

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Meeting held: 14th October 2015

Present: Councillor Lloyd Bunday (Chair)
Councillors Steve Bellamy, James Burton, Mark Dearing,
David Howes, Jan Smith, Lesley Thurland and Derek
Zanger

Also Present Councillors Anne Lee, Mick Scrimshaw, Terry Freer, Mark
Rowley and Mike Tebbutt

15.EX.27 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from the Leader, Cllr Russell Roberts

15.EX.28 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor James Burton declared a personal and pecuniary interest in Item 10 – Delivering Our Town Centres. Cllr Burton left the Chamber during the discussion and voting on this item

15.EX.29 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9th September 2015 be approved and signed as a correct record.

15.EX.30 MATTERS OF URGENCY

The Chair accepted two items of urgent business under the provisions of Section 100B 4(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 as follows:-

Investment Opportunity – Information Update

This item was accepted by the Chair as urgent business as

consideration of the report would help facilitate the start of negotiations with potential private sector partners, prior to the next scheduled meeting of the Executive.

Asset Management

This item was accepted by the Chair as urgent business as a decision was required to take advantage of a commercial opportunity which had arisen to purchase a freehold title of a property in Kettering Town Centre. This would provide the Council with a revenue income stream.

As both items were exempt, the Chair advised the meeting that both items would be taken at the conclusion of the public agenda.

15.EX.31 PUBLIC SPEAKERS

Councillor Mick Scrimshaw requested to speak on Items 10, 11 and 12.

15.EX.32 SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT – SUSPENSION OF PAYMENT FOR VOICE

A report was submitted which requested the Committee consider a request from the Monitoring and Audit Committee that funding provided by the Council to VOICE (previously Victim Support) as part of the Council's discretionary voluntary sector grant scheme be withheld, and paid back for the 2015/16 financial year.

Councillor Thurland noted that if VOICE requested that funding resume for the final year of their SLA, the Executive Committee would be required to make a decision as to whether funding should continue.

RESOLVED

that the Council cease the 2015/16 grant payment to VOICE (previously Victim Support) and recover the SLA grant funding already provided for the current financial year. Should conditions exist to reinstate the grant for 2016/17 the decision would be brought back to the Executive Committee.

15.EX.33 RENEWABLE ENERGY – SOLAR PANELS ON ROOFS OF BUILDINGS

The Executive Committee consider an issue referred from the Rural Forum on the subject of Solar Panels on Roofs of Buildings.

At its meeting on 17th September 2015, the Rural Forum agreed that:

“Rural Forum representatives, including the Chair, attend a meeting of the Executive Committee to articulate concerns regarding the inability of the Council to divert solar energy capacity into roof mounted provision and was instead having to consider a large amount of solar farms as a consequence, and to lend support to a lobby to change government policy”

In the absence of any Rural Forum representatives it was

RESOLVED that the issue be referred to the Planning Policy Committee for further consideration

15.EX.34 WORK PROGRAMME

The Council’s draft work programme to be published on 21st October 2015 was noted

15.EX.35 DELIVERING OUR TOWN CENTRES

A report was submitted which:-

- Provided an update on “Foodie Fridays” – Kettering’s new food and drink focussed monthly market
- Set a date for Small Business Saturday
- Looked forward to another hugely popular Teenage Market
- Outlined work being undertaken in partnership with Business in the Community group of town centre retailers

The report was supplemented by a presentation.

Councillor Mick Scrimshaw addressed the Executive, outlining an issue with the new bus shelters located on Newland Street. It was noted that when it rained, water fell onto waiting passengers. He enquired whether any adjustment could be made to rectify this issue.

During debate it was noted that the opening of the Yards had been well received and it was hoped that it would be a positive addition to Kettering town centre as it provided an alternative offering to the rest of the town centre

Initial feedback from traders associated with “Foodie Fridays” had been positive. It was noted that such initiatives took time to build, but with two additional stall holders already confirmed for the next event, it was clear that things were heading in a positive direction.

In response to a question regarding advertising of the events outlined above, it was noted that the council made use of a two-pronged approach to draw in shoppers and to attract traders, although further work needed to be undertaken to bring in people from outside the Borough. The Big Screen would be utilised for advertising purposes prior to, and during, the Christmas period.

RESOLVED that the Executive Committee:-

- i) Welcomed the news of the establishment of “Foodie Fridays” in Kettering
- ii) Noted the date for Small Business Saturday
- iii) Looked forward to another hugely popular Teenage Market
- iv) Recognised the importance of partnership working, particularly in reference to the Business in the Community group

15.EX.36 MAINTAINING A DURABLE BUDGET

A report was submitted which provided:-

- a. A case study on the waste and recycling collection service;
- b. A reminder Members of the Council’s medium term financial strategy and associated guiding principles;
- c. An illustration of the latest budget model, the delivery of efficiency savings for 2015/16 and the estimated level of budget savings that may be required over the next few years;
- d. A mid-year update on Treasury Management;

- e. An update on the Council Tax Support Consultation process, following the decision taken by the Executive Committee at its previous meeting;
- f. An update on the proposals for the Northamptonshire Business Rates Pool for 2016/17.

It was noted that Medium Term Financial Strategy contained a zone titled “Severe Unpredictability” for 2020/2021 as this would be when the Business Rates Retention Scheme would alter significantly, whereby 100% of Business Rates would be retained by local authorities, with the Revenue Support Grant ceasing.

Savings totalling £750k had been identified for 2016/17, with satisfactory progress being made to identify the remaining £714k savings required. Any future savings would be reported to the Executive Committee.

Councillor Mick Scrimshaw addressed the Executive and raised three points in relation to working with the County Council on waste and recycling costs; concerns regarding the wording used in the Council Tax Support consultation document and future plans for Business Rates in the face of forthcoming changes to retention rates.

In response, the Committee heard that the council was working hard with NCC and other districts, and continued to examine a number of options that might prove to be financially viable to all parties. In terms of Council Tax Support, the consultation document sought to outline the implications of changes to taxpayers as part of the consultation process. In relation to future changes to Business Rates, there was a lot of detail to examine, when it emerged, to ascertain the implications of any changes and any risks would be carefully analysed.

During debate members noted that the council had a good track record of understanding how future changes could affect the financial position of the authority and both members and officers worked hard to try and achieve the best outcome for the whole of the Borough.

RESOLVED

that Executive noted the following:-

- i) the continued success the council has achieved in delivering services in house;
- ii) the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy and associated guiding

- iii) principles;
the Council's current Medium Term Financial Forecast and the progress being made for the delivery of efficiency savings for 2016/17 and future years;
- iv) the key updates relating to the Housing Revenue Account made in the Summer Budget announcement; and
- v) The two options (as outlined in the officer report) be consulted on the future operation of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme (as outlined in the report)

15.EX.37 SOUTH-WEST KETTERING (HEADLANDS COMMUNITY) NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA AND FORUM

A report was submitted, the purpose of which was:-

- To inform Members of the applications received to designate the South West Kettering (Headlands Community) Neighbourhood Area and Neighbourhood Forum;
- To ask Members to designate the South West Kettering (Headlands Community) Neighbourhood Area; and
- To ask Members to designate the South West Kettering (Headlands Community) Neighbourhood Forum

The prospective forum met all the necessary legal requirements and forum members had worked closely with Development Services officers to ensure the forum was properly constituted. Officers had also considered the proposed area the neighbourhood plan would cover and were supportive of the proposal in planning terms. A public consultation on both the area and the constitution of the forum had received no objections, with a letter of support being received.

Councillor Mick Scrimshaw addressed the Committee and welcomed the application, noting that anything that resulted in community engagement should be supported. He raised concerns that some communities may lack the capacity to become involved in the neighbourhood plan process and requested support be offered to those requiring it.

In response, the Committee noted that as much assistance as was legitimately possible was available to those wishing to pursue a neighbourhood plan.

RESOLVED that:-

- i) Members noted the consultation on the South West Kettering (Headlands Community) Neighbourhood Area, as shown in Appendix 1, and designated the South West Kettering (Headlands Community) Neighbourhood Area in order that a Neighbourhood Plan may progress, and the prospective Forum had a defined area it must represent.
- ii) Members noted the consultation on the South West Kettering (Headlands Community) Neighbourhood Forum, and designated the South West Kettering (Headlands Community) Neighbourhood Forum in order that they might be recognised as a “qualifying body”, able to progress work on a Neighbourhood Plan for the South West Kettering (Headlands Community) Neighbourhood Area

15.EX.38 NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT DELIVERY COMMITTEE – APPROVAL OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

A report was submitted which sought approval of the Terms of Reference of the Garden Communities Joint Committee (The Joint Delivery Committee).

The revised Terms of Reference document had been approved at the initial meeting of the Joint Delivery Committee on 12th August 2015 and included the following matters:-

- Membership
- Election of a Chair/Appointment of a Deputy Chair
- Meetings
- Administration and Officer Support
- Financial Matters
- Legal Status
- Ethical Standards

RESOLVED that the revised Terms of Reference for the North Northamptonshire Joint Delivery Committee be approved.

15.EX.39 **PROTOCOL FOR THE USE OF HAND-HELD ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND SOCIAL MEDIA BY MEMBERS**

A report was submitted which brought before Members a draft protocol for the use of electronic devices and social media by Members during public meetings of the Council.

It was noted that the Standards Advisory Committee had considered the issue at length and had drawn up a draft protocol which recommended the following:-

“the draft Protocol be recommended to Executive and Council for adoption, subject to the following:-

- *The use of social media be not permitted in Planning and Licensing Committee meetings*
- *Accessing social media sites during the meeting to give contemporaneous comment on the discussion prior to conclusion of the debate be not permitted*

The Chair made a request to amend Paragraph 6 to read:-

“The Mayor, Chairman ***or their nominee*** will have the discretion to stop use of any of all personal electronic equipment if they consider the use to be disruptive and it is detracting from the prop conduct of the meeting.”

Members discussed the matter at length as to whether to adopt the draft protocol or to refer it to Full Council to be enshrined within the Council’s constitution.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED that the draft protocol be referred to Full Council for debate.

15.EX.40 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that it involved items of business which

included the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraphs 1-7 of Schedule 12A of the Local Govern Act 1972 (as amended)

15.EX.41 INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY – INFORMATION UPDATE

A report was submitted, the purpose of which was:-

- to provide Members with an update on work being done in regard to investment opportunities in renewable energy
- to seek endorsement of the Executive in the procurement of further external specialist advice; and
- to establish a process for decision making

The report outlined work carried out to date and clarified the current situation in relation to capital investment in renewable energy approved in principle by the Executive Committee in February 2015. It was noted that consideration of the report by the committee would facilitate discussion with potential investment partners. A Special Meeting of the Executive Committee would be required to consider the investment opportunity in full, the scale of which may require a report to Full Council for debate and final approval.

RESOLVED that the Executive Committee:-

- i) Recognised the work done to date;
- ii) Noted the importance and endorsed the procurement of additional external specialist advice;
- iii) Noted the fact that should said advice result in a decision not to invest, expenditure to date would be unrecoverable and would be typical of such situations; and
- iv) Agreed to the proposed decision making process, including a Special Meeting of the Executive to consider the investment opportunity.

15.EX.42 ASSET MANAGEMENT – TOWN CENTRE RETAIL INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY

A report was submitted which sought Member approval to bid at public auction for the freehold of a town centre retail property

where a commercial opportunity had arisen at short notice. Also, in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations, the report sought Member approval for two virements to facilitate the bidding process.

Members were provided with details of the property, the existing lease affecting the property and anticipated revenue income stream figures. In addition, the Committee was provided with an independent valuation figure for the property concerned.

Members considered the proposition and whether to approve bidding up to the valuation provided by the independent valuers. After voting on the recommendation, it was

RESOLVED that the Executive Committee:-

- i) Grant delegated authority to the Head of Democratic and Legal Services to bid up to the value provided by the Council's independent valuer for the property concerned; and
- ii) That the Executive in accordance with the Council's financial regulations and, subject to the Council acquiring the property via public auction approve the virements outlined in the officer report.

(The meeting started at 7.00pm and ended at 9.12pm)

Signed
Chair

DJP