

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Date: 25 April 2016

Venue: East Northamptonshire House, Cedar Drive, Thrapston

Time: 7.30pm

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

Tony Boto
David Brackenbury
Wendy Brackenbury
Val Carter
Roger Glithero JP

Helen Harrison
Dudley Hughes JP
Andy Mercer
Sarah Peacock
Rupert Reichhold

461. MR GEORGE OSBORNE

The Committee held a moment of reflection in memory of Mr George Osborne, a former Chairman of the Council, who had recently passed away.

462. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Anna Sauntson.

463. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2016 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

464. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

465. QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.3

There were no questions submitted under Procedure Rule 10.3.

466. MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES

a) Housing Policy Working Party – 17 February 2016

The minutes of the meeting of the Housing Policy Working Party held on 17 February 2016 were received (see pages 392 to 395)

b) Finance Sub-Committee – 6 April 2016

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance Sub-Committee held on 6 April 2016 were received (see pages 396 to 398).

c) Personnel Sub-Committee – 18 April 2016

The minutes of the meeting of the Personnel Sub-Committee held on 18 April 2016 were received (see pages 399 to 401).

467. STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES – THE SMOKE AND CARBON MONOXIDE ALARM REGULATIONS 2015

The Interim Environmental Protection Manager submitted a report which introduced the Statement of Principles that was required to be published to enable East Northamptonshire Council to use the newly adopted powers under the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm Regulations 2015. The Statement of Principles set out how the Council would consider enforcement action and the level of fines.

The Regulations had come into force on 1 October 2015 and required a smoke alarm to be installed by the landlord on every floor of privately rented accommodation. It was also noted that, where an appliance that used solid fuel (such as a woodburning stove or an open fire) was present, a carbon monoxide alarm must be provided in the room where the appliance was installed. Where such alarms were not fitted, the Council had powers to install the alarms and issue a penalty charge of up to £5,000 to the landlord. In January 2016, the Committee agreed that the penalty charge should be set at the maximum available level of £5,000. The Statement of Principles now stated that the first offence would receive a fine of £1,000 and any subsequent offence would be £5,000, which was in line with neighbouring authorities.

Following a discussion on the proposal that if payment of a penalty charge was made within a specified time then the penalty would be reduced by £500, officers confirmed that the reduction was set out in the Regulations and was common practice for penalty charges.

RESOLVED:

That the Statement of Principles be adopted and published.

(Reason – to accord with legislation and provide consistency with the previous decision to adopt the Regulations.)

468. URGENT ITEM

The following item of business had been added to the published Agenda with the consent of the Chairman in accordance with Section 100B (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 as following the Council's decision to develop one Part 2 Local Plan for the whole District, and a review of resources available to deliver two other key projects in Planning Services, there was an urgent need to bring in extra resource to ensure that all three projects could progress at a satisfactory pace.

469. PLANNING SERVICES – PROJECT RESOURCES

The Head of Planning Services submitted a report which sought permission to recruit an additional temporary member of staff in Planning Services to help drive forward a number of priority projects, specifically the Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension Masterplan.

It was important that demonstrable progress was made with the Rushden East SUE Masterplan and therefore a further officer resource was required within the Planning Policy and Conservation Team to provide the extra capacity required to focus on the preparation of the Masterplan.

A new permanent Principal Planning Officer post for the Planning Policy and Conservation Team was about to be advertised and it was proposed that an additional temporary Principal Planning Officer post should also be advertised at the same time. The temporary post would be on an 18 month contract.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the appointment of an additional Principal Planning Officer (Grade 8) on an 18 month temporary contract be approved.
- (ii) That the temporary post be funded from any surplus in planning fee income before the use of reserves.

(Reason – to assist with the delivery of corporately important projects being led by Planning Services.)

470. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

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 Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, may be disclosed.

471. HOUSING INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Interim Environmental Protection Manager submitted a report which provided information on a 'clawback' provision which provided a housing investment opportunity, controlled and managed by East Northamptonshire Council.

The Council had been approached by Riverside Housing Association who wished to sell two of its properties in Duck Street, Rushden. The properties had previously been owned by the Council and had been transferred to Riverside in January 1998. A pre-emption clause in the transfer documents allowed for the Council to claw back the value of the properties should they be sold other than for affordable housing. This meant that in order for Riverside to sell the properties before January 2019, they must have first offered them back to the Council and only if we formally advised them that we did not wish to buy them back were they able to put them on the open market.

R.12 RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That the purchase of two properties in Duck Street, Rushden be approved.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That preliminary works towards the purchase of the two properties be authorised.
- (ii) That a decision on the future of the properties is made when the full financial situation is available.

(Reason –.to respond to an approach by Riverside Housing Association to purchase the two properties.)

472. KAREN PELL

The Chairman advised that this would be Karen Pell's last meeting before she returned to Daventry District Council. The Committee wished Karen well for the future.

Chairman