

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE POLICY, FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, STATION ROAD, WIGSTON ON TUESDAY, 1
NOVEMBER 2016 COMMENCING AT 7.00 PM

<u>IN ATTENDANCE:</u>		
Chair - Councillor Mrs S B Morris		
Vice-Chair - Councillor D A Gamble		
COUNCILLORS (9):		
G S Atwal	J W Boyce	J Kaufman
L A Bentley	M L Darr	K J Loydall
G A Boulter	B Dave	R E R Morris
OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE (5):		
S J Ball	M Hone	A Thorpe
M W L Hall	Lane	
OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE (2):		
T Crawley	A Persaud	

Min Ref.	Narrative	Officer Resp.
35.	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> An apology for absence was received from Councillors E R Barr, Mrs L Eaton and R E Fahey.	
36.	<u>APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTES</u> None.	
37.	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u> None.	
38.	<u>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 20 SEPTEMBER 2016</u> RESOLVED THAT: The minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 20 September 2016 be taken as read, confirmed and signed.	
39.	<u>ACTION LIST ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 20 SEPTEMBER 2016</u> RESOLVED THAT: The Action List be noted by Members.	
40.	<u>PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS</u> None.	

41.

ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2015/16

By reason of special circumstance in that an additional item of business needed to be considered before the next meeting of the Committee, it was moved by the Chair and seconded by the Vice-Chair that the foregoing item of business be considered at this meeting as a matter of urgency in accordance with section 100B (4)B of the Local Government Act 1972. The reason stated for the admission of the additional item of business was that it was of significant interest to Members and the general public.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

The foregoing item of business, namely the Annual Audit Letter 2015/16, be considered at this meeting as a matter of urgency in accordance with section 100B (4)B of the Local Government Act 1972 for the reason aforementioned.

The Committee gave consideration to the Annual Audit Letter for 2015/16 ("the Letter") tabled at the meeting as jointly-delivered and summarised by the Interim Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) and the KPMG Director, Mr Tony Crawley, which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.

The Chair and Councillor J W Boyce commended Officers for their timely work in relation to the 2015/16 audit year and noted the significance in being issued an unqualified conclusion and opinion despite the financial challenges faced.

Councillor B Dave enquired as to why the additional item of business was not admitted earlier as part of the meeting's Agenda as published on 24 October. He further enquired as to whether the Council was on target to achieve the £633k of identified efficiency savings as set out in the tabled document (at page 3).

The KPMG Director advised that the statutory deadline for issuing the Letter was 31 November and that, in accordance with the Council's Audit Regulations, it was required to be considered at the next meeting of the Committee. It was said that the Agenda has been published (on 24 October) before the Letter was received (on 26 October). The Letter was said to have been circulated to Members when received.

The Interim Chief Finance Officer advised that Council was on target to achieve the £633k of identified efficiency savings as confirmed in the report at agenda item 11.

Councillor J Kaufman requested that a copy of the Letter be forwarded to the Member of Parliament for the Harborough Constituency.

Councillor J W Boyce moved that contents of the Annual Audit Letter for 2015/16 be noted.

Councillor K J Loydall seconded the motion.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

The contents of the Annual Audit Letter for 2015/16 be noted by Members.

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42.	<p><u>NEW LOCAL PLAN REGULATION 18 CONSULTATION (PREFERRED OPTIONS)</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendix (at pages 9 - 153) as delivered and summarised by the Planning, Development and Regeneration Manager which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>Councillor M L Darr enquired as to whether the Council was in a position to protect against the purchase and development of pockets of residual open-space land (i.e. under the ownership of former developers) in the Borough by private third-parties.</p> <p>The Planning, Development and Regeneration Manager advised that it was ordinarily the Council's position to adopt pockets of residual open-space land and, in respect of larger developments, seek a commuted sum from the developer(s) in question for the maintenance of the same. It was said that any development thereof would be subject to, and commensurately protected by, ordinarily planning regulations and policy.</p> <p>Councillor B Dave sought clarification in the Appendix as to the protection of Green Wedges 'by limiting development to <i>appropriate uses</i>' (emphasis added) (at page 39).</p> <p>The Planning, Development and Regeneration Manager advised an 'appropriate use' was considered to be a prescribed need (viz. leisure facilities, burial spaces etc.).</p> <p>With reference to Policy 9.10 'Hot Food Takeaways' in the Appendix (at page 127), Councillor J W Boyce suggested that such establishments should be limited in areas next or closeby to schools to give due regard and promote children's health.</p> <p>Councillor J W Boyce moved the recommendations <i>en bloc</i> as set out at paragraphs 2.1 to 2.2 of the report (at page 9).</p> <p>The Chair seconded the recommendations.</p> <p>RESOLVED THAT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The New Local Plan (Preferred Options) document be approved for the purposes of public consultation commencing Friday 4th November 2016 for a period of 6 weeks; and (ii) An all-Member Briefing to be held following the Preferred Options consultation to inform the process of preparing the submission version of the Local Plan be noted. <p>Votes For 10 Votes Against 0 Abstentions 1</p>	
43.	<p><u>JOINT STATEMENT BY THE LEICESTER/SHIRE AUTHORITIES ON COLLABORATIVE PLANNING FOR NWLDC</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendix (at pages 154 - 157) as delivered and summarised by the Planning, Development and Regeneration Manager which should be read together with these minutes as</p>	

	<p>a composite document.</p> <p>The Chair moved the recommendation as set out at paragraph 2.1 of the report (at page 154).</p> <p>Councillor J W Boyce seconded the recommendation.</p> <p>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>The Borough Council sign the Joint Statement by the Leicester and Leicestershire Authorities on Collaborative Planning in support of North West Leicestershire District Council's Local Plan (as set out at Appendix 1).</p>	
44.	<p><u>PEDESTRIANISATION OF BELL STREET, WIGSTON</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendix (at pages 158 - 164) as delivered and summarised by the Planning, Development and Regeneration Manager which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>Members noted the significant enhancements made to Bell Street, Wigston by virtue of being a vehicular-free area and commended the recommendation for its permanent pedestrianisation.</p> <p>The Chair moved the recommendations <i>en bloc</i> as set out at paragraphs 2.1 to 2.3 of the report (at page 154).</p> <p>Councillor J W Boyce seconded the recommendations.</p> <p>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The report considered by the Leicestershire County Council Highways Forum for Oadby and Wigston on 4 October 2016 supporting the experimental order to be made permanent (Appendix 1) be noted by Members; (ii) The trial pedestrianisation of Bell Street, Wigston be made into a permanent pedestrianisation; and (iii) The positive effect that the Post Office, Peacocks, Edinburgh Woollen Mill, Ponden Home and Poundland has had on Bell Street since they have opened and the significant improvements to the public realm on Bell Street, Wigston since the completion of the improvement works and the opening of the pocket park be noted by Members. 	
45.	<p><u>INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT 2016/17</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendix (at pages 164 - 192) as jointly-delivered and summarised by the Interim Chief Finance Officer (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>With reference to the final high-risk recommendation in the Appendix (at page 190), Councillor B Dave enquired as to when the new Customer Service Charters ("the Charters") were to be published on the Council's website.</p> <p>The Interim Chief Finance Officer advised that the revised Charters would</p>	

	<p>be published as soon as reasonable practicable once produced. It was said that the Member would be notified outside the meeting of the intended date of publication.</p> <p>Councillor J W Boyce stated that the revised Charters were to become “living” document and to reflect the improved standards achieved as result of the transformative work realised in the past year in respect of the Customer Services Centre project.</p> <p>RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>The content of the Progress Report for 2016/17 be noted by Members.</p>	
46.	<p><u>OVERALL BUDGET POSITION - APRIL TO AUGUST 2016</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendix (at pages 193 - 197) as delivered and summarised by the Interim Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Interim Community Services Manager advised Members to note that the years referenced in the table at paragraph 3.3 of the report (at page 194) were to read ‘2016/17’ as opposed to ‘2015/16’.</p> <p>With reference to the ‘Upgrade of Server Operating Systems to Windows 2008’ at Appendix 1 (at page 197), Councillor B Dave enquired as to whether an upgrade to Windows 10 was scheduled.</p> <p>The Chair and the Chief Executive jointly-advised that no upgrade had been scheduled as the operating system (OS) was not yet technically-proven to be a stable platform and therefore entertained an IT risk at an organisational level if installed prematurely.</p> <p>RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>The current position(s) be noted by Members.</p>	
47.	<p><u>COMMITTEE BUDGET REVIEW - APRIL TO AUGUST 2016</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendix (at pages 198 - 200) as delivered and summarised by the Interim Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>With reference to the ‘Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) for 41 Canal Street’ at Appendix 1 (at page 200), Councillor Kaufman enquired as to whether the allocation of £350k had been committed.</p> <p>The Chair advised that the CPO funds would not be committed into escrow until the CPO was acknowledged.</p> <p>RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>The current position(s) be noted by Members.</p>	
48.	<p><u>RESIDENT FORUM OUTTURN BUDGET POSITION AND ALLOCATION</u></p>	

	<p><u>REQUESTS</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at pages 201 - 205) as delivered and summarised by the Interim Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>With reference to the appendices, the Interim Chief Finance Officer added that the following schemes had since been completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the retrofitting of the seat in the bus shelter on Station Road, Wigston; (ii) the installation of a litterbin at Horsewell Lane, Wigston; (iii) the installation of a bus shelter on Howden Close, Oadby; and (iv) the installation of litterbins at Coombe Park, Oadby. <p>Councillor J W Boyce requested that the table at paragraph 3.3 of the report (at page 201) be simplified and made more intelligible in future reports and a report be brought to the next meeting of the Committee on 31 January 2017 in respect of the allocation requests system be reviewed and regularised to distinguish between capital and project-based schemes.</p> <p>The Chair moved the recommendations <i>en bloc</i> as set out at paragraphs 2.1 to 2.2 of the report (at page 201).</p> <p>Councillor K J Loydall seconded the recommendations.</p> <p>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The position(s) of the Forums' Budgets be noted by Members; and (ii) The allocation requested by the Forums (as set out in the report) be approved. 	MHo CR
<p>49.</p>	<p><u>PROPOSED SCALE OF FEES AND CHARGES 2017/18</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at pages 206 - 229) as delivered and summarised by the Interim Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>With reference to car parks at paragraph 3.7 of the report (at page 207), Councillor L A Bentley requested that a report be brought to a subsequent meeting of the Service Delivery Committee exploring the justification of the £3 charge, the uses of the Borough's car parks and the income generated from the same.</p> <p>Councillors J Kaufman and D A Gamble stated that it was an opportune time to review all car parking charges and signage ahead of the new £1 coin entering circulation in March 2017 (insofar as payment machines needing to be updated) and Leicestershire County Council's plans to charge for on-street parking from next year.</p> <p>With reference to cemetery charges in the Appendix (at page 220), Councillor J W Boyce requested that a report be brought to the next meeting of the Committee regarding additional graves charges, including fee-setting practices and figure work, the timescales involved and benchmarking against other Leicester/shire authorities.</p>	

	<p>The Interim Chief Finance Officer noted that additional graves charges were currently under review in the Internal Audit Plan together with a recommendation that charges converge closer to that currently implemented by Leicester City Council.</p> <p>Councillor J W Boyce moved the recommendation as set out at paragraphs 2 of the report (at page 206).</p> <p>The Chair seconded the recommendation.</p> <p>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>The Proposed Scale of Fees and Charges for 2017/18 be approved.</p>	
50.	<p><u>COLLECTION AND WRITE-OFF OF MISCELLANEOUS DEBTORS</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report (at pages 230 - 231) as delivered and summarised by the Interim Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Chair commended Officers' debt-collection efforts in the second quarter of 2016/17. She further requested a policy be introduced requiring payment be rendered first by service-users and existing debtors before services being supplied.</p> <p>The Interim Chief Finance Officer advised that systems were in place to "write-up" previously written-off debt was should debtors be identified as having return to the Borough if there was a change in debtors' circumstances.</p> <p>RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>The contents of the report be noted by Members.</p>	MHo CR
51.	<p><u>COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN - VISION, VALUES AND CORPORATE PRIORITIES</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report (at pages 232 - 235) as delivered and summarised by the Chief Executive which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>Members collectively commended the work undertaken in respect of the vision, values and corporate priorities and endorsed the sentiments of "togetherness" as the mainstay of the Council's work ethos.</p> <p>It was further noted by Members that Council enjoyed a highly-motivated and highly-trained complement of staff who all shared in the Council's long-term vision.</p> <p>Councillor J W Boyce moved the recommendations <i>en bloc</i> as set out at paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2 of the report (at page 236).</p> <p>The Chair seconded the recommendations.</p> <p>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</p>	

	<p>(i) The Council Vision be adopted, namely:</p> <p>“Stronger Together” and “A Stronger Borough Together”</p> <p><i>“Councillors, staff, residents, businesses, partners and stakeholders will continue to create a stronger borough by working together.</i></p> <p><i>A stronger borough that is inclusive and engaged and focuses on delivering effective services, balanced economic development, green and safes places resulting in better wellbeing for all”.</i></p> <p>be adopted; and</p> <p>(ii) The Organisational Values be adopted, namely:</p> <p>(a) Accountability: Proud to take responsibility for actions, seeing tasks through to completion;</p> <p>(b) Respect: Act with honesty, fairness and equality at all times;</p> <p>(c) Teamwork: Committed to sharing information, skills and experience;</p> <p>(d) Innovation: Striving for service improvements by exploring new ways of working; and</p> <p>(e) Customer Focus: A mindset that exceeds residents and stakeholder expectations.</p>	
52.	<p><u>FOUR YEAR EFFICIENCY PLAN (2016/17 - 2019/20)</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at pages 236 - 257) as delivered and summarised by the Interim Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>Councillor B Dave request that an original copy of the Four Year Efficiency Plan (“the Plan”) as sent to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) be circulated to Members.</p> <p>The Chief Executive and Interim Chief Finance Officer jointly-advised that the Plan was generically-framed to initially satisfy the DCLG’s request and to ensure that Members’ input on a detailed policy-level could be sought later. The information contained within was said to be used by the DCLG to ascertain the financial pressures faced by local government and ability to bridge any financial gaps.</p> <p>Councillor J W Boyce stated the Plan sought to demonstrate to the DCLG the Council’s ability to deliver a balanced-budget whilst maintaining its frontline services.</p> <p>The Chair moved the recommendation as set out at paragraph 2 of the report (at page 236).</p> <p>Councillor J W Boyce seconded the recommendations.</p> <p>RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>The Four Year Efficiency Plan (2016/17 – 2019/20) as initially agreed by the Change Management Committee by noted and approved.</p>	MHo

53.	<p><u>HOUSING AND PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE BOROUGH</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at pages 258 - 261) as delivered and summarised by the Interim Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>Councillor J W Boyce commended the report and the exciting prospects of development within the Borough. He further request that the title of the report be widened to 'Housing and Property Development within the Borough'.</p> <p>Councillor J W Boyce moved the recommendations <i>en bloc</i> as set out at paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2 of the report (at page 258).</p> <p>The Chair seconded the recommendations.</p> <p>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Authority be given to Officers to develop an implementation plan and Business Case for approval by this Committee; and (ii) The initial legal costs associated with this proposal be capped at £10,000 up to the formation stage of the company. 	
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THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.52 PM



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CHAIR

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TUESDAY, 31 JANUARY 2017
