

CABINET
19TH SEPTEMBER 2019

PRESENT: The Leader (Councillor Morgan)
The Deputy Leader (Councillor Barkley)
Councillors Bokor, Hunt, Mercer, Poland, Rollings,
Smidowicz and Taylor

Councillor Rattray

Chief Executive
Strategic Director of Corporate Services
Head of Strategic Support
Head of Landlord Services
Head of Neighbourhood Services
Procurement Manager
Democratic Services Officer (LS)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Harper-Davies

The Leader stated that this meeting would be recorded and the sound recording subsequently made available via the Council's website. He also advised that, under the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, 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.

22. **DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTERESTS**

The following disclosures were made:

- (i) Councillor Morgan – an interest in item 7 on the agenda (Charnwood Grants) in relation to a community interest company of which his wife was a director. Councillor Morgan would leave the meeting during the consideration of the item.
- (ii) Councillor Bokor – an interest in item 7 on the agenda (Charnwood Grants) as a member of a task and finish project board for the Loughborough Generator project. Councillor Bokor stated that the interest was non-pecuniary and that she had not pre-determined the matter, however she would leave the meeting during the consideration of the item.

23. **LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

No formal announcements had been published prior to the meeting, but the Leader wished to thank, on behalf of the Cabinet, the retiring Chief Executive of this Council, Geoff Parker, for his many years of service, wise words, advice and patience. The Leader wished Mr Parker the very best for his forthcoming retirement.

24. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th July 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed.

25. QUESTIONS UNDER CABINET PROCEDURE 10.7

No questions had been submitted.

Prior to commencing consideration of the reports on the agenda for the meeting, the Leader stated that he proposed a new approach which acknowledged that all members had read the reports prior to the meeting, such that officers did not need to present reports and each item would commence with any clarification members required or questions they wished to ask.

26. COMMUNAL AREA CLEANING SCHEME FOR COUNCIL ACCOMMODATION

Considered a report of the Head of Landlord Services to consider the introduction of a chargeable communal cleaning service to tenants and leaseholders living in Council accommodation served by communal entrances, stairways, landings and internal bin stores (item 6 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Head of Landlord Services assisted with consideration of the report.

Further to the report, the Cabinet Lead Member for Housing wished to highlight the support given to the proposal by both the Council's Housing Management Advisory Board and the Labour Group's Shadow Lead Member for Housing and Benefits.

RESOLVED

1. that the introduction of a communal area cleaning service to tenants and leaseholders living in Council accommodation served by communal entrances, stairways, landings and internal bin stores be approved;
2. that tenants and leaseholders receiving the service pay for it through a service charge levied weekly in addition to their existing gross rent;
3. that the administration of the service is not passed on to tenants and leaseholders but absorbed as part of the Council's normal housing management service, met through existing housing revenue account (HRA) budgets;
4. that the frequency of cleaning be carried out according to the outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken with tenants and leaseholders, and officers' recommendations;
5. that tenants and leaseholders receiving the service will be charged according to the frequency decided;
6. that there will be a one-off clean carried out initially, the cost of which will not be charged to those receiving the service but met through existing (HRA) budgets.

Reasons

1. To keep communal areas at Council accommodation clean, and to improve the quality of life for tenants and leaseholders living in Council accommodation.
2. To recover the costs incurred through the contract to deliver the service.
3. To keep the cost of the service low at the point of introduction, reducing any potential financial stress placed on tenants through additional charges.
4. To carry out cleaning at a frequency which is in accordance with the wishes of tenants where possible, balanced against the need to bring the cleanliness of communal areas up to an acceptable standard.
5. To support a charging scheme that reflects the frequency of cleaning, whilst keeping costs low for all tenants and leaseholders receiving the service.
6. To not charge tenants and leaseholders due to receive the service for work to bring the communal areas up to an acceptable standard, when there has been no cleaning undertaken, in some instances for a significant period of time, and to reflect the views of the Housing Management Advisory Board.

Having declared interests, Councillors Bokor and Morgan left the meeting during the consideration of the following item.

27. CHARNWOOD GRANTS

Considered a report of the Head of Neighbourhood Services to consider applications received for funding in round two of the Community Facilities and Community Development and Engagement Grants schemes for 2019/20 (item 7 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Head of Neighbourhood Services assisted with consideration of the report.

RESOLVED

1. that the following Community Facilities Grant be awarded:
 - £20,000 to John Storer House towards the modernisation of their toilet facilities and installation of a Changing Places facility;
2. that the following Community Development and Engagement Grants be awarded:
 - £600 to Miller and Peverill Residents Association Sileby towards running costs;
 - Up to £2,292 to The Bridge (East Midlands) towards a canvas bag initiative (to be funded through the Community Development and Engagement Environmental grant scheme);

- £9,000 to Sustainable Land Trust towards a “Branching out” project (£8,000 to be funded through the Community Development and Engagement grant scheme and £1,000 to be funded through the Community Development and Engagement Environmental grant scheme);
 - £4,500 to Albert Street Artists towards rent and running costs (£2,250 to be funded through the Community Development and Engagement Grant scheme, and £2,250 to be funded through the Loughborough Community Grants scheme);
 - £3,500 to the Loughborough Wellbeing Project towards a volunteer development project (£1,750 to be funded through the Community Development and Engagement Grant scheme, and £1,750 to be funded through the Loughborough Community Grants scheme);
 - £9,000 to Loughborough Generator CIC towards “The Generator History” project (£4,500 to be funded through the Community Development and Engagement Grant scheme, and £4,500 to be funded through the Loughborough Community Grants scheme);
 - £5,000 to The Baldwin Trust towards a marketing project “Sailing into new waters”;
 - Up to £7,000 to Shelthorpe Community Association towards an indoor gardening project (£5,000 to be funded through the Community Development and Engagement Environmental grant scheme, and £2,000 to be funded through the Loughborough Community Grants scheme);
3. that the following Community Facilities Grant applications be deferred:
- Syston Band - £732 requested – applied for funding towards the cost of a Feasibility Study for the replacement of a portacabin;
4. that the following Community Facilities Grant applications be declined:
- Loughborough Sea Cadets - £2,000 requested – applied for funding towards the replacement of a portacabin;
 - King George’s Field Charity - £12,000 requested – applied for funding towards modifications to create a Parish/Charity office;
5. that the Head of Neighbourhood Services be given delegated authority to finalise the terms and conditions of the awarded Community Facilities and Community Development and Engagement Grants.

Reasons

1. To provide financial support to organisations which meet the criteria of the Community Facilities Grants scheme in terms of community and organisational need.
2. To provide financial support to organisations which meet the criteria of the Community Development and Engagement Grants and Environmental schemes in terms of community and organisational need and to use funding provided through the Loughborough Grants scheme to support projects in Loughborough.

3. To enable further work to be undertaken with the applicant to see whether the application can be improved and strengthened.
4. To decline to provide financial support to organisations which do not meet the criteria for the award of a grant under the Community Facilities Grant scheme.
5. To enable the grants awarded to be finalised and appropriate information to be supplied to the Council about the outcomes of the project.

Councillors Bokor and Morgan returned to the meeting.

28. **BUSINESS RATES WRITE OFF**

Considered a report of the Head of Customer Experience to consider the write off of irrecoverable Business Rates debts in line with Financial Procedure Rules (item 8 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Strategic Director of Corporate Services assisted with consideration of the report. In response to a suggestion that the names of the directors concerned might be published in order to assist the awareness of others where there was a history of irrecoverable debt, he confirmed that that information could be stated in future reports.

RESOLVED that the following debts be written off:

- (i) £82,594.31 owed by Odd John & Family Ltd;
- (ii) £21,916.98 owed by S.P.U.R.R.A Ltd; and
- (iii) £49,253.19 owed by 09874619 Ltd (Preto Loughborough Ltd).

Reason

The normal enforcement/recovery and tracing of these debts have been exhausted and Write Off is now the only alternative. The Council's financial procedures require any debt over £20,000 be approved by Cabinet.

29. **AMENDMENTS TO THE ANNUAL PROCUREMENT PLAN**

Considered a report of the Head of Finance and Property Services to consider additions to the Annual Procurement Plan 2019/20 (item 9 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Procurement Manager assisted with consideration of the report.

RESOLVED

1. that the contracts, over £25,000 and up to £75,000, listed in Appendix A to the report of the Head of Finance and Property Services, be let in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules;

2. that the contracts, over £75,001 and up to £500,000, listed in Appendix B to the report of the Head of Finance and Property Services, be let in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules.

Reason

- 1 & 2. To allow contracts of the Council to be let in accordance with contract procedure rules.

30. CAPITAL PLAN AMENDMENT REPORT

Considered a report of the Head of Finance and Property Services to consider amendments to the 2019/20 - 2020/21 Capital Plan and its financing (item 10 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Strategic Director of Corporate Services assisted with consideration of the report.

RESOLVED

1. that the current Capital Plan for 2019/20 - 2020/21, as amended by the changes shown in Appendix 1 to the report of the Head of Finance and Property Services, in the sum of £28,056,800 be approved;
2. that a Community Tree Planting Programme for 2019/20, £20k to be funded from Capital Plan Reserve, be approved;
3. that a new Flexi Time System within itrent and to upgrade itrent to be hosted on the cloud, £24.1K for 2019/20 to be funded from Capital Plan Reserve, be approved;
4. that the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) scheme be increased by £12.9k to allow for the Disabled Facilities Grants from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to be spent, the total DFG Capital budget being £1,419,300;
5. that amendments to the Capital Programme since Cabinet 14th March 2019 Minute 99 in Appendix 1 to the report of the Head of Finance and Property Services be noted.

Reasons

1. To enable the Capital Plan to be the basis for capital spending by the Council and so that schemes may proceed.
2. To enable the scheme budget to be available in 2019/20.
3. To enable the scheme budgets to be available in 2019/20.
4. To confirm that the Disabled Facilities Grants scheme be increased and funded by an external grant.

5. To note the new Capital Scheme as part of S106 Agreements implemented by Officers.

31. SHARED INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE

Considered a report of the Head of Strategic Support to consider a shared service arrangement between Charnwood Borough Council, North West Leicestershire District Council and Blaby District Council for the provision of internal audit, with North West Leicestershire being the lead authority (item 11 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

Councillor Rattray, Chair of the Scrutiny Commission, presented a report detailing the Commission's pre-decision scrutiny of the matter and recommendation (copy filed with these minutes).

The Scrutiny Commission was thanked for its valuable scrutiny of the proposal.

The Head of Strategic Support assisted with consideration of the report.

RESOLVED

1. that the Council enters into an arrangement for a shared internal audit service with North West Leicestershire District Council and Blaby District Council, on the basis set out in Part B of the report of the Head of Strategic Support for an initial period of five years;
2. that delegated authority be given to the Head of Strategic Support to finalise detailed arrangements and complete any required legal agreements to implement the arrangements;
3. that the report of the Scrutiny Commission be noted.

Reasons

1. To support the delivery of a shared internal audit service between the three authorities, with the aim of increasing resilience, improving service delivery, and potentially generating future cost savings.
2. To allow for the detailed arrangements to be finalised expeditiously.
3. To acknowledge the work undertaken by and the views of the Scrutiny Commission.

32. INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Considered a report of the Strategic Director of Corporate Services to consider an Investment Strategy for the remainder of financial year 2019/20 and the financial year 2020/21, for recommendation to Council (item 12 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Strategic Director of Corporate Services assisted with consideration of the report.

RESOLVED that it **be recommended to Council** that the proposals set out at Appendix B to the report of the Strategic Director of Corporate Services are adopted and incorporated into the extant Capital Strategy, subject to the following amendment to Appendix B:

Section entitled ‘Proposal – Investment in Commercial Property’. Sentence reading “All property acquisitions will be located within the Borough” be amended to read “All property acquisitions will *normally* be located within the Borough”. (Amendment shown in italic).

Reason

To provide additional clarity to the extant Capital Strategy and enable the Council to increase the range of its investment activities.

33. DRAFT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2020-23

Considered a report of the Strategic Director of Corporate Services to consider a draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-23 (item 13 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Strategic Director of Corporate Services assisted with consideration of the report. Further to the report, he agreed to send to all members of the Cabinet an explanation as to why the housing growth forecast in the New Homes Bonus calculation and the housing growth projections by the Council’s Planning Service differed.

RESOLVED that the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy, attached as an appendix to the report of the Strategic Director of Corporate Services, be approved for consultation generally and for the purposes of scrutiny by the Budget Scrutiny Panel.

Reason

To identify the financial issues affecting the Council and the Borough in the medium term in order to inform the Council’s budget setting process.

NOTES:

1. The decisions in these minutes not in the form of recommendations to Council will come into effect at noon on 27th September 2019 unless called in under Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rule 11.7.
2. No reference may be made to these minutes at the Council meeting on 4th November 2019 unless notice to that effect is given to the Democratic Services Manager by five members of the Council by noon on 27th September 2019.

3. These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Cabinet.