

COUNCIL MEETING – 21 JULY 2015

REPORT OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

24 June 2015

Present: Councillors Bell (Chairman), Griffiths (Vice-Chairman), Bailey, Emerson, Francis, Hallam, Henley, Morrall, Partridge-Underwood, Scarborough, Ward and M Waters. (Councillor Carr joined the meeting at 8.40pm but did not participate in the meeting.)

Also present: Mr J T Campbell, Chief Executive, Mrs L Elliott, Head of Finance, Mrs B Lawrence, Head of Resources, Miss S Lyons, Monitoring Officer/Solicitor District Law, Mrs S Knowles, Principal Accountancy Manager, Mrs V Phillipson, Principal Planning Policy and Regeneration Manager, Mr R Watson, Consortium Business Rates Manager and Mrs C A Mundy, Democratic Services Officer.

(Councillors Graves and G Lawman attended as observers and Councillor Ekins joined the meeting at 8.35pm also as an observer.)

1. APOLOGIES

RESOLVED to note that apologies for absence were received from Councillors Allebone and Harrington.

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, no declarations were made.

3. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 MARCH 2015

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Resources Committee held on 18 March 2015 be approved.

4. REVENUE OUTTURN 2014-15

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Finance was received to present members with a summary of the the council's outturn position on revenue expenditure against approved budget for the financial year 2014-15.

The report detailed the final outturn position as follows:

Total net service underspends of £1.208m (an increase of £1.010m)
Unbudgeted external funding of £1.177m (an increase of £0.229m)

The council had set its revenue budget in February 2014 at £10.922m for expenditure with associated ongoing sustainable funding of £9.342m. This was

supported by revenue reserves of £1.580m. It was considered that the continuing use of reserves was unsustainable and that expenditure needed to be reduced and income increased.

Appended to the report was the revenue monitoring position to 31 March 2015.

The majority of the increase related to the business rates retention scheme and the benefit of pooling (£183,000). Under the business rates retention scheme rules all authorities must pay a 50% levy on any growth shared. For the council this would have been £397,000. By pooling with other districts this levy is reduced to approximately 25% and is now £214,000 for the council. This gave a benefit of pooling of £183,000.

It was recommended that this be transferred to the NNDR earmarked reserve to help provide resilience to the collection fund balances for future years and also to mitigate against the unpredictable nature of the business rate retention scheme and any cash flow timing differences. This is reviewed annually as part of the year end process.

Members raised a number of queries in relation to the information provided on national non domestic rates (NNDR) appeals and whether there was a designated balance in respect of reserves.

The Head of Finance and Principal Accountancy Manager responded to these queries explaining that there was a designated earmarked reserve of £892,000, which had been created to offset a timing difference with NNDR cash flow. Officers then explained how the timing difference came about.

In January each year an estimate had to be given of the balance of the NNDR collection fund account, which was a deficit of £700,000. There had, however, been an increase of £1.2m to £1.9m at year end as a result of significant increases in the number of businesses which had submitted appeals. The situation was being closely monitored.

The Head of Finance explained how the business rates were collected and that if there was less commercial activity this would have an effect on finances. It was agreed that she would provide a members' briefing note to further explain some of the more detailed points.

The Consortium Business Rates Manager informed the committee that there were 2,500 business properties which had last been valued in 2010 and were due to be revalued in 2017. In the government's Autumn Statement a cut-off date of 31 March 2015 had been given for appeals. As a consequence over 1,700 appeals had been received and this was around 70% of businesses.

Members queried the maintenance of revenue reserves for certain schemes such as a boiler replacement and ICT infrastructure.

The Head of Finance stated that she would hope to be able to capitalise some of the schemes, however it depended on how the schemes progressed.

These would be closely monitored and moved from revenue to capital if appropriate.

Members asked for clarification on the service underspend of £250,000 regarding changes to the welfare reform system and where the earmarked reserve could be found.

The Head of Finance explained that the earmarked reserve for welfare reform was created last year and was shown on the balance sheet. The statement of accounts would show this in detail and she would provide members with a members' briefing note when the accounts were finalised.

The Head of Finance also clarified that any contingency funds that should no longer be detailed will be moved and this will be shown in the next budget monitoring.

The chairman thanked the Head of Finance and her team for all the work that they had done in improving the accounts and for the achievement of an unqualified audit.

RESOLVED that approval be given to:

- (i) the creation of new earmarked reserves as shown in the report at 6.11, 6.12 and 6.14c;
- (ii) the utilisation to existing reserves as shown in the report at 6.14a;
- (iii) the contribution to existing reserves as shown in the report at 6.14b;
- (iv) the outturn position being noted, subject to audit, along with the projected outturn variations at 31 March 2015.

(Councillor Scarborough abstained from voting on item (i) above.)

5. CAPITAL OUTTURN 2014-15

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Finance was received to present members with an overview of the council's capital expenditure against approved budget for the financial year 2014-15.

The capital programme had been agreed in February 2014. Not all priority projects could be funded but those that could were moved into the approved programme. Schemes still considered as priority were approved to be included in the programme when additional resources were identified. This had produced a total programme for the year of £5.906m.

Appended to the report was the capital programme monitoring position to 31 March 2015; the capital programme funding position and the analysis of significant budget underspends.

Some members expressed concern regarding Tresham College's request for a capital grant of £500,000 to be paid in 2016-17 towards the improvements being made. They considered that they needed further information before

agreeing that the decision to award the grant was delegated to the Head of Finance in consultation with the chairman and vice-chairman of the committee.

Councillor Scarborough proposed an amendment to the resolution contained in the report at 4.5, which was seconded by Councillor Henley and detailed below:

“Agree in principal a capital grant to Tresham College as outlined in section 7.4 of the report with a further report to be submitted to a future Resources Committee once detailed plans are developed”.

The amendment was put to the vote and declared carried with seven votes in favour and three against.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and declared carried.

RESOLVED to:

- (i) note the outturn position on the capital programme and the reasons for the variances as shown in appendix one to the report;
- (ii) note the positions on the funding of the capital programme, including the re-profiling of budgets as show in appendix two to the report;
- (iii) agree the supplementary estimates as outlined in sections 7.1 and 7.2 of the report;
- (iv) note the supplementary budget of £2,635 approved by the Head of Finance under delegated powers as detailed in section 7.3 of the report;
- (v) approve in principal a capital grant to Tresham College as outlined in section 7.4 with a further report to the Resources Committee once detailed plans are developed.

6. TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN – ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Finance was received in relation to the annual report of treasury management activity for 2014-15.

The report detailed the investments held at 31 March 2015 which included short term investments for periods of less than one year; long term investments for periods greater than one year and detailed the total investments for the year.

R1 RECOMMENDED that the treasury management outturn position be noted.

7. LAND AND PROPERTY DISPOSALS

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Resources was received in relation to the disposal of land to gain a capital receipt.

The report identified land and property which could be disposed of by the council to provide the opportunity to increase the council's capital receipts.

The chairman proposed that the item relating to the two chapels at London Road be deferred to enable more information to be provided by officers on what the chapels could be used for.

The sites referred to in the report were located at Arthur Street, Croyland Park and Penrith Drive.

Members asked if the land had to be sold for best consideration as it was felt that this could prohibit registered social landlords from being able to purchase the land. Councillor Scarborough wished to propose an amendment to remove "at best consideration" if this was the case.

The Head of Resources confirmed that this condition could not be removed as the council had a legal duty to sell the land for best consideration but that this was not the same as market value. Discussions would be held with registered social landlords where appropriate.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) approval be given to the disposal of land or property being the factory site, Arthur Street, Wellingborough; land adjacent to Croyland Park; and land adjacent to Penrith Drive;
- (ii) a decision relating to the two chapels located in London Road be deferred for further information.

8. TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT SECTION 106 PROJECT UPDATE

The annexed circulated joint report of the Head of Planning and Local Development and the Head of Finance was received in relation to the section 106 project list.

As part of the contribution to a development, and to mitigate the impact that a new development has on the community, developers make a contribution known as a Section 106 payment which the council allocate as appropriate.

The council currently holds £514,000 of which £492,652 is committed to projects as detailed within appendix one of the report along with the current status of the projects. Also detailed at appendix two was a list of projects which could be undertaken using section 106 monies.

Members asked how the project list had been drawn up for their wards as councillors wished to ensure that they were consulted.

The Principal Planning Policy and Regeneration Manager explained that the lists had been compiled from information and requests received from community groups and comments made at committees by members; it was an evolving list which needed to be in place to secure section 106 contributions. Without this list it would be difficult to provide evidence to secure the contributions.

Following a lengthy discussion Councillor Scarborough proposed an amendment that reference to the proposed 3G Pitch at Redwell Leisure Centre be removed from appendix two for the time being. This was seconded by Councillor Henley. On being put to the vote the amendment was declared lost with four votes in favour and seven votes against.

Councillor Griffiths proposed an amendment as follows:

“to approve the proposed project list as detailed at appendix two but allow members’ contributions to be added and presented to the next Resources Committee in September.”

On being put to the vote this amendment was declared carried.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and declared carried.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the project update in appendix one be noted;
- (ii) the section 106 project list as detailed in appendix two of the report be approved with members adding their contributions and an update being presented to the next Resources Committee.

Councillor Scarborough asked if the Chief Executive could provide a written answer about how the 3G pitch at Redwell Leisure Centre would fit in with the sports strategy.

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

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Finance was received to request approval for the write off of irrecoverable debts.

The report detailed the amount due and the action taken to try to recover the debt of £2,922.30 of non-domestic rates. The debt was deemed to be irrecoverable. It also referred to the amount of £46,538.90 of irrecoverable council tax, housing benefit overpayment, non-domestic rates and sundry debts which had been written off under the delegated powers of the section 151 officer.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) approval be given to the write-off of £2,922.30 of irrecoverable council tax, housing benefit overpayments and non-domestic rates;
- (ii) it be noted that the amount of £46,538.90 has been written off under the delegated powers of the section 151 officer.

10. DISCRETIONARY NON-DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF REVIEW: TEAMWORK

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Finance was received following the removal of discretionary non-domestic rate relief from Teamwork located at 38a Oxford Street, Wellingborough.

Teamwork provides work placed therapy, education and personal care and promotes the preservation of mental health and as such qualifies for an 80% reduction in mandatory rate relief and, since 1999, received a discretionary rate relief of 20%.

The property has a rateable value of £34,000 and the discretionary rate relief policy prohibits the awarding of relief at properties with a rateable value of above £18,000. This limit was set as it is the government's definition of a small organisation under The Non-Domestic Rating (Small Business Rate Relief) (England) Order 2012.

The discretionary rate relief policy was appended to the report.

Due to the concern of members over the policy Councillor Bell proposed that this item be deferred to enable the policy to be reviewed. This was seconded by Councillor Emerson and on being put to the vote was declared carried.

RESOLVED that this item be deferred to enable the policy to be reviewed.

11. DISCRETIONARY NON-DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF: GLAMIS HALL FOR ALL

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Finance was received to consider an application for discretionary non-domestic rate relief from Glamis Hall for All, Goldsmith Road, Wellingborough.

Glamis Hall for All is a registered charity and the premises are used for charitable purposes. The organisation therefore qualifies for 80% mandatory relief. The application requested an additional top up of discretionary relief of 20%.

Appended to the report was the discretionary rate relief policy. The policy allows relief to be awarded at 20% to this size and type of property.

RESOLVED that approval be given to the award of a 20% top up of discretionary non-domestic rate relief to Glamis Hall for All, Wellingborough from 5 January 2015.

12. OPTIONS FOR FUTURE TRAINING COMPANIES

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Finance was received in relation to the development of options on the corporate structures and delivery

vehicles available to the council particularly in relation to trading companies for the commercial operation of services.

The report detailed the ongoing work to commission the service of Trowers Hamlin and KPMG to outline the legal and tax considerations of creating a wholly owned trading company and potential structures that could be considered at a future date. The information would then be presented to members so a decision could be made regarding not only the crematorium but also in relation to the future benefits that other similar companies could bring to different service areas.

Trowers Hamlin had produced a complex draft document outlining the numerous legal and financial implications which is in the process of being finalised. This will be the subject of a presentation by Trowers Hamlin and KPMG to members in the summer of 2015.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the contents of the report be noted;
- (ii) the findings of the Trowers Hamlin and KPMG reports be the subject of a presentation to members in the summer of 2015;
- (iii) officers undertake further legal and tax research on the options contained in the report and presentation and prepare outline business cases based on the council's preferred option which addresses those considerations;
- (iv) approval be given to the receipt of a report, containing information of a commercially sensitive nature later in the year, outlining the results of the findings and presenting an outline business case for the preferred option, including an implementation timeline.

13. STATION ISLAND NORTH, STANTON CROSS COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Planning and Local Development was received in relation to a request for a further compulsory purchase order in relation to the Stanton Cross sustainable urban extension (SUE).

The report sought authority to make the Borough Council of Wellingborough (Station Island North, Stanton Cross) Compulsory Purchase Order 2015 (the order) under Section 226(1) (a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Acquisition of Land Act 1981 and all other enabling powers. Appended to the report was a plan of the area referred to.

R2 RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) subject to Bovis Homes Ltd completing a Deed of Costs Indemnity Agreement with the Council, the Borough Council of Wellingborough (Station Island, Stanton Cross) Compulsory Purchase Order 2015 be made under section 226(1)(a) of the Town and County Planning Act

- 1990 and the Acquisition of Land Act 1981 and other enabling powers, for the acquisition of all required legal estates and interests in the land (except those held by Network Rail) and the acquisition of rights within the areas shown coloured pink on the draft Order map produced and appended to the report for the purposes of facilitating the carrying out of development, redevelopment or improvement of the land for the provision of a new highway and mixed uses including residential, employment, leisure and retail units and other complementary uses together with associated public access and public realm, highway and other infrastructure, drainage, associated servicing and works;
- (ii) the draft Order map (in appendix one) showing areas coloured pink where the intention is for the acquisition of all interests in the land, other than those of Network Rail and the acquiring authority, be noted;
 - (iii) following confirmation of the Order by the Secretary of State, authority be given to the use of the general vesting declaration procedure and notice to treat, notice of entry and conveyance where necessary in accordance with the Compulsory Purchase (Vesting Declarations) Act 1981 and the Compulsory Purchase Act 1965 to implement the Borough Council of Wellingborough (Station Island North, Stanton Cross) Compulsory Purchase Order 2015.
 - (iv) approval be given to the acquisition and appropriation of the land required for the scheme for planning purposes under the provisions of section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 and section 237 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in conjunction with clause (iii) above to enable the council or to over-ride private rights, easements and interests (including restrictive covenants etc.) affecting the land required for the scheme;
 - (v) delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning and Local Development in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Resources Committee to:
 - (a) take all necessary steps as soon as is reasonably practical to secure the making, submission, confirmation and implementation of the Order (and where appropriate amendments to the Order by way of exclusion of interests in land or the addition of interests in land) including the publication and service of all notices and the presentation of the council's case at any public inquiry and subsequent service of notices to treat and notices of entry or at their discretion the execution of general vesting declarations as the case may be if the Order is confirmed;
 - (b) negotiate to acquire all interests in the land and new rights within the Order and rights and interests affected by the Order either by agreement or compulsorily including prior to the making of the order and where appropriate to agree terms for relocation;
 - (c) approve agreements and undertakings with the owners of any interest in the Order and any objectors to the confirmation of the Order setting out the terms for the withdrawal of objections to the Order including, where appropriate, seeking inclusion in and/or exclusion from the Order of Land or new rights;
 - (d) in the event that the question of compensation be referred to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber), to take necessary steps in relation

thereto including advising on the appointment of appropriate consultants if necessary to assist and advise in this regard.

14. HIGH STREET/JACKSONS LANE SITE

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Planning and Local Development was received to provide an update on the High Street/Jacksons Lane site and gave a number of options to find an appropriate way forward.

Mr Alex Morton of Deloittes attended the meeting to answer any queries raised by members.

For a number of years the council had been working on proposals for the regeneration of the High Street/Jacksons Lane site. The report set out the current position and outlined four options (options A to D) in relation to the future use of the site, Queens Hall, Drill Hall, Derek Hooton Way, affordable housing and section 106 contributions and the development agreement.

The report also detailed the procurement process which had resulted in March 2012 as Keepmoat being identified as the 'preferred developer'.

Appendices 6 and 7 to the report were confidential by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and were not discussed in the meeting.

Members discussed the options before them in detail, with a number of members commenting on the need to ensure there was car parking, suitable appropriate housing and that the right development be put on the site.

Councillor Henley proposed an amendment to include an additional option (option E) as follows:

"To pause all activity and take no action to immediately procure or offer the land for sale, and bring back a further report on this area being a new gateway to the town centre, as part of the local plan."

This was seconded by Councillor Scarborough.

On being put to the vote the amendment was lost with four votes in favour and six against.

Councillor Bailey proposed that option C, to develop new procurement documents, identify a procurement framework and undertake the procurement process, be put to the vote.

On being put to the vote the proposal was lost with five votes in favour and six against.

Councillor Griffiths proposed that option B, to discuss the possibility of a leisure/retail development with operators and Keepmoat, and finalise a

development agreement with Keepmoat which reflects the amended site area and obligations, be put to the vote.

On being put to the vote the proposal was lost with five votes in favour and six against.

There were two abstentions during each of the votes on each of the above.

As the committee was unable to make a decision Councillor Scarborough proposed that a report be submitted to full council. This was seconded by Councillor Partridge-Underwood and on being put to the vote was declared carried.

RESOLVED that the report relating to the High Street be presented to the council meeting on 21 July 2015.

(Councillor Carr joined the meeting for this item but did not participate in the discussion or voting thereon.)

Chairman

The meeting closed at 9.00pm.

COUNCIL MEETING – 21 JULY 2015

REPORT OF THE SERVICES COMMITTEE

29 June 2015

Present: Councillors Carr (Chairman), Harrington (Vice-Chairman), Anslow, Beirne, Emerson, Griffiths, G Lawman, Patel, Scanlon, Skittrall and Stevenson.

Also present: Miss J Thomas, Head of Planning and Local Development, Mrs B Lawrence, Head of Resources, Mrs V Phillipson, Principal Planning Policy and Regeneration Manager, Mrs V Jessop, Principal Housing Manager, Mrs J Bell, Project Co-ordinator, Mr G Hollands, Solicitor, District Law and Mrs C A Mundy, Democratic Services Officer.

(Councillor Bell attended as an observer.)

Councillor Carr welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked that it be noted that agenda item 9 Station area existing residents parking scheme had been withdrawn from the agenda and would not therefore be discussed.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED to note that apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ekins, Maguire, V Waters and Watts.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED to note that no declarations were made.

3. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 MARCH 2015.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Services Committee held on 21 March 2015 be approved.

4. HOLCOT CAR BOOT SALE APPLICATION

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Planning and Local Development was received to seek a decision on the application made by Mr and Mrs Middleton to hold a Wednesday car boot sale in Holcot.

Mr Bowman, of Berry's Surveyors, was acting as Mr and Mrs Middleton's agent and had made a request to address the meeting on behalf of his clients. He explained that his clients had no knowledge of the restrictions in relation to the Market Charter when they started the process. He also stressed that the sellers attending their car boot were not traders but genuine 'car booters'. The Holcot site was 7.8 miles by road away from the market, but that the measurement quoted in the report was measured as the crow flies. He asked that the committee allow the car boot sale to continue as he did not believe

that this would have any effect on Wellingborough Market. He stressed that Mr and Mrs Middleton wished to work with the council to find a solution.

The report was presented by the council's Project Co-ordinator, who asked members to note that reference throughout the report to Mr and Mrs Hamilton was an error and that this should read Mr and Mrs Middleton. She apologised for the error.

The owners of Poplars Farm at Holcot were seeking permission to hold a car boot sale every Wednesday between 1 April and 31 October. Under the terms of its Market Charter the council has exclusive rights to conduct markets on a Wednesday, within a radius of 6.67 miles of Wellingborough town centre as the crow flies.

For the purpose of the Charter Rights a car boot sale is a market and therefore Mr and Mrs Middleton were seeking permission to continue trading. The chairman asked Mr Hollands for legal advice in relation to whether the council could refuse to grant approval to a market on any day in the week. He clarified that this was the case.

Appended to the report was the application submitted by Mr and Mrs Middleton along with the planning permission from Daventry District Council.

Members congratulated officers in bringing the report to committee. The council had worked hard with traders to protect the market and it was considered that the recommendation within the report should therefore be supported.

The chairman put the recommendation to the committee to refuse the car boot sale on a Wellingborough Market Charter Day. On being put to the vote it was declared carried with eight votes in favour and two against.

RESOLVED that the application made by Mr and Mrs Middleton of Poplars Farm Holcot to hold a car boot sale on a Wellingborough Market Charter day be refused.

5. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING POLICY

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Planning and Local Development was received to seek approval to amendments to the private sector housing policy.

The private sector housing policy was appended to the report with the changes highlighted therein.

Members raised some questions for the purposes of clarification to which the Principal Housing Manager responded.

Councillor Lawman expressed his concern in relation to the proposed action contained within the report at 4.3 to give delegated authority to officers to

determine whether it was appropriate to waive the requirement to repay a grant of up to £10,000, and considered that a decision like this should be made by committee.

Officers clarified that the purpose of requesting delegated power was to ensure that if a bereaved family or someone with a special requirement needed a time sensitive decision they would not have to wait for the next committee cycle. This would be a rare occurrence.

Councillor Lawman proposed that the clause be removed and this was seconded by Councillor Griffiths and after being put to the vote declared carried.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the proposed changes to the private sector housing policy regarding grant repayments and managing demand be approved;
- (ii) approval be given to any renovation and disabled facility grant repayments received in one financial year being added to the disabled facilities grant budget and carried forward to the following year;

6. TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT SECTION 106 – PROJECT LIST

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Planning and Local Development was received to provide an update on the council's Town and Country Planning Act Section 106 projects and to seek approval to the section 106 project list.

The Principal Planning Policy and Regeneration Manager updated the Services Committee with the decision made by the Resources Committee that members could provide additional contributions to the list and that a further report would be presented to Resources Committee in September. She would be writing to all members to ask for their input.

Councillor Emerson asked for clarification that items could also be taken off the list. This was clarified to be the case.

Councillor Lawman suggested an amendment to the proposed action as follows:

“that officers be asked to consult with councillors, parish councils and residents' associations for additional schemes to be submitted in time for the September Resources Committee.”

The chairman, Councillor Carr, also asked that neighbourhood plan groups be consulted.

This did not find favour with all members who suggested that the consultation be limited to councillors as other groups could submit items which were unrealistic and this in turn could lead to expectations of funding which wasn't

actually available. Parish councils had already been consulted and submitted their schemes but some would be contacted to seek clarity on costings.

The points raised were considered to be valid and the chairman put the proposals to the committee.

RESOVLED that:

- (i) the project update be noted;
- (ii) the section 106 project list as identified be approved, subject to additional contributions being received from councillors and a further report being presented to Resources Committee in September.

7. SHARMAN ROAD CAR PARK

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Resources was received in relation to the request from Wm Morrison PLC to amend the terms of the car park management deed which was agreed in January 2001.

The report detailed the agreement that was made in 2001 and the request received to amend the terms of the car park management deed to increase the penalty payment of £10 therein to £50 as this would be in line with other supermarkets in the area.

The Head of Resources informed members that should the committee not agree to the request an independent person could be nominated to make a decision and could award costs against the council.

Members discussed the request and considered that the car park was an integral part of the town centre and that there was no need for an increase to be levied. It was considered that people generally did not stay for more than three hours and that there was always parking available. With regard to the fee being the same as other supermarket car parks it was considered that this was a different type of car park compared to others in the town. Members noted that no charges were levied for parking in council-owned and run car parks; a change to increase the level of the penalty in the management deed could not therefore be supported.

An amendment was proposed by Councillor Griffiths that the increase be refused. This was seconded by Councillor Lawman and on being put to the vote was declared carried.

This then became the substantive motion and on being put to the vote was declared carried.

RESOLVED that the request by Wm Morrisons to increase the penalty charge to £50 for Sharman Road car park be refused.

8. LOCAL PLAN ADVISORY GROUP

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Planning and Local Development was received to set up a local plan advisory group of five members of the Services Committee.

Councillor Emerson asked that membership of the working group be from a wider group to include the Resources Committee membership. The chairman reminded members that the local plan came under the remit of the Services Committee.

It was proposed that the following five members be appointed to the local plan advisory group:

Councillors Carr, Emerson, G Lawman, Scanlon and Skittrall.

On being put to the vote this was declared carried.

- R1 RECOMMENDED** that a local plan advisory group be set up with Councillors Carr, Emerson, G Lawman, Scanlon and Skittrall being appointed thereto and that the terms of reference for such group be adopted.

9. ANY OTHER ITEM

The chairman informed members that officers would like to give a short presentation regarding the local plan prior to the next Services Committee on 14 September 2015 at 6pm which would be open to all members to attend.

Chairman

The meeting concluded at 8.10pm.

COUNCIL MEETING – 21 JULY 2015

REPORT OF THE PARTNERSHIPS AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

6 July 2015

Present: Councillors Allebone (Chairman), Gough (Vice-Chairman), Abram, Bone, Carr, Morrall, Partridge-Underwood, Patel, V Waters, and Watts.

Also present: Mrs B Lawrence, Head of Resources, and Mr S Whiteley, Electoral Services Officer.

(Councillors Bell and Emerson attended the meeting as observers. Councillor Walia did not attend the meeting.)

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the chairman welcomed the new committee members and gave a brief overview of the expected reports and presentations for the next year.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED to note that apologies for absence were received from Councillors Aslam, Simmons, Maguire, and York.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED to note that there were no declarations of interest.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2015 be confirmed and signed.

4. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Resources was received to provide members with some background on the work of the Wellingborough Community Safety Partnership and to inform members about the current partnership project on collaborative working.

The chairman welcomed Police Sergeant Paul Valentine, who explained his secondment to the Borough Council of Wellingborough and the role of the Community Safety Partnership in relation to policing and the council. He also raised the issue of tackling drug offences within Wellingborough, making reference to Operations Pyramid and Fever, which helped to remove 30 drug dealers from the street, particularly in the Hemmingwell and Queensway areas. He explained that the Northamptonshire Police and Crime Commissioner is planning for “one stop shops” in communities to aid reporting of antisocial behaviour and hate crime, with the aim that a more permanent “footprint” will improve police visibility and build relationships within the communities.

Sergeant Valentine went on to explain that part of his seconded role will be to identify how future opportunities for one stop shops may present themselves in the borough, and that recommendations would go to the police and the

council as to how community hubs could be established, and which voluntary organisations could be worked with to achieve this. He said the project is keen to build on the work that has already been done by many of the faith-based community initiatives in Wellingborough, and empower those groups to work more closely with the Community Safety Partnership and the police.

Sergeant Valentine also identified that, although the borough does not have serious issues with shoplifting and that there is a strong CCTV system in the area, greater work could be done with businesses in the borough, with a view to a potential Business Watch Partnership and the introduction of Taxi Watch.

Members asked questions in regard to hate crime, domestic violence and shoplifting within the borough. Sergeant Valentine explained that although he was not aware of an increase in hate crime, the ambition for the one stop shops would be as a community location to report hate crime, domestic violence and other antisocial behaviour. Sergeant Valentine stated that his recommendations would be put to the Community Safety Partnership. He has addressed the Retail Crime Partnership that already exists in Wellingborough and the potential aims for improvement of this partnership, including greater continuity between stores inside and outside of the main shopping centre, and better information sharing between store managers to help the prevention and reduction of theft and other retail crime.

Sergeant Valentine explained that the community hub and one stop shop solutions provide local premises for the reporting of crime and antisocial behaviour and they were working well with police community support officers (PCSOs) in the borough. Sergeant Valentine gave the example of joint working in Earls Barton, where the police and fire service shared buildings, and where further integration could be possible in the longer term.

Sergeant Valentine agreed with members that the police cadet scheme was popular, and recent trials at local schools were well received by both staff and students but their continuation would be dependent on funding.

In response to members' questions, Sergeant Valentine explained the scope of Taxi Watch as a training scheme for taxi drivers, with an aim to cut down on crime involving vulnerable people, child sexual exploitation and missing persons - and also gave examples of some authorities requiring membership of Taxi Watch as a part of successful licencing applications. Taxi Watch also provided some opportunities for integration with the night-time economy, including door security staff that can take on a "taxi warden" role. Sergeant Valentine explained that an inaugural meeting to scope interest in a business partnership with relevant stakeholders was due to take place in August 2015.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the report on the Community Safety Partnership project be noted;
- (ii) the Community Safety Partnership be asked to investigate the setting up of a Taxi Watch in the borough.

5. PRESENTATION BY THE CENTRAL AND EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

The chairman expressed his disappointment that nobody from Central and East Northamptonshire Citizen's Advice Bureau was in attendance to give their presentation, and had not sent any apologies. It was agreed that the item would be deferred; officers would investigate the reason for the absence and discuss with the chairman whether the report could be rescheduled.

6. PRESENTATION BY GLAMIS HALL FOR ALL

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Resources was received to introduce a presentation relating to the work of Glamis Hall for All.

The chairman welcomed Ms H Saunders of Glamis Hall for All. Ms Saunders' presentation began by describing milestones reached over the six month period since the charity took the keys for the Glamis Hall building, including the launch of the lunch club, the partial kitchen upgrade, the Glamis Hall float at Wellingborough Carnival and the first public event, where £800 was raised for the charity.

Ms Saunders explained some of the challenges faced by the charity, including fluctuating attendances, but said that new clients were beginning to use the services provided, and that the expectation was that the charity would break even one month ahead of target.

Ms Saunders outlined the staffing arrangements at Glamis Hall, which includes over 30 regular volunteers and a community organiser, partially funded by Locality. She then presented a price list comparing Glamis Hall services to other local care services, and outlined some of the sporting services and hire services offered at the hall, along with a new website, and a new community newsletter. The newsletter printing costs were funded by Northamptonshire County Council empowerment fund, and students from Weavers School had been engaged to assist with creation of the newsletter.

Ms Saunders closed by considering what could be done to help target vulnerable people in more affluent areas of the town and borough who would benefit from Glamis Hall services, and asked if there were alternative ways the council could support Glamis Hall for All, including publicising the service and opportunities for grants. Before members' questions, the Head of Resources explained that publicising the service via the Borough Council of Wellingborough website was not a problem, and that although all grants had currently been allocated, future allocation of grants would be considered by the Voluntary Sector Grants Working Party, which would make a recommendation to Resources Committee.

Councillor Watts thanked Ms Saunders and Glamis Hall for All for the work they had undertaken over the last six month period.

Members then queried the client capacity of Glamis Hall, which Ms Saunders stated as approximately fifty people per day. Members also suggested some

measures which could increase revenue or reduce costs for Glamis Hall, including renting solar panels to provide low-cost electricity, and alternative means of advertising its services such as local village publications, suggesting the parish clerks as the best point of contact for these publications.

RESOLVED that presentation by Glamis Hall for All be noted.

Chairman

The meeting closed at 8:25pm.

COUNCIL MEETING – 21 JULY 2015
REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

7 July 2015

Present: Councillors Bailey, (Chairman), L Lawman, (Vice-Chairman), Bell, Francis, Henley, Simmons and Skittrall.

Also present: Mrs L Elliott, Head of Finance, Mr M Watkins, Chief Internal Auditor, CW Audit Services, Mrs S Knowles, Principal Accountancy Manager and Ms E Davidson, Committee Administrator.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED to note that apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bell, who later attended the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED to note that no declarations were made.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2015 be confirmed and signed.

4. AUDIT COMMITTEE ASSURANCE

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Finance was received to provide details to the audit committee of ways it could seek the assurance it needs to fulfil its role as defined in the constitution and local code of corporate governance.

The report set out a list of actions for the committee to consider in seeking assurance that the council was carrying out its duties correctly. Appended to the report was guidance from CIPFA, to highlight areas of most importance for members.

Following on from recent training queries had been made in relation to committee membership and the Head of Finance confirmed that she would provide the committee with further advice about the roles of its members in other civic capacities.

Members asked for sight of the register of byelaws. The Head of Finance would ask the Monitoring Officer to provide this information.

Councillors asked to be advised of any concerns arising from the corporate risk register, and conversely to discuss any concerns the committee raised with the Monitoring Officer. It was agreed that the Head of Finance would consider if the Monitoring Officer and/or the Head of Resources should attend future meetings.

A training date had been arranged for 8 September at 7pm. Councillors asked the Head of Finance to inform them of online training opportunities and asked that fraud training be included in future training plans.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the report be noted;
- (ii) It be noted that the Head of Finance would update the audit committee in respect of any reportable risks and invite the Monitoring Officer and/or the Head of Resources to attend future meetings where this would give members the opportunity to seek further assurance on risks identified.

5. ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Finance was presented to the committee by Mr M Watkins, Chief Internal Auditor. The report provided the internal auditor's opinion on the work undertaken in 2014-15 and formed part of the independent assurance sources for the Annual Governance Statement.

Of the three levels of assurance reportable, the report provided a 'significant' level of assurance; the highest level possible. There were no significant internal control issues of note. .

The report also provided the committee with items considered of importance. These had been raised in previous reviews throughout the year and it was confirmed they were being taken forward by the Head of Finance.

Members queried why detailed reports on items of only moderate assurance had not been brought to previous committees. The Chief Internal Auditor responded that he had not wished to duplicate reports and considered the Annual Internal Audit Report a summary. He agreed to circulate the five outstanding priority two reports as a members' briefing note to the Audit Committee only.

(Councillor Bell, whose apologies had been accepted, joined the meeting at 7.43pm.)

In response to councillors' concerns about following up outstanding actions, the Chief Internal Auditor explained that CW Audit provided a set number of working days to the council. The allocation of these days was planned on a risk basis with the Head of Finance. Completion of actions was usually by way of self-assessment and submission of evidence, but in high-risk cases may be re-visited by the auditors.

Mr Watkins gave a summary of the five outstanding reports. This prompted members to request the summary as an appendix to future internal audit reports.

RESOLVED that the report be noted as part of the committee's role in reviewing internal audit coverage and the internal audit opinion for the year 2014-15.

6. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2014-15

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Finance was presented to the committee. Together with an explanation that whilst it was no longer considered to be part of the Statement of Accounts, the Annual Governance Statement required member approval each year.

The Head of Finance corrected an error in 5.1 of the report, which stated that the un-audited statement of accounts had been approved and signed 'for audit on 30 June 2014'. This should have read '26 June 2015'.

Members questioned whether the project plan for the crematorium would have slipped unacceptably if an urgent action had not been utilised. There followed a discussion about the use of urgent action. As part of the discussion it was confirmed that and estimated six urgent actions had been used over the past financial year.

On being put to the vote, the motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED that the Annual Governance Statement 2014-15.

(Councillor Henley asked that it be noted that he abstained from voting on this item.)

7. UN-AUDITED STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2014-15

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Finance was received to provide members with the draft statement of accounts.

The Head of Finance explained that the un-audited statement of accounts had been circulated later than other papers for the meeting owing to the end of June deadline for approval by the Section 151 Officer. The Head of Finance suggested that to avoid this in future years, the July audit committee could be moved to later in the month. This was agreed by all councillors.

It was explained that new legislation required accounts to be approved by the end of May 2017 and audit completed by the end of July. The finance team had investigated ways to streamline the process to meet the new deadlines.

The Principal Accountancy Manager informed members that the audited accounts would be brought to committee in September. She stated she was satisfied that few discrepancies would be identified by the external auditor, since the council had purchased a toolkit from CIPFA which analysed the accounts and had been used in conjunction with the council's own tool for this purpose; both products had found the accounts reconciled.

The Head of Finance said she would distribute A Guide to BCW Statement of Accounts to assist members with reading and understanding the document.

Members queried the potential arrears impairment in the document and the Principal Accountancy Manager replied that this figure included commercial debt. The Head of Finance explained the provision did not represent the true amount to be written off, but was a provision allowed to minimise impact on budgets in the event that outstanding high risk debt was not recovered. Some of the provision was for historic housing benefit overpayments.

Councillor Henley proposed that a report on bad debt provision be produced for Resources Committee to consider. This was seconded by Councillor Bailey and on being put to the vote declared carried.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the accounting policies as set out in section E of the Statement of Accounts, Note 1 be approved;
- (ii) the content of the Statement of Accounts be noted;
- (iii) A report relating to debtors impairment be presented to the Resources Committee

Chairman

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.