

## COUNCIL MEETING – 23 FEBRUARY 2017

### REPORT OF THE SERVICES COMMITTEE

17 January 2017

Present: Councillors G Lawman (Chairman), Hallam (Vice-Chairman), Skittrall and Watts

Also present: Mrs L Elliott, (Head of Finance), Mrs G Chapman, (Principal Community Support Manager), Mrs A Wilcox, (Principal Environmental Health Manager), Mrs C A Mundy, (Democratic Services Officer) and Miss N Harewood, (Governance Officer).

#### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

**RESOLVED** to note that apologies for absence were received from Councillors Maguire, Scanlon and Stevenson.

#### 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
Lawman G	4	Operational policy and conditions governing taxi and private hire licensing.	Other – has a relationship with a private hire company

#### 3. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 SEPTEMBER 2016

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Services Committee held on 27 September 2016 be confirmed and signed.

#### 4. REVIEW OF OPERATIONAL POLICY AND CONDITIONS GOVERNING TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Planning and Local Development was received in relation to informing members of the results of the consultation exercise on the draft policy and conditions.

Appended to the report was a summary of the consultation responses along with the draft operational policy and appendices.

The consultation had resulted in 16 responses being received; 14 from licensed drivers/operators, one from the Wellingborough Hackney Carriage

Association and one from the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire. Particular reference was made to the introduction of the following:

- an Exceptional Vehicle Age Policy;
- the use of CCTV within licensed vehicles;
- medical checks on drivers;
- door signage on vehicles – no use of magnetic signage;
- the defined colour of hackney carriage vehicles being mid-yellow;
- wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles and the loading thereof;
- permission for one bluetooth earpiece only.

Members asked questions of the Principal Environmental Health Manager for the purpose of clarity, particularly around the fees charged and discrimination regarding the disabled. She responded to these queries explaining that as a general rule private hire vehicles were cheaper than hackney carriages and that drivers were not allowed to discriminate regarding the disabled and had to fulfil travel requirements. She was also planning training for licence holders on the Disability Act.

Councillor Lawman advised that anyone who was unhappy with the service provided by a taxi driver should report it to the licensing section.

A query was also raised with regard to operator records and whether computerised records could be changed or overwritten and whether the information was 'backed up' and secure, with a suggestion that this could be added to the policy. The Principal Environmental Health Manager confirmed that she would add this provision to the policy.

**RESOLVED** that the updated policy and conditions governing Taxi and Private Hire licensing be implemented from 1 April 2017.

## **5. REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ENFORCEMENT POLICY**

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Planning and Local Development was received to update members on the results of the consultation exercise on the reviewed Environmental Health Enforcement Policy and to seek approval to the updated policy, which was appended to the report.

The report detailed the six week consultation that had taken place between 14 October 2016 and 25 November 2016. No responses had been received to the consultation and it was therefore proposed that the policy be adopted.

**RESOLVED** that the Environmental Health Service Enforcement Policy be approved.

## **6. PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER (PSPO)**

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Finance was received to seek approval to consult on the terms of a potential Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO).

The proposed provisions of the PSPO were appended to the report.

The original Designated Public Protection Order had been introduced in 2009 to cover the town centre and adjacent street and had allowed police officers to confiscate alcohol if anti-social behaviour was being caused by the effects of alcohol consumption. This order would lapse in October 2017 following the introduction of the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act which had come into force in 2014. This Act gives the power to replace the DPPO with a PSPO which are designed to stop individuals or groups of people committing ASB in a public place. Restrictions could be placed on an area where activities had a detrimental effect on the quality of life of local people. Evidence would be needed to support any measures introduced.

The dog control orders would also lapse but would automatically convert to PSPOs, but the scope of the orders would also need reviewing.

It was also suggested that the consultation should include reference to the policing of unauthorised parking. The chairman informed the meeting that the Parking Working Group would be discussing this issue.

It was proposed that a consultation be carried out on the PSPO area, which mirrors the current town centre boundaries and the provisions relating to the management of dogs, though other interested parties, such as parish councils would be consulted. The consultation would be for a period of six weeks starting at the beginning of February and running until mid-March.

### **RESOLVED that:**

- (i) a consultation be carried out by officers regarding the introduction of a Public Spaces Protection Order;
- (ii) a further report be received later in the year to consider whether to implement a Public Spaces Protection Order and, if so, what particular provisions any proposed order should include, taking into account the responses to the consultation.

Chairman

The meeting concluded at 7.40pm.



## **COUNCIL MEETING – 23 FEBRUARY 2017**

### **REPORT OF THE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

30 January 2017

Present: Councillors Carr (Chairman), Skittrall (Vice-Chairman), Anslow, Bailey, Beirne, Bone, Ekins, Emerson, L Lawman, Maguire, Partridge-Underwood, Walia, V Waters and Watts.

Also present: Miss J Thomas, (Head of Planning and Local Development), Mrs V Phillipson, (Principal Policy and Regeneration Manager), Mrs S Bateman, (Senior Planning Officer) and Mrs C A Mundy, (Democratic Services Officer).

(Councillors Griffiths and G Lawman attended as observers.)

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations made.

#### **3. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 5 DECEMBER 2016.**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Development Committee of 5 December 2016 be approved.

#### **4. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME REVIEW**

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Planning and Local Development was received to seek approval of the reviewed Local Development Scheme (LDS) for the Plan for the Borough of Wellingborough (PBW).

The report detailed the requirement for a planning authority to publish the local development scheme on its website. This would inform the public of the documents that were being prepared as part of the local plan along with the date of their production. The original LDS had been produced in April 2016 and the reviewed document was appended to the report.

The report also detailed the completed stages of the PBW along with the next stages in the process.

A councillor referred to the consultation that was expected to take place following the June 2017 Development Committee meeting and expressed concern that the proposed six week consultation period was insufficient. The Senior Planning Officer explained that this six week period complied with the

regulations and that this consultation related to the technical consultation stage which was unlikely to attract much comment from the general public.

A query was also raised regarding the position of Programme Officer and whether this was a new post that was specific to the local plan.

The Senior Planning Officer responded explaining that the Programme Officer was a set role to assist the Planning Inspectorate, and was a temporary position which would be a mix of part-time and full-time.

**RESOLVED** that the Local Development Scheme (January 2017 review) be approved for publication on the council's website.

**5. MEARS ASHBY VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Planning and Local Development was received in relation to the adoption of the Mears Ashby Village Design Statement (VDS) as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

A formal consultation on the Village Design Statement had taken place between the 17 November 2016 and 30 December 2016. Comments had been received from the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England and were appended to the report. The comments had been considered and a decision taken not to make any changes to the VDS other than to correct typographical errors. The Senior Planning Officer confirmed that she was now in receipt of an updated copy of the statement with all minor errors corrected.

**R1 RECOMMENDED** that the Mears Ashby Village Design Statement be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document.

Chairman

The meeting concluded at 7.08pm.

**COUNCIL MEETING – 23 FEBRUARY 2017**  
**REPORT OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

1 February 2017

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 L Elliott, (Head of Finance), Mrs B Gamble, (Head of Resources), Miss J Thomas, (Head of Planning and Local Development), Miss S Lyons, (Solicitor/Monitoring Officer, 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 Allebone (for part of the meeting) and Councillor Skittrall attended as observers.)

**1. APOLOGIES**

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, no declarations were made.

**3. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 7 DECEMBER 2017**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Resources Committee held on 7 December 2016, be confirmed and signed.

**4. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2017/18**

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Resources was received in relation to the council's Pay Policy Statement which, under the Localism Act 2011, had to be published on 1 April 2017.

The draft Pay Policy Statement was appended to the report. The statement referred to all aspects of remuneration and gave background information on arrangements for all officers

**R1 RECOMMENDED** that the Pay Policy Statement 2017/18 be approved for publication.

## **5. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN**

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

The report referred to the capital member review meeting held on 5 January 2017 which had reviewed the public realm schemes, most of these schemes had been deleted with two schemes being transferred to appendix B - schemes awaiting further information. The working group had also recommended that the capital strategy be updated to enable the community grants project to commence. The report also detailed the process for new capital schemes. Also appended to the report was a summary of capital resources.

A member asked if the Section 106 funding referred to at Appendix A had to be returned if not spent during a particular timescale. The Principal Finance Manager clarified that the monies were committed and therefore did not need to be returned.

Clarification was sought on the following:

- what the assets for sale referred to;
- the asset held for sale;
- other anticipated receipts and whether this referred to Wellingborough North.

The Principal Finance Manager confirmed that assets for sale was an estimate of income expected from the sale of capital assets; the asset held for sale related to the site at Lea Way. The other anticipated receipts did include Wellingborough North but it was not anticipated that this would be received this financial year.

Clarification was also sought on the balance of available funding and whether this was £23m or £18m. The Principal Finance Manager confirmed that the sum of £23m included the sum of £5m retained to maintain the minimum level of reserves balance.

Queries were also raised about the capital community funding availability and the amount that would be available to bid for.

The Head of Finance informed the meeting that this had been discussed by the working group and she was currently working on establishing a process to present to this committee in March. The working group would meet in early April to set priorities.

Some councillors expressed their concern over the process and the delays in spending and allocating capital funds particularly to community groups. The chairman considered that the system, as agreed, should continue with a review after six months.

Confirmation was sought over when funding, in relation to Wellingborough North, may be expected.

The Head of Finance informed councillors that work in relation to the section 106 monies was ongoing with the developers and it was hopeful that once concluded funding may be available during the next financial year.

**R2 RECOMMENDED that:**

- (i) approval be given to the capital funding being made available for the financial years 2017-18 to 2021-22 as detailed in appendix A to the report;
- (ii) the list of capital schemes awaiting information, as shown in appendix B to the report, be approved, in principle, to enable schemes to be released into the capital programme at a later date, in line with the council decision making policy, as soon as the information to progress the scheme is received.

**6. REVENUE BUDGET 2017-18 AND THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY PROJECTIONS**

The annexed circulated report and tabled amended report of the Head of Finance was received to provide members with detailed proposals for the revenue budget for 2017-18 and to give an updated forecast of the projected position for the subsequent financial years.

The report also included a proposal regarding council tax for 2017-18 in line with the draft budget position previously presented at the Resources Committee meeting on 7 December 2016 for consultation along with a recommendation for future council tax increases.

Appended to the report were the following:

- 2017-18 Budget Analysis;
- Pressures and savings included as part of the 2017-18 budget;
- Medium term financial projections 2017-18 to 2020-21;
- Budget 2017-18 consultation response analysis;
- Fees and charges schedule;
- Section 25 report.

The report detailed the continuing challenges facing local government and the need for prudence. The report detailed the savings for 2017-18 that were required amounting to approximately £1,070k. Efficiencies had already been made in many areas and reserves would need to be used to fund the revenue budget.

The public had been consulted on the budget proposed for 2017-18 and the responses were detailed at appendix four to the report. The proposed budget for 2017-18, considered the medium term financial position and included the

proposed council tax for the borough council and a recommendation for future council tax increases.

The council had accepted the government's offer of a four year settlement covering the period 2016-17 to 2019-20 and the total provisional funding, comprising of Business Rates Retention Scheme (BRRS) and Revenue Support Grant (RSG) was shown in the report.

Reference was made to the changes to the New Homes Bonus scheme and the introduction of the national baseline for housing growth of 0.4% which would impact on funding. This was reflected in appendix three of the report.

The report also detailed the medium term financial projections and the need to save around £1,070k in 2017-18, rising to £1.6m per annum by 2020-21; a total of £4.1m over four years. This amount would need to be met from reserves if savings had not been identified. The report detailed the current level of general fund reserves and the minimum level of reserves. The level of general fund reserves would be insufficient to create a balanced budget over the four year period, in accordance with the council's reserves policy.

Savings proposals and budget additions were also detailed in the report. Changes to service delivery and quality would need to be further developed and consulted upon.

The report detailed the proposed increases to council tax, as recommended by the Section 151 officer, for the next four years which represented the current maximum increases allowable before a referendum was required.

The economic outlook was also referred to with the expectation that the uncertainty of the post-Brexit era would be reflected in inflation over the next three years.

Reference was also made to the budget for 2017-18 and the budget forecasts for 2018-19 to 2020-21 and these were detailed further in appendix one and appendix three respectively.

The general fund balance for the current financial year indicated that the general fund balance at 31 March 2017 would be £3.9m, which was considered to be prudent, giving the reliance on reserves to balance the current budget.

The report detailed the collection fund deficit and council tax in relation to a Band D property for 2016-17 and 2017-18.

Reference was made to the Business Rates Retention Scheme and the changes that would be expected to this in 2020-21 to encourage business growth.

Details of the budget consultation that had taken place were appended to the report along with the Chief Finance officer's statement.

The report also referred to the appointment of external auditors and the option to 'opt-in' to the national sector led appointment thereof.

Members referred to appendix three and asked questions of officers in relation to the Crematorium, Croyland Hall and Abbey, Business Rates, fees and charges and the costs of delivering services and invest to save projects.

The Head of Finance responded to the queries and confirmed that her statement as appended to the report was a prudent view. She would be able to provide some documentation in regard to service areas and the fees and charges and whether these balanced themselves out or not.

A member commented that the results of the consultation process did not reflect the ethnicity of the borough. The Head of Finance confirmed that efforts had been made to get more people involved in our consultations and that we used Survey Monkey, there had been an increase in responses this year. She would consider various alternative options for future consultations.

**R3 RECOMMENDED** that approval be given:

- (i) to an increase in the council's average Band D council tax in 2017-18 of £5 (4.96%), as allowed within the referendum levels announced;
- (ii) to the following increases in the council's Band D council tax in 2018-19 to 2020-21, subject to meeting referendum criteria:
  - (a) 2018-19: £5.00 (4.73%);
  - (b) 2019-20: £5.00 (4.52%);
  - (c) 2020-21: £2.30 (1.99%);
- (iii) for funding from reserves, in principle, should this be required following a decision of a future Services Committee (in relation to the operation of Wollaston HWRC within 2017-18);
- (iv) to the revenue budget for 2017-18, as detailed at appendix one of the report, and the financial plan, as detailed at appendix three of the report;
- (v) to the fees and charges schedule 2017-18;
- (vi) to 'opt in' to the national sector led appointment of external auditors as detailed in the Audit Committee report of 13 September 2016 and as outlined in section 13 of the report.

**7. COUNTER FRAUD AND CORRUPTION STRATEGY**

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Finance was received in relation to the Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy which was appended to the report.

The key elements of the strategy and were to acknowledge and understand fraud risks, prevent and detect more fraud, and pursue fraudsters by punishing and recovering losses.

A member asked if details regarding the use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers (RIPA) would be reported to committee. The Principal Revenue and

Benefits Manager responded and confirmed that there had been no use of the powers but that he would provide a members briefing note in this regard.

**RESOLVED** that the Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy, as appended to the report, be adopted.

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

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

The report detailed debts over the sum of £2,000 that were now considered to be irrecoverable, The total amount of council tax cases amounted to £25,947.89 and housing benefit overpayments of £10,964.28.

There were no questions and the report was heard in the open part of the meeting.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) approval be given to the sum of £36,912.17 of irrecoverable council tax and housing benefit overpayments be written-off;
- (ii) it be noted that the sum of £32,555.12 has been written off under the delegated powers of the Section 151 officer.

Chairman

The meeting closed at 8pm

## COUNCIL MEETING – 23 FEBRUARY 2017

### REPORT OF THE PARTNERSHIPS AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

6 February 2017

Present: Councillors L Lawman (Chairman), Gough (Vice-Chairman), Abram, Allebone, Aslam, and Simmons.

Also present: Mrs B Gamble, (Head of Resources), Mrs G Chapman, (Principal Community Support Manager), Miss K Denton, (Principal Corporate Support Manager) and Miss E McGinlay, (Electoral Services Officer).

(Councillors Carr, Ekins, Griffiths and G Lawman attended as observers. Inspector D Lyons, Northamptonshire Police and Mr J Cable, Manager at Wellingborough BID attended to present reports.)

#### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

**RESOLVED** to note that an apology was received from Councillor Graves.

#### 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 26 September 2016 be confirmed and signed.

#### 4. PRESENTATION FROM WELLINGBOROUGH BID

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Resources was received to introduce members to the presentation by Wellingborough BID (Business Improvement District).

The chairman welcomed Mr Cable, who presented information about the BID to members. Mr Cable informed the committee about the background of the BID and what services it offered to its members and local businesses in the borough. He explained that the BID's main objective was to promote business growth within the Wellingborough area and confirmed details of upcoming planned events.

Members discussed the provision of services and support that the BID provide and considered the value to businesses yet to join the organisation. Mr Cable noted that the free recycling service they provide to local businesses is a main benefit of the BID. He advised that events hosted by the BID increased footfall in the town which is likely to encourage visitors to spend money in the town. The chairman thanked Mr Cable on behalf of the committee for the essential work that Wellingborough BID do in order to promote business growth for Wellingborough.

**RESOLVED** that the presentation be noted and that no further matters be reported for consideration to any policy committees.

#### 5. PRESENTATION FROM GOODWILL SOLUTIONS

The representative from Goodwill Solutions was unable to attend and address the committee and will be invited to a future meeting to present a report to members.

## **6. WELLINGBOROUGH COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP**

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Finance was received to give background to the Wellingborough Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and inform members about the current partnership priorities and work streams.

The Principal Community Support Manager introduced the report and informed members that the reporting now focuses on more than simply police statistics, having moved towards a more detailed and balanced approach. It was communicated that the shared aim of the CSP was to reduce crime and protect people from harm.

The chairman welcomed Inspector Lyons who introduced himself to the committee. He briefed members on his priorities and advised them of his plans to increase accountability, transparency and visibility of the local police force in an effort to establish a stronger relationship between the police and key partners in the borough. He emphasised that his preferred approach was one of problem solving rather than being reactive.

Members discussed the benefit of police hubs in challenging wards in the borough, and asked the Inspector for reassurance that these would still be available to the public. Inspector Lyons confirmed that there is a new hub being created for the Wellingborough and East Northants area which he envisages to be a multi-agency hub combining services and support from the Police, Child Services, Early Help and other relevant agencies.

**RESOLVED** that the report on the Wellingborough Community Safety Partnership be noted.

## **7. COMPLAINTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLIMENTS AND FOI PERFORMANCE**

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Resources was received to inform the committee of the council's performance, including Wellingborough Norse, during the first half of 2016/2017 in handling customer feedback. It also included performance details for managing FOI requests considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

The Principal Corporate Support Manager introduced the report and advised of an amendment on page 49: the number of completed complaints dealt with by Wellingborough Norse was 34/34 and not 35/34.

Members discussed the level of complaints regarding bin repairs and made some suggestions about reducing these. The Head of Resources committed to ensuring that Wellingborough Norse was made aware of the suggestions so it could consider them as part of their approach to the repair and replacement of bins.

The chairman acknowledged and thanked the frontline officers for their hard work and asked that the thanks be noted in the minutes, to which all members agreed.

**RESOLVED** that the report on compliments, comments and complaints, and Freedom of Information be noted.

Chairman

The meeting closed at 8.25pm.