

**COUNCIL MEETING – 17 OCTOBER 2017**  
**REPORT OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

13 September 2017

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

Also present: Mrs L Elliott, (Managing Director), Mrs B Gamble and Miss J Thomas, (Directors), Mrs S Knowles (Interim Assistant Director), 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 an apology for absence was received from Councillor Morrall.

**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, there were no declarations made.

**3. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 28 JUNE 2017**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the resources committee, held on 28 June 2017 be confirmed and signed.

**4. FINANCIAL MONITORING AND POSITION STATEMENT FOR 2017-18**

The annexed circulated report of the Section 151 officer was received in relation to the monitoring position for revenue expenditure. The revenue forecast outturn was estimated as at 30 June 2017.

The report detailed the net revenue budget as £10.106m made up of £16.680m of gross expenditure and £6.574m of gross income which was further summarised in the graph within the report.

Appended to the report was the revenue monitoring position to 30 June 2017.

The revenue monitoring was forecasting an increase in the need to use reserves in the sum of £131,000 due to net pressures and efficiencies which were further detailed in the report. Particular reference was made to the use of reserves in relation to the running of the Castle Theatre.

Members asked about the timing of the reporting now being to the end of June rather than the end of July. They also asked if there had been any significant change to the overspend position since 30 June 2017.

Mrs Knowles, Interim Assistant Director clarified that the report period had changed as a trial for this year and that the reviews would still be quarterly but at the end of June, September, December and March. The reason for this was to fit in with the new earlier close down period for the accounts in future years. She also informed members that the finance team were investigating and quantifying financial pressures in relation to homelessness in both the Revenue & Benefits and Housing areas.

Members also made reference to the figures in relation to the Castle Theatre; the chairman informed the meeting that a further report updating members on the Castle Theatre would be presented in October.

**RESOLVED** that the position in relation to the revenue monitoring and reasons for the variances reported be noted.

## **5. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING**

The annexed circulated report of the Section 151 officer was received in relation to the capital programme monitoring to 30 June 2017.

The total capital budget for 2017-18 as reported to resources committee in June 2017 was £6.635m. This report updated the capital budget for 2017-18 as being £4.898m.

Appended to the report was the capital outturn report to 30 June 2017, the capital programme funding position and an urgent action request for the homelessness initiative.

The report referred to the updates and amendments to the capital programme in detail. The urgent action request for additional funding for the homelessness initiative and the increase in homeless applications were also appended to the report. The report also detailed the findings of the Capital Working Group.

Members asked questions of clarity in relation to the capital programme and the disabled facilities grant funding, the waste transfer station and the heritage lottery fund. They also asked if consideration had been given to the reallocation of funds, no longer to be spent on the photovoltaic panels, to schemes that had originally not met the criteria but which could now be brought forward. A question was also asked as to whether heritage lottery funding could be used on council owned buildings.

Officers responded to members' queries and the managing director clarified that the capital programme had recently been reviewed but that a further review could be carried out. The annual call for schemes would also take place shortly. Director, Miss Thomas, confirmed that the heritage lottery fund was received for a five year programme of projects; this precluded the funds from

being used for the first two years of this period on council owned property. The two year period had elapsed and the funding could now be used for council owned buildings.

**RESOLVED** that the:

- (i) projected outturn and anticipated variances as at 30 June 2017 be noted;
- (ii) external funding be noted;
- (iii) updates and amendments to the 2017-18 capital programme, as detailed within the report, be noted;
- (iv) urgent action request, approved under delegated powers, be noted;
- (v) schemes outlined in the report at item 9 be included in the agreed capital programme.

## **6. VICTORIA WARD CAR PARKS**

The annexed circulated report of the director was received in relation to the future of two car parks in Victoria Ward.

The two car parks, known as land adjacent to 130 Winstanley Road and land adjacent to 100 Winstanley Road, had been identified for sale in 2012 but no action had been taken at that time because of member concerns. Members were now asked to consider whether the car parks needed to remain as car parks for properties in the area or whether they should be disposed of.

The car parking advisory group considered the sale of the car parks in April 2016, recommending to resources committee, that these car parks be sold. The resources committee had requested that a further parking survey be carried out, and this was done in July 2017. An extract of the information from the survey was appended to the report.

The report detailed the options available to the committee as follows:

Disposal: if the car parks were disposed of they would realise between £100,000 and £200,000 in capital receipts and would accommodate approximately nine houses.

Retention: If the car parks were retained they would provide an amenity for nearby properties but incur revenue expenditure by the council.

Wellingborough Norse considered that the cost of bringing the car parks up to a good standard would be £60,000 for each car park over a ten year period including ongoing maintenance for sweeping, litter picking, weed spraying, white lines, barriers and tarmac surfaces

Members considered the options before them.

Councillor Graves informed the committee that he had visited the car parks at 1pm on the day of the meeting and found them to be well-used. He, however,

considered that the car park next to 130 was very small and difficult to use. The car park next to 100 Winstanley Road was larger and easier to access.

Councillor Graves proposed that the land adjacent to 130 Winstanley Road be sold for development and that the land adjacent to 100 Winstanley Road be retained as a car park using the capital receipt from the sale of land adjacent to 130 Winstanley Road for improvements and maintenance. This was seconded by Councillor L Lawman.

Councillors Emerson and Francis, as ward councillors, expressed the desire that both plots of land remain, and be used as car parks. The area was densely populated with no off-street parking and a large number of properties in multiple-occupation. There were already considerable issues with on-street parking being difficult to find in the area and there was concern that the removal of these car parks would only exacerbate an already difficult situation.

There was speculation by some members that the car parks were being used for anti-social purposes and both councillors considered that this was not the case. Reported issues of cars being abandoned and removed by Wellingborough Norse and the police were in relation to cars located in the large car park at the end of Knox Road and not in either of these car parks.

In their view the occupancy study clearly showed that the car parks were being used by residents rather than rail users as the survey indicated the times of day that the car parks were full. Since the original decision had been made to sell these car parks in 2012 there had been changes in the occupancy levels in the area with parking becoming a significant issue.

Councillor Henley proposed an amendment to Councillor Graves' proposal that the land be retained and used as car parks and a sum be included in revenue budgets for day to day and planned preventative maintenance. This was seconded by Councillor Scarborough.

On being put to the vote this amendment was declared lost with four votes in favour and 10 against.

The chairman put the original proposal to the meeting and this was declared carried with 10 votes in favour and four against.

(Councillors Emerson, Francis, Henley and Scarborough asked that their vote against the above be recorded.)

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) the land adjacent to 130 Winstanley Road, be sold at best consideration and that planning permission be sought for housing development;
- (ii) the land adjacent to 100 Winstanley Road be retained as a car park and the capital receipt from the sale of land adjacent to 130 Winstanley Road be used to fund a refurbishment and improvement of the car park as well as planned preventative maintenance.

## **7. WORLD WAR I CENTENARY**

The annexed circulated report of the director was received to consider how to commemorate both the centenary of World War I and mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Major Mick Mannock, VC, DSO & Two Bars, MC & Bar.

Major Edward (Mick) Mannock VC moved to Wellingborough at the age of 20 and was an active member of the community. He served with the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Air Force during the First World War and became a distinguished pilot. His bravery and leadership during conflict are well-documented. To commemorate the centenary of his death it was proposed that the land on which the Cadet Centre sits in Spring Gardens, Wellingborough - home to the Mannock Squadron - be transferred to the squadron with a restrictive covenant that limits its use to that of a centre for training cadet forces. The land was the subject of a 99 years lease from 2004 for a peppercorn rent; the building on the land was owned by the East Midlands Reserve Forces and Cadets Association.

It was also proposed that there be an official hand-over ceremony, which the Mayor would attend, in 2018.

Councillor Carr reiterated the sentiments within the report and proposed an additional motion, that a working party be established to investigate other possible opportunities to commemorate Major Edward (Mick) Mannock VC, DSO & Two Bars, MC & Bar, and consider other local events that may acknowledge the centenary of the conclusion of World War I. This proposal was seconded by Councillor Scarborough and on being put to the vote declared carried.

The chairman put this substantive motion and the proposals within the report to the committee and these were declared carried.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) the council transfer the land on which the 378 Mannock Squadron Air Training Corps Centre is built upon to the East Midlands Reserve Forces and Cadets Association, with a restrictive covenant to limit its use to cadet training;
- (ii) the land be transferred during a presentation by the Mayor in 2018 to commemorate the end of World War I and the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Major Edward (Mick) Mannock VC, DSO & Two Bars, MC & Bar;
- (iii) a working party be established to investigate other possible opportunities to commemorate Major Edward (Mick) Mannock VC, DSO & Two Bars, MC & Bar and to consider other local events that may acknowledge the centenary of the conclusion of World War 1.

## **8. MEMBERS OF RESERVE FORCES: COUNCILLORS**

The annexed circulated report of the director was received to seek approval to the adoption of a policy relating to the leave of absence by a councillor acting as a reservist.

Appended to the report was the policy and procedure note for a councillor who is a member of the reserve forces.

**R1 RECOMMENDED** that the policy and procedure in relation to councillors who are members of the reserve forces be approved and adopted.

## **9. BUSINESS RATES LOCAL DISCRETIONARY RELIEF SCHEME**

The annexed circulated report of the managing director was received in relation to the new local discretionary rate relief scheme for businesses adversely affected by the 2017 rating revaluation.

On 8 March 2017, the Chancellor announced that a scheme of relief would be available for those most adversely affected by the 2017 new rating revaluation.

The report detailed the government's intention for local authorities to deliver schemes through the use of discretionary powers under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended). The granting of relief was optional and an authority could choose not to make awards or even participate in a scheme.

The grant funding represented the local government share of 50% of the relief, with central government meeting the other 50%.

The total allocation was detailed in the report with the council's share being 40% valued at £80,000, and the county council's share being 10%, equating to £20,000 in 2017/2018, reducing over a four year period.

Details of the borough scheme and the criterion were contained within the report.

Using the suggested scheme, initial analysis indicated there would be 106 qualifying hereditaments for the new discretionary business rates relief and that all of the rate increases attributable to the revaluation could be met during year one from the borough allocation. The total amount of relief awarded would initially be £84,774.72 with the borough council and county council's share being £42,387.36, 50% of the total amount.

The report also detailed the levels of transitional protection over the four year period.

**RESOLVED** that approval be given to the local discretionary rate relief scheme.

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

The annexed circulated report and exempt appendices of the managing director was received in relation to the write off of irrecoverable debts.

The following debts were proposed to be written-off:

Council tax cases	£27,382.13
Non-domestic rate cases	£9,785.73
Housing benefit overpayment cases	£14,025.27

Details of the above debts were appended to the report.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The sum of £51,193.13 of irrecoverable council tax, non-domestic rates and housing benefit overpayments be written off;
- (ii) It be noted that the sum of £33,137.07 was written off under the delegated power of the Section 151 officer.

Chairman

The meeting concluded at 8.25pm.

