

CABINET

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 10th February 2011 at Retford Town Hall

Present: Councillor M W Quigley (Chair),
Councillors K H Isard, M G Pugsley, K Sutton, C Wanless and T E Yates.

Liaison Members: Councillors H Burton, Miss M Stokes and G J Wynne.

Officers: D Armiger, A Burton, J Hamilton, M Hill, L Hull, D Hunter, N Taylor and R Theakstone.

Standards Members: None.

Also present: Councillor H Brand.

127. DIVERSITY PEER CHALLENGE

The Chairman announced that, following the Diversity Peer Challenge on Wednesday and Thursday of this week, the Council had been awarded "Achieving" status. Level 1 is "Developing" and Level 3 is "Excellent". The Council has been working pro-actively over many months to prepare for this very important assessment in order to check our commitment and approach to the Equalities and Diversity Agenda. The Chairman thanked everyone for contributing to the Equalities and Diversity agenda either through attending training, undertaking e-learning, participating in the Equalities Champions Group, producing EIA's and most importantly for the commitment to serving our communities in the best way we can. He also expressed special thanks to Stephen Brown who had devoted a lot of time towards preparation for the inspection and in ensuring we have been able to move this important agenda forward.

RESOLVED that:

1. The attainment of 'Achieving' status to Bassetlaw District Council as a result of the Diversity Peer Challenge be noted.
2. Thanks be recorded to everyone who contributed to the Equality and Diversity Agenda, particularly Stephen Brown, Senior Manager Support Services, for his preparation work.

128. QUESTION TIME - PUBLIC

Council Procedure Rules were suspended for fifteen minutes to allow questions from the public.

How can a Parish Council ensure that a planning application is presented to Planning Committee for consideration? If the Planning Consultation Group is a committee of the Council, why is there no public agenda, minutes taken or members of the public allowed to attend? Why does Bassetlaw District Council circulate leaflets asking for views if it doesn't listen to residents' concerns?

The Cabinet Member for Community Prosperity replied that the proposed development in East Markham to which the Parish Councillor referred was in outline only with all matters reserved except that of access and, although 41 dwellings were shown on the indicative layout, the applicant is free to vary all of the details at the reserved matters stage. The application was presented at a recent meeting of the Planning Consultation Group where Members decided to allow the Planning Officers to continue with a delegated determination.

There is no guarantee that a planning application will be presented to Planning Committee for consideration. A parish council can ask, as can a Ward Member, but it is the Planning Consultation Group that decides which applications are referred to Committee.

There is no agenda for Planning Consultation Group, only a list of applications to be considered, and no minutes are taken. The Group consists of the Chair and Vice of Planning Committee, together with the Opposition Spokesperson and another Committee Member on a rota basis.

The leaflet currently being distributed throughout villages is from the Planning Policy Team regarding proposed developments in rural area and will help shape future planning policy and the Local Development Framework.

(The member of the public left the meeting.)

129. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor G A N Oxby.

130. 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.

131. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11TH JANUARY 2011

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2011 be approved.

132. MINUTES FOR ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

RESOLVED that the Minutes for Action and Implementation be received.

133. OUTSTANDING MINUTES LIST

RESOLVED that the Outstanding Minutes List be received.

SECTION A – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PUBLIC

Key Decisions

134. REPORT(S) OF THE CABINET MEMBER – FINANCE AND PROPERTY – COUNCILLOR T E YATES

(a) Budget Monitoring and Capital Programme Update Report to 31st December 2010 (Key Decision No 251)

Members were informed of: the spending position for the period 1st April to 31st December 2010 for the Council's General Fund, Housing Revenue and Capital Programme; any significant variances from the approved budgets; the proposed resourcing of the Capital Programme and the level of Council capital resources available, including capital receipts; updates on regeneration projects and sites that are not monitored through the Council's Capital Programme; Treasury Management budget issues; and the regular quarterly update on

performance against the approved Treasury Management Prudential Indicators for the period ending 31st December 2010.

Members' approval was also sought for variations and additions to the existing Capital Programme, as appended to the report.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

The budget monitoring section of the report is for information only. There are some potential risks that the estimated out-turn variance could still differ from that currently shown; however, as the financial year-end becomes closer then the level of risk reduces.

The Council has responsibility for delivering its Capital Programme on time and not doing so could undermine the achievement of its objectives. The Property and Regeneration Group will continue to monitor scheme progress on a monthly basis.

There may be changes to the way the Capital Programme is financed as officers review the most appropriate methodology as part of the closedown process.

RESOLVED that:

1. The position with regard to revenue and capital budget monitoring be noted.
2. The 're-profiling' to the 2010/11 Capital Programme totalling £(3.729m), as outlined in paragraph 3.10 of the report and detailed in Appendix 3 of the report, be approved.
3. The 'new approvals' to the 2010/11 Capital Programme totalling £0.561m, as outlined in paragraph 3.10 of the report and detailed in Appendix 3 of the report, be approved.
4. The 'other variations' to the 2010/11 Capital Programme totalling £(0.247m), as outlined in paragraph 3.10 of the report and detailed in Appendix 3 of the report, be approved.
5. The proposed resourcing of the Capital Programme and the level of capital receipts currently available to fund any further capital expenditure be noted.
6. The update on the Langold Lake key regeneration project be noted.
7. The quarterly update on performance against the approved Treasury Management Prudential Indicators for the period ending 31st December 2010 be noted.
8. The weekly investment balances made throughout the third quarter of the financial year, in conjunction with the Security, Liquidity and Yield benchmarking date for the Council be noted.

(b) General Fund Budget 2011/12 (Key Decision No 254), Financial Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan 2011/12-2013/14 (Key Decision No 246)

Members were presented with the draft budget for the next financial year and asked to make recommendations to full Council on 3rd March 2011 to set the budget and Council Tax levels for 2011/12. Projections about the long-term financial sustainability of the Council, in conjunction with current issues and the financial support required for Bassetlaw's priorities in the Corporate Plan, were outlined in the report.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

Bassetlaw District Council needs to review its Financial Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan each year to ensure income equals expenditure, and where it doesn't, or is projected not to, corrective action needs to be identified and put in hand.

RESOLVED that:

1. The draft budget for 2011/12 and the Medium Term Plan for 2012/13 and 2013/14, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, together with the associated comments from the Audit and Performance Scrutiny Committee on 8th February 2011, be recommended to full Council on 3rd March 2011 for approval.
2. A Council Tax increase of 0% for 2011/12, in line with best practice, be recommended to full Council on 3rd March 2011 for approval, also indicative increases of 0% for both 2012/13 and 2013/14.
3. The Service Improvements of £41,100, as summarised in paragraph 3.49 of the report, be approved.
4. The declaration of a nil surplus on the Collection fund for 2011/12, as summarised in paragraphs 3.50 and 3.51 of the report, and detailed in Appendix 3 of the report, be approved.
5. Delegated authority be given to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Property for addressing any issues coming out of the Business Ratepayers' meeting in February 2011.
6. The position regarding the Manton Community Alliance budgets, as outlined in paragraph 3.43 of the report, be noted and delegated authority be given to the Director of Resources to deal with the termination of the scheme during 2011.
7. Delegated authority be given to the Director of Resources to deal with amendments to the budget with regard to Revenue Support Grant, Drainage Board invoices, New Homes bonus and parish precepts, all of which will not affect the Council Tax Resolution.
8. Thanks be recorded to M Hill, Head of Property and Finance, and the Finance officers for their hard work to produce the reports on time.

(c) Housing Revenue Account Budget 2011/12 and Future Years to 2013/14 (Key Decision No 255)

Members were presented with the draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2011/12, together with indicative figures for 2012/13 and 2013/14, and asked to make recommendations to full Council on 3rd March 2011 to set the budget and rent levels for 2011/12.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

The Council must set a balanced HRA budget that leaves a Minimum Working Balance at 31st March 2012. It is recommended that this minimum balance is £0.75m in line with previous budget strategies and the guidance from external auditors.

In respect of the budget, the following options are available:

- (a) Revise the planned use of reserves to support the HRS budget.
- (b) Change the planned level of increase in housing rents.

Cabinet is advised to adopt a strategy of setting a rent increase in line with the Government requirements for inflationary increases and rent convergences.

RESOLVED that:

1. The draft HRA budget for 2011/12 and future years, together with the associated comments from the Audit and Performance Scrutiny Committee on 8th February 2011, be recommended to full Council on 3rd March 2011 for approval.
2. An average rent increase of 6.27% for 2011/12 be recommended to full Council on 3rd March 2011 for approval, and, in accordance with best practice, indicative increases of 2.83% for both 2012/13 and 2013/14 (dependent upon future RPI changes) be recommended.

3. The average of rent be applied at an individual property level as calculated using the Government Rent Restructuring model.
4. The use of reserves of £0.038m to fund 2011/12, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report, be approved.

(d) General Fund Capital Programme 2011/12 to 2015/16 (Key Decision No 256)

Members were presented with the draft General Fund Capital Programme for 2011/12 to 2015/16, which was appended to the report, and asked to make recommendations to full Council on 3rd March 2011 for its approval.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

Members can decide what schemes to include or exclude. Any schemes that include external finance will have implications for those organisations.

RESOLVED that the new additions to the draft Capital Programme 2011/12 to 2015/16, as at Appendix B of the report, be recommended to full Council on 3rd March 2011 for approval.

(e) Housing Capital Programme 2011/12 to 2015/16 (Key Decision No 257)

Members were presented with the draft Housing Capital programme for 2011/12 to 2015/16, which was appended to the report, and asked to make recommendations to full Council on 3rd March 2011 for its approval.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

The report indicates that internal resources for capital investment are currently very limited. Further options will become available on the generation of additional capital receipts, and Members have the opportunity to amend the proposed Capital Programme as they see fit. Other options are available through unsupported borrowing, although this would have a detrimental impact on the long-term sustainability of the Housing Revenue Accounts.

Once the announcement of funding levels for 2011/12 and 2012/13 is made by the Homes and Communities Agency, this programme will require further amendment to align resources to expenditure.

RESOLVED that the draft Housing Capital Programme 2011/12 to 2015/16 of £37.604m, as at Appendix A of the report, be recommended to full Council on 3rd March 2011 for approval.

(f) Treasury Management Policy and Strategy 2011/12 to 2013/14 (Key Decision No 258)

Members were presented with the Treasury Management Strategy, Borrowing Strategy, Annual Investment Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and Prudential Indicators, as updated in accordance with latest guidance, and asked to make recommendations to full Council on 3rd March 2011 for its approval.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

The only option is to accept the recommendations and adopt the Treasury Management Strategy, Borrowing Strategy, Annual Investment Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and Prudential Indicators.

To not approve these policies would contravene the requirements of both legislation and good practice. In addition, the Audit Commission may pass comment in their Annual Audit Letter.

RESOLVED that:

1. The Treasury Management Strategy 2011/12 to 2013/14, incorporating the Borrowing Strategy and the Annual Investment Strategy, as at Appendix 1 of the report, be recommended to full Council on 3rd March 2011 for approval.
2. The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement, contained within Appendix 2 of the report, which sets out the Council's Policy on (MRP) be recommended to full Council on 3rd March 2011 for approval.
3. The Prudential Indicators and Limits for 2011/12 to 2013/14, as at Appendix 3 of the report, be recommended to full Council on 3rd March 2011 for approval.
4. The Authorised Limit Prudential Indicator, contained within Appendix 3 of the report, be recommended to full Council on 3rd March 2011 for approval.

(g) Capital Investment Strategy 2011/12 to 2015/16 (Key Decision No 259)

Members were presented with the draft Capital Investment Strategy 2011/12 to 2015/16, which was appended to the report, and asked to recommendations to full Council on 3rd March 2011 for its approval.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

The Capital Investment Strategy is a key document which sets out how capital resources will be deployed to meet the priorities of the Council.

RESOLVED that the draft Capital Investment Strategy 2011/12 to 2015/16 be recommended to full Council on 3rd March 2011 for approval.

(h) Property Asset Management Plan 2011/12 to 2015/16 (Key Decision No 260)

Members were presented with the draft Property Asset Management Plan 2011/12 to 2015/16, which was appended to the report, and asked to recommendations to full Council on 3rd March 2011 for its approval.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

The Asset Management Plan is a key document which sets out how the Council effectively manages its assets to support the efficient delivery of its priorities and objectives.

RESOLVED that the draft Asset Management Plan 2011/12 to 2015/16 be recommended to full Council on 3rd March 2011 for approval.

135. REPORT(S) OF THE CABINET MEMBER – COMMUNITY PROSPERITY – COUNCILLOR K H ISARD

(a) Civil Parking Enforcement (Key Decision No 280)

Members were updated on the current situation in relation to Civil Parking Enforcement and approval was sought for a change to arrangements in relation to the Town Hall car parks.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

Whilst it is possible to leave the parking arrangements as they are at the Town Hall car parks, doing so will not address a long standing issue where a small minority of people do not pay for parking at weekends whilst others incur a charge by following the correct procedure.

RESOLVED that:

1. Worksop and Retford Town Hall car parks be made available as public car parks on Saturdays and charges introduced in line with the adjacent car park.
2. The current performance of the Civic Parking Enforcement contract be noted.

Other Decisions

136. REPORT(S) OF THE CABINET MEMBER – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE – COUNCILLOR M W QUIGLEY

(a) Forward Plan – February 2011 to May 2011

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 February 2011 to May 2011 be approved.

(b) Appeals Procedure

Members' approval was sought for the new draft Appeals Procedure which was appended to the report, and which had been agreed with the employee representatives at the Joint Employee Council on 14th December 2010.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

Option One – To agree the draft Appeals Procedure which will ensure that a consistent, clear procedure is applied in each relevant circumstance and compliance with the Constitution.

Option Two – To suggest amendments to the draft Appeals Procedure.

RESOLVED that the draft Appeals Procedure be approved.

137. REPORT(S) OF THE CABINET MEMBER – FINANCE AND PROPERTY – COUNCILLOR T E YATES

(a) Robustness of Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves

Members were presented with a report which deals with the robustness of estimates and the adequacy of reserves. Sections 25 and 26 of the Local Government Act 2003 places a personal duty on the Chief Finance Officer to make such a report to Council when considering its budget and Council Tax.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

The LAAP bulletin 77 states that: "Account should be taken of the key financial assumptions underpinning the budget and financial strategy alongside a consideration of the Authority's financial management arrangements." The Head of Finance and Property's judgement of the residual risks of there being variances (over or underspending) from the budget, after taking account of the measures as discussed in paragraph 3.3 of the report, were outlined in the report.

Having considered the risks, the conclusion of the Section 151 Officer is that the Council be advised that overall the estimates are sufficiently robust and the levels of reserves and balances forecasted to be held at 31st March 2012 are adequate to allow the Council to set the Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax for 2011/12, and provide indicative figures for 2012/13 and 2013/14.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and recommended to full Council on 3rd March 2011 for noting.

138. REPORTING MINUTES

(a) Parish Councils Liaison Group – 13th October 2010

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Parish Councils Liaison Group held on 13th October 2010 be received.

(b) Bassetlaw Enterprise Board – 18th October 2010

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Bassetlaw Enterprise Board held on 18th October 2010 be received.

(c) Bassetlaw Enterprise Board – 10th January 2011

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Bassetlaw Enterprise Board held on 10th January 2011 be received.

139. 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 Paragraph 2 and, therefore, in accordance with Section 100A of the Act, the press and public be excluded from the meeting:

Agenda Item No 12(a) – Modernisation and Improvement: Revenues and Customer Services - Paragraph 2

(With the Chairman's permission, Councillor Brand remained in the meeting.)

SECTION B – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PRIVATE

Key Decisions

None.

Other Decisions

140. REPORT(S) OF THE CABINET MEMBER – REVENUES AND CUSTOMER SERVICES -
COUNCILLOR C WANLESS

(a) Modernisation and Improvement: Revenues and Customer Services

Members' approval was sought for an amendment to management arrangements of two of the seven recommendations considered in the September 2010 Cabinet report, which covered efficiency savings agreed and management changes.

Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

There is an option to do nothing and maintain the status quo and not realise the efficiencies stated, some of which were programmed in the September 2010 report.

There is the option to adopt the proposals, which will provide the basis for efficiencies and further structural changes later, as outlined in the report.

RESOLVED that:

1. The changes to management arrangements previously approved in September 2010 be approved, as outlined in the report, and the proposed staffing structures for Customer Services and Local Taxation be approved as at Appendix 1A of the report.
2. The indicative budget changes be noted, amending the relevant appendix of the September 2010 report outcomes, as at Appendix 2 of the report.
3. Delegated authority be given to the Director of Resources to proceed with detailed matters such as concluding the enabling procedure in connection with senior customer services staff.

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

As there was no other business to be considered, the Chairman closed the meeting.