>SERVICE DELIVERY REVIEWS</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices delivered by the Director of Services as set out in report pages 172 to 176, which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Director of Services explained the background to the report and recommendations sought.</p> <p>Members were informed that this report was an update on service reviews.</p> <p><u>Customer Services Transformation Programme</u></p> <p>Members were informed that customer services were being transferred to premises at 40 Bell Street, Wigston to make it more accessible to the public. We are on target to do this and have a new centre open in July 2015.</p> <p>The Head of Corporate Resources informed Members that the Council was on target with the premises contract and were waiting for a dilapidations report. Members were informed the Council has negotiated a 6 year lease with a 3 month holiday period with an annual rent of £23,500. If the Council renew the lease then there will be a 3 month rent free period.</p>	

	<p><u>Planning Policy, Planning Control and Building Control.</u></p> <p>Members were informed that there was no change Planning Policy and that the Local Plan was up to date. That Planning Control had procedure in place and was not under resourced.</p> <p>Members were informed that Building Control had two strands</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Fee earning side for advice, building inspections and making sure regulations were met. 2) No Fee making side for enforcement action when people haven't complied with regulations. <p>For fee earning the Council can set their own fees but it has to be cost neutral service. Fee income is short at covering the service. In conclusion that due to the size of the borough there is limited fee earning and Building Control is open to the market meaning the Council can get undercut.</p> <p>The Council has lost its Building Control Manager .Options are to have a shared service Leicestershire wide. Other authorities have shown very little interest. There were a lot of options to consider and a report will be brought back within six months.</p> <p>A Member was concerned that a decision had been made and had heard that another Authority is delighted we are giving building control work to them.</p> <p>The Director of Services informed the Member that nothing had been agreed with another Authority and that we need to look at all the options open to us.</p> <p>A Member welcomed the report but was concerned that no enforcement was taking place and that it was a concern for residents. The turnover of staff, people used to be using the Council as a stepping stone now it's a pebble.</p> <p>A Member queried the £282,000 cost and was informed that it was the whole cost of the service and was provided by management but the points raised would be clarified.</p> <p>A Member was pleased the Customer Services Transformation was on track and in relation to building control stated we should welcome people moving on to better careers but the concerns raised are a reality check on how we need to respond as an authority.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That Members move recommendations as detailed in the report.</p>	
97.	<p><u>ESTABLISHING INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY GROUPS - PRIDE OF THE BOROUGH</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices delivered by the Director of Services as set out in report pages 177 to 178, which should be read together with these minutes as a</p>	

	<p>composite document.</p> <p>The Director of Services gave the background to the report and recommendations sought. Members were informed that there would be annual funding of £3000 and that any additional set up costs would come from the Greening of the Borough Reserve.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Pride of the Borough Group is established as an independent community group. 2. That it is established on the principles as set out in Section 3 of the report. 3. That funding will be assessed annually by the Council and mutually agreed with the group at such a level so that the group is able to fully provide the services, events and activities required. The presumption would be that funding will be granted on a 3 year cycle. 	
98.	<p><u>THE BOROUGH OF OADBY & WIGSTON (OFF-STREET PARKING PLACES) ORDER 2015</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices delivered by the Director of Services as set out in report pages 179 to 221, which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Director of Services gave the background to the report and recommendations sought. Members were informed that no objections had been received and that the Order can be confirmed as advertised to come into effect on the 1 April 2015.</p> <p>A Member asked that if car park layout changes took place would the Order plans be amended. The Member was informed that they would.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Borough of Oadby and Wigston (Off Street Parking Places) Order 2015 be confirmed as advertised, to come into effect on 1 April 2015.</p>	

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm