

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Date: 26 September 2013

Venue: East Northamptonshire House, Cedar Drive, Thrapston

Time: 7.30 pm

Present: Councillors:-

Richard Lewis	(Chairman)
Glenvil Greenwood-Smith	(Vice-Chairman)
Steven North	(Leader of the Council)
Glenn Harwood MBE	(Deputy Leader of the Council)

Peter Baden	Dudley Hughes JP
Wendy Brackebury	Andy Mercer
Roger Glithero JP	Rupert Reichhold
Marika Hillson	

185. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2013 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

186. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors David Brackebury, John Farrar and Jeremy Taylor.

187. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

188. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.3

There were no questions received.

189. MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES

(a) District Regeneration Working Party – 9 September 2013

The minutes of the meeting of District Regeneration Working Party held on 9 September 2013 were received and approved.

(b) Finance Sub-Committee – 11 September 2013

The minutes of the meeting of Finance Sub-Committee held on 11 September 2013 were received and approved.

(c) Personnel Sub-Committee – 24 September 2013

The minutes of the meeting of Personnel Sub-Committee held on 24 September 2013 were received and approved.

190. REPORT OF THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR AND FINAL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2012/13

The committee considered a report which detailed the Annual Governance Report from the external auditor and presented the Statement of Accounts for approval.

It was reported that the annual statement was a statutory requirement and an essential feature of public accountability and stewardship as it provided an annual report on how the council had used the public funds for which it was responsible.

The council produced its draft Statement of Accounts in line with statutory timescales and these were signed off by the Chief Finance Officer on 28 June 2013. Following this, the accounts were audited and a material error was identified, which was detailed within the report.

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 2013 be approved.
2. That the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee and Section 151 Officer be authorised to sign the Management Representation letter on behalf of the authority.
3. That the thanks of the committee be passed to all officers involved in compiling and informing the Statement of Accounts.

191. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The committee received a report from the Community Partnerships Manager which sought approval of revisions to the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures.

It was reported that external inspections of safeguarding and child protection arrangements in Northamptonshire County Council and Northamptonshire Police had identified significant areas for improvement. In March 2013, all partner agencies, including lower tier authorities, undertook an online self assessment of their policies and procedures against the requirements of Section 11 of the Children Act 2004. Subsequently a number of key improvement processes were introduced across the county which were reflected within the proposed revisions to the policy.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the revisions to the Safeguarding Children and Young People policy and procedure be approved.
- (2) That a further report in respect of the new Prevention and Safeguarding Framework for East Northamptonshire be submitted to the committee meeting on 4 November 2013.

192. SCRAP METAL DEALERS ACT 2013

The committee received a report from the Health Protection Manager which detailed the provisions of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 and sought approval for the scale of fees and delegated authority.

It was reported that the Act would replace the previous registration scheme for scrap metal dealers and introduce a new licensing regime which would be administered by local authorities. In the future, every scrap metal dealer would be required to have a licence and operating without would be a criminal offence.

RESOLVED:

That the fee structure for Scrap Metal Licensing, as set out within the report, be approved.

R.5 RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

1. That the authority to issue licences under the Scrap Metal Act 2013 be delegated to the Head of Environmental Services, Health Protection Manager, Environmental Protection Manager, Waste Manager and Senior Environmental Health Officer.
2. That authority to revoke licences, make applications for closure notices and to issue proceedings under the Scrap Metal Act 2013 be delegated to the Executive Director, Head of Environmental Services and the Health Protection Manager.
3. That applications where representations are received be determined by a Licensing Panel.
4. That appeals against a decision to revoke a licence be considered by a Licensing Panel.
5. That the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Licensing Committee, be authorised to make the necessary amendments to the terms of reference of the Licensing Committee.

193. DRAFT COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

The committee received a report from the Communications Manager which sought approval of the draft Communications Strategy 2013 – 2016.

It was reported that legislation would prevent local authorities from publishing a newspaper on a fortnightly basis with effect from 31 March 2014. The current contract for the publication of Nene Valley News (NVN) would expire on that date and the draft strategy detailed how the loss of NVN would be mitigated in future.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Communications Strategy be approved.
- (2) That £60,000 from the current budget be retained to deliver the outcomes detailed within the strategy.

194. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item 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.

195. MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES & WORKING PARTIES

(a) Leisure Contracts Working Group – 6 September 2013

The minutes of the Leisure Contracts Working Group held on 6 September 2013 were received.

Chairman