
POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MINUTES

For a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Northway, Rickmansworth on Monday, 6 July 2015 at 7.30pm to 9.21pm.

Councillors Present:-

Ann Shaw OBE (Chairman),	Matthew Bedford (Vice-Chairman) (Resources and Shared Services)
Sara Bedford (Health)	Heather Kenison
Martin Brooks (substitute for Cllr P Brading)	Angela Killick
Kemal Butt	Chris Lloyd (Leisure, Community and Wellbeing)
Stephen Cox	Ralph Sangster
Stephen Giles-Medhurst (Economic Development, Sustainability and Transport)	David Sansom
Paula Hiscocks	Roger Seabourne (Community Safety)
	Martin Trevett (Housing, Planning and Strategic Schemes)

Officers Present:

- Steven Halls, Chief Executive
- Joanne Wagstaffe, Director of Finance
- Rebecca Emmett, Head of Regulatory Services
- Tracey Field, Asset and Property Manager
- Chris Hope, Head of Community Services
- Andy Stovold, Head of Community Partnerships
- Kevin Snow, Communications Manager
- Sarah Haythorpe, Principal Committee Manager

PR01/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Phil Brading and Ty Harris. (Councillor Phil Brading joined the meeting part way through as an observer).

PR02/15 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 23 March 2015 and the Extraordinary meeting held on 20 May 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

PR03/15 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman ruled that the following items, which had not been available for five clear days before the meeting were of sufficient urgency to be considered by the Committee for the reasons indicated:

Item 15 – Summary of Financial Outturn for 2014/15

To enable on-going financial control.

Item 16 – Framework Agreement Tender Proposal for Audio-Visual Accessibility Support for Websites

To enable the Council to work on having a framework for the provision of website accessibility software once a budget provision is established.

PR04/15 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None received.

PR05/15 LEISURE, COMMUNITY AND CAPITAL GRANTS

The Committee was asked by the Leisure, Wellbeing and Health Committee to agree a change of policy with regards to Leisure, Community and Capital Grants.

Councillor Chris Lloyd proposed, duly seconded, that the revised grants process be agreed.

A Member requested that the Ward names listed on Page 6 of the agenda papers be updated in line with the 2014 boundary changes. The Head of Community Partnerships advised that the areas of deprivation were due to be updated later this year but officers would look to approximate them.

The Committee acknowledged the point raised by a Member on the grant application process being open to judicial review with the changing of the process part way through. It was noted that it had always been agreed that schools could not apply for grants. The Council were not the education authority and were not the Secretary of State and had no responsibility to fund schools. Nowhere in the policy did it state that schools were eligible for funding. It was not possible to define “schools”.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

That the revised Grants process attached at appendix A be agreed.

PR06/15 ANIMAL BOARDING ESTABLISHMENTS ACT 1963 – HOME BOARDING AND DOG CRECHE

The report provided details on the current trend of the Home Boarding of dogs and dog crèches and recommended that the Committee consider adopting new model conditions under Section 1 of the Animal Boarding Act 1963 in relation to the licensing of Home Boarding Establishments for dogs and Day Care (crèche) for dogs. Members noted that

the Committee were only being asked to agree the principle and not the details. A Member requested clarification on why the overnight fees were less than the day care fees. The Head of Community Services agreed to provide a written reply but he understood that the fees were in line with other Local Authorities. Details would be provided to the Regulatory Services Committee at their meeting on Wednesday 8 July 2015.

Councillor Martin Trevett proposed, duly seconded, the recommendations on the principles and fees and that the Regulatory Services Committee approve the conditions.

A Member asked for clarification on the home boarding of cats and the implications of this. It was noted that the details on this could be discussed at the Regulatory Services Committee meeting.

A Member said that it was not always possible to collect your dog before 7pm and asked what the implications would be. The Head of Community Services agreed to bring this to the attention of the Regulatory Services Committee.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

- 1) Approves the principle of licensing home boarding, Dog Day Care (Home) and Dog Day Care (Commercial) separately as detailed in the report;
- 2) Approve the licence fees for Dog Day Care, both home and commercial, as detailed in Paragraph 6.3 of the report; and
- 3) That Regulatory Services Committee be requested to approve the sets of conditions in respect of Home Boarding of dogs, Dog Day Care (Home) and Dog Day Care (Commercial) as detailed in appendices 1-3.

PR07/15 CEMETERY PARKING

Members were presented with a range of options for Cemetery parking within Woodcock Hill Cemetery.

Councillor Sara Bedford moved, duly seconded, the recommendations on the planning application and negotiations with Battlers Wells with the following amendments:

Recommendation 8.2 to read: that the planning application includes the provision of car parking and that the Leisure, Wellbeing and Health Committee determine which car parking option was to be taken forward.

A new recommendation be added at 8.4 to read: that an increase in budget from £50,000 to £95,000 be recommended to Council with the detail to be determined by the Leisure, Wellbeing and Health Committee within the agreed budget.

Members noted that the leasing of the land to Battlers Wells for 100 years was not an unusual arrangement.

On being put to the Committee the motion, with the amendments, was declared CARRIED the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that a planning application be submitted for a traditional cemetery within the Area shown in Appendix A;

- 2) that the planning application includes the provision of car parking and the Leisure, Wellbeing and Health Committee determine which car parking option is taken forward;
- 3) Officers enter into negotiations with Battlers Wells Foundation to lease the unallocated land adjacent to Section J for 99 years and that a proportion of the receipt from this lease be used to provide the car parking required within Woodcock Hill Cemetery; and

RECOMMEND:

- 4) that an increase in budget from £50,000 to £95,000 be recommended to Council with the detail to be determined by the Leisure, Wellbeing and Health Committee within the agreed budget.

PR08/15 COMMUNITY CENTRE RECYCLING

To recommend a policy change of no longer collecting recycling free of charge from community centres and sports clubs.

Councillor Ann Shaw moved, duly seconded, the recommendation that the recycling collections no longer be offered free of charge to community centres and sports club and that trade recycling fees be charged with the following amendments:

that a letter be distributed to all community centres and sports clubs providing details on the changes;

that a poster be produced setting out the rules of the service and the poster to be placed near to the recycling bins;

that officers visit the community centres and sports club to explain how the service would be implemented.

On being put to the Committee the motion with the proposed amendments was declared CARRIED the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

1) That recycling collections no longer be offered free of charge to community centres and sports clubs and that trade recycling fees are charged;

2) That a letter be distributed to all community centres and sports clubs providing details on the changes;

3) That a poster be produced setting out the rules of the service and the poster to be placed near to the recycling bins; and

4) That Officers visit the community centres and sports club to explain how the service will be implemented.

PR09/15 CO-MINGLED RECYCLATE CONTRACT

To advise Members on the sharp decline in recyclate price and how officers are proposing to address this.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst moved, duly seconded, Management Board's decision to invoke the Exceptional Circumstances Clause within Contract Procurement Regulations and to extend the existing Contract with Pearce Recycling Ltd until February 2017.

A Member said that other Local Authorities were also experiencing a sharp decline in the recyclate price and one authority had now suspended all recycling. There should be a proper tax incentive provided by Central Government to Councils.

In response to questions on the employment of two extra staff on a fixed term contract, the Head of Community Services advised that the extra staff would be working with the drivers and crews to reduce the level of contamination in the recycling bins in order to reduce costs. It was noted that a recent load had seen contamination levels of 4.95%. If this had been over 5% the load would have been refused and would have been sent to landfill costing the Council significantly more.

The Chief Executive provided details on the remit of this Committee and the Service Committees from Article 6 and 7 of the Council Constitution.

Councillor Chris Lloyd moved, duly seconded, an amendment, that a letter be sent to the Government Minister highlighting the concerns regarding the decline in the recyclate price and the consideration of a tax incentive for Local Authorities.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED the voting being 9 For,

0 Against and 3 Abstentions.

RESOLVED:

- 1) Endorsed Management Board's decision to invoke the Exceptional Circumstances Clause within Contract Procurement Regulations and extend the existing Contract with Pearce Recycling Ltd until February 2017; and
- 2) That a letter be sent to the Government Minister highlighting the concerns regarding the decline in the recycle price and the consideration of a tax incentive for Local Authorities.

PR10/15 AQUADROME, BURY LAKE YOUNG MARINERS (BLYM)

The Committee received the recommendation of the Leisure, Wellbeing and Health Committee held on 3 June 2015 on the Aquadrome, Bury Lake Young Mariners (BLYM)

Councillor Chris Lloyd moved, duly seconded, the recommendation that the lease between Bury Lake Young Mariners and the Council be for fifty years.

On being to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

That the lease between Bury Lake Young Mariners and the Council be for fifty years.

PR11/15 WATERSMEET FILM SEASON TRIAL (FILMSMEET)

To receive the recommendation of the Leisure, Wellbeing and Health Committee held on 3 June 2015 on the Watersmeet Film Season Trial (Filmsmeet).

Councillor Chris Lloyd moved, duly seconded, the recommendations:

To continue the Filmsmeet Season annually from January – March, subject to annual review; and

For Watersmeet to continue its successful operation and to maintain the awareness of the Filmsmeet brand, officers recommend the flexibility to screen up to six films over the year to capture the popular market of blockbuster release and family films during school holidays.

On being to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

- 1) To continue the Filmsmeet Season annually from January – March, subject to annual review; and
- 2) For Watersmeet to continue its successful operation and to maintain the awareness of the Filmsmeet brand, officers recommend the flexibility to screen up to six films over the year to capture the popular market of blockbuster release and family films during school holidays.

PR12/15 MEMBER TRAINING

The report provided Members with an update on the previous report presented to the Committee in September 2014 and gives the opportunity for Members to comment on

and add to the suggested and planned Member learning and training opportunities in the coming year.

Members made the following comments:

- The training provided to date was too exclusive and did not cater for all Members' needs;
- The training opportunities need to be themed either desirable or essential for example, licensing and planning were essential. All the desirable training and essential training should be listed separately;
- Officers need to understand that each Member had different levels of experience and that consideration should be given to the different levels of experience of the Members;
- More involvement and consultation should be made through the Group Leaders and not generally through all Members;
- Clear categories of training were required and should be listed in the plan including which training was essential and which was not;
- Members could consider undertaking LGA Councillor workbooks and other online opportunities available on the LGA website;
- To undertake an LGA course required the Member to provide a lot of their time which was not always possible;
- That a review of the effectiveness of the Herts Member Development Group be made;
- That training provided before a Council meeting be reviewed as this was not an effective and suitable time to provide training;
- That more training be provided in the evening;
- That detailed costs of each training option be provided and how this impacts on the budget; and
- That a report be provided to the Committee at the September meeting addressing the points made.

RESOLVED:

- That a report be provided to the Committee at the September meeting addressing the points made above.

PR13/15 BUSINESS RATES DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF APPLICATION

An application had been received from one owner who owns two businesses, namely:
Boys & Girls Nursery (Croxley Green) Ltd **and**
Boys & Girls Nursery (Rickmansworth) Ltd

The Director was requesting 80% discretionary rate relief for their business rates premises. Neither business is a registered charity so mandatory rate relief does not apply. If these applications were granted, it would cost the Authority a total of £22,776.60 (£12,127.80 for the Rickmansworth business and £10,648.80 for the Croxley Green business).

Councillor Matthew Bedford moved, duly seconded the recommendation that the request for business rates discretionary rate relief be refused.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Committee refuses the request for Business Rates Discretionary Rate Relief; and

- 2) That public access to the decision be immediate.

PR14/15 RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Committee received the recommendation of the Audit Committee held on 25 June 2015 on the Risk Management Strategy.

Councillor Matthew Bedford moved, duly seconded, the recommendation that the risk management strategy be agreed.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

That the Risk Management Strategy, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be agreed.

PR15/15 SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL OUTTURN FOR 2014/15

This report showed the 2014/15 outturn position for both revenue and capital. The report also made the following recommendations:

To carry forward to 2015/16 unspent revenue budgets and;
To rephrase those capital budgets that required completion in 2015/16.

Councillor Matthew Bedford moved, duly seconded, the recommendations in the report as detailed below with an amendment to recommendation 4 to read Appendix 2A and that the Committee do not agree the rephrasing of the disability facility and private sector renew grant of £57,020.

- 1) That the revenue outturn position as summarised at Appendix 1A and supplementary notes at Appendices 1B and 1D be noted.
- 2) That the capital outturn position as summarised in Appendix 2A be noted.
- 3) Approves to carry forward the unspent service budgets from 2014/15 to 2015/16 which total £311,700 as detailed at Appendix 1D.
- 4) Approves the rephrasing on capital projects from 2014/15 to 2015/16 which total £360,691 as detailed at Appendix 2A apart from the Disability Facility & Private Sector Renew Grant (7822).

A Member raised concern regarding the increase in employee costs by £2m in Appendix 1A but noted there had been an increase in costs due to the transfer to a lead authority where Finance and Revenue and Benefits staff from Watford transferred to Three Rivers on 1 April 2014 which included pay awards and pension costs.

Another Member raised concern regarding the Business Rates Growth in the budget of £250,000 but the 2014/15 outturn reported no growth. The Director of Finance advised that the main reason the business rates were not showing any growth was that they were assessed against the baseline of back dated appeals. In 2014/15 the Council had joined the business rates pool and the baseline would be over and above this next year.

A Member asked if training could be provided on business rates.

Councillor Ralph Sangster wished it be noted that the Conservative Group would be abstaining from the voting on the motion.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED the voting being 8 For, 0 Against and 7 Abstentions.

RECOMMEND:

- 1) That the revenue outturn position as summarised at Appendix 1A and supplementary notes at Appendices 1B and 1D be noted;
- 2) That the capital outturn position as summarised in Appendix 2A be noted;
- 3) Approves to carry forward the unspent service budgets from 2014/15 to 2015/16 which total £311,700 as detailed at Appendix 1D; and
- 4) Approves the rephasing on capital projects from 2014/15 to 2015/16 which total £360,691 as detailed at Appendix 2A apart from the Disability Facility & Private Sector Renew Grant (7822).

PR16/15 FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT TENDER PROPOSAL FOR AUDIO-VISUAL ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORT FOR WEBSITES

This report provided an outline proposal to tender for a framework agreement for accessible audio-visual website software.

A Member advised that I-Pad and tablet devices provided accessibility.

Councillor David Sansom said that this would duplicate other services at the Council and was not required at present. He moved, seconded by Councillor Chris Lloyd, that the framework for the provision of website accessibility is not undertaken.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

That a framework for the provision of website accessibility software is not undertaken.

PR17/15 UPDATE ON LEASE ARRANGEMENTS FOR BASING HOUSE

The following report provided an update on the current lease arrangements for Basing House. The only current lease for the building is with the Three Rivers Museum. If Members wished to discuss any of the valuation figures contained in the appendix, the Committee will have to move into Part II business.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 35 (B), Mr Mead spoke against the recommendations.

Councillor Ann Shaw moved, duly seconded, that recommendations 1 and 4 be approved as detailed below as it provided the best support to the Museum until the Wenta Business Hub had been assessed by the Council.

- 1) That the Museum is granted a one-year lease for the three rooms it currently occupies, on its existing terms and conditions. This will give the Council the flexibility to fully consider and scope the Wenta proposal for Basing House.
- 2) That the Museum's request to lease additional space is put on hold whilst the Council assesses the Wenta Business Hub proposal.

Some Members wished it to be noted that the Museum should not be moved.

It was advised that many local schools visited the museum and it was well used by local people. The Museum was run solely by volunteers. The Museum should not be placed in a back room of the library.

In response to a question on including a 3 month break clause in the lease, it was advised that a 3 month break clause could not be given, however the Museum would be given statutory notice on the expiry of the 12 month lease. The lease wouldn't automatically come to an end on the lease end date without the statutory notices being given.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst moved an amendment, duly seconded, that the Council explore the options available on the use of the library site with the County Council.

On being put to the Committee the motion including the amendment were CARRIED the voting being 13 For, 2 Against and 0 Abstentions.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Museum is granted a one-year lease for the three rooms it currently occupies, on its existing terms and conditions. This will give the Council the flexibility to fully consider and scope the Wenta proposal for Basing House.
- 2) That the Museum's request to lease additional space is put on hold whilst the Council assesses the Wenta Business Hub proposal.
- 3) That the Council explore the options available on the use of the library site with the County Council.

PR18/15 WORK PROGRAMME

To agree the Committee's work programme.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be agreed.

PR19/15 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

"that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined under paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act. It has been decided by the Council that in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information."

PR20/15 TENDER PROPOSAL FOR ADVERTISING REVENUE GENERATION

This report followed the outline proposals for assessing advertising revenue which was approved by the Committee on 23 March. Committee Members requested a more detailed report to be prepared before tendering.

Councillor Ann Shaw moved, duly seconded, the recommendations in the report subject to an amendment that the Editorial Working Party be asked to set out the guidelines on the type of organisations the Council would wish to undertake advertising with and also the appropriate places to have advertising. It was not just Three Rivers Times where advertising could be included but consideration should be given to other publications and the annual calendar for bin collections.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That tendering is undertaken through publication in the Official Journal of the EU (OJEU);
- 2) That framework agreements are made if appropriate and that a joint approach be explored with neighbouring authorities;
- 3) That progress is reported to this Committee;
- 4) That further scope for advertising is researched and recommendations for a second phase of advertising sponsorship on Three Rivers' assets for 2016/17 are made to this Committee;
- 5) that the Editorial Working Party be asked to set out the guidelines on the type of organisations the Council would wish to undertake advertising with and also the appropriate places to have the advertising;
- 6) That public access to the report be denied until the matter is resolved; and
- 7) That public access to the decision be immediate.

PR21/15

1 FROGMOOR LANE LAND SALE REQUEST

The matter relates to an area of land (The Plot) in the ownership of Three Rivers District Council. TRDC has been approached by the owner of 1 Frogmoor Lane, Rickmansworth (The Property) which is adjacent to The Plot, with a request to sell The Plot to him for inclusion in the grounds of his property.

Councillor Ann Shaw moved, duly seconded, the recommendations in the report with an amendment that the sale of the land be agreed in principle subject to the Council receiving a planning application and before the sale price of the land is agreed.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the sale of the land be agreed in principle subject to the Council receiving a planning application before the sale price of the land is agreed;
- 2) That the final decision on the sale price is delegated to Director of Community and Environmental Services in consultation with the Chairman of Policy & Resources which enables negotiations to commence if Members agree to the principle of the sale;
- 3) That all costs in relation to the sale of The Plot will be borne by the owner of 1 Frogmoor Lane;

- 4) That public access to the report be denied until a sale has been agreed and negotiations have been completed; and
- 5) That public access to the decision be immediate.

PR22/15 APPLICATION FOR WRITE-OFFS WITHIN REVENUES

The purpose of this report is for Members to consider agreeing to write-off individual 'Revenues' debts of £3,000.00 or more that there are no means to recovery outstanding debts. The Council seeks to recover all the debt it is owed by residents and businesses. However, there are a variety of recovery methods that the Council can rely on to secure debts, and in each case listed all the recovery methods have been attempted.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the debt detailed in appendices 2 to 5 be written off.
- 2) That public access to the report is denied indefinitely.
- 3) That public access to the decision be immediate

PR23/15 APPENDIX TO BASING HOUSE REPORT

RESOLVED:

That the appendix be noted.

That public access to the appendix be denied until matter resolved.

CHAIRMAN