

CABINET

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 3rd December 2013 at Retford Town Hall

Present: Councillor S A Greaves (Chair),
Councillors A Chambers, J Evans, J A Leigh, S May, J White and
G J Wynne.

Assistants: Councillors I J Campbell, M Gregory and C Palmer.

Advisory Members: Councillors H M Brand and D Challinor.

Liaison Members: Councillors B Barker, H Burton and K H Isard.

Officers: D Armiger, S Brown, J Hamilton, M Hill, L Hull, M Ladyman, E Simmonds,
N Taylor and R Theakstone.

Also present: Councillors D G Pidwell, J M Sanger and K Sutton.

(The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting, read out the Fire Evacuation Procedure, and also enquired as to whether any member of the public wished to film the meeting or any part thereof.)

(The meeting opened at 6.30pm.)

92. QUESTION TIME - PUBLIC

Council Procedure Rules were suspended for fifteen minutes to allow questions from the public; however, although several members of the public were present, no questions were asked.

93. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G Jones and C Wanless.

94. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

(a) Members

Councillor A Chambers declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Item No. 12(a) – Retford Food Bank, as he works for Hope, the Food Bank's umbrella organisation; he left the meeting and took no part in the discussion and voting thereof.

Councillor S May declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item No. 12(a) – Retford Food Bank, as she is a trustee; she remained in the meeting during the discussion but left the meeting for the voting thereof.

(b) Officers

There were no Declarations of Interest by officers.

95. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5TH NOVEMBER 2013

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 5th November 2013 be approved.

96. MINUTES FOR ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

RESOLVED that the Minutes for Action and Implementation be received.

97. OUTSTANDING MINUTES LIST

RESOLVED that the Outstanding Minutes List be received.

98. FORWARD PLAN

It was noted that the Extraordinary Cabinet Meeting will take place on 7th January 2014.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be received.

SECTION A – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PUBLIC

Key Decisions

99. REPORT(S) OF THE CABINET MEMBER – POLICY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
– COUNCILLOR S A GREAVES

(a) Town Centres and Night Time Economy (Key Decision No. 364)

Members were updated on the review process and development of a draft Strategy and Policy Statement for the Night Time Economy (NTE) in Bassetlaw; and Members' approval was sought to proceed with consultation on the draft Strategy and Policy Statement prior to presenting back to Cabinet for formal approval. The draft Strategy was appended to the report for Cabinet, Assistant, Advisory and Liaison Members, and had been deposited in the Members' Room.

The work on the NTE has coincided with the drafting of the Council's new Statement of Licensing Policy which will come into force on 4th January 2014 following conclusion of the consultation process and its formal adoption. Discussions and collaboration between partners as part of the NTE work has enabled a more robust and meaningful Policy to be produced. Similarly, a clear NTE Strategy and Policy will assist in enabling the Licensing Committee to make reference to such as part of its decision-making process.

Particular mention was made of the Street Pastors' work in making the town centres safe and secure, and it was noted that the Police and Crime Commissioner, Paddy Tipping, had given a financial contribution to the Street Pastors to help them continue their work.

The Deputy Leader reported that a meeting had been held the previous day with the Police and licensees, and it is hoped that the Strategy and Policy will help raise standards in both town centres and encourage a thriving and safe evening and night-time economy.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

In reviewing and developing a strategy for the NTE in Bassetlaw, this ensures the Council identifies and utilises the tools and powers at its disposal to both tackle the negative effects and support the positive benefits of a clearly defined NTE in the short, medium and longer term. In addition, through working with partner agencies, it also ensures that wider powers (Police and Trading Standards) are utilised and positive outcomes can be achieved for all those involved in a cohesive manner.

RESOLVED that:

1. The draft Strategy and Policy Statement for the Night Time Economy in Bassetlaw, as appended to the report, be endorsed and approval to commence consultation be given.
2. Following the conclusion of the consultation exercise, a further report be presented to Cabinet with the final Night Time Economy Strategy and Policy Statement, together with a supporting action plan.

(b) Bassetlaw's Next Corporate Plan 2014-2017 (Key Decision No. 424)

Members' approval was sought to publish the new draft Corporate Plan for 2014-17 for consultation with partners, which will take place between December and January. The results of the consultation exercise will be brought back to Cabinet for recommendation to full Council on 6th March 2014 for formal adoption.

The draft Corporate Plan was appended to the report and contains four themes:

- A viable, co-operative Council
- Local growth
- Quality housing and decent neighbourhoods
- Local living standards

The Interim Chief Executive added that much work has been done by both Members and officers to redefine the objectives. With regard to service provision, new service models need to be looked at and other areas in the public sector need to be consulted.

An Advisory Member suggested that specific reference should be made to rural areas and town/parish councils to fully engage with the rural communities within the District.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

Members can adopt some or all of the draft Corporate Plan proposals. It is being published for consultation and will come back through Bassetlaw's decision-making process in the next few months.

Taken together with the recent launch of the Bassetlaw Partnership and the internal Organisational Review, this is another major piece of work that has been delivered to ensure Bassetlaw keeps looking forward, responding to changes as positively as it can, and maximising benefits for local people, their environment and the local quality of life for people in the District.

RESOLVED that:

1. The draft Corporate Plan 2014-17, as appended to the report, be endorsed and published for consultation.
2. Following the conclusion of the consultation exercise, the final Corporate Plan be presented to Cabinet for approval and recommendation to full Council on 6th March 2014 for adoption.

100. REPORT(S) OF THE CABINET MEMBER – FINANCE – COUNCILLOR J EVANS

(a) Fees and Charges 2014/15 (Key Decision No. 395)

Members' approval was sought to determine the level of fees and charges for 2014/15 in accordance with the Corporate Charging Policy. The report outlined: the corporate charging policy; pricing principles; and the proposed fees and charges which were appended to the

report. The report also gave details of the larger income generating areas, namely: car parking; planning; markets; building control; licensing; cemeteries; trade refuse; and land charges. Concessions and discounts, at a rate of 50% and 10% respectively, were proposed on some activities, which were also detailed within the appendices.

Elected Members asked questions on charges for the use of the Town Halls and if there were any plans to refurbish these buildings to attract wedding bookings.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

The first option is to accept the recommendations and adopt the fees and charges set out in accordance with the adopted Corporate Charging Policy and its underlying principles. The other option is to not adopt the fees and charges as appended to the report.

When setting fees and charges, attention needs to be paid to the level those fees are set at. They need to support the underlying principles of the Corporate Charging Policy but with an aim to secure maximum income levels for the Council. Pitching the fee and charge at the correct level is vital. Too high and it may encourage people to find an alternative service provider, meaning that the Council could lose income; too low and the Council would not be recovering its costs.

Fees and charges are a significant income stream for the Council. All councils are operating under increasing financial pressure to support the service they currently provide, and Members should take this annual opportunity to strengthen the resource base. The consequence of not doing so may mean cuts and reductions in services, as any specific subsidy is ultimately paid for by general council taxes, and there is a consequence for any decision whether it be to subsidise, break-even or achieve any sort of surplus.

In the past, the Council's budget has been robust in terms of the level of Formula Grant, but as this decreases, all aspects of the Council's budget needs to be considered in light of fewer resources, which creates different service/income tensions.

RESOLVED that:

1. A concession of 50% be approved, which is to be applied to the standard charge for those services where concessions are deemed to apply (subject to rounding and consistency adjustments).
2. A discount of 10% be approved, which is to be applied to the standard charge and the concessionary charge for those services where discounts are deemed to apply (subject to rounding and consistency adjustments).
3. The decision to approve a new request in year for a concession or discount be delegated to the relevant Head of Service in conjunction with the Head of Finance and Property.
4. The individual fees and charges, as appended to the report, be approved.

(b) Housing Capital Programme 2014/15 to 2018/19 (Key Decision No. 399)

Members' approval was sought for the Housing Capital Programme for 2014/15 to 2018/19, which was appended to the report. The report outlined: Decent Homes; fuel poverty; crime and disorder; disability; funding; capital receipts; the Right To Buy scheme; and affordability. The HRA Capital Programme includes details of six other schemes, namely: Airey Housing, Harworth; community alarm equipment; vehicle fleet replacement; non-dwelling assets; contribution to flood prevention schemes; and upgrade works to shops on Council estates.

As the second year of the new HRA self-financing regime is coming to an end, the Council's 30-year Business Plan has been fully developed into a 'live' model which is updated on a continuous basis to reflect any changes that materialise. The year 2013/14 will see the end of Government funding for the Decent Homes programme, but for Bassetlaw, the legacy and further commitment to the programme will be on-going.

A Liaison Member raised the issue of adaptations for the disabled.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

Members can decide what schemes to include or exclude, and the timing of those commitments. The summary provided under the 'Affordability' section sets out the full situation. In coming to a view on what priorities Members want to establish, consideration must be given to the overall limit on investment set by the Overall Borrowing Limit of £105.4m, coupled with the impact that long-term borrowing has on the affordability within the Housing Revenue Account.

What should be avoided at all costs is a full commitment right up to the Overall Borrowing Limit of £105.4m, the Council will always need some room for manoeuvre, and for this reason only, full approval for the 2014/15 programme is being sought at this stage. Following years' capital programmes are therefore only being approved on an indicative basis and will be confirmed in succeeding financial years.

This approach will allow for some flexibility, giving the opportunity to 're-borrow' the repaid amounts within the original transferred long-term debt figures if suitable schemes are identified that meet Members' priorities.

RESOLVED that:

1. Thanks be recorded to both BDC and A1 officers for their hard work to date on the Housing Capital Programme and the 30-year Business Plan.
2. The Capital Programme for 2014/15, as appended to the report, be approved.
3. The indicative Capital Programmes for 2015/16 to 2018/19, as appended to the report, be approved.
4. The report be recommended to full Council on 30th January 2014 for approval.

(c) Housing Revenue Account Budget 2014/15 and Future Years to 2016/17 (Key Decision No. 400)

Members' approval was sought for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget for 2014/15 and the indicative figures for 2015/16 and 2017/17, which were appended to the report. The report outlined: the 2014/15 HRA Revenue budget; rents; repairs and maintenance; pensions provision; depreciation; Value For Money and the A1 Housing Management Fee; provision for bad debts; Treasury Management; Supporting People; and reserves.

The recommended rent increase for 2014/15 is 3.14% or an average of £3.23 per week, and Appendix 2, which showed the Rent Restructuring, was tabled at the meeting.

A Liaison Member asked how the rent increase compares to other local authorities.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

The Council needs to set a balanced budget for its HRA services with income equalling expenditure and ensure that:

- It does not breach the overall borrowing limit of £105.4m at any stage. The KPMG External Auditor will take action if it does.
- The HRA remains solvent with the adequate reserves of a “going concern”
- The Council achieves the convergence of its rents to the national guideline by 2015/16.

This budget sets out the approach to maintain levels of quality and investment, comply with the borrowing limit, and meet the Government’s rent assumptions in a move to meet its rent convergence target by 2015/16. The rent increase of 3.14% could be lowered but this will impact on the levels of investment in this and successive financial years.

The budget assumptions are based on the HRA Business Plan and associated risks include any variances in estimates for inflation, interest rates, volume of voids and the number of Right To Buy sales.

The viability of the Business Plan is based on the reduction of debt. In reality, the Business Plan needs to be flexible enough to cope with changes to this strategy over time.

The Council now has a self-sufficient HRA in which income from tenants is used to pay for the delivery of services to tenants and investment in the housing stock. However, the transition to self-financing means there is a significantly reduced capacity for the Council to fall back on Government support in delivering its housing service. This represents a key shift in risks, with the Council taking full responsibility for managing and maintaining its own housing stock in return for access to all of its revenue income.

For these reasons, the budget has been framed to minimise any risks, at least for the first few years of the new system. Members have a clear set of recommendations to support a soundly financed housing service as the 2014/15 budget will set the foundation for the next 30 years of Council house funding in Bassetlaw.

RESOLVED that:

1. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2014/15, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be approved.
2. The indicative HRA budgets for 2015/16 and 2016/17, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be approved.
3. An average rent increase of 3.14% for 2014/15, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report, be approved, in accordance with the nationally set rent guideline criteria.
4. The indicative rent increases of 2.5% for both 2015/16 and 2016/17 be approved, in accordance with best practice.
5. The minimum level of HRA reserves to remain at £1.3m in recognition of the overall funding value of the HRA.
6. The principle of moving to a break-even position for the Supporting People and District Heating Fuel accounts be approved.
7. The report be recommended to full Council on 30th January 2014 for approval.

(d) Medium Term Financial Plan 2014/15 to 2016/17 and Value For Money Strategy (Key Decision No. 401)

Members were presented with projections about the longer term financial position of the Council. The projections, which were appended to the report, show that by 2016/17 a balanced budget, including council tax increases, will be approximately £11,364,300 which is £3.8m or 24% less than the comparative base position of £15,162,500 for 2013/14.

The report outlined: the formula grant; New Homes Bonus; Council Tax; reserves and balances; collection fund surplus/deficit; staffing and downsizing costs; inflation; service improvements; Capital Financing Strategy; Value For Money; Accommodation Strategy; and the cost of democracy.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

Bassetlaw needs to review its Financial Strategy and the Medium Term Financial Plans annually to ensure its projected expenditure is balanced with the income it receives, and where it doesn't, or is projected not to, corrective action needs to be identified and put in hand.

Risks in respect of: time; viability; finance; profile; and adaptability were detailed in paragraph 5.1 of the report.

The public sector continues to face significant financial challenges, and local government has been at the forefront of the cuts in public expenditure with 54.5% of its core funding likely to be reduced between 2010/11 and 2016/17. The Council has managed to remain one year ahead of the changes it has to make and the 2014/15 budget report to Cabinet in February will reflect this.

The eventual switch to the Universal Credit system, plus the level of on-going cuts year after year in officer posts in the Council is changing the nature of the organisation. The management structure is reducing significantly which also results in a more corporate approach. Further potential shared services with A1 Housing, plus closer working with other public sector colleagues, can provide further efficiencies.

RESOLVED that:

1. Thanks be recorded to Finance officers for their hard work to date on the Medium Term Financial Plan.
2. The projections for the next three financial years, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be noted.
3. The Medium Term Financial Plan for 2014/15 to 2016/17, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be approved as part of the framework for the next three years' budgets.
4. Council Tax be increased as part of the 2014/15 budget preparations.
5. The Value For Money Strategy for 2014/15 to 2016/17, as outlined in paragraphs 3.28 to 3.38 of the report be approved.
6. The calculation and declaration of the Council Tax deficit or surplus for the 2014/15 budget on 15th January 2014 be delegated to the Head of Finance and Property.

(Councillor I J Campbell left the meeting during consideration of the above item.)

101. REPORT(S) OF THE CABINET MEMBER – REGENERATION – COUNCILLOR J WHITE

- (a) Bassetlaw's Local Development Framework – Site Allocations Development Plan Document – Preferred Options Consultation (Key Decision No. 363)

Members' approval was sought for public consultation on the Site Allocations Preferred Options document and also for a separate Development Plan Document (DPD) allocating gypsy and traveller sites to be progressed.

The Site Allocations document will be the second DPD to be produced by the Council following the adoption of the Core Strategy in December 2011 and together, these two documents will form the District's Local Plan.

Following the initial 'Issues and Options' consultation stage, including a full review of the submissions and evidence base, the Preferred Options document sets out the Council's preferred development sites and these were outlined in the report. The greatest levels of new development will be identified in Harworth/Bircotes, Retford and Worksop, in line with the policy framework set out in the Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework. Key land allocation proposals were set out within the report and further detailed on the plans appended to the report and tabled at the meeting. In addition, copies of the full Draft Site Allocations Preferred Options Consultation Document are available for inspection within the Planning Policy Office.

The formal publication of the document for consultation purposes will take place in January 2014 for the statutory consultation period. This will be followed by consideration of the issues raised prior to a final submission document being published in Autumn 2014 and in Inquiry which is likely to be held on late 2014/early 2015. On this basis, adoption is unlikely before the middle of 2015.

Liaison Members raised issues on the testing of sites for land quality.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration stressed to members of the public present that they should submit their comments during the official consultation period, and not before, as this would be mean that they would not be considered. The dates for the consultation period and also any public events organised by the Planning Team would be advertised widely.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

Option One – To not approve the Preferred Options report for consultation. The risk of this is that it will further delay the process of achieving a complete Local Plan and the certainty that this brings for developers and service users, as well as for the Council in terms of the District's long-term housing land supply (as required by National Planning Policy) and delivery of future employment sites.

Option Two – To approve the Preferred Options report for consultation. There are no obvious risks in so doing, providing that it is made clear that the Council will be progressing gypsy and traveller pitch provision as a separate project.

The Council must be able to substantiate its proposals on planning grounds (e.g. impacts on local infrastructure which cannot be mitigated) rather than non-material considerations (e.g. the effects of a potential allocation on property prices). Without such substantiation, the Council will be unable to defend its position at an Examination in Public and may well have to start the process again and/or have decisions challenged by developers.

RESOLVED that:

1. Thanks be recorded to Planning officers and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration for their hard work to date on the Site Allocations Development Plan Document.
2. The Site Allocations Preferred Options Document be approved for consultation.
3. The production of a separate Development Plan Document on gypsy and traveller sites be approved.
4. The required budgets for 2015/16, 2015/16 and 2016/17, as detailed in section 5(c) of the report, be approved.
5. It be noted that if funds are not available, a further report will be presented to a future meeting of Cabinet.

(Councillor K H Isard left the meeting during consideration of the above item.)

(b) Sustainable Housing Layout and Design Supplementary Planning Document (Key Decision No. 432)

Members were informed of the development of the Residential Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), entitled 'Successful Places: A Guide to Sustainable Housing Layout and Design'. Members' approval was sought to adopt the guide as an SPD to the adopted Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (DPD).

The guide is a joint initiative between Bassetlaw, Bolsover and North East Derbyshire District Councils and Chesterfield Borough Council to support developers, their design professionals and agents in preparing proposals for residential developments or mixed use schemes comprising both commercial uses and housing. It is also intended for use by local authority officers, councillors and communities to facilitate and inform the design discussions and assist them in the delivery of high quality, sustainable places to live.

Public consultation was undertaken between 25th October and 26th November 2012 across the four local authority areas, and a detailed summary of the consultation process and comments received is available in the SPD's Statement of Consultation.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

Option One – To halt the progress on the SPD. The risk of doing so is that the Council may be unable to secure the best quality of design from residential developments in Bassetlaw.

Option Two – To adopt the SPD, as it has committed to do so in the Core Strategy, thus enabling the efficient delivery of higher level design policy in Bassetlaw.

RESOLVED that the adoption of the Successful Places Residential Design Supplementary Planning Document for Bassetlaw be approved.

Other Decisions

102. REPORT(S) OF THE CABINET MEMBER – POLICY AND COMMUNITY – COUNCILLOR S A GREAVES

(a) Appointment of Honorary Alderman

Members were presented with a request for the appointment of former Councillor Ken Bullivant to Honorary Alderman, and approval was sought to recommend the consideration of this request to full Council in accordance with the legal process for so doing.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

It is important for the public to recognise the significant time and personal commitments elected Members give to their communities. It is also important that elected Members feel valued for having made significant contribution to their communities. The appointment as an Honorary Alderman provides that opportunity.

RESOLVED that:

1. The proposal for former Councillor Ken Bullivant to be appointed as Honorary Alderman be approved.
2. An Extraordinary Meeting of Council be convened for ratifying the proposal and conferring the honour.

(b) Equality and Diversity – Annual Report 2013

Members' approval was sought for the publication of the Equality and Diversity Annual Report for 2013, which had been appended to the report for Cabinet, Assistant, Advisory and Liaison Members, and deposited in the Members' Room.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

There is a statutory duty to produce and publish Equality Objectives for the next four years. The Objectives have been previously approved by Cabinet and are reflected in the Corporate Plan.

The Equality Objectives play an important role in helping the Council to deliver on its equality and diversity commitments and demonstrate this through a set of positive outcomes both internally and externally, and in partnership with other organisations.

RESOLVED that:

1. The progress against the Equality Objectives be noted and updates on progress as part of the overall Equality updates be provided to future meetings of Cabinet.
2. The updates, which will form the basis for the Council's Annual Equality Report, be agreed with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Equalities Champion.

103. REPORT(S) OF THE CABINET MEMBER – FINANCE – COUNCILLOR J EVANS

(a) Retford Food Bank

Members were updated on the progress of seeking alternative suitable premises within the ownership of the Council and/or the possibility of working with external third parties/partnership organisations to find more suitable premises for the location of the Retford Food Bank, as agreed by Cabinet on 11th June 2013.

Members' approval was sought for a prospective tenant (the charity 'Hope') to rent Unit E of Buttermarket House, Exchange Street, Retford, at a concessionary rent for the purpose of setting up a Food Bank in Retford.

The location and issues surrounding delivery to, and collection from, the Unit were discussed, together with the operation of the Food Bank through referrals from relevant agencies.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

The report has identified the further review of potential alternative premises and the rationale for recommending the proposal. Members have the opportunity to progress the recommendation or not.

RESOLVED that a lease be granted to Bassetlaw Food Bank for the premises at Unit E, Buttermarket House, Exchange Street, Retford, to set up a Food Bank in accordance with the terms outlined in the report.

(Councillor A Chambers declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the above item, left the meeting and took no part in the discussion and voting thereof. Councillor S May declared a non-pecuniary interest in the above item, remained in the meeting for the discussion but left the meeting for the voting thereof.)

104. REPORTING MINUTES

(a) Friends of Kings' Park Sub-Committee – 15th October 2013

A Liaison Member questioned the reference to a “splash park”; however, the Chair of the Sub-Committee, Councillor A Chambers, clarified that external funding is being sought.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Friends of Kings' Park Sub-Committee held on 15th October 2013 be received.

105. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RESOLVED that, in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and after considering the public interest test as set out by the officer in the body of the report, Members agreed that the following items of business involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 2 and 3, and therefore, in accordance with Section 100A of the Act, the press and public be excluded from the meeting:

Agenda Item No. 14(a) – Health and Safety Shared Services (Key Decision No. 376) – Paragraph 2

Agenda Item No. 14(b) – Organisational Review Phase I - Paragraph 2 (Key Decision No. 420) – Paragraph 2

Agenda Item No. 15(a) – Benefits Risk-based Verification Policy (Key Decision No. 435) – Paragraph 3

Agenda Item No. 16(a) – ICT Unit – Review of Structure – Paragraph 2

Agenda Item No. 16(b) – Legal and Licensing Service Review – Paragraph 2

Agenda Item No. 17(a) – Review of Car Parking – Paragraph 2

(Councillors D G Pidwell and J M Sanger remained in the meeting with the Chairman's permission.)

SECTION B – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PRIVATE

Key Decisions

106. REPORT(S) OF THE CABINET MEMBER – POLICY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – COUNCILLOR S A GREAVES

(a) Health and Safety Shared Services (Key Decision No. 376)

Members' approval was sought to proceed with a shared Health and Safety Service between Bassetlaw and Mansfield District Councils. The Business Case was appended to the report for Cabinet, Assistant, Advisory and Liaison Members, and had been deposited in the Members' Room.

A shared service has been operating since 1st February 2012 with Bassetlaw's Safety and Resilience Manager providing a shared safety manager resource.

As Chair of the Council's Health and Safety Committee, Councillor D Challinor supported this initiative.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

Drivers for further development of the existing shared service include: increased resilience; increased synergy; shared skills and expertise; and improved efficiency (both cashable and non-cashable savings); and these were detailed within paragraphs 3.7 and 3.8 of the report.

RESOLVED that:

1. Thanks be recorded to J Moran, Safety and Resilience Manager, and the project team for their work to date on the shared service and its Business Case.
2. Approval be given for Bassetlaw District Council to proceed with a full shared Health and Safety Service with Mansfield District Council.
3. The proposed budget, as set out in paragraph 4(c) of the report, be approved.

(b) Organisational Review Phase I (Key Decision No. 420)

Members were presented with the current Voluntary Redundancy and Early Voluntary Retirement requests, and approval for these was sought, together with the deletion of 6.8 posts that are currently vacant, as part of the process required to balance the 2014/15 budget.

This report concludes the first phase of the Organisational Review. In March 2014, Phase II will be submitted to Cabinet.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

This is a voluntary exercise and Members can decide whether or not they wish to approve the staff requests that have been made. Similarly, Members have discretion to decide what vacant posts to delete but should they decide to reject any recommendations there will be a compensating impact on the Council's budget preparations.

RESOLVED that:

1. Thanks be recorded to officers for their work to date on the Organisational Review.
2. The Voluntary Redundancy and Voluntary Early Retirement of all the applicants, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report, be approved.
3. All the posts associated with the staff requests detailed in paragraph 7.1 of the report be deleted, with the exception of those set out in paragraphs 3.5 and 3.7 of the report.
4. The deletion of, or changes to, the vacant posts from existing structures, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report, be approved.
5. It be noted that the timescale for Phase II of the Organisational and Managerial Review, as set out in paragraph 6.2 of the report, be noted.

107. REPORT(S) OF THE CABINET MEMBER – CUSTOMER AND SUPPORT SERVICES – COUNCILLOR S MAY

(a) Benefits Risk-based Verification Policy (Key Decision No. 435)

Members' approval was sought for the adoption of the Risk-based Verification (RBV) Policy in determining evidence requirements for the assessment of new claims and changes in circumstances for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction. The Business Case was appended to the report for Cabinet, Assistant, Advisory and Liaison Members, and had been deposited in the Members' Room.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

The Council's Section 151 Officer has agreed the Policy following agreement that it is in line with legislation and guidance, and that the IT system can identify which cases have gone through the RBV process. This then forms the basis of the audit for the subsidy grant claim. There is a risk that if this is not done then the grant claim could be qualified.

DWP advises that there is a risk that fraud could exist within cases allocated a low risk score. However, this will be mitigated by regular reviews and quality assurance checks.

Members could decide not to adopt the RBV principles at Bassetlaw, and verification processes would remain the same as now. The risk associated with this option is that elements of the electronic claiming process within the planned transactional website would be hindered.

A decision to adopt the RBV principles would allow for a higher number of claims and their evidence to be completed electronically and reduce the burden on claimants in the low risk category in supply evidence, which would, in turn, reduce the number of people attending the One Stop Shops and other designated offices to provide documents.

RESOLVED that:

1. Thanks be recorded to Benefits officers for their work to date on the Policy.
2. The adoption of the Benefits Risk-based Verification Policy be approved, to be implemented in line with the transactional website project timetable, but not before 1st April 2014 as this could affect the audit of the 2013/14 subsidy claim.
3. The onward referral of the Policy to full Council for ratification by the Audit and Risk Scrutiny Committee be endorsed.

Other Decisions

108. REPORT(S) OF THE CABINET MEMBER – CUSTOMER AND SUPPORT SERVICES – COUNCILLOR S MAY

(a) ICT Unit – Review of Structure

Members were presented with the rationale behind proposed changes to the staff structure of the ICT Unit within Support Services in response to issues identified from staff consultation on the original proposals and from the outcome of discussions with A1 Housing regarding the possibility of closer working.

The current structure chart for ICT, GIS, Land Charges and the Print and Design Unit was appended to the report, together with a potential future structure encompassing these units.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

The Council is facing significant pressure both structurally and financially, therefore the need to review and restructure its services is of paramount importance. ICT will play an increasingly important part in enabling more innovative and cost effective ways of delivering services. The proposals seek to centralise ICT, rationalise management arrangements and building in strategic ICT expertise, and prepare the Council for the significant changes ahead.

Members have the options of either progressing or not progressing with the proposals for restructuring ICT. Should the decision be made not to move to implementation then

this could have an impact on the Council's ability to deliver against the more demanding Government agenda. The current structure does not provide a cost-effective option to align itself with these requirements. The Council's strategic ICT capacity will not be improved, therefore expertise will need to be "bought in" to assist the Council in preparing for the emerging agenda.

RESOLVED that:

1. The initial proposals, as outlined in the report, be approved and consultation with affected staff and their representatives be commenced in accordance with the Council's Job and Structure Redesign Policy and Procedure.
2. A further report be submitted to Cabinet for approval of the final structure and budget changes.

(b) Legal and Licensing Review

Members were presented with the rationale behind proposed changes to the structure within the Legal and Licensing Services which has been operating within a temporary structure for the last two years.

The current structure and a proposed structure were detailed within the report.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

The Legal Service has been in a state of flux for two years and has been wholly dependent upon the goodwill of existing staff in addition to the dependency of locum support. The Organisational Review has provided much needed guidance on some of the issues that must be addressed to create the optimum structure.

Notwithstanding the budgetary pressure to reduce costs, the proposals represent the most pragmatic and viable restructuring option at this time, which would also represent value for money by reducing the need to buy external support through locums and private legal services. It would further reinstate the team as a professional legal resource.

Members have the option of either progressing or not progressing with the proposed changes identified in the report. However, Members should be mindful of the issues identified, therefore any decision made must reflect a will to address those issues and mitigate risk to the Council.

RESOLVED that:

1. The initial proposals, as outlined in the report, be approved and consultation with affected staff and their representatives be commenced in accordance with the Council's Job and Structure Redesign Policy and Procedure.
2. A further report be submitted to Cabinet for approval of the final structure and budget changes.

109. REPORT(S) OF THE CABINET MEMBERS – FINANCE AND REGENERATION –
COUNCILLORS J EVANS AND J WHITE

(The item was presented by the Cabinet Member for Finance.)

(a) Review of Car Parking

Members' approval was sought for revised arrangements for the operation of the Car Park Management Service, which were detailed within the report and included proposals for parking enforcement, car park site management and the cash collection service

An Advisory Member suggested that officers approach the Hospital Trust with regard to partnership working in respect of the management of car parks provided by the two organisations.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

Members may decide not to agree with the proposals set out in the report and continue with the current arrangements. However, given the nature of the demand-led income, particularly within the car park area, this will not address the on-going shortfall in income figures or a more co-ordinated approach to the management of car parking.

RESOLVED that:

1. The principle of working in partnership with one or more members of the Nottinghamshire Parking Partnership in the delivery of the Parking Management Service be approved, and the outcome be reported to a future meeting of Cabinet.
2. Authority to agree the final partnership arrangements be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Finance.
3. Any direct impact on existing staff be reported back to Cabinet for consideration following the conclusion of discussions.
4. A new post of Facilities Officer be added to the establishment and the current provider of the pay and display machine cash collection service be given notice of termination of its contract.

110. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

As there was no other urgent business to be considered, the Chairman closed the meeting after thanking everyone for their attendance and wishing them Season's Greetings.

(Meeting closed at 8.50pm.)