

## COUNCIL MEETING – 26 MARCH 2020

### REPORT OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

11 March 2020

Present: Councillors Griffiths (Chairman), Allebone, Bell, Carr, Emerson, Francis, Gough, Graves, Harrington, Henley, Morrall, Partridge-Underwood, Scarborough and M Waters and Weatherill.

Also present: Mrs L Elliott (Managing Director), Mr S Darcy (Director/Section 151 Officer), Miss K Denton, Mrs V Jessop, Mr A Piper and Mr E Symons (Assistant Directors), Mr R Watson (Senior Revenue Officer), Ms T Cave (Service Accountant), Ms C Conway-Hook (Service Accountant), Ms C Mani (Service Accountant), Mrs G Chapman (Principal Community Support Officer), Mr R Thompson (RPT Consulting), Mr S Churchman (Places Leisure), Mr G Kane (Northamptonshire County Council), Mr R Boulton (Northamptonshire County Council) and Mr S Whiteley (Electoral Services Team Leader).

(Councillors G Lawman and G Simmons attended as observers. Cllr L Lawman attended to speak on agenda item 5).

#### 1. APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

#### 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	Minute no.	Reason
Scarborough	10 – Prudential indicators and treasury management strategy 2020-21	Registerable Spouse is working as contractor for Santander Bank

#### 3. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5 FEBRUARY 2020

The minutes of the resources committee of 5 February 2020 were received.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the resources committee held on 5 February 2020, be confirmed and signed.

#### 4. IRRECOVERABLE COUNCIL TAX, HOUSING BENEFIT OVERPAYMENTS, NON DOMESTIC RATES AND SUNDRY DEBTS

The annexed circulated report (with exempt appendices) of the Section 151 Officer was received to request approval of the write off of irrecoverable debts.

Appended to the report were the following:

Appendix A Council tax cases;  
Appendix B Non-domestic rate cases;.

The report detailed the total amount of irrecoverable debts as shown below:

Council tax £8,007.12;  
Non-domestic rates £2,089.59.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) approval be given to write off the sum of £10,096.71 of irrecoverable council tax and non-domestic rate balances;
- (ii) it be noted that the sum of £22,327.24 had been written off under the delegated powers of the section 151 officer.

## **5. REDWELL LEISURE CENTRE – UPDATE REPORT**

The annexed circulated report of the director was received to present an update on discussions regarding the future of leisure services delivered from the Redwell Leisure Centre site and seek approval to add a project for redevelopment of the leisure centre building and grounds to the council's capital programme.

Appended to the report was a potential new build plan for Redwell Leisure Centre.

The chairman invited Cllr L Lawman to address the committee as a speaker. Cllr Lawman explained the benefits of hydrotherapy and urged members not only to support the proposals in the report but to seriously consider both a pool and hydrotherapy pool as part of the redevelopment of Redwell Leisure Centre.

The assistant director outlined the report and explained that further work was required to understand the condition of the land before considering procurement options. She also explained that a planning pre-application would be undertaken with an aim to provide members with a further report at resources committee in June 2020.

Members discussed the report and considered the options, and whilst expressing broad support for the resolutions, that there were some concerns around adding the project to the capital programme without having undertaken surveys on the condition of the land and with clear costs for a re-build. Members agreed to amend the wording on resolution 4.2 to "that the project agreed at 4.1 is considered and is continued to be considered for addition to

the capital programme in principle with more detailed costs to be presented at a future resources committee meeting”.

There was a further discussion about the need for a new health and wellbeing centre in the borough and that this provided an opportunity for a centre to serve residents in the immediate area and beyond.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) a new build (Option 6) is the preferred option through which to deliver future leisure services from the Redwell site;
- (ii) that the project agreed at 4.1 is considered and is continued to be considered for addition to the capital programme in principle with more detailed costs to be presented at a future resources committee meeting;
- (iii) that an allowance for fees of £100,000 be made in order to progress the project to be added to the capital programme, and;
- (iv) that officers are instructed to further explore the revenue implications, procurement options and contractual arrangements to be brought back as part of a report to resources committee later in 2020.

## **6. PROPERTY MATTERS**

The annexed circulated report of the director was received to update members on the progress of property matters.

Appended to the report was an update on the current projects.

The assistant director gave a verbal update, confirming that the multi-storey car park project set up was ongoing with work commencing the following week, and that the purchaser of the Croyland Road development site was due to submit an application shortly. He went on to confirm that 20 Sheep Street had been cleared out with a view to exchange contracts soon, and that the car park at Castle Theatre was due for repair and maintenance work in April and May.

Members discussed upcoming potential community asset transfers and cited Glamis Hall as a previous example of an effective and successful community asset transfer. Members agreed that it was positive that all of the current projects on the register were listed as green or amber in progress.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) the progress of the projects as detailed in appendix one be noted;

## **7. FINANCIAL MONITORING AND POSITION STATEMENT FOR 2019-20**

The annexed circulated report of the Section 151 Officer was received to show members the monitoring position for revenue expenditure only, but it was stated that this report should have been read in conjunction with the capital report on the agenda for this meeting to give a total view and understanding of the council's financial position.

The Section 151 Officer outlined the report and explained some of the shifting pressures impacting on the financial position of the council outlined in the appendices, such as increasing grants being applied in Housing and additional income received within Property and Projects.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) the position on the revenue monitoring and the reasons for the variances reported and show in Appendix 1 be noted.

## **8. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING**

The annexed circulated report of the Section 151 Officer was received to provide members with the capital programme monitoring information to 31 January 2020.

The Section 151 Officer outlined the summary of budgets that had been reprofiled over £100k, including the multi storey car park, property renovations and the temporary accommodation mitigation fund.

The chair invited Mr G Kane and Mr R Boulton of Northamptonshire County Council to speak on the proposal for £1m investment to fund the design and development of the strategic outline business case of the Isham Bypass scheme.

A lengthy debate ensued around the history of the Isham Bypass project.

Members sought clarity around the investment and whether this effectively constituted a return to the first phase of a project that had already neared completion on previous occasions. Mr Kane advised members that without the proposed funding, the scheme would not move forward.

The managing director explained that the funding would allow access to Major Road Network funding required to deliver the scheme. Mr Kane thanked the members for their views and passion regarding the Isham Bypass and reassured them that this would be taken forward positively.

Members went on to discuss the requested for £24,386 for the purchase of a further four surveillance cameras to continue monitoring fly tipping within the borough. All members agreed that investing in cameras to help deter fly tipping was a sensible use of funds.

Some concern was raised around the refurbishment of the Tithe Barn offices and some members felt that not enough information had been provided either to resources committee, or to members of other committees, about the future location of staff following local government reform to warrant committing to an investment of £2.876m. Some members were also concerned around the rental potential of the building following refurbishment, citing a previous similar project which was subsequently redeveloped.

The Section 151 Officer explained that whilst no decisions had yet been taken, the building was currently outdated, and refurbishment could help to provide a safe and secure working environment with an extended lifespan.

(Cllr Francis left the meeting at 20:56 and did not return.)

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) the projected outturn and anticipated variances as at 31 January 2020 as shown in Appendix 1 be noted;
- (ii) the external funding as stated in Appendix 2 be noted, and;
- (iii) the updates and amendments to the 2019-20 capital programme as shown in Section 6;

**R1 RECOMMENDED** that:

- (I) the allocation of funding for Phase 3 of the Castle Theatre project in section 7 be agreed, and;
- (II) the Capital budget requests as shown in section 8 in the current capital programme be agreed;

## **9. CAPITAL AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY FOR THE MEDIUM TERM**

The annexed circulated report of the Section 151 Officer was received to present members with the capital strategy for the medium term, together with a list of all agreed capital schemes for the coming years. This now also encompassed the asset investment strategy and newly required non-treasury investment indicators as required.

The report formed part of the council's capital strategy process and provided the committee with the opportunity to review the strategy and governance of the capital programme.

The Section 151 Officer explained some of the wording had been updated to reflect upcoming changes to local government in Northamptonshire.

**R2 RECOMMENDED** that:

- (i) the capital and investment strategy at appendix 1 be agreed;

(Councillor Scarborough left the meeting having declared an interested on the following item.)

## **10. PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2020-21**

The annexed circulated report of the Section 151 Officer was received to inform members of the treasury indicators to allow members to monitor the council's performance over the coming financial year.

The Section 151 Officer introduced the report and explained that the report added in some delegations to officers, and that whilst correct at the time of publication, the announcement from the Bank of England earlier in the day has meant that the base rate forecasts and projections are out of date.

**R3 RECOMMENDED** that:

- (i) the Treasury Management Strategy Statement set out in Appendix A of the report be approved, and;
- (ii) based on a strong business case for investment and revenue returns to cover the costs, borrowing can be considered as a source of financing for certain capital schemes be agreed.

(Councillor Scarborough returned to the meeting.)

**11. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2020/21**

The annexed circulated report of the Assistant Director was received to seek approval from members for the council's Pay Policy Statement so that it can be published by 1 April 2020.

The assistant director explained to members that there were some inaccuracies in the report, outlined below:

- The reference to Corby Borough Council on page 4 should have read Borough Council of Wellingborough
- On paragraph I on page 4, the referenced Spinal Column Point (SCP) should have read as SCP6, with an FTE rate of £19,171 or £9.93 per hour.
- The median pay ratio referenced on page 4 was 2.71:1

Members queried if the honoraria system was still being used. The assistant director stated that the policy was still active, and that in 2019/20, six honoraria had been paid out totalling in the region of £7,000.

**R4 RECOMMENDED** that:

- (i) The Pay Policy Statement 2020/21 be approved for publication.

Chairman

The meeting concluded at 9.05pm.