

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Date: 23 March 2015

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
David Brackenbury	Andy Mercer
Wendy Brackenbury	Rupert Reichhold
Roger Glithero JP	

439. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 16 February 2015 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

440. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Farrar, Marika Hillson, Sue Homer and Jeremy Taylor.

441. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following interests were declared in the Agenda items specified below:

Councillor/ Officer	Agenda item	Nature of Interest	DPI	Other Interest
Andy Mercer	8 – Food Law Enforcement Service Plan and Health and Safety Plans 2015-16	Holds position as an Assistant Cabinet Member at Northamptonshire County Council with responsibility for Trading Standards		Yes

442. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.3

It was reported that no questions had been received.

443. MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES

(a) Personnel Sub-Committee – 9 March 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2015 were received (see pages 454 to 457).

444. REVISED PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING GRANTS POLICY

The Environmental Protection Manager submitted a report which sought consideration of revisions to the Private Sector Housing Grants Policy to reflect current working practices.

It was reported that every local authority is bound by a statutory requirement to detail the housing-related grants on offer to residents and review the document regularly to ensure that it reflects what is actually offered by the council. Following the committee's decision to bring the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) service in house in June 2014 (minute 34 refers), a number of changes to the service offer had consequently necessitated a review of the policy.

In addition to the essential changes, the opportunity was taken to review the document in its totality to ensure that all information was accurate. As a result of the review, three main changes had been made to the document. The first change was to remove all reference to the former Care and Repair service and to update the DFG section to reflect how the service was being provided. The second change was to clarify that the council would not purchase extended warranties for equipment as part of a grant application. The final change was to include a section on the DFG waiting list.

Having considered the revisions to the policy and the prioritisation of DFG referrals, the committee was satisfied with the amendments subject to a number of typographical corrections.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the typographical corrections identified being made, the amended Private Sector Housing Grants Policy be approved.

(Reason – to ensure the council's policy reflects recent changes and is consistent with previous decisions.)

445. MODEL CONDITIONS FOR PET SHOPS, CAT BOARDING ESTABLISHMENTS AND DOG BREEDING

The Health Protection Manager submitted a report introducing new conditions to accompany Pet Shops, Cat Boarding Establishments and Dog Breeding licences, which had been developed by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health in consultation with the trade, vets and animal welfare organisations.

It was reported that the introduction of the revised conditions could have implications for the five licensed pet shops and eight animal boarding establishments currently in operation within the district. Members noted that there were no licensed dog breeders currently in the district. A consultation exercise had been undertaken and the responses received were generally supportive of the new conditions and had suggested a transition period of two to five years to allow the businesses to work towards meeting the new conditions.

RESOLVED:

That the new model conditions be adopted immediately for new businesses, and a transition period of three years before existing businesses need to comply.

(Reason – to ensure that council complies with its legal obligation in respect of licensing and animal welfare.)

446. FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICE PLAN AND HEALTH & SAFETY SERVICE PLANS 2015/16

The Health Protection Manager submitted a report introducing the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan and a Health and Safety Service Plan, which were both statutorily required by the Food Standards Agency and the Health and Safety Commission respectively.

It was reported that Section 18 of the Health and Safety (Enforcing Authority) Regulations 1998 placed a duty on the council to monitor and enforce the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 on premises identified within the same regulations.

The committee noted that the Food Safety Service would face a challenging year in improving food safety and dealing with a number of new and growing businesses. The health and safety service would be focused on risk-based projects including workplace transport, workplace violence and slips, trips and falls.

R.20 RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That, subject to typographical corrections being made as identified by the committee, the Food Safety and the Health & Safety Service Plan 2015-16 be approved.

(Reason – to ensure that the Council complies with its legal obligations in respect of food safety and health and safety.)

447. HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION GRANTS 2015-16 AND 2016-17

The Housing Strategy and Delivery Manager submitted a report advising the committee of the progress on the application process for the Homelessness Prevention Grant for 2015-16 and 2016-17 and which also sought the approval of recommendations from the Voluntary Sector (Homelessness Prevention) Grants Member Panel.

Funding bids for the 2014-15 financial year had been agreed by the committee on 8 December 2014 (minute 281 refers) following recommendations from the Panel. The committee had agreed with the panel's wish to defer the decision on the level of funding for applicants in subsequent years as it was as yet unknown how much would be required and what priority it would be given by an incoming council. However funding bids for 2015/16 and 2016/17 had been invited in order to obtain information about the level of funding that might be required and to provide certainty around the funding available to the voluntary organisations before the end of the financial year.

The report detailed an outline of the evaluation process that the Grants Panel had followed in making its recommendations. The committee noted that a number of internal demands on the fund, amounting to £11,000 for the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol, Housing research and consultancy work and mediation work, which had left remaining funds of 363,720 in total.

As the Grants Panel had met on the same day that the committee meeting had been scheduled it was necessary to table the recommendations for the award of grants in 2015-16 and 2016-17, which were:

Organisation	Proposal	Grant recommended
East Northants Faith Group	To continue to operate the four bedded direct access emergency Night Shelter hostel facility at the Full Gospel Church	£10,000
East Northants Faith Group Homelessness Support Work	– To provide support and advice for those in the night shelter, those moving on to settled accommodation and those needing help to maintain tenancies and prevent homelessness and repeat homelessness	£10,000
East Northants Faith Group	To help assist with running costs of accommodation and support at the Recovery House, for six people wishing to move on from the cycle of addiction, unsettled lifestyles and homelessness	£10,000
Midland Heart – High Street South	To provide support for single people in temporary accommodation at 50 High Street South to foster independence and prevent repeat homelessness	Up to £16,860
Midland Heart Shoemaker Court	– To provide support for families in temporary accommodation at Shoemaker Court to foster independence and prevent repeat homelessness.	Up to £16,860

It was clarified that any indicative awards for 2016/17 would be confirmed via the budget setting process for that year.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the evaluation process undertaken by the Homelessness Prevention Grants Panel be endorsed.
- (ii) That the award of the Homeless Prevention Grant for 2015-16 and indicative award for 2016-17 be approved.
- (iii) That any underspend be carried forward to the following financial year.

(Reason – to enable the efficient and effective discharge of the council's budget to prevent and reduce homelessness.)

448. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND 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.

449. HOUSING OPTIONS CONTRACT EXTENSION

The committee gave consideration to a report from the Housing Strategy and Delivery Manager which sought a three-year extension to the existing Housing Options Contract.

The report outlined and assessed the options available to the committee and each were considered accordingly. Having regard to the probable post-election financial situation, the committee indicated that it would welcome the opportunity to review choice based lettings after May 2015.

RESOLVED:

That the housing contract with Midland Heart be extended for a further three years in principle, subject to agreement of final terms and conditions and a review prior to the end of the second year taking customer satisfaction in account.

(Reason – to enable certainty for the continued delivery of the service in the most cost-effective way.)

450. PAYROLL PROVISION

The committee gave consideration to a report from the Human Resources Manager which proposed the conversion of the payroll service delivery contract to a shared service agreement.

In considering the report, the committee noted the performance of the contract with Corby Borough Council since 2011 and the levels of assurance provided from each annual audit of the service.

RESOLVED:

That a shared service for the delivery of the payroll function with Corby Borough Council be established from 1 July 2015.

(Reason – to enable the efficient and effective delivery of an ongoing payroll service.)

Chairman



East
Northamptonshire
Council

Personnel Sub-Committee

Minutes of a meeting held on 9 March 2015 at 10.30am, East Northamptonshire House, Thrapston

Present: Councillors Roger Glithero JP (Chairman)
Jeremy Taylor (Vice-Chairman)
Wendy Brackenbury
Glenn Harwood MBE
Steven North

David Oliver Chief Executive
Katy Everitt Head of Resources and Organisational Development
Aime Armstrong Human Resources Manager
Paul Smith Senior Democratic Services Officer

1.0 **MINUTES**

1.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2015 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

2.0 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

2.1 No apologies for absence had been received.

3.0 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following interests were declared in the items listed below:

3.1	Officer	Item	Nature of Interest	DPI	Other Interest
	Katy Everitt	Options for S151 Officer Support	Member of staff affected.	Yes	
	Paul Smith	Options for S151 Officer Support	Member of staff indirectly affected.		Yes.

4.0 **QUESTIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 10.3**

4.1 There were no questions submitted under Procedure Rule 10.3

5.0 WORKFORCE STATISTICS

- 5.1 The Sub-Committee reviewed data concerning staff sickness, turnover and the number of staff employed.

6.0 VACANT POSTS UPDATE

- 6.1 The Sub-Committee received a report on posts currently vacant within the Council and progress made in recruiting to vacancies to be filled.

7.0 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

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, 2 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, may be disclosed.

8.0 AGENDA ORDER OF BUSINESS

- 8.1 With the consent of the Sub-Committee, the Chairman varied the order of business on the published Agenda.

9.0 FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT REQUEST

- 9.1 The Head of Resources and Organisational Development presented a report on a request received from the Council's Amenities Manager seeking flexible retirement under the Council's Pensions Discretion Policy and Procedure.
- 9.2 The proposals for the flexible retirement arrangement were outlined, together with the proposed transfer of some of the Amenities Manager's existing tasks to the Amenities Supervisor which would be required as part of the arrangement.

RESOLVED: That

- i) the Amenities Manager's flexible retirement request and associated changes to the Amenities Supervisor role be approved in principle
- ii) the final decision be delegated to the Council's S151 Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Personnel Sub-Committee, subject to the proposed change being delivered within existing budget

(Reason: To retain knowledge and skills and provide time to review the longer term future provision of amenities services)

10.0 PRINT REVIEW PROJECT

- 10.1 The Human Resources Manager informed the Sub-Committee that a project to review printing services across the Council had recently commenced and would be overseen by her. While this project was at an early stage, authority to consult with affected staff was being sought now to avoid any unnecessary delays in the project as the next meeting of the Sub-Committee would not be held until June 2015.
- 10.2 It was confirmed that all aspects of printing services within the Council would be considered as part of the project and any changes to service provision would need to be referred to the Policy and Resources Committee.

RESOLVED:

That consultation with affected employees may be commenced when an appropriate point has been reached in the project.

(Reason – To ensure council policies and employment law have been adhered to.)

11.0 OPTIONS FOR S151 OFFICER SUPPORT

- 11.1 It was reported that the Scrutiny Committee had called-in the decision made by the Sub-Committee on the above matter made at the meeting held on 9 February 2015. The Scrutiny Committee had met to consider the call-in and review the decision on 2 March 2015 and a copy of the resolution made by the Committee was circulated to Members of the Sub-Committee.
- 11.2 The Chief Executive informed the Sub-Committee that since the decision had been made, it had become known that the Head of Customer & Community Services was likely to be seconded to a neighbouring Council. Arrangements for covering the post during the period of any secondment would be considered at a special meeting of the Sub-Committee to be convened to take place on 23 March 2015.
- 11.3 The Sub-Committee considered that, although it did not share the Scrutiny Committee's concerns and noted that the proposal had been supported by the Executive Director/Monitoring Officer, in view of the implications of the likely secondment for the Council's management team and that any review of the Council's structure should be considered by the new Council following the May 2015 Elections, consideration of the matter should be deferred.
- 11.4 With reference to Resolution (ii) made by the Scrutiny Committee, Members of the Sub-Committee expressed concern at the Scrutiny Committee's request to be consulted on decisions as this was not in accordance with the line of reporting for the Sub-Committee and suitable call-in procedures were contained in the Constitution.

RESOLVED: That

- i. whilst the Personnel Sub-Committee does not share the concerns expressed by the Scrutiny Committee on the decision made by the Sub-Committee at its meeting held on 9 February 2015, in recognition of the likely secondment of the Head of Customer & Community Services to a neighbouring council, which has arisen since that time, no further action be taken on the matter for a period

of at least one year.

- ii. as a call-in procedure exists, the Personnel Sub-Committee does not believe that it is appropriate for the Scrutiny Committee to be consulted on decisions taken by the Sub-Committee.

Chairman