

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Meeting held: 7th February 2018

Present: Councillor Duncan Bain (Chair)

Councillors Mike Brown, Jenny Henson, Paul Marks, Mick Scrimshaw and Greg Titcombe

Also Present: Lisa Hyde (Executive Director)
Mark Dickenson (Head of Resources)
Jo Haines (Group Accountant)
David Pope (Committee Administrator)

17.RD.22 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jim Hakewill. It was noted that Cllr Paul Marks was acting as substitute for Cllr Hakewill.

17.RD.23 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Research and Development Committee held on 28th November 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

17.RD.24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

17.RD.25 BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2017/18 AND THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (A1)

A report was submitted which considered the Council's draft budget proposals and medium term financial forecast and sought comments for reporting back to the Council's Executive for consideration at its meeting on 14th February 2018.

The Head of Resources and Group Accountant attended the meeting and summarised the key elements of the report.

It was noted that comments had also been sought from the geographic forums, the Tenants' Forum and the Monitoring and Audit Committee. The formal consultation period would run until the 28th February when the budget would be formally considered by full Council.

Members of the Committee submitted comments as follows:-

Item / Issue	Summary of Response Given
<p>We are a scrutiny committee and it is our duty to put comments forward to the Executive Committee. I propose we do recommend a change to the draft budget, no-one declared that they are under the application of a party whip, so we can send forward any concerns we have. All of us stood on a manifesto which sought to cut car parking charges in the Borough. What I would like to do is increase the funds for the Town Centre Initiative by £50,000 to £100,000 to go towards more town centre parking charge cuts.</p> <p>We have a number of reserves; we could take a small amount from each of these and put it towards that fund. There is a professional development reserve that stood at £750,000 last year, so take a few tens of thousand from that. Commercial investment receipts, we could take £5,000 to £10,000 from that to be allocated to Town Centre Initiatives. Revenue underspend is usually allocated to the Capital Budget and we can take some out of that. I would like to see something to satisfy that manifesto pledge on car parking charges and would like to see that taken as a recommendation to the Executive Committee.</p> <p>Cllr Mike Brown</p> <p>I second the recommendation about car parking charges. I agree about the remit of this committee, our job is to go through the budget and work out if the things suggested in it are deliverable, and to put forward our views as to whether things are desirable. Overall it is a steadfast budget, it is not imaginative and it is doing nothing to increase service provision locally or answer criticisms of the council from our residents. It is true that the administration had reducing car parking charges as a</p>	<p>Executive Committee reports and papers have already been published. Despite that, all comments emanating from Monitoring and Audit, this meeting and Tenants' Forum tomorrow will be documented and presented to the Executive on 14th February.</p> <p>Officer Response</p>

<p>manifesto pledge and this has not been addressed. I do not care how it is funded, as there is plenty of flexibility in the draft budget. Cllr Mick Scrimshaw</p> <p>I would like to see a viability report from officers on reducing car parking charges as there is a knock-on effect whatever you do. Cllr Greg Titcombe</p> <p>In theory I would like to see car parking charges cut, but I would like to see the figures involved and know what it would be reduced to. Cllr Paul Marks</p>	
<p>Was the whole of the HRA self-financing loan taken from the Public Works Loan Board? Cllr Mick Scrimshaw</p> <p>Do we have any LOBO loans? Cllr Mick Scrimshaw</p> <p>Regarding the crematorium and the suggestion of weddings on a Saturday, are there any ideas of the capital costs for altering the facilities and the projected income? Cllr Mick Scrimshaw</p> <p>Under Culture and Heritage was there some kind of one-off equipment purchase of £8,000 for the art gallery, should that be capital spending? Cllr Mick Scrimshaw</p> <p>Under Environmental Health - Public Conveniences, there is a budget of £2700 for this year. Is that for Rothwell toilets and is that money just to check on the facilities? If that is the case are there any plans to sell it? Cllr Mick Scrimshaw</p> <p>Under Highways and Roads there is a one off expenditure, what was that for? Cllr Mick Scrimshaw</p>	<p>The whole £72.9m loan was borrowed through the Public Works Loan Board. Officer Response</p> <p>We have no LOBO loans. Officer Response Work is ongoing at the moment. The main investment will be a pagoda-type structure outside. The capital programme has a global budget for Invest to Save and that is where the investment will come from. A business case is currently being worked up. Officer Response</p> <p>We would have to get back to you on that. We have offered explanations where the budget has moved by more than £10,000. Officer Response</p> <p>We will be undertaking a full review of all the assets we hold so we can rationalise and optimise our asset base to ensure assets fulfil their duties or whether they can be realised for sale. There are potentially some rates for the toilets themselves in that budget line Officer Response</p> <p>That line in the budget related to one-off works undertaken to street lights and columns Officer Response</p>

<p>There is a one-off staffing cost mentioned in line 68 of the budget under Finance and SMT, was this for consultancy fees? Cllr Mick Scrimshaw</p> <p>What sort of things would be a one-off within that budget line, consultancy fees? Cllr Mike Brown</p> <p>Would any of that extra spend be on payment related to David Cook's departure? Cllr Mike Brown</p>	<p>This is an amalgam of one-off staffing costs and one-off recruitment costs. Officer Response</p> <p>It would include one-off recruitment costs and also costs associated with the Flexible Resources Review we undertook. Officer Response</p> <p>That would be recorded in this section of the budget. Officer Response</p>
<p>The budget is not particularly imaginative moving forward. Cllr Mick Scrimshaw</p>	

17.MA.26 WORK PROGRAMME (A2)

The work programme was noted.

(The meeting started at 7.00pm and ended at 7.50pm)

Signed:

(Chair)

DJP