

# POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

**Date:** 27 September 2012

**Venue:** East Northamptonshire House, Cedar Drive, Thrapston

**Time:** 7.30 pm

**Present:** Councillors:-

|                                |                                       |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Richard Lewis</b>           | <b>(Chairman)</b>                     |
| <b>Glenvil Greenwood-Smith</b> | <b>(Vice-Chairman)</b>                |
| <b>Glenn Harwood MBE</b>       | <b>(Deputy Leader of the Council)</b> |

|                          |                         |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Richard Gell</b>      | <b>Andy Mercer</b>      |
| <b>Roger Glithero JP</b> | <b>Rupert Reichhold</b> |
| <b>Marika Hillson</b>    | <b>Jeremy Taylor</b>    |
| <b>Sue Homer</b>         |                         |

## 195. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2012 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

## 196. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors David Brackenbury, Wendy Brackenbury, John Farrar, Dudley Hughes JP and the Leader of the Council, Councillor Steven North submitted their apologies.

## 197. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following members and officers declared interests in the items as shown. Where DPIs were declared, the named members and officers left the room for the consideration of, and voting on, the items.

| <b>Person</b>                                   | <b>Agenda Item</b>                      | <b>Reason for Declaration</b>   | <b>Discloseable Pecuniary Interest?</b> | <b>Other Interest?</b> |
|---|---|---|---|------------------------|
| David Oliver<br>(Chief Executive)               | 5b – Minutes of Personnel Sub-Committee | Affected by proposals recommended under the Council Car Scheme Review | No                                      | Yes                    |
| Mike Deacon<br>(Head of Environmental Services) | 5b – Minutes of Personnel Sub-Committee | Affected by proposals recommended under the Council Car Scheme Review | No                                      | Yes                    |

|   |   |   |    |     |
|---|---|---|----|-----|
| Mike Greenway<br>(Community Partnerships Manager)                       | 5b – Minutes of Personnel Sub-Committee   | Affected by proposals recommended under the Council Car Scheme Review                   | No | Yes |
| Cat Hartley<br>(Housing Strategy Manager)                               | 5b – Minutes of Personnel Sub-Committee   | Affected by proposals recommended under the Council Car Scheme Review                   | No | Yes |
| Councillors Andy Mercer and Rupert Reichhold                            | 7 – Business Rates Pooling and<br>10 – Devolution of Local Major Transport Scheme Funding | Members of Northamptonshire County Council  | No | Yes |
| Councillor Sue Homer  | 7 – Business Rates Pooling  | Owens a business within the district  | No | Yes |
| Councillors Richard Gell, Marika Hillson, Richard Lewis and Andy Mercer | 8 – CCTV in East Northamptonshire – Update  | Members of town councils affected by ongoing discussions in respect of future provision | No | Yes |

#### **198. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.3**

There were no questions.

#### **199. MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES & WORKING PARTIES**

##### **(a) Finance Sub-Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2012 were received and approved. (See pages 294 to 298).

##### **(b) Personnel Sub-Committee**

*(David Oliver, Mike Deacon, Mike Greenway and Cat Hartley left the meeting during consideration of minute in respect of the Council Car Scheme Review).*

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2012 were received as an urgent item in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(4)B of the Local Government Act 1972, as the Chairman determined that matters contained therein could not be reasonably delayed for consideration until the next meeting of the committee. (See pages 299 to 302).

## **RESOLVED:**

That the following item of business be considered in accordance with Section 100(4)B of the Local Government Act 1972, as the Chairman determined that such matters could not reasonably be delayed to the next scheduled meeting.

Members considered the minutes of the sub-committee and gave specific consideration to the minute in respect of Staff Proposal 7a (Legal Shared Services). In noting the decisions of the sub-committee on this matter, the committee also gave formal authorisation for the establishment of the shared service arrangement with Northampton Borough Council with effect from 1 October 2012.

## **RESOLVED:**

That the formal shared legal service with Northampton Borough Council be established with effect from 1 October 2012.

*(Reason – To deliver efficient and effective legal services for the authority.)*

Members further considered the minute in respect of the Council Car Scheme Review and the recommendations made therein.

## **R.5 RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:**

That the results of the consultation be noted and be taken into account when making the final decision.

- (1) That the proposal to implement the closure of the Council Car Scheme be agreed following the three choice model.
- (2) That the option of purchasing a car at a discounted rate be calculated from the value of the car on 8 April 2013.
- (3) That, in the event of no choice being made by individual staff affected by the closure of the Council Car Scheme, the lease agreement be terminated on 8 April 2013 with no compensation.
- (4) That a robust annual review of the status of all Essential Car Users be undertaken annually by managers and the Chief Finance Officer.

*(Reasons – To confirm arrangements for the cessation of the Council Car Scheme.)*

## **200. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2011/12 AND ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REPORT**

The committee considered a report which provided an explanation of the outcome of the external audit by the Audit Commission and the impact of any amendments to the financial statements. The report also sought approval of the Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement for the year ending 31 March 2012.

Yola Geen of the Audit Commission attended the meeting and provide the committee with a synopsis of the matters discussed within the Annual Governance Report. In considering the document, members confirmed their agreement with the advice of the Chief Finance Officer in respect of an uncorrected error within the council's financial statements.

The committee requested a breakdown of capital growth and dividend within the Actuarial Assumptions in the Statement of Accounts and the Chief Finance Officer undertook to provide a response following the meeting.

Being satisfied with the content of both the Statement of Accounts and the Annual Governance Report, the committee wished for their appreciation of the efforts of officers involved in compiling the Statement of Accounts to be recorded.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Statement of Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2012 be approved.

*(Reason – To comply with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.)*

- (2) That the thanks of the committee be passed to all officers involved in compiling and informing the Statement of Accounts.

**201. BUSINESS RATES RETENTION AND POOLING**

The committee considered a report from the Chief Finance Officer which sought approval for the council to enter into a pooling arrangement with other Northamptonshire councils in respect of business rate retention.

Under proposals from the government, councils would retain some of their locally raised business rates if there is growth. The proposed scheme is designed to give local authorities an incentive to promote growth over the longer term and to reduce dependency on central government funding. Authorities can choose to form pools and be treated as a single authority for funding purposes and financial modelling undertaken by councils across Northamptonshire has shown a financial benefit of pooling under the business rates retention scheme.

Given the significant financial benefits as a result of pooling, Members considered that as long as those benefits continue to exist and the governance arrangements do not compromise the council, the option of pooling should be pursued.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the progress on the pooling arrangements to date be noted.
- (2) That the submission of a formal pooling request to DCLG on 9 November 2012, subject to the financial benefits continuing to be demonstrated and acceptable governance arrangements being put in place, be approved.
- (3) That authority be delegated to the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer, to determine whether or not to continue with the pooling arrangement after the draft Local Government Finance Settlement is published.
- (4) That further reports be submitted to future meetings of this committee detailing progress on the government's proposals for the localisation of business rates.

*(Reasons - To maximise the authority's share of the national business rates pot.)*

## **202. CCTV IN EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE – UPDATE**

The committee considered an update report detailing the progress of work undertaken with the town councils and the police to explore alternative technologies for providing CCTV in the district.

A workshop led by the e-Forensics Sergeant from Northamptonshire Police had recently been held to discuss the range of newer technologies available, where it was noted that operating CCTV systems placed obligations and responsibilities on the organisations involved. The key to making systems effective is ensuring the capture and transfer of images and data is undertaken in a controlled and secure way.

Attendees at the workshop agreed to form a project steering group to progress the issues in respect of switching to a wireless system, costs and monitoring, which would meet in mid to late October to identify final proposals for consideration. Prior to that meeting, the next stages in the project would involve town clerks consulting with other town councils across the country that had commissioned wireless systems, whilst officers from Northamptonshire Police and East Northamptonshire Council would draft a specification for an effective CCTV system for the district within the authority's procurement framework.

In the discussion following the presentation of the report, reference was made to an increase in serious organised crime in the rural north of the district which was having a significant impact on the communities in that area. Whilst the report was principally concerned with the provision of CCTV in towns of the district, the committee noted the situation in the north of the district.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the work undertaken by the Project Steering Group to date be endorsed.
- (2) That the intention to receive a further report detailing final proposals for the future of CCTV in East Northamptonshire be noted.

*(Reason – To support the work to explore potentially cheaper and more effective options for CCTV in East Northamptonshire, following the committee's decision in July 2012 that the council will provide no further funding after 31 March 2013.)*

## **203. ASSET MANAGEMENT – FUTURE OF THE RUSHDEN CENTRE**

The committee received a report which provided an update on the estimated costs associated with the disposal of the Rushden Centre and options for alternative short-term use.

The majority of the ground of the building is occupied by the council's customer services team and is used by approximately 15,000-20,000 visitors a year to access council services. It was reported that overall number of users increased by 40% last year, which was attributed to the recession, and it was anticipated that the government's welfare reforms are likely to result in further changes in customer numbers in 2013. The majority of the upper floors had been rented out in recent years, but three quarters of the total space in the centre is now vacant.

Informal valuation advice had indicated that the market for the centre would be limited due to its layout and location, which included a lack of parking or delivery facilities. Immediate sale, if it were possible, could probably achieve revenue savings from operational uses, but would

necessitate alternative provision for business continuity purposes, which could impact on the achievable saving. Capital receipts from the sale would be net of any costs of separation redesign necessary to enable the sale and costs of relocation of customer services.

Members considered that continued use of the centre by the council in the short to medium term would provide better value for money than early disposal given the current state of the market. The committee also considered this to be the preferred approach in view of the need for a venue to host business continuity provision and the likely increase in customer service queries likely to be generated by the implementation of welfare reform.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Rushden Centre be retained for business continuity purposes and the position be reviewed in two years to ascertain the financial implications of the sale of the property.

*(Reason – To achieve the best financial outcome for the authority, whilst maintaining services to meet customer demand and meeting business continuity requirements.)*

**204. DEVOLUTION OF LOCAL MAJOR TRANSPORT SCHEME FUNDING**

The committee considered a report which detailed changes to how local major transport schemes would be funded from April 2015 and sought members' views to inform a response to a consultation undertaken by the Department for Transport (DfT).

In January 2012, the DfT launched a consultation on new methods for distributing funding for local major transport schemes via Local Transport Bodies, formed by consortia of local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships. Following the end of the consultation, the DfT sought to confirm the Local Transport Body geography for Northamptonshire and required a response by 28 September 2012.

The DfT had advised that Local Transport Bodies should, as far as possible, be coterminous with existing boundaries of Local Transport Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships. It was reported that Northamptonshire County Council's Cabinet had considered a report setting out the pros and cons of the two options, which was also considered at a meeting of the Northamptonshire Councils' Chief Executives, where it was clear that all preferred the Northamptonshire option over the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP).

There was widespread agreement from members that a countywide approach would be preferential to an arrangement based on the SEMLEP area.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Local Transport Body covering East Northamptonshire should be Northamptonshire.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to draft a reply to this effect to Northamptonshire County Council.
- (3) That a further report be submitted to this committee later in the year setting out the proposed governance arrangements for the Local Transport Body.

*(Reason – To respond to the DfT's consultation on the geographic boundaries to be adopted for Local Transport Bodies.)*

## **205. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING GRANTS POLICY**

The committee considered a report which sought approval of the publication of the final version of the Private Sector Housing Grants Policy.

The draft policy had been presented to members on 11 June 2012 (minute 30 refers) where approval was given to commence public consultation until 17 August 2012. Following the closure of the consultation, only one response had been received from the Care and Repair Service.

Members considered the consultation response and the overall content of the final version of the policy. Reference was made to section 4.8.0 of the policy and the historic use of disabled facilities grant monies with concerns expressed that more could be allocated than has previously been the case. It was confirmed that these issues would be discussed at the relevant case review panel where each case would be determined on its own merits.

### **RESOLVED:**

That, having closed public consultation on the draft document, the Private Sector Housing Grants Policy in its current form be approved.

*(Reason – To give effect to the policy.)*

## **206. DOG CONTROL ORDERS – HIGHAM FERRERS**

The committee considered a report which sought approval for the introduction of a Dog Control Order to address problems of dog fouling and other related issues at the fenced area of the Vine Hill Road (Saffron Road) recreation ground in Higham Ferrers, which had been requested by Higham Ferrers Town Council.

In December 2011, town and parish councils were surveyed to ascertain if there were any additional areas which should be considered for dog control orders. A specific request was received from Higham Ferrers Town Council with regard to the Saffron Road recreation ground. Prior to drafting order, consultation had taken place with the public to ascertain their views on the area and the proposed order. Whilst a petition with over 200 signatories had been received, it appeared that many were not resident to the immediate vicinity of the location and, in some cases, did not appear to be residents of East Northamptonshire.

The committee welcomed the report and considered the proposal to be a considerable improvement on the current position.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Saffron Road recreation ground be included in the proposed Dog Control Orders for a Dogs on Leads Order.
- (2) That the Head of Environmental Services, Waste Manager, Environmental Services Officer (Dogs) and nominated member review any representations received prior to the final notice being published and authorised, in consultation with the Solicitor to the Council, to agree the final Dog Control Orders.
- (3) That the Equalities Impact Assessment be approved.

*(Reason – To give effect to the Dog Control Order)*

## **207. NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SAFETY AND RESILIENCE PARTNERSHIP**

The committee considered an update report on the development of a partnership arrangement between three councils in North Northamptonshire to jointly deliver the functionality and services associated with Corporate Health and Safety, Emergency Planning and Business Continuity.

Following the departure of key staff and recognising the need to rationalise the operating model across the three councils to deliver efficiencies, a new team structure has been proposed to cover the responsibilities of emergency planning, corporate health and safety and business continuity for Corby, Kettering and East Northamptonshire. It was noted that the partnership arrangement would deliver benefits in the form of increased capacity, resilience and economies of scale.

The committee were supportive of the proposal to operate a partnership arrangement between the three councils, however, given the lack of detail within the service level agreement, members determined to delegate responsibility to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to determine any final amendments to the agreement and sign the agreement on behalf of the council.

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the content of the report and the associated equalities impact assessment be noted.
2. That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to agree any final amendments to the service level agreement and to sign the agreement on behalf of the Council.

*(Reason – To progress the development of the partnership arrangement with Corby and Kettering.)*

## **208. HOUSING POLICY WORKING PARTY**

The committee considered a report which sought approval to amend the terms of reference for the Housing Policy Working Party.

It was reported that the working party had reviewed its work programme and considered it necessary to amend its terms of reference to effectively progress the items identified. The proposed amendment would expand its remit to enable the group to review market housing requirements and requirements for specialist accommodation. It was considered that such activity was necessary in the context of the government's welfare reform agenda and the forthcoming Four Towns Plan.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the revised Housing Policy Working Party terms of reference be approved.

*(Reason – To enable the Housing Policy Working Party to continue effectively.)*



**209. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:**

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business because exempt information, as defined under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972, may be disclosed.

**210. MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES & WORKING PARTIES**

**(a) Leisure Contracts Working Group**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 August 2012 were received and approved.

**Chairman**



## Finance Sub-Committee

**Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday 12 September 2012 at 7.30pm,  
Council Chamber, East Northamptonshire House, Thrapston**

**Present:**

Councillors: Glenn Harwood MBE (Vice-Chairman)  
Richard Gell  
Roger Glithero JP  
Glenvil Greenwood-Smith  
Richard Lewis

Officers: David Oliver (DO)  
Glenn Hammons (GH)  
Kelly Watson (KW)  
David Pope (DP)

**Action**

**1.0 APOLOGIES**

1.1 Councillors David Brackenbury and Steven North sent their apologies. Katy Everitt also sent apologies.

**2.0 MINUTES**

2.1 The minutes of the Finance Sub-Committee meeting held on 25 June 2012 were received and approved.

**3.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

**4.0 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 1 2012/13**

4.1 GH presented a paper to the sub-committee detailing the Council's expenditure against the approved revenue budget for 2012/13 to the end of quarter 1, 30 June 2012. The report highlighted any significant under or overspend greater than £10k and identified the impact on the end of year position.

4.2 Members noted that since the budget was set in February 2012, the total budget figure had been revised to £10,174,830. Supplementary estimates totalling £200,690 were the reason for the revision. £134,180 had been carried forward from the 2011/12 budget, while the Higham Ferrers and Thrapston Masterplans

had contributed the remaining £66,510.

- 4.3 Members heard that the estimated outturn for the year was an underspend of £147k, with a review currently underway to establish how much of the underspend was for one off items, and how much would feed in the draft budget for 2013/14 and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- 4.4 Members were provided with tables detailing:
- Actual expenditure to date against budget and the estimated outturn for the year including variance against budget identified
  - Summary of savings and overspends over £10k
  - Forecast drawdown from reserves for 2012/13 given the forecast underspend of £147k.
  - Impact on revenue reserves
- 4.5 Members were advised that £181k had been set aside from the New Homes Bonus when the 2012/13 budget was approved in February 2012. These funds would be used to fund Community Projects, targeted at areas of the district where development had occurred and to promote economic growth within the district. Members were provided with a table indicating the current position in relation to the drawdown of monies from the Community Projects Fund (CPF) which gave a current balance of £194,701. Members heard that a report on the approach to releasing funds from the CPF was discussed at the meeting of Policy and Resources Committee on 10 September 2012.
- 4.6 It was

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted

**GH/DP**

**5.0 CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

- 5.1 GH presented a paper to the sub-committee detailing the capital expenditure against the approved budget for 2012/13 to the end of quarter 1, 30 June 2012, highlighting any significant under or overspend and identified its impact on the end of year position. The report sought to bring to members' attention the explanations for any high level variations of a material nature above the value of £10k.
- 5.2 Members noted that, at its approval on 29 February 2012, the Capital Programme budget was £12.5m, and a summary of the programme approved was supplied to the meeting. It was further noted that, since the budget was approved, the 2012/13 budget had increased from £4.2m to £5.3m due to rescheduling of expenditure from 2011/12, new schemes and enhancements to existing schemes. Members were advised that three schemes incorporated into the medium term capital programme were subject to review and the latest position on these was discussed.

**Action**

- 5.3 Details of Capital Funding for 2012/13 were provided to members, outlining the funding sources for capital spending. Members noted that overall funding required for 2012/13 had increased to £5.3m, with this increase being met by external contributions from new schemes approved since the budget was set. Members were advised that an increase in capital reserves at the end of 2011/12 had lessened the requirement to borrow to finance capital investment in 2012/13.
- 5.4 Members were provided with a table which detailed the impact on capital reserves which are anticipated to be exhausted by 31 March 2013.

**5.5 RESOLVED:****GH/DP**

That the report be noted.

**6.0 TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE - AS AT 30 JUNE 2012**

- 6.1 GH presented a report to the sub-committee which provided an update on the activity of the Treasury Management function for the second half of 2011/12 up to 30 June 2012. The report also provided the likely performance for the remainder of the financial year.
- 6.2 Members noted that the 2012/13 Treasury Management Strategy (TMS) was approved on 29 February 2012 and was underpinned by the adoption of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Code of Practice. The code recommended that members be informed of treasury management activities at least twice a year; hence the production of the report.
- 6.3 The report went into detail on the impact market conditions had had on determining the 2011/12 TMS in February 2011. Tables were provided to members which gave information latest forecast for the Bank of England base rate and the Forecast Investment Returns. The indication was that, due to the expected continuation of base rates at 0.5% until at least 2015, Council investment returns were expected to remain at current levels of 0.75% for longer than previously anticipated.
- 6.4 Two further tables were provided in the report which gave members an indication of the positions of ENC's investments at both 31 March and 30 June 2012.
- 6.5 Members were advised that, due to uncertainty within the market and ongoing weakness in the banking sector, the council has followed its strategy of keeping liquid money in AAA rated money market funds and instant access bank accounts.
- 6.6 On the subject of borrowing, members were advised that the Council had currently not had to undertake any temporary borrowing to finance its capital programme as this would be funded by capital reserves. Members noted that the Council would need to use temporary borrowing in 2012/13, based on the current spending forecast, borrowing in the first instance from its surplus cash resources, a process known as "internal borrowing". The level of temporary borrowing was dependent on the Council realising monies by selling assets, currently budgeted at £860k.

6.7 **RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

**GH/DP**

7.0 **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

7.1 **RESOLVED:**

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business because exempt information, as defined under paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972, may be disclosed.

8.0 **SALE OF LAND AND BUILDINGS**

8.1 DO presented a report to the sub-committee on behalf of KE, which provided an update on the progress of the sale of phase one Council-owned land and buildings that had been recommended for release at the Policy and Resources Committee on 13 February 2012.

8.2 Members noted that agents had been appointed to sell each of the buildings and land and an update was provided for each site detailing the current status of the sale process.

8.3 The sub-committee were advised that a sale had been completed on one of the sites concerned.

8.4 **RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

**KE/GH/DP**

9.0 **MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE**

9.1 GH gave a presentation to update members on the position of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) following agreement of the MTFS 2012/16 by Council in February 2012 and to set out the way forward for the 2013 planning round.

9.2 Members were provided with an outline of the Council's position as at February 2012, with specific regard to Revenue Budgets, the Capital Programme 2012-22 and cash reserves.

9.3 GH outlined potential local and central government issues that would affect the MTFS between 2012/13 and 2015/16. Major issues facing ENC were considered to be Welfare Reform, the localisation of Council Tax Support and the use of the New Homes Bonus.

**Action**

- 9.4 The latest Local Government Control Totals were highlighted to members who noted the assumption of a 5% per annum reduction made in the MTFS and the current expectation that the reduction was likely to be far higher at 12.3% for 2012/13 and 8.7% for 2014/15. A similar rate of reduction was anticipated for the next spending review.
- 9.5 The new funding system for Local Government was explained as being a formula derived grant incorporating grants previously paid separately, such as the Homelessness Grant, Council Tax Support and Community Safety.
- 9.6 Members were given details of an opportunity to potentially increase business rates by pooling with other local authorities across Northamptonshire. It was estimated that an additional £3-8million could be raised, depending on the rate of growth in business rates. Authorities had to confirm their intention to proceed with pooling on business rates by 19 October 2012 at the latest.
- 9.7 The impact of introducing Council Tax Discount and Support Schemes was outlined alongside potential income figures that could be raised as a result of the changes. Census details were provided to give an indication of population change within the district and the changing ages of the demographic.
- 9.8 Members were also provided with a MTFS and Budget Timetable covering September 2012 - February 2013.

9.9 **RESOLVED:**

**GH/DP**

That the presentation be noted.

**Chairman**



East  
Northamptonshire  
Council

## Personnel Sub-Committee

### Minutes of a meeting held on 25 September 2012 at East Northamptonshire House, Thrapston

**Present:**

Councillors                      Roger Glithero JP (Chairman)  
    Jeremy Taylor (Vice-Chairman)  
    Glenn Harwood MBE

Katy Everitt                      Head of Resources and Organisational Development (KE)  
Glenn Hammons                Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer (GH)  
Lisa Hyde                         Head of Customer and Community Services (LJH)  
Aime Armstrong                Human Resources Manager (AA)  
James McLaughlin              Democratic and Electoral Services Manager (JMcL)

**Action**

**1.0            MINUTES**

1.1            The minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2012 were approved, subject to the inclusion of the apologies of Councillor Jeremy Taylor, and signed by the Chairman.                      **JMcL**

**2.0            APOLOGIES**

2.1            Apologies were received from Councillors Wendy Brackenbury and Stephen North. A further apology was received from David Oliver, Chief Executive.

**3.0            DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

3.1            Katy Everitt, Head of Organisational Development, and Lisa Hyde, Head of Customer and Community Services, declared an interest in agenda item 10 (Council Car Scheme Review) as they were recipients of the scheme. They left the meeting before the consideration of the item.                      **JMcL**

Lisa Hyde declared a further interest in agenda item 9 (Legal Shared Services) and left the meeting during consideration of the item.

**4.0            QUESTIONS**

4.1            There were no questions.

## **5.0 WORKFORCE STATISTICS**

5.1 The sub-committee reviewed data about staff sickness, turnover and the number of staff employed.

## **6.0 VACANT POSTS UPDATE**

6.1 The sub-committee received a report on:-

- (a) Vacant posts
- (b) New posts created on the establishment
- (c) Posts temporarily vacant
- (d) Budget savings, and
- (e) Empty posts/hours still on establishment but with no budget.

## **7.0 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

7.1 The Sub-Committee noted the dates of future meetings:

- Tuesday 16 October 2012 at 2.00pm
- Tuesday 27 November 2012 at 2.00pm
- Tuesday 29 January 2012 at 2.00pm
- Tuesday 19 March 2012 at 2.00pm

## **8.0 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC**

8.1 **RESOLVED:**

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business because exempt information, as defined under paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, may be disclosed.

## **9.0 STAFF PROPOSAL 15 – LAND CHARGES SERVICE STRUCTURE**

9.1 The sub-committee considered a report proposing a permanent staffing structure for the Land Charges Service. Members were provided with a detailed background of the changes to the legislative context in which land charges services are delivered. Reference was made to the existing staffing structure and a number of factors necessitating the proposal to establish all posts as permanent within that team.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That all posts within the Land Charges Service be made permanent.
- (2) That recruitment to the permanent post of Land Charges Manager commence in October 2012.

## **10.0 STAFF PROPOSAL 16 – COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE STRUCTURE**



- 10.1 The sub-committee received a report detailing a proposal in respect of the Communications Service structure. Members were provided with the context of the changing landscape of local authority communications and the impact this would have on the service provided by the council in the future. Recognising that the communications strategy and direction of the service would be the subject of significant change in the coming years, members agreed to the interim proposal for the current post to be advertised as an internal secondment opportunity.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the post of interim Communications Manager, with a revised job description, be internally advertised as a secondment for the period from October 2012 to March 2014.
- (2) That the permanent post of Communications Manager be revised to deliver the newly developed communication strategy, with recruitment to that post commencing from October 2013.

**11.0 STAFF PROPOSAL 7a – LEGAL SHARED SERVICES**

- 11.1 The Head of Resources and Organisational Development provided a verbal update in respect of the outcome of the staff consultation regarding the proposed Legal Shared Service with Northampton Borough Council.
- 11.2 It was noted that the Policy and Resources Committee had previously decided that the council would enter into a shared service arrangement with Northampton Borough Council in respect of legal services. Members were provided with detailed consultation feedback and independent employment law advice
- 11.3 Having considered all information in detail, the sub-committee considered that no new information had come to their attention which could cause them to doubt whether the legal shared service should proceed as previously determined by the Policy and Resources Committee. However, it was considered appropriate for further attempts to be made to resolve outstanding employee relations issues over a maximum period of four weeks from the commencement of the legal shared service on 1 October 2012. In addition, members requested that, if required, consideration be given to providing a trial period of up to four weeks for any new work pattern.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the staff consultation responses be noted.
- (2) That the financial and personnel implications be noted.
- (3) That the sub-committee, while noting criticisms expressed by one member of staff, is satisfied that the matter has been handled correctly.
- (4) That the redundancy costs for the additional support for an officer within the existing structure be noted and agreed.

- (5) That any further personnel matters relating to the implementation of legal shared services be resolved as soon as possible and in line with timescales set out in 11.3 above.
- (6) That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chairman of the Sub-Committee, to resolve any further personnel matters in respect of the implementation of Legal Shared Services.

## **12.0 COUNCIL CAR SCHEME REVIEW**

- 12.1 The sub-committee received a report which recommended the winding up of the Council Car Scheme and the mechanism for achieving such a change. It was reported that consultation had taken place with affected staff and UNISON on the proposal to end the car scheme and comments from that consultation were submitted for members' consideration.
- 12.2 Having regard to the responses received and having reviewed the financial implications associated with the termination of the council car scheme, members were satisfied to recommend an extension to the variety of choices offered to staff who would no longer benefit from the scheme.
- 12.3 Members considered the advice provided in respect of a breach of contract with regard to one member of staff who was entitled to car under the scheme and determined to provide a short term lease, which could be funded from within existing budgets.

### **RESOLVED:**

That a lease car be immediately secured to remedy the breach of contract detailed within the report.

### **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:**

- (1) That the results of the consultation be noted and be taken into account when making the final decision.
- (2) That the proposal to implement the closure of the Council Car Scheme be agreed following the three choice model.
- (3) That the option of purchasing a car at a discounted rate be calculated from the value of the car on 8 April 2013.
- (4) That, in the event of no choice being made by individual staff affected by the closure of the Council Car Scheme, the lease agreement be terminated on 8 April 2013

That a robust annual review of the status of all Essential Car Users be undertaken annually by managers and the Chief Finance Officer.

**Chairman**