

CABINET

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 3rd April 2012 at Retford Town Hall

Present: Councillor G A N Oxby (Chair),
Councillors J Evans, S A Greaves, J A Leigh, S May, D R Pressley and
A Rhodes.

Liaison Members: Councillors H Burton, M W Quigley and C Wanless.

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

Standards Members: B Letherland.

(The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and read out the Fire Alarm/Evacuation Procedure.)

162. QUESTION TIME - PUBLIC

Council Procedure Rules were suspended for fifteen minutes to allow questions from the public; there were two members of the public, one of which asked two questions:

Is the Council proposing to cut street cleaning?

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure replied:

“Following central Government’s reductions in council budgets, in terms of street cleansing we have achieved the following: no reduction in the amount of street cleansing in Bassetlaw; the end of the use of expensive agency workers; greater efficiency through investment in additional and improved equipment to raise standards District wide; and a review of the current structure and working arrangements for the service.

The street cleansing service had four vacancies due to retirements and a further four due to voluntary redundancy. We recruited to the four vacancies which arose after the retirements and reorganised the work schedules and arrangements for the service to ensure appropriate cover for the reorganised workforce. One post is a supervisory post, which has little impact on front line operational functions. Further efficiencies were made through greater use of single operative working, rather than always working in groups and pairs.

A review is planned to facilitate improved and increased operator performance. This will ensure that operatives working across the street cleansing and refuse collection areas will be trained and enabled to cover each post so that these vital public services will remain a priority for the District Council.

This drive to improve efficiency across street cleansing and refuse collection has led to a total saving of £82,443, which is 11% of the budget, with no loss of service in either of these essential areas of service.”

Is the Council proposing to increase Members’ allowances?

The Leader of the Council replied that the Independent Remuneration Panel looks at Members' allowances, and its recommendations are supported. In 2010/11, allowances were reduced by 5%; in 2011/12, allowances were frozen; and for 2012/13, allowances will again be frozen.

The Cabinet Member for Community Prosperity added that following the change of Administration in May 2011, an additional Cabinet Member was introduced; however, the other Cabinet Members took a reduction in their allowances to pay for the additional Cabinet Member.

163. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S Toms.

164. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

(a) Members

There were no declarations of interest by Members.

(b) Officers

There were no declarations of interest by officers.

165. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6TH MARCH 2012

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 6th March 2012 be approved.

166. MINUTES FOR ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

RESOLVED that the Minutes for Action and Implementation be received.

167. OUTSTANDING MINUTES LIST

With regard to Minute No 12(a) – Welbeck Colliery Regeneration, the Cabinet Member for Community Prosperity reported that a planning application had been received from Nottinghamshire County Council to restore the site, which was a condition of the original planning application i.e. to restore the site within two years of its closure.

RESOLVED that the Outstanding Minutes List be received.

SECTION A – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PUBLIC

Key Decisions

None.

Other Decisions

168. REPORT(S) OF THE CABINET MEMBER – POLICY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – COUNCILLOR G A N OXBY

(a) Forward Plan – April to July 2012

Members were presented with the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the coming four months.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

The report is for noting.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan for the period April to July 2012 be approved.

(b) Armed Forces Community Covenant

Members' approval was sought to enter into an Armed Forces Community Covenant between the District of Bassetlaw and representatives of the Armed Forces. Guidance notes on the Covenant were appended to the report.

The pledge should be supported by the measures the signatories will put in place to give effect to the pledge. The Local Strategic Partnership will also be encouraged to support the Covenant to provide wider community involvement. If approved, it is proposed that the formal signing of the Covenant takes place when the Sherwood Foresters next exercise their Freedom to March within Bassetlaw.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

The options exist to approve, amend or reject the recommendations. Given the Council's ongoing support for the Armed Forces community and its links with local regiments, the Covenant would underpin this approach.

RESOLVED that the Armed Forces Community Covenant for Bassetlaw be approved and arrangements be made for the Covenant to be signed by representatives of the Armed Forces.

(c) Shared Working Arrangements – Human Resources and Organisational Development

Members were updated on progress towards shared working arrangements in the delivery of Human Resources and organisational development support to the Council and A1 Housing. Members' approval was sought to implement temporary arrangements which will facilitate and enable a more comprehensive review of longer-term requirements whilst achieving immediate cost reductions.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

Option One – To note the contents of the report and approve the temporary arrangements for Human Resources shared services as set out in the report.

Option Two – To not approve the temporary arrangements for Human Resources shared services as set out in the report. This will prevent the achievement of the cost and efficiency savings outlined in the report.

RESOLVED that the report be received and the temporary arrangements for Human Resources shared services, as set out in the report, be approved.

169. REPORT(S) OF THE CABINET MEMBER – ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE –
COUNCILLOR J A LEIGH

(a) Revised Nottinghamshire Waste Partnering Agreement

Members' approval was sought for: the completion of the Revised Nottinghamshire Waste Partnering Agreement, which had been appended to the report for Cabinet and Liaison Members and deposited in the Members' Room; to appoint the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure onto the Executive Board; and to authorise the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure to be the formal signatory for the Authority at the signing of the Agreement at the Executive Board Meeting.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure reported that the initial agreement which had been proposed included an element for the sharing of any excess income generated by Nottinghamshire County Council's contract with Veolia Environmental Services for the throughput of tonnages of dry recyclable materials at the MRF facility at Mansfield. This element did operate for a temporary 12-month period until March 2012 but, following the County Council's budget realignment process for 2012/13 and beyond, has now been discontinued and no longer forms part of the revised proposals.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

The need to have a County-wide understanding and agreement between Nottinghamshire County Council and all the Nottinghamshire Districts is essential and over-rides any other considerations.

RESOLVED that:

1. The principles set out in the revised Waste Partnering Agreement, as appended to the report, be agreed and the Agreement be completed.
2. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure be duly authorised to be the signatory for the revised Waste Partnering Agreement on behalf of the District Council.

170. REPORT(S) OF THE CABINET MEMBER – HOUSING – COUNCILLOR A RHODES

(a) Disabled Facilities Grants

Members' approval was sought for the revised Disabled Facilities Grants Policy, which had been appended to the report for Cabinet and Liaison Members and deposited in the Members' Room, and the terms of reference for the Disabled Facilities Grants Panel which were appended to the report.

The Council has a statutory duty to provide Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs), the demand for which continues to increase nationally as the elderly population increases. This is compounded by the drive for more independent living together with an increasing life expectancy of both adults and children with disabilities. Bassetlaw has the highest number of people aged 65 with long-term limiting illness in Nottinghamshire, and this situation is predicted to continue for the foreseeable future.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

To approve the revised terms of reference for the DFG Panel to: require all adaptations likely to exceed £10,000 are referred to the Panel to ensure all options are considered in order to meet the needs of the disabled persons in the most cost effective way; and implement a priority system if demand for adaptations exceeds the resources available. The risk associated with this option is the potential for complaints from applicants; however, clear and consistent decision-making by the Panel supported by the Policy will counter such complaints.

To approve the revised Policy in order to provide clarity on the Council's position relating to the delivery of the DFG programme. The risk to the Council of not having a clear policy is that decisions could be subject to challenge.

To approve the re-profiling of the current budget allocating £1m per year for 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15, leaving a balance of £0.590m for 2015/16. This will enable the Council to continue to meet its statutory obligations and reduce the risk of a waiting list. The risk of not re-profiling the budget will be a backlog of applications for DFGs accruing in 2014/15 as the budget reduces by two-thirds.

RESOLVED that:

1. The revised terms of reference for the Disabled Facilities Grants Panel be approved.
2. The revised Disabled Facilities Grants Policy be approved.
3. The re-profiling of the five-year Disabled Facilities Grant budget, as outlined in paragraph 3.13 of the report, be approved.
4. Formal consultation on the Disabled Facilities Grants Policy be undertaken and approval of any minor amendments to the Policy be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Housing. Any fundamental amendments to the Policy be referred to the June 2012 Cabinet Meeting.

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

(a) Developing the Council's Anti-Poverty Agenda

Members' approval was sought to commence work on the development and co-ordination of an Anti-Poverty Strategy for the Council.

The Council's priorities within the Corporate Plan for 2012-15 include: increase supply of affordable housing; tackle fuel poverty by making energy saving home improvements; develop a financial inclusion strategy; and work with partners to combat the causes and effects of poverty. These priorities have been driven by the knowledge on debt and poverty within Bassetlaw. A recent study indicates that Bassetlaw is ranked 61st in England for the biggest risk of poverty and 64th for child poverty out of 326 local authorities.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

Cabinet can accept, amend or reject the proposals contained within the report. Given the priority placed upon this work by the Corporate Plan, Cabinet is recommended to agree the proposals.

RESOLVED that:

1. The proposals to commence work on the co-ordination and development of an Anti-Poverty Strategy for Bassetlaw, as set out within the report, be approved.
2. Regular reports be presented to Cabinet on the progress on developing the Strategy and the actions arising from that work.
3. A budget of £2,500 be approved for 2012/13 to support public awareness raising and the delivery of the Strategy's outcomes. This to be funded from the 2012/13 Corporate Contingency Fund.
4. The draft Anti-Poverty Strategy be submitted to a future meeting of Cabinet for approval.

172. REPORTING MINUTES

(a) Information Technology and Access Sub-Committee – 8th December 2011

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Information Technology and Access Sub-Committee held on 8th December 2011 be received.

(b) Joint Employee Council – 20th December 2011

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Employee Council held on 20th December 2011 be received.

173. 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 12(a) – Bassetlaw CCTV Monitoring Contract (Key Decision No. 322) - Paragraph 3

Agenda Item No 13(a) – Community Engagement and Performance Service Review – Final Proposals – Paragraph 2

Agenda Item No 14(a) – Management Review of Environment Services – Paragraph 2

SECTION B – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PRIVATE

Key Decisions

174. REPORT(S) OF THE CABINET MEMBER – COMMUNITY PROSPERITY – COUNCILLOR D R PRESSLEY

(a) Bassetlaw CCTV Monitoring Contract (Key Decision No. 322)

Members were updated on the contractual arrangements for monitoring the closed circuit television (CCTV) surveillance system in Bassetlaw.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

Whilst it is possible to maintain the contract at the existing level, this will not provide full 24-hour monitoring of the system and will result in reduced confidence in the ability of the system to tackle community safety concerns. Therefore, this matter was dealt with by way of an authorised waiver of the Contract Procedure Rules using delegated powers. Given the scale of funding involved, it was necessary to report this matter to Cabinet.

RESOLVED that:

1. The decision to let the extended contract for the monitoring of the closed circuit television surveillance system under the provisions of Section 18.1 of the Contract Procedure Rules be endorsed.
2. The additional expenditure of £37,000 be funded from the 2012/13 Corporate Contingency Fund.
3. Thanks be recorded to all Members and officers for the work involved in this contract.

Other Decisions

175. REPORT(S) OF THE CABINET MEMBER – POLICY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – COUNCILLOR G A N OXBY

(a) Community Engagement and Performance Service Review

Members were updated on the outcome of the formal consultation process relating to the proposed restructure arrangements for the Community Engagement and Performance Service, and Members' approval was sought for the proposed arrangements.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

The Council is facing significant pressure both structurally and financially, therefore the need to review and restructure all services is of paramount importance. The impact of the successful application of voluntary early retirement to those members of staff having requested this option has been considered and remaining duties will be absorbed as indicated within the proposals.

Members have the option of either approving or not approving the proposed changes. However, should the decision be made not to approve the proposals, then this will have an impact on: performance management and support to the Audit and Performance Scrutiny Committee; capacity and expertise in administering elections and the Council's committees; and, further, not adequately responding to the emerging outward focussed communications and consultation agenda.

RESOLVED that the proposed changes to the Community Engagement and Performance Service, as outlined within the report, be approved.

176. REPORT(S) OF THE CABINET MEMBER – ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE – COUNCILLOR J A LEIGH

(a) Management Review of Environment Services

Members' approval was sought for the proposed changes to the management structure within Environment Services.

Trade union comments had been circulated prior to/tabled at the meeting.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

Option One – To not support the proposals and no changes are made to the Environment Services management structure following the voluntary early retirement of the Environment Services Manager.

Option Two – To accept the proposals as detailed in the report and agree to the commencement of recruitment to the new posts. All posts are ring-fenced for existing employees within Environment Services.

RESOLVED that:

1. The proposed structure for Environment Services, as detailed within the report, be approved and recruitment to the agreed posts be commenced.
2. Thanks be recorded to the trade unions for their proactive and supportive engagement.

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

As there was no other business to be considered, the Chairman closed the meeting after thanking both elected Members and officers for their work and professionalism during the municipal year.