

## COUNCIL MEETING – 11 JULY 2017

### REPORT OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

28 June 2017

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

Also present: Mrs L Elliott, (Managing Director), Mrs B Gamble and Miss J Thomas, (Directors), Miss S Lyons, (Solicitor, District Law), Mr P Burnett, (Principal Property and Facilities Manager), Mrs V Philipson, (Principal Planning Policy and Regeneration Manager), Mr N Robinson, (Principal Revenue and Benefits Manager), Mrs J O'Connell, (Accountancy, Team Leader) and Mrs C A Mundy, (Democratic Services Officer).

#### 1. APOLOGIES

**RESOLVED** to note that apologies for absence were received from Councillors Carr, Hallam and L Lawman.

#### 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 declarations were made:

Councillor	Min no.	Report title	Reason
Francis	8	Authorisation of council representative at the Magistrates court	Other – is a Magistrate at Wellingborough court
G Lawman	11	Property matters	Personal – is one of the council representatives on the Board of Wellingborough Homes
Scarborough	6	Treasury Management Outturn – Annual report 2016-17	DPI – wife is consultant for financial services organisations
Scarborough	8	Authorisation of council representative at the Magistrates Court	Registerable – is a Justice of the Peace.

**3. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15 MARCH 2017**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the resources committee held on 15 March 2017, be confirmed and signed.

**4. CAPITAL OUTTURN 2016-17**

The annexed circulated report of the Section 151 officer was received in relation to an overview of the council's capital expenditure against approved budget for the financial year 2016-17.

The report detailed the total programme for capital schemes for the year in the sum of £4.750m. An updated forecast of expenditure was reported in March 2017 as being £2.648m. A final capital programme monitoring statement for 2016-17 detailed an outturn of £2.051m, being a variation of £0.597m compared to the previously revised forecast of £2.648m.

The managing director explained the reasons for some of the delays in capital expenditure, making particular reference to earmarked funds for empty properties; compulsory purchase orders; disabled facilities grants, which were committed funds with ongoing work taking place; and delays to the shop front improvement work taking place in Market Street.

Some members raised concern that capital monies were not being spent within the financial year and asked whether the review of the projects list, as requested at the committee in March, had been undertaken, as this was expected for the June committee but had not been circulated.

The managing director clarified that a review would be undertaken and presented to committee in September. Members asked that, rather than wait until the next committee, the information be provided in the form of a members' briefing note within the next few weeks. The managing director confirmed that she would make arrangements for this to be done.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) the outturn position on the capital programme and the reason for the variances be noted;
- (ii) the position on the funding of the capital programme be noted and that approval be given to the re-profiling of budgets;
- (iii) the update in relation to the 2017-18 capital programme, including approved urgent actions, be noted.

## **5. REVENUE OUTTURN 2016-17**

The annexed circulated report of the Section 151 officer was received in relation to the council's revenue expenditure against approved budget for the financial year 2016-17.

The closure of the accounts process for the 2016-17 financial year had been completed and would be subject to external audit.

The council had set its budget in February 2016 at £9.936m for expenditure, with associated ongoing sustainable funding of £9.317m, resulting in the need for £619,000 to be transferred from revenue reserves to support the level of expenditure.

The final outturn position had been calculated to require £530,000 of general reserves to fund the 2016-17 budget. This meant that £89,000 of reserves had not been required.

The report emphasised the need to address the deficit in the budget as the use of reserves was unsustainable.

Appended to the report was a summary of budget monitoring at 31 March 2017.

A member asked for clarification in relation to 6.8 of the report and the creation of three new reserves. The managing director explained why these were required.

A member also made reference to the difficulties experienced by the voluntary sector in relation to grant funding; the significant issues with regard to homelessness and the need to use bed and breakfast accommodation; and the continuing difficulties in recruiting to building control.

The managing director clarified that it had been difficult to recruit building control officers and consideration was being given to how this service could best be delivered. Homelessness and the provision of temporary accommodation was an ongoing national issue. There were no families being housed in this type of accommodation over the target of six weeks currently, but there were a continually high number of other households in temporary accommodation. Work was ongoing with a number of housing associations to find a solution to this issue.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) approval be given to the creation of new ear marked reserves as detailed in 6.8c of the report;
- (ii) approval be given to the utilisation of existing ear marked reserves as detailed in 6.8a of the report;

- (iii) approval be given to the contribution to existing ear marked reserves as detailed in 6.8b of the report;
- (iv) the outturn position, subject to audit, as outlined in the report along with the reasons for the projected outturn variations as at 31 March 2017, be noted.

## **6. TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN – ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17**

The annexed circulated report of the Section 151 officer was received in relation to the annual report of treasury management activity for 2016-17.

(Councillor Scarborough left the meeting during discussion on this item, having previously made a declaration in relation to this.)

Appended to the report were the prudential indicators for the year 2016-17 along with the economic overview as at 31 May 2017.

The report detailed the investments in money market transactions; long term investments for periods greater than one year; investment trusts; borrowing; interest received; and future prospects.

**RESOLVED** that approval be given to the treasury management outturn position as detailed in the report.

(Councillor Scarborough returned to the meeting.)

## **7. STREET TRADING FEES**

The annexed circulated report of the director was received to provide clarity to members in relation to the street trading fees in Wellingborough town centre.

The resources committee at its meeting on 1 February approved the street trading fees appended to the report. A number of complaints had been received in relation to the significant increase in charges. The market working party had reconsidered the fees and agreed that they were correct, but felt that the way in which they were implemented was not clear. The market working party had proposed that the table of fees be amended as detailed in appendix two attached to the report to provide clarity, particularly around annual, quarterly, monthly and weekly fees.

Members thanked officers for reviewing the scheme to improve its clarity and expressed thanks to officers and the working group for the improvements that had been made to the market. The managing director also confirmed that the Christmas market would be located on the market square this year.

**RESOLVED** that the clarification provided be welcomed and the updated street trading fee schedule, to be implemented retrospectively from 1 April 2017, be agreed.

## **8. AUTHORISATION TO REPRESENT THE COUNCIL AT COURT**

The annexed circulated report of the managing director was received to seek authority for Sophie Greenham, Technical Revenue Officer, to represent the Borough Council of Wellingborough in proceedings before a magistrates' court.

**R1** **RECOMMENDED** that Sophie Greenham be duly authorised to represent the Borough Council of Wellingborough in proceedings before a magistrates' court.

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

The annexed circulated report of the managing director was received to seek approval of the write-off of irrecoverable debt.

The report detailed that the sum of £39,787.39 had been written off under the delegated power of the Section 151 officer. Also appended to the report were details of outstanding council tax cases totalling £8,693.25 and non-domestic rate cases totalling £7,401.28 which were recommended for write-off as irrecoverable debts.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) approval be given to the write-off of £16,094.53 of irrecoverable council tax and non-domestic rates;
- (ii) it be noted that the sum of £39,787.39 had been written off under the delegated power of the Section 151 officer.

## **10. SENIOR MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE**

The annexed circulated report of the managing director was received in relation to the future senior management structure of the council.

Appended to the report was the proposed structure.

The report detailed the changes that had already taken place to the council structure and the future proposals to ensure resilience at senior level in case of emergency and for succession planning.

The proposal was to create four assistant directors at deputy chief officer level to be filled by four of the existing nine principal managers, whose substantive posts would then be deleted. The salaries for these positions would be set at 60% of the director salaries – between £51,100 and £53,200 - with a supplement for the deputy Section 151 officer.

Further details of the new structure and funding were provided in the report.

Reference was also made to the application of “time off in lieu” arrangements to the chief executive, directors and assistant director posts. This was intended

to provide compensatory time off for any events or meetings attended outside standard office hours. The managing director confirmed that flexible working hours applied to the remainder of the workforce, but not to these posts. This change in terms and conditions would reflect those enjoyed before the recent restructure by heads of service (who were appointed as chief officers). In accordance with agreed practice, consultation had been carried out with union and employee representatives before the local agreement had been made.

The positions of assistant director would be advertised internally and, as these were deputy chief officer appointments, they would be made by the Appointments Panel who would receive appropriate training.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) approval be given to the creation of four assistant director posts at deputy chief officer level with a salary band set at 60% of chief officer (director) salaries of £51,100 to £53,200, with the continued provision of a supplement for the deputy Section 151 officer;
- (ii) approval be given to recruitment from the pool of existing principal managers, following which the posts they vacated would be deleted from the establishment;
- (iii) approval be given to fund 60% of the salary of the assistant director for property services from capital budgets, for corporate projects being undertaken;
- (iv) the variation, by local agreement, to the terms and conditions of chief officers and the chief executive, to incorporate provision for time off in lieu for meetings, events and other council commitments (excluding elections) outside normal office hours be noted;
- (v) it be noted that the managing director would present a report to a future meeting outlining the structural arrangements for the remainder of the council.

## **11. PROPERTY MATTERS**

The annexed circulated report of the director was received in relation to a range of property matters.

Appended to the report were a number of exempt appendices.

The chairman asked if members wished to discuss these in detail as he would need to move this report to the confidential part of the meeting.

Members confirmed that further discussion was required.

## 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:

Minute No.	Item	Paragraph of Schedule 12A
13	Property Matters	E3

## 13. PROPERTY MATTERS

The exempt appendices to the property report were received.

The appendices related to the following:

- Appendix 1 - Croyland Hall and Abbey;
- Appendix 2 - Tithe Barn;
- Appendix 3 - Swanspool House and Pavilion;
- Appendix 4 - Doddington Road car park;
- Appendix 5 - Car parks in Victoria Ward;
- Appendix 6 - Multi-storey car park;
- Appendix 7 - Plan of Tithe Barn;
- Appendix 8 - Plan of Doddington Road car park;
- Appendix 9 - Plan of car parks in Victoria ward.

Members discussed each of the exempt appendices in turn and commented thereon, asking questions for clarity on the proposals before them.

Following a lengthy discussion the chairman put the recommendations to the vote.

Councillor Scarborough proposed an amendment to 4.1 of the report to agree, in principle, to the planned conversion of Croyland Hall and Abbey, but requesting that the project be retendered due to the significant increase in costs since the original proposals. Officers advised members of the risk of a further increase in cost if this approach was adopted because of the length of the procurement process, and provided an outline of the means by which each part of a project is tendered when a contractor is selected from a procurement framework. It was suggested that an alternative, more timely, way forward would be for an independent quantity surveyor to be appointed, so that officers could report back to September's committee. Members agreed this proposal.

An amendment was proposed to 4.3 in relation to the regeneration of Swanspool House and Pavilion, requesting a feasibility study to be undertaken immediately. It was considered that there was no requirement to refer to the

Town Centre Regeneration Advisory Group in advance, and this approach would mean that officers could report back to the committee late in the year on the viability of the options available.

An amendment was proposed to 4.4 in relation to the car park at Doddington Road, to enable planning permission to be sought, but requesting that a further report on viability be presented to resources committee so that a decision could be made in relation to the retention or disposal of the site.

Members asked that in relation to 4.5, car parks in Victoria ward, a further survey of the use of car parks 7 and 8 take place as there was concern that those car parks were still required. Officers agreed to provide an update on this to a future meeting.

With regard to 4.6 members proposed that car park 9 in Knox Road be disposed of on the open market at best consideration. This was agreed.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) to enable the future development of Croyland Hall and Abbey to be determined an independent quantity surveyor be commissioned to advise officers on the cost of the project, so that a further report could be submitted to the Resources Committee on 13 September 2017;
- (ii) the conversion of the Tithe Barn and its annexe into one café/function room for lease be agreed in principle, subject to appropriate planning permission and subject to a future report on viability;
- (iii) a feasibility study be undertaken immediately on Swanspool House and Pavilion as to the viability of options for regeneration of the whole site, with a further report to resources committee later in the year;
- (iv) planning permission for residential development on the council car park in Doddington Road be sought and a further report be presented to resources committee in due course on the viability of disposal or development by the council.
- (v) An update of the car parking survey for car parks 7 and 8 (as detailed on the plan attached to the appendix) in Winstanley Road would take place, and a further report submitted on the findings before planning permission could be considered for residential development;
- (vi) agreement be given to the disposal, at best consideration, of car park 9 in Knox Road, as detailed on the plan attached to the appendix;
- (vii) the position in relation to the multi-storey car park be noted and a further report would be submitted to a future meeting.

(Councillors Henley and Scarborough asked that their vote against (ii) above be recorded. Councillor Francis asked that her vote against (vi) above be recorded.)



**14. URGENT MATTER**

The chairman informed members that the following item was urgent within the meaning of section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 for the reason set out below:

<b>Minute no.</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Reason</b>
15	Redhill Farm road adoptions budget	An urgent decision was required to enable legal agreements with Northamptonshire County Council to be concluded and for the road adoptions to progress

**15. REDHILL FARM ROAD ADOPTIONS BUDGET**

The annexed circulated report of the director was received to seek approval to allocate £260,000 of capital reserves to the Redhill Farm road adoptions budget to cover the commuted sums required by Northamptonshire County Council, to enable the road adoption process at Redhill Farm to be completed.

**R2 RECOMMENDED** that £260,000 from capital reserves be allocated to the Redhill Farm road adoptions, capital budget (J037) to cover the commuted sums required by Northamptonshire County Council.

Chairman

The meeting closed at 9.35pm

