

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Meeting held: 18th October 2017

Present: Councillor Russell Roberts (Chair)

Councillors Lloyd Bunday, Mark Rowley, Mark Dearing, David Howes, Ian Jelley and Lesley Thurland

Also Present Councillors Mick Scrimshaw, Andrew Dutton, Paul Marks, Mike Tebbutt and Ash Davies

17.EX.26 APOLOGIES

None

17.EX.27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Lloyd Bunday declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 12.

17.EX.28 MINUTES

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20th September 2017 be approved and signed as a correct record.

17.EX.29 WORK PROGRAMME

The Council's draft work programme published on 4th October 2017 was noted.

17.EX.30 STREET SCENE PARTNERSHIP WITH CORBY BOROUGH COUNCIL

A report was submitted which sought to update members on the progress and ongoing work around the development of a shared Street Scene Service between Corby Borough Council (CBC) and Kettering Borough Council (KBC).

The report also sought Executive Committee approval to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with CBC on the development of shared service as well as seeking nominations for elected members to sit on the proposed joint steering group as set out in the MoU.

Finally, the report outlined legal advice in regard to the use and extension of KBC's existing fleet contract for the proposed shared service arrangement.

The meeting welcomed Ian Smith, Head of Planning and Environmental Services at CBC and noted that a very similar report would be shortly be taken to the One Corby Policy Committee at CBC for approval.

Members heard that the council had sought internal and external legal advice in relation to the shared service, particularly in relation to fleet provision. It was noted that the existing seven year contract was due to end in 2020, although it contained an option to extend for a further seven years and could be expanded on the proviso that the size of the shared service was not so great as to constitute a material variation exceeding a 50% increase on the current contract. Costing exercises undertaken indicated that the shared service increase would be below that threshold. In addition, it was noted that APSE would independently audit the fleet extension contract as part of a "value for money" exercise.

The meeting was advised communication to staff, including staff at Kier, regarding the shared service had already commenced and would continue on a regular basis and a Project Implementation Plan was in the process of being produced.

It was noted that during the pre-implementation stage of the project a Joint Steering Group would be in place, made up of elected members from both parties and officers to oversee the planning and implementation phase of the shared service. Once implementation had taken place, a Joint Committee would convene to oversee the strategic direction of the shared service.

Members considered joint working with CBC to be a positive step forward and noted that the scheme had cross-party support.

RESOLVED

that the Executive Committee:-

- i) Agree the Memorandum of Understanding, subject to any amendments being delegated to the Head of Environmental Care in consultation with the Head of Democratic and Legal Services; and
- ii) That Cllrs Roberts, Jelley and Scrimshaw be nominated to represent KBC on the shared service Joint Steering Group; and

- iii) To facilitate the shared service arrangement, the Executive Committee approved the extension of the existing fleet contract for a further 7 years from September 2020 subject to delegated authority to the Head of Democratic and Legal Services in consultation with the Head of Environmental Care and the Head of Resources.

17.EX.31 MAINTAINING A DURABLE BUDGET

The committee was provided with an update on the Council Tax Support Scheme consultation process, a mid-year update on the Treasury Management position and an update in regard to the Business Rates Retention Scheme pilot project.

It was noted that at the September meeting of the Executive Committee, it had been agreed that the 2017/18 Council Tax Support scheme be continued, with a taper rate of 45%. A formal consultation was underway as to whether a one or two year extension to the existing scheme should be agreed. The consultation had commenced on 25th September and would end on 20th November, with the results reported to the committee on 6th December and a final decision taken by Council at its meeting on 13th December.

In regard to the Treasury Management position, it was heard that the Council had adhered in full to the Treasury Management Strategy agreed by members at the meeting of Council in March.

Members were reminded of the pilot scheme proposed by the government in relation to the possible 100% retention of Business Rates. A joint bid submission for 2018/19 had been worked on and all local authorities across the county were in agreement that a submission be made. Significant financial benefits were possible under the proposed scheme as additional growth in the sector would be retained. As part of the pilot scheme, there was a requirement to accept a “no detriment” clause, however modelling indicated that potential growth would be above the base line and on that basis KBC was happy to accept the clause.

Distribution mechanisms of additional Business Rates growth were outlined to the meeting, who noted that should the bid be unsuccessful pooling arrangements as currently set out for 2017/18 would continue into 2018/19.

Councillor Mick Scrimshaw asked questions in relation to projected variances within the budget and commercial investments. A £100,000 deficit in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was also queried.

It was heard that although there were hundreds of lines within the

budget with some degree of variation, it was projected that a balanced budget would be achieved at the end of the financial year. Commercial investments were progressing, with details of one specific investment to be submitted to the Asset Management Board. In regard to the HRA deficit, it was projected that the account would come in £100,000 over budget, which would be funded through reserves, reducing them from £850,000 to £750,000.

RESOLVED

that the Executive Committee:-

Delegate responsibility to the Council's Section 151 Officer in conjunction with the Finance Portfolio Holder to submit the Northamptonshire Pilot Bid for 100% Business Rates Retention for 2018/19; and

Noted the following:-

- i) The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and associated guiding principles; and
- ii) The Council's current Medium Term Financial Forecast and the progress being made for the delivery of efficiency savings for 2018/19 and future years;
- iii) The Council Tax Support Consultation period would run from 25th September to 20th November 2017;
- iv) The Treasury Management performance for the period 1st April – 30th September 2017.

17.EX.32 TOWN CENTRE DELIVERY PLAN – NEXT STEPS

A report was submitted which sought to set out the conclusions drawn from the Town Centre Conference held on 13th September, proposed some immediate actions for implementation, as well as sketching out further engagement work ahead of agreeing a final delivery plan.

It was noted that the event had been well attended, with over 70 attendees present at the conference. A significant level of positive feedback had been received and this was outlined in the appendix to the report. The meeting heard that it was important to maintain ongoing dialogue with stakeholders and the topic had been taken to other events such as the LSP Conference where further input had been received.

The meeting was advised that a number of issues had already been taken forward including:-

- Digital training sessions
- Engagement with the Christmas programme of events
- A programme to clean and tidy specific town centre areas
- Purple Flag Weekend held 6th-8th October

All views pertaining to car park management had been recorded to form part of the review of car parking.

In terms of WiFi provision in the town centre, opinion had been split from the feedback received. The meeting heard that there was added value to its potential introduction as the level of marketing feedback that could be obtained may prove to be beneficial in identifying how the town centre offer could be improved. There were a number of potential drawbacks to the proposal in regard to the public's use of technology and the emergence of new technology. It was heard that business buy-in was vitally important if WiFi was to be realised, with independent retailers able to utilise it to promote their businesses.

It was recognised that initial installation capital would need to be identified that was not currently allocated within budgetary planning. In addition there would be ongoing running costs associated with the scheme. If the principle of WiFi was one the council wished to establish, tenders for installation would need to be sought and budgetary allocation identified.

Councillor Scrimshaw addressed the committee and stated that he fully supported future engagement with the business sector and community groups, and that the Town Centre Conference had been very constructive. Town Centre WiFi was also an interesting and exciting prospect and assurances were sought in relation to member involvement in the proposal going forward.

During discussion members considered that a number of town centre businesses already offered free WiFi to customers and that increasingly people had access to unlimited data on their smartphones. Members considered that further work was required in scoping out the requirements for WiFi from both a financial and need perspective.

Following discussion an amendment was proposed to the recommendation to take into account members wishes for a scoping document to be produced and return to the Committee for further consideration.

RESOLVED

that in respect of a public WiFi system:-

To produce a scoping document for the provision of a WiFi service and investigate future capital and revenue costs for a scalable solution; with a report back to this committee before any decision was made.

(Councillor Lloyd Bunday left the room prior to the discussion of this item)

17.EX.33 TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER REVIEW (PSPO)

A report was submitted which sought to update the Committee on activities that had occurred under the Town Centre PSPO implemented in July 2016 and to request further delegation of powers to enable better management of Anti-social Behaviour matters across the Borough.

The Committee heard that concerns had been raised about the scope of the original PSPO prior to implementation and members had requested details of successes or otherwise of the order. While the PSPO dealt with transgressions informally, it was a useful tool for all officers who had been impressed with the response from those who previously had been engaged in ASB.

Members noted that most complaints connected to the PSPO were in relation to drinking and begging in the Town Centre. Although this issue remained a challenge, joint working with the police meant it was better managed.

The Committee heard that should the Head of Development Services and the Head of Environmental Care Services receive delegated authority to use powers such as community protection notices or fixed penalty notices, this would allow for greater flexibility of work and could assist in tackling a number of long standing issues across the borough.

Sgt Scott Little attended the meeting and provided his views of the PSPO from a community policing perspective, noting its success particularly in allowing police to obtain criminal behaviour orders off the back of fixed penalty notices.

Councillor Mick Scrimshaw addressed the Committee, questioning whether there were plans to increase enforcement activity in the light of an increase in begging and street drinking activity. In addition, he requested a breakdown of figures for skateboarding complaints.

It was heard that the issue of drinking and street begging was a national one, although the PSPO enabled KBC to manage it better than other authorities. The public was now aware of the PSPO and as a result the number of complaints received had increased. KBC and the police undertook as much enforcement action as possible given the resources available.

During discussion members noted that there was only a small minority of individuals committing ASB in contravention of the PSPO and that

joint working between KBC wardens and police had been positive.

RESOLVED

That the Executive:

- (i) Approve the approach taken by officers in the implementation of the Town Centre PSPO; and
- (ii) Extend delegated authority under Part 4 Chapter 1 and Chapter 3 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 to the Head of Development Services and the Head of Environmental Care

17.EX.34 NEW AND REPLACEMENT PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS

The Committee received a report that requested approval to replace existing Designated Public Places Orders (DPPOs) covering the town centres of Burton Latimer and Desborough as well as The Grange shops in Kettering with Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) as required by the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014; and to agree new PSPOs for Rothwell and the Mill Road Park area.

The meeting heard that existing DPPOs were due to expire and would automatically transfer to PSPOs unless changed or altered. The approval of a PSPO for Rothwell would bring it into line with the other A6 Towns and would tackle a number of issues raised during public consultation. Similar issues had been noted at Mill Road Park and Pocket Park where a full consultation exercise had been undertaken with involvement from police and the Community Safety Partnership. The new PSPOs, if approved would last for a period of three years and could then be reviewed.

Councillor Mick Scrimshaw spoke positively about the inclusion of Mill Road Park and surroundings within a PSPO, but cautioned that effective enforcement needed to be undertaken as public expectations had been raised during the consultation process.

RESOLVED

That the Executive:

- i) Agreed the transfer of existing DPPOs in Desborough, Burton Latimer and The Grange to Public Space Protection Orders; and
- ii) Agreed the proposed new Public Space Protection Orders for Rothwell and Mill Road Park as set out at Appendix 3 (a and b) and 5 (a and b) to the report

17.EX.35 BUSINESS SUPPORT – ENTERPRISING KETTERING

The Committee received a report that set out the proposed future delivery and promotion of local business and enterprise support provision under a new Enterprising Kettering brand; and presented recommendations for the use of agreed Community Grant enterprise funding.

It was noted that until April 2017, KBC had a service level agreement with the University of Northampton to provide business support under the Enterprise4Kettering banner. The Task and Finish Group convened to consider such service level agreements had recommended a different approach given the change in the business landscape since 2012. It was recommended that the £22,500 previously allocated for business support be used to fund the model set out below.

The proposed brand, under the name “Enterprising Kettering” would be managed in-house and provide a single point of entry for business support advice, with referrals made to a number of external agencies that could be of assistance to businesses. The £22,500 funding would be used for promotion and to address needs that emerged through dialogue with businesses..

Councillor Scrimshaw commented that it was right for the council to take the lead in supporting small businesses. He requested that a report be brought to the Monitoring and Audit Committee after an appropriate period to identify how many businesses had benefitted from the new system.

RESOLVED that the Executive Committee:

- i) Noted the range of business and enterprise support currently available;
- ii) Approved and welcomed Enterprising Kettering as an umbrella offer to business; and
- iii) Agreed proposals to utilise the funding previously allocated for business support in the way set out in the report

17.EX.36 OMBUDSMAN REPORT

The Committee was required to consider a Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman’s report where a complaint had been upheld and maladministration and injustice were considered to have occurred. Accordingly, the report advised the Executive Committee of the outcome of an investigation undertaken by the Ombudsman into a

complaint by Mrs C concerning her homelessness application and temporary accommodation.

It was noted that a total of six recommendations had been made by the Ombudsman, all of which had now been implemented. The Keyways Allocation Scheme had been reviewed and its wording clarified. Standard letters to applicants had also been reviewed and staff training provided.

It was heard that although the Ombudsman findings were regrettable, KBC was using the outcome as an opportunity to carry out an in-depth review of how the Council handles applications from homeless households.

Councillor Mick Scrimshaw addressed the Committee and noted that it was disappointing to read of such a complaint, but it was pleasing to hear details of a review of services for homeless households.

RESOLVED that the Executive Committee considered the findings of the Ombudsman's report and the actions that had been taken as a result.

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and ended at 7.50pm)

Signed
Chair

DJP