

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Date: 9 November 2009

Venue: East Northamptonshire House, Cedar Drive, Thrapston

Time: 7.30 pm

Present: Councillors:-

Robin Underwood (Chairman)
Wendy Brackenbury (Vice-Chairman)
Andy Mercer (Leader)

Pauline Bradberry JP
Albert Campbell
Lisa Costello
Glenn Harwood MBE

Richard Lewis
Steven North
John Richardson MBE

219. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 12 and 26 October 2009 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

220. APOLOGIES

Councillors David Brackenbury, Roger Glithero, Philip Hardcastle, Sylvia Hughes and Anna Sauntson sent their apologies.

221. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations.

222. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.3

There were no questions.

223. MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEE AND WORKING PARTY MEETINGS

The minutes of the meeting of the Waste and Recycling Working Party held on 6 October, the meeting of the Personnel Sub-Committee on 20 October and the meeting of the Finance Sub-Committee held on 26 October were received and noted.

224. IRTHLINGBOROUGH CONSERVATION AREA REVIEW

The Committee considered revised proposals for the designation of the Irthlingborough Conservation Area. It was noted that two rounds of consultation had been undertaken and a number of changes had been made in the light of representations made.

Members discussed the concerns of the Irthlingborough Ward Members about the proposed Conservation Area and impending changes to the Constitution that would transfer responsibility for Conservation Areas to the Planning Policy Committee. In the light of these issues it was

RESOLVED

- (1) That a workshop for Irthlingborough Ward Members and the Town Council be held on the proposals but that, should no agreement be reached, the current proposals be submitted for adoption.
- (2) That approval of the Irthlingborough Conservation Area boundary be deferred until after the workshop.
- (3) That, if the workshop is held before the next Policy and Resources Committee meeting, approval of the Irthlingborough Conservation Area boundary be considered at that meeting of the Committee, and if held after that date, it be considered at the next Planning Policy Committee meeting.

225. CONSERVATION AREA REVIEW 2009/10

A report on conservation area proposals for Thrapston, Titchmarsh, Oundle and Woodford was considered. It was noted that so far research had been carried out by consultants, culminating in the production of sketch proposals for each area/settlement. Preliminary consultation with the relevant town and parish councils had been conducted, and draft conservation area appraisals and management plans produced for each area for public consultation.

RESOLVED:

That public consultation on the conservation area proposals be approved.

226. CONSERVATION AREA REVIEW 2010/11

The Committee discussed proposals for conservation area review work for 2010/11. The areas/settlements considered to be the highest priority and therefore put forward for review were Aldwincle, Easton-on-the-Hill, Collyweston and King's Cliffe. The financial implications of going ahead with the third year of work on conservation areas, the difficulty of bringing work in-house in order to reduce costs, and the current economic climate were discussed.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed conservation area review work for 2010/11 be deferred for consideration for a year.

227. SECTION 10 AGREEMENT FOR THE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTNERSHIP

Further to the discussion of a draft Section 10 Agreement for the Northamptonshire Children and Young People's Partnership at the meeting of the Committee on 14 September 2009 (minute 133 refers), Members considered a revised draft of the Agreement. The Committee noted its approval that the disproportionate financial contribution the Council had been asked to make had been reduced.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Section 10 Agreement be adopted and the financial contribution of £8650 for 2009/10 be approved.
- (2) That a report be brought back to the Committee outlining the requested contribution and future plans of the Northamptonshire Children and Young People Board from 1 April 2010 onwards.

228. BROOKSIDE, GLAPTHORN ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Members reviewed progress on the Brookside, Glapthorn Road improvement project and noted that full adoption of the road would not be possible. It was also noted that this issue had been discussed many times by the Committee and there was a pressing need for the road to be made safe. The matched financial contribution Spire Homes was prepared to make and the Committee's desire to resolve the situation were highlighted. It was agreed that this would be the final offer to residents and, should there be any disagreement, the Committee would not consider the issue again.

RESOLVED:

That the reduced contribution of £11,000, up to a maximum of £12,500, be approved to enable road improvement works to proceed.

229. LOCAL AUTHORITY REPOSSESSION PREVENTION FUND

The Committee considered how to use £28,500 of funding that had been received from Communities and Local Government. The one-off payment was intended to be used to help households who, as a result of the recession, were facing possible homelessness through repossession or eviction. The Government had recommended that the funding be used to give such households financial assistance through small loans which would allow the money to be recycled to help other households in the future.

Members raised concerns that the funding was limited and therefore unlikely to make a great deal of difference but could be used as a last resort after a householder had exhausted all other avenues. It was noted that the distribution of the funding needed to be based on individual circumstances and it was difficult to set out a prescriptive mechanism for its distribution or set a cap amount that could be given to one household. The capacity of the officers to respond to the increased number of inquiries relating to repossession and eviction was discussed and it was suggested that the money could be used to extend officer capacity should the situation worsen.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Local Authority Repossession Prevention Fund remain in the Housing Strategy budget for use in increasing resources capacity and/or helping households in difficulty in consultation with the Head of Planning Services and the Lead Member for Planning Services.
- (2) That a briefing note be circulated to Members on the work of the Housing Strategy Team on repossessions.

230. CULTURAL COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (CCP) UPDATE

Members received an update on the performance of CCP since it had been agreed to provide additional funding to the company in June 2009 (minute 42 refers). The Committee was pleased to note that CCP was on budget for 2009/10 despite the economic downturn and the effect of many neighbouring councils offering free swimming to under-16s since April. It was noted that Councillor Glenvil Greenwood-Smith had joined the CCP Board as an observer and would be giving updates at future Council meetings.

Chairman