

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

A6 TOWNS FORUM

Meeting held: 1st February 2017

Present: Councillor Cedwien Brown (KBC/RTC)
Councillor Ruth Groome (KBC/BLTC)
Councillor June Derbyshire (KBC/DTC)
Councillor Karl Sumpter (KBC/RTC)
Councillor Michael Tebbutt (KBC/DTC)
Councillor Christopher Groome (BLTC/NCC)
Councillor James Hakewill (NCC)
Councillor Mark Cox (RTC)
Councillor Ray Davis (RTC)
Councillor Carolyn Carter (BSPC)
Councillor Lesley Thurland (KBC)
Councillor Jan Smith (KBC)
Councillor David Watson (Rural Forum Representative)
Councillor Ian Jelley (KBC/RTC)
Councillor Ray Brooks (DTC)
Councillor Peter Cox (BSPC)

Also Present: Martin Hammond (Kettering Borough Council)
Mark Dickenson (Kettering Borough Council)
Dean Mitchell (Kettering Borough Council)
Rob Harbour (Kettering Borough Council)
Peter Chaplin (Kettering Borough Council)
Julie Trahern (Kettering Borough Council)
Sgt Scott Little (Northamptonshire Police)
Amy Nimmo (Committee Administrator – KBC)

16.A6TF.47 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Margaret Talbot (KBC/RTC) and Councillor Derek Zanger (KBC/BLTC)

16.A6TF.48 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the A6 Towns Forum held on 30th November 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair

16.A6TF.49 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

16.A6TF.50 PLANNING APPLICATION CONSULTATION WITH TOWN COUNCILS

The Head of Development Services attended the meeting to have a consultation with regards to how the local authority carries out planning application consultation with Town Councils. It was reported that budgets were under strain and the process needed to be reviewed to work in a cost effective manner.

Members heard that re-consultations had been carried out successfully electronically for the past six years and Kettering Borough Council were the only authority in Northamptonshire not to have moved over to electronic consultation.

It was suggested that the benefits would include

- Saving staff time and other budgetary costs.
- Improved speed of delivery to Town and Parish Councils
- Things would not get lost in the post.
- Instant delivery would mean Town and Parish Councils could utilise the full 21 days consultation period. As soon as an application was validated the details and a link to all the available documents on the website would be forwarded to each parish clerk.

The forum were given the opportunity to provide their views on the ambitions and proposals of electronic consultation. Comments were made as follows: -

- The proposed system would be appropriate to deal with normal applications, but a hard copy of site plans for larger applications would still be required.
- A recipient received icon would be needed to prove the applications had been received.
- It was suggested that applicants could be requested to provide paper copies of plans for Town and Parish Councils. It was noted that there was no requirement for applicants to provide paper copies and 70% of applications were submitted electronically.
- Some Town and Parish Councils felt they were not equipped sufficiently.

Councillor Hakewill proposed and Councillor Peter Cox seconded that a six week consultation be held. Members were reminded that the A6 Towns Forum was not a decision making body.

16.A6TF.51 POLICE STATISTICS

Sergeant Scott Little attended the meeting to present the crime statistics for the A6 Towns for the last 24 months.

It was reported that the first year showed a significant decline in crime, but the first six to nine months of the second year showed a different picture. There was a large increase in burglary, shed breaks and distraction burglary but arrests had recently been made.

There had been a large increase in shop robberies in all four A6 Towns. Six people had been arrested and were on remand.

Anti-social behaviour was an issue in Rothwell and Desborough and police had visited many youths to discuss the issues.

It was noted that following the parking patrol carried out by the Police at Meadowside Primary School there were still issues with staff parking.

Members requested that the crime figures be broken down to town level.

16.A6TF.52 DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2017/18 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Mark Dickenson and Dean Mitchell attended the meeting and provided the forum with an overview of the budget setting process, the position with the 2016/17 budget, the budget for 2017/18 and the preparation involved in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

The meeting heard that the Draft Budget for 2017/18 had been presented to the Executive Committee at its meeting on 18th January, signalling the start of the consultation process. The draft budget would be considered by the Council's scrutiny committees, the Budget Consultation meeting and geographic forums, with questions and comments received as part of the process submitted to the Executive Committee on 15th February. A recommendation would then be made to Council for consideration and approval alongside the setting of 2017/18 Council Tax rates. This meeting had originally been scheduled for 22nd February but had been moved to 1st March to allow for the county council budget setting.

The Council had utilised the budget delivery framework to identify approximately £1.5m of savings to realise and set a balanced budget for 2016/17. All the identified savings were being successfully delivered.

The Draft Budget for 2017/18 included a reduction in central government grant of £568,000 (16.3%), broadly in line with what had

been modelled. In total, it was estimated that £1.38m of savings would be required to achieve a balanced budget for 2017/18. As in 2016/17, savings had been identified using the Council's budget delivery framework, with the largest saving identified as a result of staff suggestions and service innovations. Additional income would also be derived from an increase in Business Rates through pooling arrangements and growth within the Borough, New Homes Bonus and increased service demand.

The forum noted that setting the draft budget was a paper exercise, and there was a need to ensure delivery of that draft, for which KBC had an excellent track record, even in the face of significant financial pressures.

When considering Council Tax for 2017/18 and going forward, members needed to consider what represented a sustainable strategy. Council tax levels had been frozen by KBC for the previous six years, although there was no longer any government incentive to continue this policy.

In the medium term, KBC had accepted a multi-year grant settlement to 2019/20, which allowed core levels of grant to be incorporated into the MTFs. Prior to considering changes to Council Tax levels, KBC would be required to make average savings of over £1 million a year up to 2019/20, in addition to the £11 million of savings achieved since 2010. It was noted that KBC had closed this gap without increasing Council Tax, cutting frontline services or voluntary sector funding.

The meeting heard that the council's MTFs would continue to be reviewed and amended in future as it progressed, although it was noted that there was still a significant task ahead.

The following comments were made:

Item / Issue	Summary of Response Given
<p>On page 26 of the full budget, there are a number of technical accounting adjustments, and Capital Charges, however Depreciation shows as a negative?</p> <p>What is the Refcus transaction?</p> <p>I do not understand how there can be capital expenditure with no capital asset.</p> <p>(Cllr David Watson, Geddington, Newton and Little Oakley Parish Council)</p>	<p>The Council is bound by legislative requirements to account for things in a certain way. The Technical Adjustments relate to items in the accounts that are reversed out and are not a cost to the taxpayer.</p> <p>MRP relates to budget that is set aside to pay for an asset over its life.</p> <p>Refcus (Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statue) is Capital expenditure on an asset that is not ours. REFCUS expenditure is captured in the Capital programme but passes through</p>

	<p>the revenue account; it has no impact on the bottom line. The Council complies with best practice and the accounts are audited.</p> <p>Officer Comment</p>
Item / Issue	Summary of Response Given
<p>Regarding the Policy of investments and generating income, how are we going to deliver the Commercial Investment Income?</p> <p>What is the progress on both 6 Station Road and Sheerness House?</p> <p>What is the progress with these assets and what is the position of paying staff through companies.</p> <p>(Cllr C Groome)</p>	<p>Work is ongoing with both assets and the Asset Management Board are determining a framework for investments.</p> <p>A report on 6 Station Road was taken to Executive in December and the property is currently being marketed. A report will be taken back to a future Executive meeting.</p> <p>Options are currently being considered for Sheerness house and a report will be taken to a future Executive meeting.</p> <p>We do use Agency workers where there are operational needs. The spend on Agency workers is reported to Monitoring and Audit monthly.</p> <p>Officer Comment</p>

16.A6TF.53 UPDATE ON ELECTRIFICATION AND LINE SPEED IMPROVEMENTS

Councillor Chris Groome gave an update on the electrification and line speed improvements. It was noted that an announcement with the terms of the franchise was expected soon.

16.A6TF.54 FARMERS MARKETS' IN TOWN CENTRE

Councillor Ruth Groome gave a presentation detailing information on the Burton Latimer Framers Market, which started in 2003 and was held on the first Saturday of every month.

16.A6TF.55 INFORMATION ITEMS

Newsround

Burton Latimer

The Burton Latimer Civic dinner was being held on Friday 17th March at Kushboo. Invitations would be sent out soon.

The village hall would be open to the public around May.

Councillor Smith stated she was currently working with youths to address anti-social behaviour.

Rothwell

A new wine shop had opened in Rothwell.

The skated ramp at Well Lane had been replaced and was being extremely well used. This was the first park in the borough to be fully accessible.

A charity event was being held on 4th March at Rothwell Charter Inn in memory of Councillor Alan Mills.

Feedback from other Forums

Kettering Town Forum

It was noted that the Kettering Town Centre Task Force had been combined with the Kettering Town Forum under the new constitution and was moving forward on a trial basis to try to engage a wider audience.

Rural Forum

The forum were updated on crime in the rural areas.

The forum had a debate buying or leasing pay phones.

Harrington now had a defibrillator.

Election costs would remain the same.

16.A6TF.56 ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

None

16.A6TF.57 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

An update was given on the closure of the Desborough/Rothwell bypass. It was noted that Town and Parish Clerks were being notified about the situation.

16.A6TF.58 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would take place on 28th June 2017

(The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 8.30 pm)

Signed.....

Chair

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