

COUNCIL MEETING – 24 FEBRUARY 2015
REPORT OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

4 February 2015

Present: Councillors Bell (Chairman), Hollyman (Vice-Chairman), Carr, Emerson, Graves, Griffiths, Harrington, Hawkes, Henley, Morrall, Partridge-Underwood, Scarborough, Ward and M Waters.

Also present: Mrs L Elliott, Head of Finance, Mrs B Lawrence, Head of Resources, Miss J Thomas, Head of Planning and Local Development, Miss S Lyons, Solicitor/Monitoring officer - District Law, Mrs S Knowles, Principal Accountancy Manager, Mr N Robinson, Principal Revenue and Benefits Manager, Mr J Casserly, Wellingborough Norse and Miss L Bignell, Wellingborough Norse and Mrs C A Mundy, Democratic Services Officer.

(Councillors Bass, Elliott, Gough, G Lawman, L Lawman and Simmons attended as observers.)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED to note that an apology for absence was received from Councillor Allebone.

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 under-mentioned councillors declared an interest in the following items:

Councillor	Minute	Report Title	Reason
Scarborough	11	Multi-Storey car park	Disclosable pecuniary interest Is the owner of properties in proximity to site of MSCP.

3. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 DECEMBER 2014

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Resources Committee held on 17 December 2014 be approved.

4. WASTE COLLECTION AND RECYCLING

The Chief Executive informed the meeting that a number of discussions had been taking place with Northamptonshire County Council and other authorities regarding the future of the waste collection and recycling services following the county council's budget consultation. A number of initial proposals for the

future service could have a serious impact on the borough council particularly around a reduction in recycling credits which could amount to £500,000.

More positive discussions were now taking place around five work streams and the Chief Executive and Mr Casserly, Managing Director of Wellingborough Norse were heavily involved in these discussions. This was a major piece of work and there were a number of issues that would need to be considered and he hoped to be in a position to present a written report to the Resources Committee in March.

He also informed the meeting that Wellingborough Norse was in discussions with the county council about the Wollaston recycling centre. Consideration was also being given to increasing the brown bin collection to a nine month period rather than eight months. Details of this would also be presented to the committee in March.

Members discussed the update provided and welcomed the consideration of some of the proposals and looked forward to receiving a report in March.

RESOLVED that the verbal update of the Chief Executive be noted.

5. REVENUE BUDGET 2015-16 AND THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY PROJECTIONS

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Finance was received to provide members with detailed proposals for the revenue budget 2015-16 together with an updated forecast of the projected position for the subsequent financial years. Also included was a proposal in respect of council tax for 2015-16 in line with the draft budget position previously presented to committee on 17 December 2014.

The report detailed the medium term financial outlook; the new homes bonus; the council's approach to the budget pressures for 2015-16 and the medium term; savings proposals and budget additions; council tax and referendum levels; the budget 2015-16; the budget forecasts 2016-17 to 2018-19; the general fund balance; collection fund deficit and council tax; budget consultation; chief finance officer's statement and business rates.

The Principal Accountancy Manager clarified that confirmation of the final settlement had been received and there was no change to that detailed in the report.

The Head of Finance also referred to her duty as the council's section 151 officer to report to council on the financial sustainability and robustness and adequacy of reserves when setting the budget, and her various concerns, all of which were contained in appendix 7.

Members thanked officers for the excellent report.

The chairman proposed that there be no increase in the council's average band D council tax in 2015-16 for the borough.

On being put to the vote this was declared carried with 10 votes in favour, one vote against and three abstentions.

R1 RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) approval be given to there being no increase in the council's average band D council tax in 2015-16 for the borough;
- (ii) approval be given to the revenue budget for 2015-16 attached at appendix 1 and the financial plans attached at appendix 3 to the report, following consideration of the S151 officer's Section 25 report;
- (iii) approval be given to the standstill 2015-16 budget position;
- (iv) approval be given to the extension to the current community grants scheme as outlined in section 7.2 of the report, whilst further review is undertaken in 2015-16;
- (v) approval be given to the fees and charges schedule attached at appendix 6 to the report.

Councillors Emerson, Henley and Scarborough asked that it be noted that they abstained and Councillor Hawkes asked that it be noted that he voted against the recommendation.

6. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Finance was received on the capital financing available to the council for the medium term, along with a list of proposed capital schemes.

The funding for the capital programme was based on the assumption that the council would maintain a balance of £5million in its capital resources available for future years.

Appended to the report was a summary of capital resources, a list of capital schemes, a list of capital schemes where information was required, and a copy of the current capital programme for information.

Members asked for clarification on the current position of certain items to which the Head of Finance responded.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) approval be given to capital funding being made available for the financial years 2015-16 to 2019-20 as detailed in appendix A to the report;
- (ii) approval be given to the list of prioritised capital schemes as detailed in appendix B to the report and that approval be given to schedule 1 for release into the capital programme 2015-16 to 2019-20;

- (iii) approval be given to the list of prioritised capital schemes as per appendix B and that approval be given to schedule 2 for release into the capital programme as soon as resources were available;
- (iv) approval be given in principle to the list of capital schemes awaiting information as detailed in appendix C, and that it be noted that such schemes would then be released into the capital programme at a later date, in line with the council decision making policy.

7. GUIDELINES ON REPORTING ON COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Resources was received on new regulations which allow the press and public the right to film and report on meetings of the council, and to ask committee to consider and agree the guidelines to be published on the website.

New regulations had been introduced by the government to make local democracy more transparent and accessible for local communities. The council must allow members of the press or public to take photographs, film, make audio recordings and use social media to report the proceedings of any meeting that is open to the public.

Appended to the report were the draft guidelines for reporting on council and committee meetings.

RESOLVED that the draft guidelines for reporting on council and committee meetings be approved.

8. NOTIFICATION OF URGENT ACTION – STANTON CROSS COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Planning and Local Development was received on the urgent action taken to approve the use of compulsory purchase powers to bring forward elements of the Stanton Cross development.

The signed urgent action form was appended to the report.

RESOLVED that the urgent action taken be noted.

(Councillor Scarborough left the room having made a declaration on the following item.)

9. DEVELOPMENT OF THE MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Resources was received to inform members of the decision made by Services Committee on 2 February 2015.

The Services Committee resolved to recommend to Resources Committee that the redevelopment of the multi-storey car park and any related council

premises be explored, subject to appropriate consultation with partners and due diligence in respect of finance.

Members discussed the report and considered that this was a good opportunity to explore options for development of this area of the town and agreed that this be supported in principle.

RESOLVED to approve in principle the redevelopment of the multi-storey car park and any related council premises, subject to appropriate consultation with partners and due diligence in respect of finance.

(Councillor Scarborough returned to the meeting.)

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

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Finance was received on the write-off of irrecoverable debts.

Members wished to discuss the exempt information in the appendix to the report in further detail and this item was moved to the confidential part of the meeting.

11. CREMATORIUM PROJECT – PROGRESS REPORT

The annexed circulated report of the Chief Executive and Head of Finance was received in relation to the progress of the crematorium project.

The report detailed the current position in relation to the crematorium project and the specific issue of financial viability. Appended to the report was the profile of Mr Jones of Classic Cremation Partnerships Limited. Also appended, as a confidential appendix, was the viability and business case report by Classic Cremation Partnerships Limited.

Councillor Scarborough thanked officers for the report and for the information contained therein.

Members wished to discuss the exempt information in the appendix to the report and this item was moved to the confidential part of the meeting.

(Councillor Partridge-Underwood left the meeting and did not return.)

12. 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:

Min. no.	Item	Paragraph of Schedule 12A
13	Irrecoverable council tax, housing benefit overpayments, non-domestic rates and sundry debts.	E3
14	Crematorium – progress report.	E3

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

The annexed circulated exempt appendices were received and members raised a number of issues to assist them in understanding the process for write off.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the sum of £53,060.91 of irrecoverable council tax, housing benefit overpayments and non-domestic rates be written off;
- (ii) the sum of £24,450.07 be written off under the delegated powers of the section 151 officer.

14. CREMATORIUM PROJECT – PROGRESS REPORT

The annexed circulated exempt appendix relating to the viability and business case for Wellingborough crematorium was received.

Members asked a number of questions in relation to the expected number of cremations and the charging structure. Questions were also raised regarding the cost of the maintenance of the cremator in the long term and whether this had been considered, to which the Head of Finance responded.

Members considered that the project would provide a valuable service for residents of the borough and others.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the details regarding financial viability be noted;
- (ii) approval be given to the project proceeding to the construction phase and that the new crematorium be built in accordance with the plans approved by the Planning Committee;
- (iii) regular updates on progress with the project be provided to the Crematorium Member Advisory Group.

Chairman

The meeting closed at 8.10pm.