

COUNCIL MEETING – 20 DECEMBER 2016
REPORT OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

2 November 2016

Present: Councillors Griffiths (Chairman), Partridge-Underwood (Vice-Chairman), Carr, Emerson, Francis, Graves, Gough, Hallam, Henley, G Lawman, L Lawman, Morrall, Scarborough, Simmons and Ward.

Also present: Mr J T Campbell (Chief Executive), Mrs B Gamble (Head of Resources), Mr G Hollands (Solicitor District Law), Mrs S Knowles, (Principal Finance Manager), Mr N Robinson (Principal Revenue and Benefits Manager), Mr R Watson (Senior Revenue Officer) and Mrs C A Mundy (Democratic Services Officer).

(Councillor Harrington attended as an observer.)

1. APOLOGIES

RESOLVED that there were no apologies.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED to note that in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, the council's code of conduct and the council's constitution, the following declaration was made.

Councillor	Min. no.	Report Title	Reason
Scarborough	5	Mid-year report on Treasury Management	DPI – wife has taken a contract with principality building society

3. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2016

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Resources Committee held on 21 September 2016 be confirmed and signed.

4. REVIEW OF POLLING STATIONS 2016

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Resources was received in relation to the review of polling stations following the Police and Crime Commissioner Election on 5 May 2016 and the Referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union on 23 June 2016. During the review, two issues had been identified in relation to the future use of the portakabin on Cox's site on Westfield Road and Hilton Hall in Little Irchester, as neither would be available.

Alternative sites had been sought in these locations but no suitable venue had been located within either the relevant Irchester polling district or the Brickhill polling district.

Following consultation with ward councillors from the polling districts affected, the Returning Officer had determined that the most effective solution, subject to member approval, of a change to the designated polling place, would be to move polling district BC to St Mark's Church Hall, Brickhill Road and to transfer polling district IC to Irchester Village Hall, 36 School Road, Irchester.

Council had previously agreed that the polling place for polling district BC (Brickhill no.3) would be the entire polling district of BC, and that the polling place for polling district IC (Little Irchester) would be the entire polling district of IC. This was the council's usual practice as it allowed a level of flexibility if the polling station became unavailable. On this occasion and as there was no suitable alternative in the relevant polling districts, the decision of the Returning Officer was to re-site the polling station for BC at St. Mark's Church Hall, subject to the council agreeing to change the designated polling place for BC from polling district BC (Brickhill no. 3) to polling district BA (Brickhill no. 1), and to re-site the polling station for IC at Irchester Village Hall, subject to the council agreeing to change the designated polling place for IC from polling district IC (Little Irchester) to Irchester ward. The latter change was suggested so, that if a suitable location became available in Little Irchester, the Returning Officer could make use of it without changing the statutory polling place.

Members thanked officers for consulting with the ward councillors and considered that the proposal was the best way forward.

R1 RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) approval be given to the polling place for polling district BC being amended to polling district BA;
- (ii) approval be given to the polling place for polling district IC being amended to Irchester Ward.

RESOLVED to note the decision of the Returning Officer to transfer the polling stations for BC (Brickhill) to St Mark's Church Hall, Brickhill Road, Wellingborough and for IC (Little Irchester) to Irchester Village Hall, 36 School Road, Irchester with immediate effect.

(Councillor Scarborough left the room for the next item, having declared an interest.)

5. 2016-17 MID YEAR REPORT ON TREASURY MANAGEMENT

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Finance was received on the treasury management activity in line with the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) which was approved by committee on 23 March 2016.

A summary of investment transactions at 30 September 2016 was appended to the report along with the summary of economic background and interest

forecast. The Principal Finance Manager referred to the interest rate forecast contained within appendix two of the report and advised councillors it was unlikely the base rate would drop again this year, as indicated in the report; however the effect of this was immaterial on the expected level of investment interest income.

Councillor Simmons referred to appendix one and the first four items which had matured and asked where the money had been invested. The Principal Finance Manager confirmed that these funds had been rolled over with Santander to give access to liquid funds.

A councillor referred to the investment in property funds, and the ongoing investigations of this type of investment by officers, and offered his assistance and knowledge to officers.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) The mid-year report on treasury management be noted;
- (ii) Officers be authorised to undertake due diligence and investigate the use of property funds and report back to a future committee with their findings.

(Councillor Scarborough re-joined the meeting.)

6. MID-YEAR SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE REQUESTS

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Finance was received to seek approval to a number of mid-year supplementary budget requests for the capital programme and to review the proposed community capital funding scheme arrangements for inclusion in the draft capital programme later in the year.

Appended to the report was the current funding available as per the September Resources report.

The capital working group had met on 11 October 2016 and discussed a number of new proposed schemes for inclusion in the current year's capital programme and in future years. Some of the in-year schemes included an upgrade to Agresso of £34,375; Redwell Leisure Centre installation of boilers of £15,770 and fencing for parks of £50,000

The Principal Finance Manager informed the committee that the additions to the Capital Programme would be put to council on 20 December, however, should work need to commence prior to such approval at council, officers were seeking the approval of committee to use the urgent action process if necessary. Members agreed that if it was necessary, urgent action could be taken prior to the next council meeting.

A number of schemes had also been put forward by parish councils and members had indicated that they also wished to put forward other community schemes. The current system of scoring meant that these would not score sufficiently high enough to be included. It was therefore proposed to include a new scheme in the programme from 2017-18 for 'Community Capital Funding' whereby members would agree a capital budget for use on schemes which, under the current arrangements, would not normally score highly enough. The budget would be administered by the working group in the same way as the community grant arrangements.

Members welcomed the proposals in relation to the Redwell boilers, the fencing of parks and the proposal for Community Capital Funding.

A question was asked in relation to appendix A and the Kick Start funding. The Principal Finance Manager confirmed that she would provide a members briefing note in relation to this.

Members also expressed their concern about the condition of the Redwell building. The chairman confirmed that he and officers had recently visited the site which he believed had considerable potential for existing and additional sports provision, and that options were being considered for a future report.

Members also asked about the current maintenance programme for council buildings. The Head of Resources confirmed that a planned preventative maintenance survey had recently been undertaken which indicated that a budget would need to be set aside for operational council buildings; a five year review plan would be put in place.

R2 **RECOMMENDED** that the schemes outlined in the report be included in the ongoing agreed capital programme for 2016-17 and beyond.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) approval be given to the community capital funding scheme governance arrangements being put forward as part of the 2017-18 capital programme;

7. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2017-18

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Finance was received in relation to the local council tax support scheme (CTS) for 2017-18 and subsequent years.

The report detailed the annual total expenditure estimated for 2017-18 to be in the region of £3,875,000 for the CTS, which would not present an additional burden on the revenue budget.

The report detailed the background to the local council tax support scheme which had been agreed in 2014-15. There was no change to the scheme in

2015-16, however in 2016-17; a number of technical changes had been incorporated to align the local scheme to national welfare changes.

The report detailed the amount that working age people would be required to pay under the current system. There were no further regulation changes to housing benefit or universal credit that would warrant technical amendment to the council scheme for compatibility purposes.

A public consultation exercise had been undertaken during October and November 2015, case law had directed councils to undertake meaningful consultation on local council tax schemes, even if the scheme provision remained unaltered. It was intended that a further consultation would take place prior to the budget setting for next year.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) The public be consulted on there being no change to the Borough Council of Wellingborough's Local Council Tax Support scheme for 2017-18;
- (ii) It be noted that a further report would be received by this committee, following the consultation, to agree the council tax scheme for 2017-18 to be recommended to council.

8. IRRECOVERABLE NON-DOMESTIC RATES, COUNCIL TAX, HOUSING BENEFIT OVERPAYMENTS AND SUNDRY DEBTS

The annexed circulated report, and exempt appendices, of the Head of Finance was received in relation to the write off of irrecoverable debts.

Appended to the report were details of the non-domestic rate cases and council tax cases along with a summary of the process used for the write off of debts. There was no discussion on the exempt appendices.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the sum of £34,183.64 of irrecoverable non-domestic rates and council tax be written off;
- (ii) it be noted that the sum of £29,431.19 be written off under the delegated powers of the Section 151 officer.

9. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items in accordance with Section 100A (4) to the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information of the descriptions shown in schedule 12A to the Act:

Minute no.	Item	Paragraph of 12A
11	Report on harassment of members and council officers	E1, 2 & 5

10. URGENT MATTER

The chairman decided that the following matter was urgent within the meaning of Section 100B (4) (B) of the Local Government Act 1972 for the reasons set out below:

Min no.	Title of report	Reason
11	Report on harassment of members and council officers	Effect on council business

11. REPORT ON HARASSMENT OF MEMBERS AND COUNCIL OFFICERS

The tabled exempt report of the Chief Executive was received relating to a persistent complainant, and a resolution passed as recorded in the confidential minutes.

RESOLVED that the decision, as recorded in the confidential minutes, be approved.

Chairman

The meeting closed at 8.10pm.