

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE POLICY, FINANCE & DEVELOPMENT  
COMMITTEE HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, WIGSTON ON TUESDAY, 27  
OCTOBER 2015 COMMENCING AT 7:10 PM**

<b><u>IN ATTENDANCE:</u></b>		
Chair - Mrs S B Morris Vice Chair - D A Gamble		
<b>COUNCILLORS:</b>		
G S Atwal G A Boulter Dr T Khong	E Barr B Fahey R E R Morris	L A Bentley J Kaufman
<b>OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:</b>		
Mrs A E Court P Loveday	M Hone Ms A Pathak-Mould	A Thorpe S Ball
<b>OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:</b>		
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Min Ref.	Narrative	Officer Resp.
36.	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b></p> <p>An apology for absence was received from Councillors J W Boyce, M L Darr, B Dave, Mrs L Eaton and K J Loydall.</p>	
37.	<p><b>APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTES</b></p> <p>Councillor Dr T Khong substituted for Councillor B Dave.</p>	
38.	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b></p> <p>None.</p>	
39.	<p><b>PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS</b></p> <p>None.</p>	
40.	<p><b>MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 22 SEPTEMBER 2015</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED THAT:</b></p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 22 September 2015 be taken as read, confirmed and signed.</p>	
41.	<p><b>ACTION LIST</b></p> <p>The Head of Finance reported that 'Min Ref 6. Action List – Building Control' (at page 6) has been duly actioned and circulated to Members.</p>	

	<p><b>RESOLVED THAT:</b></p> <p>The Action List be noted by Members.</p>	
42.	<p><b>INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT 2015/16</b></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at pages 7 - 28) as jointly-delivered by the Interim Section 151 Officer and Audit Manager at CW Audit Services, Mr Anand Persaud, which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Audit Manager summarised the sections of the appendix (at pages 9 - 28). He reported that the Audit Plan for 2015/16 was to include 26 planned reviews and, as of September 2015, two final and two draft reports were at varying stages of completion. It was noted that half of the outstanding recommendations were yet to be implemented and that a concentrated effort was needed to address this. He added that the smooth progression of the Plan's delivery would enable it to be completed by the year-end in consultation with the Section 151 Officer.</p> <p>Councillor G A Boulter noted the importance of the internal audit process to identify areas of concern. He was hopeful that the new interim appointee would see the report progressed with an update expected at the next meeting of this Committee on 02 February 2016.</p> <p><b>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</b></p> <p>(i) The content of the Progress Report for 2015/16 be noted by Members; and</p> <p>(ii) The internal audit contract with CW Audit Services be extended until 31 March 2017.</p>	
43.	<p><b>COMMITTEE BUDGET REVIEW - APRIL TO AUGUST 2015</b></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at pages 29 - 31) as delivered by the Interim Section 151 Officer which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Interim Section 151 Officer reported an estimated projected increase in spend of £119,350. He summarised the two reasons for the changes in the projected outturn as set out in the report (at page 29).</p> <p><b>RESOLVED THAT:</b></p> <p>The current position be noted by Members.</p>	
44.	<p><b>OVERALL BUDGET POSITION - APRIL TO AUGUST 2015</b></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at pages 32 - 35) as delivered by the Head of Finance which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Head of Finance reported that the General Fund suggested an estimated under spend for the year of £195,000 in approved virements</p>	

	<p>and supplementary budgets as set out in the report (at page 33). A revenue budget supplementary request was also requested due to a fall in the market price of recyclates owing to a discontinuation of a garden waste subsidy from Leicestershire County Council and a faltering in foreign-market purchasing of recyclates. He confirmed that the new deficit on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was £ 2,120,866 with a reserve balance of £600,000 and signposted Members to note the Council's Capital Programme as detailed in the appendix (at page 35).</p> <p>Councillor J Kaufman requested that the appendices herewith attached to future reports be formatted and, or, presented in a larger-print font.</p> <p><b>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) The current budgetary position on the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programme (Appendix 1) be noted by Members; and</li> <li>(ii) The revenue budget supplementary request at paragraph 3.4 in the report be approved.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>45.</b></p>	<p><b>FEES AND CHARGES 2016/17</b></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at pages 36 - 61) as delivered by the Interim Section 151 Officer which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Chair stated that external leisure services providers were yet to submit their fees and charges (i.e. up to three months before the start of the financial year) in accordance with the contract, further advising that these would be submitted to a subsequent meeting of this Committee.</p> <p>The Interim Section 151 Officer reported that the default position had increased by 1.0% commensurate to the Retail Price Index (RPI). He drew Members' attention to the details for individual service-areas as set out in the report (at pages 37 - 38) and stated that a planned benchmarking exercise for Corporate Services was to be undertaken in the new year and incorporated into the 2017/18 charges. It was said that an increase by an amount consistent with RPI at July 2015 was to be made to the Allotments area effective as of 30 September 2016.</p> <p>Councillor J Kaufman asked whether Members were to be consulted on future charges in respect of Parklands Leisure Centre and Wigston Swimming Pool. The Director of Services advised that related-charges were to be submitted up to three months before the start of the financial year and that off-peak discount rates were to apply.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED THAT:</b></p> <p>The proposed scale of fees and charges for 2016/17 be approved.</p> <p><b>Votes For</b>            6  <b>Votes Against</b>      0  <b>Abstentions</b>         4</p>	

<p><b>46.</b></p>	<p><b>BUDGET STRATEGY 2016/17 - 2017/18</b></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at pages 62 - 83) as delivered by the Interim Section 151 Officer which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Interim Section 151 Officer summarised the update of the Council's projected annual financial position during 2016/17 and 2017/18 as outlined in the report, including the updated projections following announcements in March 2015 since the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) report (at pages 62 - 65). He also outlined the initial proposals for the preparation of budgets for 2016/17 onwards (at pages 65 - 69). He acknowledged that the current austerity climate was challenging and that the Strategy was intended to confirm the continued resilience of this Council t whilst providing excellent service-delivery.</p> <p><b>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) The latest financial projections be noted by Members;</li> <li>(ii) The draft budget strategy set out in the report be considered; and</li> <li>(iii) The principles set out in the report to form the basis of the budget strategy for the financial years 2016/17 and 2017/18 be approved.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>47.</b></p>	<p><b>RESIDENT FORUM BUDGET POSITION AND ALLOCATION REQUESTS</b></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at pages 84 - 89) as delivered by the Interim Section 151 Officer which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Interim Section 151 Officer signposted Members' to the current Residents' Forums' budget allocations (at page 84), the rules set forth in respect of the same (at page 85) and the requests made at the their latest respective meetings (at page 86) as set out in the report.</p> <p>Councillor B Fahey raised two concerns regarding the poor publicity of the three Resident Forums and that their budget allocations did not necessarily reflect the potential scope of Forum membership. The Chair acknowledged that there was scope for improvement in these respects.</p> <p>Councillors G A Boulter, J Kaufman and D A Gamble emphasised the importance of the three Resident Forums as mechanisms for local residents to self-determine their own action points in terms of identifying and supporting worthwhile causes with no Councillor influence or involvement. It was also reported that the Forums enjoyed the highest rates of comparative attendance throughout the County. It was suggested that any feedback or suggestions from Members be raised directly with the Community Engagement Officer, Veronika Quintyne.</p> <p>Councillor G A Boulter asked whether the funds had been spent in respect of the Uplands Park Footpaths request as identified in the appendix (at page 89). Councillor D A Gamble answered affirmatively.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED THAT:</b></p>	

	<p>(i) The position of the Forum's budget be noted by Members; and</p> <p><b>Votes For</b>            6  <b>Votes Against</b>       0  <b>Abstentions</b>         4</p> <p>(ii) The allocations requested by the Forums as set out below be approved; and</p> <p><b>Votes For</b>            6  <b>Votes Against</b>       0  <b>Abstentions</b>         4</p> <p><b>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</b></p> <p>(iii) The spending guidelines as set out at paragraph 3.2 of the report as amended be affirmed.</p> <p>The Chair advised that third resolution was to be confirmed by the Chief Executive, Mark Hall by week commencing 02 November 2015.</p>	
<p><b>48.</b></p>	<p><b>RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE</b></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at pages 90 - 100) as delivered by the Head of Finance which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Head of Finance confirmed that there have been no additions and, or, amendments to the Strategic Risk Register and the next review dates for all risks have been noted in the appendix (at pages 92 - 100).</p> <p><b>RESOLVED THAT:</b></p> <p>The review of the Strategic Risk Register be noted by Members.</p>	
<p><b>49.</b></p>	<p><b>FUTURE FUNDING FOR SUPPORTING LEICESTERSHIRE FAMILIES (SLF)</b></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at pages 100 - 102) as delivered by the Head of Community which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Head of Community re-familiarised Members with the pooled-budget and partnership/local arrangements of the SLF initiative as set out in the report (at pages 100 - 101). She further reported that a meeting of the SLF Working Group on 29 September discussing the value of the partnership and programme, Jane Moore (Head of Service at Leicestershire County Council) delivered a service presentation and an annual service report. It was particularly noted that a total of 35 families have been worked with in the Oadby and Wigston locality alone representing a £129,395 service-value alongside the benefits of partnership work. It was therefore agreed at the meeting that a further 3 year financial commitment be maintained by this Council at the same</p>	

	<p>level as previously at £23,000 per year, subject to the recommendation at 1.2 of the report being resolved before this Committee (at page 101). This was said to include an “in-kind” contribution to the programme of officer support, accommodation and parking in return for three workers and a team leader working in partnership with other service-areas.</p> <p>Councillor G A Boulter welcomed the report and commended the SLF’s well-intentioned initiative and good return on the Council’s contribution.</p> <p><b>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</b></p> <p>(i) The performance of the SLF programme in the Oadby Wigston locality ne noted by Members; and</p> <p>(ii) A further 3 years of funding to be maintained at the same level as previously at £23,000 per year be approved.</p>	
<p><b>50.</b></p>	<p><b>ADVISORY SERVICES IN THE BOROUGH - SHORT TERM INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS</b></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report (at pages 103 - 104) as delivered by the Director of Services which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Director of Services reported the existing advisory contract with the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) was resolved by Members at a meeting of this Committee held on 21 July 2015 to allow to lapse at the end of its contract period on 31 July 2015. Members were advised that the outstanding unspent balance from 2015/16 for the provision of these services would be utilised to fund any short term interim requirements.</p> <p>Councillor G A Boulter welcomed the report and appealed for more, long-term permanent arrangements to be put in place in due course.</p> <p><b>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</b></p> <p>Delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the Policy, Finance and Development Committee and the Leader of the Council in order to put in place short-term interim arrangements in relation to advisory services in the Borough.</p>	
<p><b>51.</b></p>	<p><b>HOUSING BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE</b></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at pages 105 - 117) as delivered by the Head of Community which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Head of Community summarised the update in respect of the progress made in implementing the Housing Revenue Account’s (HRA) 30 year business plan, noting a number of changes to Central Government policy impacting on the HRA going forward. This included a new social housing policy with rents reducing by 1% per annum for the next four years and the impact of the recently published Housing Bill. This was said to affect the Right to Buy scheme being brought into the Housing Association sector and the introduction of a levy on Councils,</p>	

	<p>based on stock values in addition to the moving of higher earning tenants to market rent levels. The assumptions around these were said to be set out in the attached appendix (at pages 107 - 115) together with the half-year protections by consultants (at pages 116 - 117). It was said that the HRA Business Plan was nonetheless fully viable.</p> <p>Councillor G A Boulter commended the value of the self-financing settlement to ensure financial autonomy and good service-delivery. He raised a concern regarding the redefinition and use of sales to support the Housing Associations and the unpredictability of increasing the housing stock. He further requested that a seminar be held on the subject of new build properties offered under the Right to Buy scheme.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED THAT:</b></p> <p>The report be noted by Members.</p>	
52.	<p><b>REQUEST FOR HOUSING BENEFIT OVERPAYMENT WRITE OFF</b></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report (at pages 118 - 119) as delivered by the Interim Section 151 Officer which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Interim Section 151 Officer advised Members that an amount exceeding £10,000 required a resolution from this Committee in accordance with Council policy. He summarised the reasons as to why the debt was uncollectable as set out in the report (at page 30) noting that a write up was possible should the debtor's circumstances change.</p> <p>Councillor G A Boulter clarified that the write off procedure was a simple paper exercise assigned to the Council and attributable to the debtor.</p> <p><b>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</b></p> <p>The write off of an overpayment of Housing Benefit in the sum of £15,815.05 be authorised.</p>	
53.	<p><b>ADOPTION OF OPEN SPACES IN OADBY</b></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at pages 120 - 122) as delivered by the Director of Services which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED THAT:</b></p> <p>(i) The disposal of each of the open spaces identified in the report to this Committee held on 22 July 2015 be noted by Members;</p> <p>(ii) The process in respect of the open space at Florence Wragg Way, Oadby being transferred to the Council by way of gift be specifically noted by Members.</p> <p><b>Votes For</b>            7  <b>Votes Against</b>      0  <b>Abstentions</b>         3</p>	

<p>54.</p>	<p><b>ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE NOMINATION</b></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at pages 123 - 128) as delivered by the Planning Policy and Regeneration Manager which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Planning Policy and Regeneration Manager reported that the Borough's was in receipt of its first nomination made by the Leicester Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) to list The Cow and Plough in Oadby as an Asset of Community Value (ACV). He summarised the application that had been submitted by CAMRA, the regulations governing the Council's decision-making in respect of Nominated Assets (NA), the obligations incumbent upon asset owners and the rights of nominating or eligible groups as set out in the report (at pages 123 - 127).</p> <p>Councillor L A Bentley enquired as whether the confirming of an ACV afforded the NA extraordinary planning protection. The Planning Policy and Regeneration Manager advised that ordinary planning rules and procedures would apply subject to the exceptions in respect a change of an ASC building's class use as set out in the report (at page 124).</p> <p>Councillor B Fahey stated that he was not in favour of the NA.</p> <p>Councillor G A Boulter asked whether the nomination process was open. The Planning Policy and Regeneration Manager advised that a community nomination can be made in respect of any public or private asset by any qualifying community or voluntary organisation or group.</p> <p>The Member requested the this Council be mindful of the potential implications arising from asset owners' rights of appeal and enquired as to whether any entry on the ACV Register was subject to timeframes. The Planning Policy and Regeneration Manager advised that a review of the Register before this Committee shall be required every five years.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED THAT:</b></p> <p>Subject to there being no representations received that would alter the recommendation, the Nominated Asset (The Cow and Plough, Stoughton Park, Gartree Road, Oadby, LE2 2FB) be confirmed as an Asset of Community Value on the basis that the nomination has been made by a qualifying community group and that the nominated asset "furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community" and, therefore, the asset be included on the Council's Local List of Assets of Community Value Register and the asset be placed on the Local Land Charge Register.</p> <p><b>Votes For</b>            7  <b>Votes Against</b>      0  <b>Abstentions</b>         3</p>	
<p>55.</p>	<p><b>PAVILION AT BLABY ROAD PARK, SOUTH WIGSTON</b></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at</p>	

	<p>pages 129 - 131) as delivered by the Planning Policy and Regeneration Manager which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Planning Policy and Regeneration Manager summarised the proposed extension to the pavilion at Blaby Road Park with reference to the floor plans provided in the appendix (at page 131) and the analysis of the costs involved totalling £250,361 as set out in the report (at pages 129 - 130). He stated this would demand the provision of a sufficiently-sized extension to enable the Council to hire the facility out alongside existing functional and amenity spaces. He stated that the funding-gap of £126,000 was to be sought from local community groups acknowledging further work would be commissioned if endorsed.</p> <p>Councillor R E R Morris welcomed the report commending the efforts of Officers and was hopeful that pro-active steps be taken to engage with community groups so to fully realise the proposal. The Member was also mindful of the fact that it ought not to be the intention of the on-site café to enter into competition with other eateries in the nearby locality.</p> <p>Councillor G A Boulter similarly welcomed the extension's specification and funding arrangements and was hopeful the funds could be raised.</p> <p><b>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) The costs of providing an extension to the Pavilion to the specification required ne noted by Members; and</li> <li>(ii) Officers approaching local community groups with the plans and costs to enable them to seek funds to support the extension of the building be endorsed.</li> </ul>	
56.	<p><b>DIGITAL DISPLAY SCREEN - DISCOUNTS</b></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report (at pages 132 - 133) as delivered by the Director of Services which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Director of Services reported that the installation of digital display screens in Oadby and Wigston town centres had been positively received by local business thus warranting a discounting scheme for advertising as outlined at paragraph 3.3 of the report (at page 132).</p> <p>Councillor L A Bentley asked whether interest had been gauged at the current price-point vis-à-vis a discount. The Planning Policy and Regeneration Manager advised that such interest had been expressed in respect of a longer-term discount scheme for business advertising.</p> <p>Councillor B Fahey enquired as to whether the Council was in receipt of any advertising income. The Planning Policy and Regeneration Manager advised that businesses were due for invoicing imminently.</p> <p><b>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</b></p> <p>A discounting scheme for advertising on the digital display screen as</p>	

	set out in paragraph 3.3 of the report be approved.	
<b>57.</b>	<p><b>SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY</b></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report (at pages 134 - 136) as delivered by the Director of Services which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Director of Services stated that purpose of the policy and plan served to improve the social-media presence of the Council in respect of the better e-sharing of information and the implementation of necessary safeguards to ensure acceptable and responsible usage.</p> <p>Councillor G A Boulter questioned the inclusion of Street Life as a social-media platform due to its previous dismissal. The Director of Services advised that further information was due and the report would be brought back to the next meeting of this Committee on 02 February 2016 for resolution. The Chair and Councillor G A Boulter requested that the report set out a plan to increase the number of Twitter followers and how various platforms were to be kept up-to-date, respectively.</p> <p>Councillor R E R Morris enquired as to what platforms would be integrated and in such a way to ensure its compliant use (i.e. in terms of young people access permissions) of the Youth Council. The Head of Community advised that the Youth Council's Twitter account (@OWYC) would be incorporated and administered by the Young Persons Co-ordinator, Mark Smith and that safeguarding process were needed to address the question of access permissions. The success of the Community Safety Partnership's (@OWCommSafety) and Local Police's (@LPOadbyWigston) Twitter accounts was also commended.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED THAT:</b></p> <p>The proposals within the report as the basis for a Social Media Policy be deferred to the next meeting of this Committee on 02 February 2016.</p>	
<b>58.</b>	<p><b>HARBOROUGH LOCAL PLAN OPTIONS CONSULTATION</b></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report (at pages 137 - 139) as delivered by the Planning Policy and Regeneration Manager which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Planning Policy and Regeneration Manager directed Members' attention to the Options Consultation Paper in respect of a new Local Plan for Harborough district (at page 137) and summarised the comments at paragraphs 3.3 to 3.10 of the report (at pages 137 - 139).</p> <p>Councillor D A Gamble requested the Chair write to Harborough District Council outlining this Council's objections to any development on the Green Wedge land between Great Glen and Gorse Lane, Oadby.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED THAT:</b></p> <p>The comments set out in paragraphs 3.3 to 3.10 of the report as Oadby</p>	

	<p>and Wigston Borough Council's formal response to the Options Consultation Paper be approved.</p> <p><b>Votes For</b>           6  <b>Votes Against</b>    0  <b>Abstentions</b>       4</p>	
<b>59.</b>	<p><b>EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED THAT:</b></p> <p>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 below on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the respective paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and the public interest in maintaining the exempt items outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.</p>	
<b>60.</b>	<p><b>41-43 CANAL STREET, SOUTH WIGSTON</b></p> <p>Members had a discussion <i>in camera</i> in respect of the restricted item.</p>	

**The Meeting Closed at 8:58 PM**