

**LOUGHBOROUGH AREA COMMITTEE
15TH DECEMBER 2021**

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Hamilton)
Councillors Bailey, Boldrin, J. Bradshaw,
Campsall, Draycott, Forrest, Goddard, C. Harris,
K. Harris, Mercer, Miah, Morgan, Parsons, Parton,
Smidowicz, Tillotson and Ward

Head of Leisure and Culture
Head of Planning and Regeneration
Neighbourhoods and Partnerships Manager
Head of Financial Services
Head of Strategic Support
Democratic Services Officer (EB)

The Chair stated that the meeting would be recorded and the sound recording subsequently made available via the Council's website. He also advised that, under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting, and the use of any such images or sound recordings was not under the Council's control.

8. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED that Councillor Ward be appointed as Vice-chair of the Committee for the remainder of the 2021/22 Council year.

9. APOLOGIES

No apologies were received.

10. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16th June 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and signed.

11. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTERESTS

The following disclosures were made:

- i. Councillor Miah disclosed a personal interest in respect of item 6 on the agenda (Loughborough Special Expense Draft Budget 2022/23) as a representative of Fearon Hall but comes to the meeting with an open mind.
- ii. Councillor Ward disclosed a personal interest in respect of item 6 on the agenda (Loughborough Special Expense Draft Budget 2022/23) as a Trustee

of Gorse Covert Community Centre but comes to the meeting with an open mind.

- iii. Councillor C Harris disclosed a personal interest in respect of item 6 on the agenda (Loughborough Special Expense Draft Budget 2022/23) as a representative of Fearon Hall but comes to the meeting with an open mind.

12. QUESTIONS UNDER COMMITTEE PROCEDURE 12.8

No questions were submitted.

13. LOUGHBOROUGH SPECIAL EXPENSE DRAFT BUDGET 2022/23

Councillor Morgan joined the meeting at 6:29pm

Councillor Smidowicz left the meeting at 7:33pm

A report of the Head of Finance to advise the Loughborough Area Committee on the draft Loughborough Special Expense Budget for 2022/23, was submitted (item 6 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Heads of Financial Services, Leisure and Culture, Strategic Support and Planning and Regeneration and the Neighbourhoods and Partnerships Manager attended the meeting to provide assistance in consideration of this item. The following responses were provided to questions raised:

- i. There was an adjustment of £82k for the Council Tax base rate which meant additional funds of £64k could be used to support reserves. This was a rolling balance account over a two-year period.
- ii. The Council had previously been working with the Thorpe Acre Residents Association to identify a suitable venue for a community hub facility. There had initially been S106 funds and financial support from Loughborough University allocated towards this project. Partners had since determined that there was not capacity to run the project. Funding received from Loughborough University had been used by partners to support other schemes.
- iii. As part of the Council's overall savings proposals, a 5% deduction in Strategic Partner Grants had meant that Gorse Covert and Fearon Hall Community Centres would receive a reduced level of funding from the Council. Members expressed some concern over the implication of this reduction in funding and agreed to propose that the reductions in funding for Fearon Hall and Gorse Covert Community Centre were not approved by Cabinet.
- iv. There was a due process followed with regards to the appropriate placement of CCTV cameras, including consideration of evidence and rules and regulations on privacy.
- v. There were separate budgets allocated for permanent and casual salaries managing CCTV in Loughborough. The 10% reduction in funding for casual

- salaries did not indicate a reduction in 24 hours monitoring of CCTV. It was highlighted that the casual staff budget had not been required for some time.
- vi. Information on the location of additional allotments in the Loughborough area was not available at the meeting. It was highlighted that the Open Spaces Strategy outlined existing allotment sites and indicated demand for new allotment sites. It was agreed that the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces would provide this information following the meeting.
 - vii. The Festive Lights budget included maintenance, testing and installation and other associated costs. The festive lights contract was due for procurement in 2022 and the expenditure of this aspect will depend on the successful contract.
 - viii. A more comprehensive break down of costs associated with the metered water budget was requested, including information on how much of the metered water budget was used by the Loughborough in Bloom Scheme. It was agreed that this information would be circulated following the meeting.
 - ix. A comprehensive breakdown of the finances associated with the Loughborough in Bloom scheme was requested. It was agreed that this information be circulated following the meeting.
 - x. A review on burial charges for people outside of the Borough was planned in order to identify any potential savings in that area. There was no additional information available at the meeting and it was agreed that the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces provide more information to members following the meeting.
 - xi. It was not possible to alter the funds within the General Fund and the Loughborough Special Expenses fund.
 - xii. Some members expressed concerns over the impact of budget reductions on projects and service areas. It was suggested that in future funds be identified from other service areas to mitigate the cost of budget reductions in other areas.

RESOLVED

1. That the Loughborough Area Committee note the draft Loughborough Special Expense budget for 2022/23 set out in Appendix 1 to this report.
2. That the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces provide information on the potential location of additional allotment sites within the Loughborough area.
3. That a more comprehensive break down of costs associated with the metered water budget be provided to members, including information on how much of the metered water budget was used by the Loughborough in Bloom Scheme.
4. That a comprehensive breakdown of the finances associated with the Loughborough in Bloom scheme was provided to members.

5. That the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces provide information on the review of burial charges for people outside of the Borough.
6. That it be recommended to Cabinet that they reconsider the proposed reduction in the budgets for Fearon Hall and Gorse Covert Community Centre in the Loughborough Special Expenses Budget for 2022/23.

Reasons

1. To enable the views of the Committee to be sought on the draft Loughborough Special Expenses for 2022/23 in accordance with its terms of reference, prior to the final Cabinet budget report on the 10th February 2022 and Council 21st February 2022.
2. To provide members of the committee with information regarding the location of additional allotment sites in the Loughborough area.
3. To provide members of the committee with information regarding the breakdown of the metered water budget.
4. To provide members of the committee with information regarding the finances associated with the Loughborough in Bloom scheme.
5. To provide members of the committee with information regarding the review of burial charges for people outside of the Borough.
6. To inform Cabinet that the Loughborough Area Committee felt that the reduction in the budgets for Fearon Hall and Gorse Covert Community Centre in the Loughborough Special Expenses Budget for 2022/23 was not appropriate at this time.

Post meeting notes:

In response to recommendations 3 and 4 the following responses were received from the Head of Financial Services:

3) All Parks Loughborough water Budget 2022/23 was £3,400 in total. It was not possible to break this down to reflect usage.

4) The Britain in Bloom Budget for 2022/23 was £20k.

In response to recommendations 2 and 5 the following responses were received from the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces:

2) Officers are yet to identify anywhere for additional allotment sites within Loughborough.

Standard allotment plots are very large and many plot holders now prefer a smaller area to manage. As plots become vacant, discussions take place with residents on the

waiting list to determine the size of plot that they require. Quite often a standard plot is divided into half plots which are more manageable. This allows officers to reduce the waiting list for an allotment by replacing one tenant with two.

Allotment sites are set to be included in the Garendon Park development. It is likely that these will be managed and maintained by someone other than CBC.

5) *The Council's burial charges have three tiers.*

1. *Residents of Loughborough – Single Charge*
2. *Residents of Charnwood – Double Charge*
3. *Non Resident of Charnwood – Triple Charge*

The multiplier outlined above applies to the internment costs and the exclusive right of burial. More details can be found on the website here: https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/cemetery_fees

It is likely that all charges will increase by approx. 10% for 22/23 in order to raise an additional £10k in income. It is hoped that the restrictions on the purchasing of plots in advance will be lifted once the new cemetery is operational.

14. BEDFORD SQUARE GATEWAY PROJECT UPDATE

Councillor Ward left the meeting at 7:37pm

Councillor Julie Bradshaw left the meeting at 7:43pm

The Head of Planning and Regeneration provided a verbal update on the Bedford Square Gateway Project. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. The project was intended to deliver improvements to the public realm and represented an invest of £3.8m. The project was driven by meeting the concerns of local businesses and was part of the Town Centre Masterplan.
- ii. The improvements would deliver a pleasant and distinct character to the area and aimed to boost trade within the area.
- iii. The construction had been delayed due to external requirements and this had been reported to the Loughborough Area Committee previously. There had been further issues as a result of utilities infrastructure and therefore the project had been redesigned slightly and to reduce further delays.
- iv. A voucher scheme and wavering of parking fees had been introduced by the Council and the Loughborough BID in order to mitigate the impact of the scheme on local businesses.
- v. The project was following a phased approach and the future phases were to be funded though the Loughborough Town Deal, which was awarded to the Loughborough Town Deal Board in October 2021.

- vi. The project was scheduled for completion in May 2022, including carriageways, pedestrian crossings and surfacing.
- vii. Concerns were raised regarding drainage issues in the area. It was stated that these concerns could be communicated to contractors.
- viii. Concerns were raised regarding parking in inappropriate places around the development area. It was stated that it was possible to explore signage options in the area to reduce issues with parking.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee notes the progression of the Bedford Square Gateway Project.
2. That the Head of Planning and Regeneration communicate the drainage issues highlighted to contractors.
3. That the Head of Planning and Regeneration explore options for signage around the development area to reduce parking issues.

Reasons

1. To ensure the Committee is kept up to date on the progression of the Bedford Square Gateway Project.
2. To ensure contractors are made aware of drainage issues before the completion of the project.
3. To identify options for reducing parking issues around the development area.

NOTES:

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at the Council meeting on 21st February 2022 unless notice to that effect is given to the Democratic Services Manager by five members of the Council by noon on the fifth working day following publication of these minutes.
2. These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Loughborough Area Committee.

