

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SERVICE DELIVERY COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, WIGSTON ON TUESDAY 21
JANUARY 2014, COMMENCING AT 7.00 P.M.**

IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor G A Boulter – Chair
Councillor Mrs S Z Haq – Vice Chair

Councillors L A Bentley, J W Boyce, R F Eaton, D M Carter, Mrs J Gore, K J
Loydall, R Thakor

Officers in Attendance: Mrs A Court, L Marshall, Mrs S Parker, C Raymakers,
I Dobson and Miss S Basten

Min Ref	Narrative	Officer Resp
32.	<u>APOLOGIES</u> An apology for absence was received from Councillor Miss M V Chamberlain.	SB
33.	<u>APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTES</u> None.	
34.	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u> None.	
35.	<u>PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS</u> None.	
36.	<u>MINUTES – 24 SEPTEMBER 2013</u> RESOLVED: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 September 2013 be taken as read, confirmed and signed.	SB
37.	<u>ACTION LIST – 24 SEPTEMBER 2013</u> The Committee noted the action list.	
38.	<u>COMMITTEE REVISED FINANCIAL POSITION 2013/14 AND DRAFT BUDGET 2014/15</u> The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices delivered by the Principal Accountant as set out	

	<p>in report pages 11 to 16, which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Principal Accountant informed the Committee of a reduction in expenditure in next year's budget for 2014/15 against the budget for 2013/14. He made reference to the table contained within the report which highlights the areas where reductions in expenditure have been made.</p> <p>Members queried the reduction in income for recycling and cemeteries, on the basis that the Council needs to provide these services, and the reduction in rental income.</p> <p>Members were advised that the reduction in recycling income was not a reflection on the service being delivered; instead the 2014/15 budget had been reduced owing to a failure to meet assumptions for the current 2013/14 year.</p> <p>Members were further advised that the reduction in the income for cemeteries was largely owing to the reduction in advanced purchases of plots, and the reduction in rental income was due to the new tenants at Brocks Hill leasing a smaller area than the previous tenants and therefore paying a lesser rent.</p> <p>It was confirmed that any future changes would be reported back to a future meeting of the Committee.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Note the Committee revised General Fund revenue budget position for 2013/14 (2) Recommend to the Policy, Finance and Development Committee the Committee's draft General Fund revenue budget for 2014/15 	
39.	<p><u>ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report of the Interim Head of Environmental Development and Operational Services as set out in report pages numbered 17 to 23, which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>Members heard that the recycling rate is slightly down on the same period for last year which can be attributed to green waste weights. Dependent on the uptake for the recycling of green waste, the Committee was informed that collection levels look promising to match those for first six months.</p>	

<p>It was noted that a further report for Service Delivery in March will present an opportunity to consider operational issues developing with green waste that were highlighted in a recent Members seminar.</p> <p>The Committee heard that the food waste trial from October 2013 had highlighted several operational issues with the collection system for this type of waste, partly due to the high take up. In particular, a Borough-wide roll out of the programme would greatly increase the amount of time taken to complete the collection rounds.</p> <p>If rolled out across the Borough, the Council would expect a 10% increase in the recycling rate, giving us one of the top recycling rates in the country. However, there are cost implications when funding runs out from the DCLG. Members were informed that 60% of households were participating in the collections, with 40% putting their food waste caddy out for collection on a weekly cycle.</p> <p>The Interim Head of Environmental Development and Operational Services reported that Leicestershire County Council had indicated changes to the recycling credits scheme, which awards credits for the amount of recycling collected. It was noted that Members would be informed of these changes once the Council had received further details.</p> <p>Members were informed that the current procedure for food waste collection is to allocate one caddy per household only and requests for additional caddies are refused.</p> <p>Following some discussion Members agreed that additional caddies would be available to larger households on a case by case basis, in line with the current policy for refuse.</p> <p>The Interim Head of Environmental Development and Operational Services stated that he was in discussions with the Leicestershire County Council about contributing to the funding of bin liners for food caddies.</p> <p>Members stated that they were pleased that food waste collections had been implemented in the Borough. However, they raised concerns as to the cost of supplying caddies to residents and the limitations which had already been experienced during the trial period.</p> <p>The Interim Head of Environmental Development and Operational Services noted that after the trial period the Council would need to undertake a further review of the cost and operational implications of extending the scheme to the whole of Borough.</p>	LM
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It was confirmed that a consultation will take place at the end of the trial period.

The Committee heard that work was progressing on the introduction of a procedure for the recycling of commercial waste, which could be incorporated into the Council's current collection service. This collection is expected to commence from the end of March.

Concerns about references to wheeled bins were clarified as relating to commercial waste only the Interim Head of Environmental Development.

The Interim Head of Environmental Development confirmed that the Leicestershire County Council would realise the benefit of the reduced taxes and gate fees. He added that our Council act as the collection authority for recycling as opposed to the disposal company.

The Interim Head of Environmental Development and Operational Services continued with his report referring to the good level of service the Council are currently providing for removal of graffiti. He noted that improvements are being made to IT systems to ensure better engagement with the Community Safety and Enforcement teams in order to address the causes of graffiti.

Members heard that a tree survey was undertaken by the Council's Clean and Green Operatives. Where dead wood has been identified, work has been carried out to make trees safe and tidy.

The Interim Head of Environmental Development and Operational Services discussed the proposal for a woodland cemetery at Brocks Hill. He noted several considerations that would have to be taken into account, including the authorisation required for the Environment Agency. The viability of the proposal was being considered.

Members suggested that the Council should initially consider the viability of permitting the intermittent scattering of ashes and report back to the next meeting of the Service Delivery Committee in March.

LM

The Committee heard that the bays at Sandhurst Street car park had been repainted in order to maximise its use.

RESOLVED: That Members:

	<p>(1) Noted the progress being made in relation to environmental development and operational activities within in the Borough; and</p> <p>(2) Approve the supply of additional caddies to larger households on a case by case basis in line with current policy on refuse collection.</p>	LM
40.	<p><u>CLIMATE CHANGE UPDATE</u></p> <p>The Interim Head of Environmental Development and Operational Services stated that the Country Parks and Environment Manager is taking a strategic lead on climate change in partnership with Leicestershire County Council. She is currently reviewing the technology at Brocks Hill to reduce the Council’s carbon footprint and to hopefully adduce financial savings. Funding will be obtained from the Government to implement home energy efficiency projects.</p> <p>Members welcomed the proposals and suggested that all departments were informed of the action plan for Climate Change and how it affects the department and individual employees.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That Members noted the report.</p>	
41.	<p><u>COLD WEATHER PLAN</u></p> <p>The Committee was advised that the Cold Weather Plan clarifies and updates existing arrangements regarding service delivery in icy and snowy conditions.</p> <p>Members were informed of the processes we have in place for grit bins and the assessments the Council make to determine whether waste collections can continue in such conditions. Updates are made in real time and communicated through the appropriate channels to residents.</p> <p>It was noted that a formal risk assessment is carried out by a Manager in these conditions prior to collections being carried out. This does not prevent Officers from determining the risk during the course of their collection duties and appropriate training will be given in order to achieve this.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That Members noted the report and the current arrangements which were in place</p>	
42.	<p><u>SERVICE CHARTERS</u></p> <p>The Committee considered the Council’s current Service Charters.</p>	

	<p>Members discussed whether these could be communicated to residents to ensure openness and transparency and suggested their incorporation into the Council's website or some other application for making them available.</p> <p>It was noted that the Service Charters would begin from April 2014 and continue to be rolled out throughout the year.</p> <p>A Member sought a corporate view on evidence of the Council's priorities contained within the Service Charters.</p> <p>The Director of Services confirmed that, in terms of governance, the Corporate Plan is in place and sets priorities. The Service Delivery Charters measure against those Council priorities and the Constitution defines service areas that are considered within the remit of each Committee.</p> <p>It was noted that the Service Delivery Committee should be presented with information as to which targets set out in the Service Charters the Council had failed to meet, so that they were regularly kept up to date. However, this may need to be an exempt report.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Noted the service delivery Charters for the current financial year and the proposed performance indicators and the delivery to date; and (2) The Committee continues to monitor and scrutinise targets set within the service delivery Charters. 	
43.	<p><u>DELIVERY OF HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA)</u></p> <p>The Community Safety and Tenancy Manager advised the Committee of the increase in the uptake of Right to Buy's, with a potential for as many as 10 properties to be sold pursuant to the scheme by the end of the current financial year.</p> <p>On this basis, the 6.41% increase in rent is intended to ensure business continuity and has been kept as low as possible. Historically, increases have been kept to a minimum. It was noted that the Residents' Panel had been consulted and they understood the need for an increase.</p> <p>Members noted that although they were not happy about having to increase rent levels during these times of austerity, cuts and unemployment, they recognised the need for them and approved the increase. They instructed that a letter should be sent to all residents which explained the increase in</p>	

	<p>rent levels and clearly highlighted the reasons for them.</p> <p>The Community Safety and Tenancy Manager discussed the capital programme of refurbishment at Boulter Crescent. She noted the excellent feedback from residents and how these comments have been fed into the tender. The tenders have now been received and discussion regarding the start date would be taking place in late January / early February.</p> <p>It was pointed out that properties on King Street and Countesthorpe Road also need to be brought up to the decent homes standard.</p> <p>The Community Safety and Tenancy Manager noted that a letter had been received from the Leicestershire County Council regarding the procurement of older persons support and outlined its contents. A further update would be presented to the next meeting of the Service Delivery Committee when more information was available and Members requested that Officers consider the possibility of running this service internally.</p> <p>An update was given on the opportunities for supplying new affordable housing and it was noted that the Council is currently in negotiations with developers for the Canal Street and Bennett Way sites.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That Members:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Approved the proposed rent and service charges increase for 2014/15 of 6.41% in accordance with the approved Social Rent Policy; (2) Noted the update on Housing Related Support for older people; (3) Noted the increased uptake of Right to Buy; and (4) Approved that further discussions take place between the Council and its partners to progress affordable housing opportunities. 	
44.	<p><u>EMPTY HOMES IN OADBY AND WIGSTON</u></p> <p>The Community Safety and Tenancy Manager outlined the report and noted that the number of empty properties within the Borough was relatively low as compared with national statistics.</p> <p>The number of complaints received in relation to empty homes shows that only a small number required further</p>	

	<p>action. Where action was required the new Corporate Enforcement team would be taking appropriate action and working with the owners in supporting them to utilise their properties.</p> <p>An initial target of 3 empty homes per year to be brought back into use was proposed by the Committee and it was agreed that a report would be brought to the next meeting of the Service Delivery Committee in March.</p> <p>Members asked whether the council tax, charged at 150% on empty properties, had been collected and the Community Safety and Tenancy Manager said that a written response would be provided.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That Members noted the contents of the report.</p>	
45.	<p><u>DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS</u></p> <p>The Community Safety and Tenancy Manager discussed the report and pointed out the new proposals for 2015/16. The Council currently employs an external consultant who carries out all surveys and makes decisions on funding. The proposal is to bring the scheme back in house in order improve checks and balances in the decision making process and get better value for money.</p> <p>Members asked for a detailed explanation of the reporting processes and relevant information relating to Disabled Facilities grants, including the average level of grant and the number of people who receive it to the next meeting.</p> <p>The Community Safety and Tenancy Manager and the Director of Services reiterated that savings were achievable by bringing the service in house and it was intended to follow through with this.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Noted the contents of the report; and (2) Recommended a capital bid of £400,000 for Disabled Facilities Grants in 2014/15, to be funded from the specific capital grant £143,456 received from the Department for Communities and Local Government and the remainder from other earmarked reserves. 	APM
46.	<p><u>RENEWAL OF THE GAS SERVICING AND MAINTENANCE CONTRACT</u></p> <p>The Community Safety and Tenancy Manager outlined the</p>	

	<p>report.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That Members approved the procurement of the new contract through the Northern Housing Consortium.</p>	
47.	<p><u>HOUSING OPTIONS UPDATE</u></p> <p>The Community Safety and Tenancy Manager outlined the report and noted the significant increase in homelessness cases from 14 in 2009/10 to 62 in the first nine months of the current financial year.</p> <p>The Community Safety and Tenancy Manager went on to note the general decrease in the use of temporary accommodation through various means, including negotiation of residence with friends and relatives and securing accommodation in the private sector with financial assistance.</p> <p>It was clarified that there is an appeals process to scrutinise the decision process and that these appeals are heard by the appeals panel.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That Members noted the report and supported the proposed action contained within the report.</p>	
48.	<p><u>EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC</u></p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That under Section 100 A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that the business to be transacted involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act. (as amended).</p>	
49.	<p><u>REVIEW OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report of the Head of Community which set out details of the review of the Council's Temporary Accommodation for Homeless Families with Children.</p> <p>The Members felt that there was insufficient information to make a decision and requested a further, more detailed report to the next meeting of the Service Delivery Committee.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That the principle is approved but the matter be deferred to the next meeting of Service Delivery Committee.</p>	

The Meeting Closed at 9:00 p.m.