

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY, FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, STATION ROAD, WIGSTON ON TUESDAY, 31 OCTOBER
2017 COMMENCING AT 7.00 PM**

PRESENT

Councillor Mrs S B Morris (Chair)
Councillor D A Gamble (Vice Chair)

COUNCILLORS

E R Barr
L A Bentley
G A Boulter
J W Boyce
M L Darr
B Dave
R F Eaton
J Kaufman
Mrs L Kaufman
Dr T K Khong

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

S J Ball (Senior Democratic Services Officer / Legal Officer)
Mrs A E Court (Interim Chief Executive)
D Gill (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
S Glazebrook (Interim Head of Communities)
C Raymakers (Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits)
A Thorpe (Head of Planning, Development and Regeneration)

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

A Persaud (Audit Manager, CW Audit Services)

27. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillors Mrs K M Chalk, R E Fahey and R E R Morris.

28. APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTES

None.

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

30. READING, CONFIRMATION AND SIGNING OF MINUTES

30a. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 25 JULY 2017

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 25 July 2017 be taken as read, confirmed and signed.

30b. MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 10 OCTOBER 2017

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Committee held on 10 October 2017 be taken as read, confirmed and signed.

31. ACTION LIST ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 25 JULY 2017

The Committee was informed that the first and third action points (min. ref. 7 and 14) featured as a report update at agenda item 7. In respect of the second action point (min. ref. 8), it was said that a Members' seminar would be arranged once the actuarial assumptions on the pension scheme were made known.

RESOLVED THAT:

The Action List be noted by Members.

32. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

None.

33. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT 2017/18

The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at pages 11 - 48) as jointly-delivered and summarised by the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits and the Audit Manager at CW Audit Services, Mr Anand Persaud, which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.

The Interim Head of Communities provided the Committee with a verbal update in relation to the 'high risk' outstanding issues marked '15/16 Housing Register and Allocations', '16/17 Housing Repairs and Maintenance' and '16/17 Housing Void Property Management' at Appendix 1 (at pages 18 - 22). A summary of the current position is filled together with these minutes at Annex A. In brief, it was reported that substantial progress had been made in these areas and that those issues which had not been fully completed were still subject to work in progress. It was said that all updates had since been entered on to the recommendation tracking system.

The Committee noted that in consideration of the verbal update, performance in relation to housing responsive repairs was currently being measured against a policy adopted in 2014. It was therefore recommended that a review of this policy be undertaken so that performance in the area could be subsequently re-examined.

The Committee was also advised that in relation to the outstanding 2016/17 review regarding grant aid for the three Residents' Forums, it was to be proposed that a five Member panel be established to consider grant requests, which was to cover all aspects of grant-making and the rules governing the same, so to remove any existing concerns regarding value for money. This proposition was said to form part of an overall governance review of the Forums currently being undertaken by the Interim Director of Services. It was anticipated that a report on the outcome of that review was brought to the next meeting of the Council on 5 December.

RESOLVED THAT:

The contents of the progress reports for 2016/17 and 2017/18 and the Internal

Audit Charter for 2017/18 be noted by Members.

34. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS) UPDATE

The Committee gave consideration to the report (at pages 49 - 52) as delivered and summarised by the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.

RESOLVED THAT:

The Schedule of Programmes identified to mitigate budget deficits, and the Council's timetable to achieve this (as set out in the report) be noted by Members.

35. PROPOSED UPDATE TO THE COUNCIL'S CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES (CPR'S)

The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendix (at pages 53 - 81) as delivered and summarised by the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.

The Committee was advised that in relation to public authority procurement procedures (as set out at paragraph 7 of the report), the current thresholds triggering European Union (EU) rules were £164,176 / €209,000 for supplies and services contracts and £4,104,394 / €5,225,000 for works contracts subject to changes in EU regulations and fluctuations in the EUR-GBP exchange rate.

It was moved by the Chair, seconded by the Vice Chair and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

- (i) The contents of the updated Contract Procedure Rules (as set out in the Appendix) be recommended to Council for adoption;**
- (ii) The key aspects of the Contract Procedure Rules (as set out in the report) be noted by Members.**

36. OVERALL BUDGET POSITION (APRIL - AUGUST 2017)

The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at pages 82 - 88) as delivered and summarised by the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.

The Committee was advised that in: (a) respect of the Belmont House Refurbishment Scheme (under Service Delivery Committee at line three of Appendix A) the works contract was currently out to tender until 3 November and that any decision as to the future transfer of the asset was to be reserved until a future committee meeting; and; (b) respect of the comment against the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) at 41 Canal Street, South Wigston (under Policy, Finance and Development Committee at line 5 of Appendix A), the comment did not reflect the current position on the matter and was to be otherwise taken in context of the report at agenda item 14.

It was moved by the Chair, seconded by the Vice Chair and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

- (i) The current position on the revenue budgets be noted by Members;**

- (ii) The capital programme (as outlined in the appendix) be approved; and**
- (iii) The virements and supplementary budgets (as listed in the report) be approved.**

37. PROPOSED SCALE OF FEES AND CHARGES 2018/19

The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendix (at pages 89 - 117) as delivered and summarised by the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.

It was moved by the Chair, seconded by the Vice Chair and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

The proposed Scale of Fees and Charges for 2018/19 (as listed in the Appendix) be approved.

38. RESIDENT FORUM OUTTURN BUDGET POSITION AND ALLOCATION REQUESTS

The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendix (at pages 118 - 122) as delivered and summarised by the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.

The Committee raised concerns regarding the exclusion from the report of a number of outstanding and, or, time-sensitive allocations requests, the lack of accurate and contemporaneous information available within the report and appendix and the general lack of information and communication on progress made. This was said to have ultimately resulted in Chairs of Forums being ill-informed at Forum meetings.

Whilst it was acknowledged that the rules and procedures for administering allocations requests were being considered as part of the overall governance review of the Forums currently being undertaken, Members did not consider it fair or acceptable for existing allocation requests to be postponed at the discretion of Officers whilst pending the conclusion of the review itself or by virtue of unilateral decisions being taken at the South Wigston Residents regarding its own requests.

Notwithstanding their current issues, the Committee nevertheless wanted it to be recognised the three Forums were some of the best attended, generously resourced and most successful in terms of community engagement across all of Leicestershire.

The Chair requested that a revised report and appendix, to include the requested and correct information, be prepared and circulated to Members of the Committee by 3 November.

It was moved by the Chair, seconded by the Vice Chair and

RESOLVED THAT:

- (i) The position of the Forums' Budget be noted by Members; and**
- (ii) Delegated authority be granted to the Interim Chief Executive, following consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, to take the all necessary action(s) to expedite accordingly any outstanding and, or, time-sensitive allocations requests as already agreed by the respective Forums.**

Votes For	11
Votes Against	0
Abstentions	1

39. COLLECTION AND WRITE-OFF OF MISCELLANEOUS DEBTORS

The Committee gave consideration to the report (at pages 123 - 125) as delivered and summarised by the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.

The Committee was advised to be mindful that the introduction of Universal Credit was to have implications upon existing methods used to recoup overpayments of housing benefit which over time would require the use of more traditional collection methods to reduce debt levels. It was further reported that details of the work being undertaken to collect unpaid Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates was to also to feature in a report to be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED THAT:

The contents of the report be noted by Members.

40. 41-43 CANAL STREET, SOUTH WIGSTON: COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER (CPO)

The Committee gave consideration to the report (at pages 126 - 125) as delivered and summarised by the Head of Planning, Development and Regeneration which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.

The Committee recognised that the redevelopment of the site made possible by the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) was the Council's first and foremost priority. It was therefore considered that a covenant requiring the new owner(s) to bring the property back into beneficial use as housing within a period of five, as opposed to three, years would afford added flexibility in order to better realise this objective.

The Committee was advised that the sale of the property by way of public auction without a reserve price was the best method to establish its true market value.

It was moved by Councillor J W Boyce, seconded by Councillor J Kaufman and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

- (i) It be noted that Officers are well advanced with the process of making a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) under section 17 and Part XVII of the Housing Act 1985 and the Acquisition of Land Act 1981 and that this will be submitted in early 2018 at the latest;**
- (ii) It be noted that if the CPO is granted to the Council, it will acquire the property by General Vesting Declaration;**
- (iii) It be agreed that the Council will appoint an auctioneer in order to manage the sale of the property by public auction as soon as is practicable after the Council's acquisition; and**
- (iv) It be agreed that the sale will include a covenant for the new owner(s) to bring the property back into beneficial use as housing within a period of five years from the date of transfer.**

41. PUBLICATION OF THE PRE-SUBMISSION LOCAL PLAN FOR PUBLIC

CONSULTATION AND SUBMISSION

The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at pages 131 - 306) as delivered and summarised by the Head of Planning, Development and Regeneration which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.

It was moved by the Chair, seconded by the Vice Chair and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

- (i) The Pre-Submission Local Plan document for the purposes of public consultation commencing Monday 6 November 2017, running until Monday 18 December 2017 and subsequent submission to The Planning Inspectorate in January 2018 for Examination be approved; and**
- (ii) It be noted that the Pre-Submission Local Plan document is proposing the Borough can meet both the housing and employment Objectively Assessed Needs (OAN) up to 2031, as set out in the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA), thus the Council will no longer have unmet need.**

42. LEICESTER CITY LOCAL PLAN: EMERGING OPTIONS STAGE AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES CONSULTATION COMMENTS

The Committee gave consideration to the report (at pages 307 - 310) as delivered and summarised by the Head of Planning, Development and Regeneration which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.

The Committee expressed its mindfulness of the fact that the inability of Leicester City to meet its housing and employment targets would in all probability result in additional pressures being exerted on the Borough to accommodate unmet need.

It was moved by the Chair, seconded by the Vice Chair and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

The consultation comments set out in paragraphs 4.2 to 4.6, paragraphs 5.2 to 5.3, and paragraphs 6.2 to 6.4 of the report as Oadby and Wigston Borough Council's formal response to Leicester City Council's current Local Plan consultation stage be approved.

43. COMMENTS ON THE HARBOROUGH LOCAL PLAN 2011-2031: PROPOSED SUBMISSION DOCUMENT

The Committee gave consideration to the report (at pages 311 - 313) as delivered and summarised by the Head of Planning, Development and Regeneration which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.

The Committee noted the fact of the provision contained with the Harborough Local Plan Spatial Strategy for the minimum number of new homes to be built in excess of the District's objectively assessed need with particular significance.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

The comments set out in paragraphs 3.1 to 3.7 of the report as Oadby and Wigston Borough Council's formal response to Harborough District Council's

consultation on its Local Plan be approved.

44. PILOT WI-FI PROJECT FOR WIGSTON TOWN CENTRE

The Committee gave consideration to the report (at pages 314 - 318) as delivered and summarised by the Head of Planning, Development and Regeneration which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.

The Committee welcomed the introduction of the Pilot Wi-Fi Project ("the Project") as a means of attracting visitors and shoppers to Wigston Town Centre. Although initial concerns were raised by some Members regarding the potential misuse of the free wi-fi provision by "in-range" residential properties and other perceived anti-social behaviour issues, it was agreed that ways could be investigated to either limit the wireless range or connection times should those issues become apparent after a suitable trial period. The opportunities available to extend the Project to other Borough town centres were also of particular interest to Members, including the possibility of seeking contributions from future developers to extend wi-fi provision.

The Committee was advised that the further supplementary budget was essentially required to install a third wireless access point (WAP) to extend the wireless range along the whole of Leicester Road, Wigston. It also was reported that a consultation process to include residents, business owners and the police was to be undertaken by this Council as part of the Project's implementation process. For clarity, the increase to ongoing revenue costs were said to be £2,400 per year for three years.

It was moved by Councillor J W Boyce, seconded by the Chair and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

- (i) A further supplementary budget of £6,138 as match funding towards the capital and the first year revenue support for the Project be approved;**
- (ii) The possibility of the third WAP being installed in an appropriate area covering Oadby Town Centre be explored or, if this was not possible, for the WAP to be installed at the northern end of Leicester Road, Wigston; and**
- (iii) Budgetary provision for the ongoing revenues costs of £2,400 per annum for years two and three of the Project be made available.**

45. CLOSURE OF THE COUNCIL'S MATERIALS RECYCLING FACILITY (MRF) (PART I)

The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at pages 319 - 325) as delivered and summarised by the Interim Chief Executive which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.

The Committee denounced the decisions taken by Leicestershire County Council ("the County Council") in relation recycling credits and the waste collection arrangements that were to be imposed on this Council. It was acknowledged by Members that the Council had no other option but to comply and, in doing so, would unfortunately necessitate the closure of the Council's Materials Recycling Facility (MRF). It was broadly held that the decisions take by the County Council were to have a profoundly detrimental impact upon the Borough and its residents.

The Committee was advised that, insofar as it was the legal duty of this Council to arrange for the collection as opposed to the disposal of household waste, it alone would be responsible for financing the costs of any and all necessary changes to be made to waste

collection methods in order to comply with the County Council's directions. It was said that residents were be informed as far as reasonable practicable of any changes required using the appropriate communication channels.

It was moved by the Chair, seconded by the Vice Chair and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

- (i) **The contents of the report be noted by Members; and**
- (ii) **Delegated authority be granted to the Senior Management Team, following consultation with the Chairs of the Policy, Finance and Development Committee and the Service Delivery Committee, to take the final decision on the effective date for the closure of the Materials Recycling Facility and the management of the decommissioning of the facility after the closure date.**

45a. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED THAT:

The press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (Exempt Information) during consideration of the item(s) below on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the respective paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and, in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exempt item(s) outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

45b. CLOSURE OF THE COUNCIL'S MATERIALS RECYCLING FACILITY (MRF) (PART II)

The Committee gave consideration to the exempt report (at pages 326 - 327) as delivered and summarised by the Interim Chief Executive in closed session.

RESOLVED THAT:

The contents of the exempt report be noted by Members.

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.48 PM



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Chair
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Tuesday, 06 February 2018
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Internal Audit Progress Report 2017/18

Verbal Update of the Interim Head of Communities

I can report that substantial progress has been made on the outstanding items in relation to housing rents and housing repairs and those issues which have not been fully completed are still subject to work in progress.

To re-assure members, I will briefly summarise the current position:

- The Orchard rents system has now been fully reconfigured and the automated functions within the system are being used to their full capability. The rents system is now fully aligned with the rent arrears policy.
- Pre-paid accounts are now being monitored on a regular basis and refunds are being made after checking with other departments for outstanding debts. Some tenants do however prefer to keep a credit on their account as a precaution against unforeseen circumstances.
- Housing Register and Allocations - This action has been superseded by the implementation of a new choice based lettings system and random sampling will take place after the system goes live at the end of November.
- Housing Repairs and Market Testing - We are currently investigating options including adopting the National Schedule of Rates and will report back early in the New Year.
- Rechargeable Repairs - There is now a consistent approach to re-charging tenants and the Maintenance Officer meets regularly with the Customer Services Team to agree and sign off re-charges.
- Post Inspection of Empty Properties - 100% of void properties are now taking place in accordance with the 2014 Policy and appropriate records are being maintained. We also post inspect repairs over the value of £2000.
- Void Turnaround Times are within the target of 20 days and there are no undue delays, any exceptions however are recorded.
- Contractor performance data - This is work still in progress and we are testing new working procedures which we hope to implement from the beginning of the new financial year 2018/19.
- Market testing of Void Work costs - We are currently carrying out a benchmarking exercise to compare our costs with the market and consideration is being given to procuring a separate voids contract in 2018/19 which may provide better value for money.
- Budgetary Control Variations to orders are now being monitored and managed effectively.

All of the updates have now been entered on to the Audit System and we will ensure that in the future they are updated in a timely manner to reflect the accurate positions.