

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE MEETING

held in the Council Chamber,
Council Offices, Adam and Eve Street, Market Harbourough

31st July 2002

commencing at 4.30 p.m.

Present:

Councillors Bladon, Fewkes, Galton, Gray, Hadley and Mrs. Roeber

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Fort, Hart and Totten

249 - APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING

RESOLVED: that Councillor Bladon would be Chairman of the Meeting.

250 - MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Executive Meeting held on the 17th July 2002 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

251 - FUTURE MEETING

It was reported to the Executive that the Executive Meeting on the 9th October 2002 was unable to be held in the Council Chamber. It was therefore necessary to book an alternative venue for that date. The suggested venues in order of preference were the Coplow Centre, Tugby Centre or Thurnby. These venues will be investigated for availability and put before the Leader for decision.

252 - TOPICAL ISSUES

1. Flash Flooding, Harbourough District

It was reported to the Executive that Tuesday 30th July 2002 had been the wettest July day since 1968 and the wettest day on record since June 1982. Market Harbourough town had suffered 30 mm of rain within an hour between 4.00 and 5.00 p.m. with a further 20 mm falling overnight.

In accordance with previous arrangements, high risk properties had had sandbags in place and there had also been many requests for sandbags in surrounding areas which had stretched the resources. It was the professional view that the flooding had been caused almost entirely by the insufficient capacity of the storm water and sewerage drainage systems in the town.

The whole range of the emergency services had worked in the town, including officers from the Harbourough Highways Partnership, Environmental Health Officers and secretaries of the department. Private contractors, Service Team, P & R Construction and Harbourough Drainage also played an important role.

Work had continued up until 11.00 p.m. both on pumping out and clean-up and advice to food and drink premises. Most pubs in the town had been closed. The Quick Response Team were able to provide bunding to dam the water flow at the Harbourough Leisure Centre and hence avoided any flooding.

Throughout Wednesday the clean-up continued and damage assessments were undertaken. There was damage to the carriageway in three locations in High Street and the Anglian Water Company had agreed to pay for the reinstatements. The Water Company had also agreed to appoint a loss adjuster to work with the local traders who have suffered large amounts of stock loss and damage. Anglian Water has accepted that the works need to be done to ensure that the situation does not happen again.

Members wished to thank Peter James and all the staff in the office for their quick response to this emergency.

The Quick Response Team and Emergency Services concentrated their efforts in the Market Harborough Town Centre. It was requested that Members provide information back to the Council regarding how the situation had been in the rural areas.

2. Formula Grant Distribution - consultation paper

It was reported that the Government had been reviewing the annual local government finance settlement for some time, in partnership with local authorities and other interested parties, e.g. the LGA.

At present the system was based on a number of mathematical formulae covering seven service blocks which included Education, Personal Social Services, Police, Fire, Environmental, Protective and Cultural Services (EPCS). Highways Maintenance and Capital Finance. These blocks relate to spending. The main block which affects Harborough District Council is the EPCS.

The consultation paper provided fifty options with no view as to which option was preferred by Government. Authorities were being asked to produce views on the options. A response to the consultation paper was required by the 30th September and a further report would be coming from the Chief Officer (Resources) with a suggested response. The settlement was expected in the first week in December 2002. It was reported that the Government was committed to the new settlement for 2002/03/04.

3. Litter

Councillor Hadley enquired whether there had been any prosecutions for the dropping of litter, or other fly tipping. It was reported that no prosecutions had been instigated during the recent period by the Legal Department. It was reported that the use of fixed penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution was being implemented and the positive publicity this had received should be taken into account.

253 - ANNUAL TREASURY REPORT 2001-02

The actual performance for 2001/02 against the Council's Approved Treasury Policy Strategy was reported.

RESOLVED: that the Executive recommend to Council that the Annual Treasury Report be approved.

Reason:

The production of this report to Members was a requirement of CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management in Local Authorities.

254 - TREASURY CONSULTANCY SERVICE

The existing contract for the Treasury Management Consultant expires on the 31st July 2002. The Company providing the lowest tender was not considered to have sufficient experience in the field and therefore the recommendation was to appoint the second lowest tenderer to undertake the contract with effect from the 1st August 2002.

RESOLVED: that:-

- i) Standing Order 1.3 in relation to contracts was applied in this instance;
- ii) the tender from Butlers at £7,500 per annum be accepted;
- iii) the contract be for a three year period to commence on 1st August 2002; and
- iv) the savings in 2002/03 of £7,500 be put towards the efficiency savings target of £108,233.

Reason:

Although the basic fee quoted by Sterling Consultancy Service was the lowest, the company employed few advisors and consultants to deliver the service to its clients and its track record was not as strong as either Sector's or Butlers. It was considered that Butlers would bring a fresh approach and new ideas to the Council's Treasury activities and they are therefore the preferred advisers to work with the Council over the next three years.

255 - CAPITAL STRATEGY JULY 2002 AND ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN JULY 2002

The draft Capital Strategy July 2002 and Asset Management Plan July 2002 was presented to the Executive. The deadline for the submission of the Capital Strategy and the Asset Management Plan was 31st July 2002. The Chief Officer (Resources) had submitted the document subject to approval and recommendation by the Executive to the Council and ratification by the Council. The final approval of the documents is a matter reserved for Council.

RESOLVED: that the Executive:-

- i) approves and recommends to Council the Capital Strategy July 2002 and Asset Management Plan July 2002;
- ii) authorise the action taken by the Chief Officer (Resources) in submitting the document identified in the recommendation above to the Government Office for the East Midlands by the due date of the 31st July 2002, subject to the approval of the Executive and ratification by Council.

Reason:

Although there is no statutory requirement to produce a Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan, these documents are used by Government to allocate the capital resources to the Council.

256 - COUNCIL OFFICE - ROOF RENEWALS TENDERS

It was reported that the Council Office's roof was in need of repair. There were two alternatives of repair. Alternative 1 related to the re-roofing of the entire front elevation, renewals of flat roof areas above the staff lift motor room and the Chief Officer (Resources) Office as well as for undertaking various isolated repairs to other roof areas and parapet walls. This was referred to as Tender A.

The second alternative was a combination tender including all of the works detailed in Tender A and in addition included for the replacement of the patent glazing (roof lights) in the roof over the north wing of the building (Planning Wing). This option was referred to as Tender B.

Tenders had been received from three companies. The available budget for the proposed repairs and renewals was £109,200. It was seen that all the tenders received exceeded this figure and as a result none had been accepted. The Companies had been approached and asked to put forward suggestions for possible savings and it was suggested that savings could be made from the use of best quality Spanish slate instead of Welsh slates as specified. However, it was the consideration of the Planning Policy Manager that the use of Spanish slates would not constitute a like for like replacement and as a

result listed building consent would be required. Any application would have to be referred to the Secretary of State for approval since the Council cannot consider such applications for buildings in its ownership. It was also the view of the Planning Policy Manager that the Secretary of State would refuse permission in line with current planning guidance. Concern was made of the longevity of Spanish slate over Welsh slate in the British climate and it was reported that any savings may only be short term.

Four options were put forward to the Executive:-

1. Not to award any contract and continue to repair the roof on an ad hoc basis.
2. To award a contract to Jennings Roofing on Tender A.
3. Award a contract to Jennings Roofing based on Tender A and issue a subsequent variation to the contract with the additional works contained in Tender B.
4. Award this contract to Jennings Roofing based on Tender B and authorise the Chief Officer to consider and identify the appropriate funding.

The Members were given an assurance from the Officer that the Tender was a fixed cost tender, which included provision for contingencies.

RESOLVED: that the Executive accepts Tender B received from Jennings Roofing in line with Option 4 as set out above.

Reasons:

1. The Council has a legal duty to ensure that its premises are adequately maintained.
2. To preserve the structure of the fabric of this Grade II Listed Building.
3. To reduce risk of falling material, potential injuries and maintain the value and condition of the asset.

257 - EMPLOYMENT LAND AVAILABILITY MONITORING REPORT 2002

The Executive was informed of the employment land availability situation in the District as at the 31st March 2002.

It was reported that employment land availability statistics were monitored on a yearly basis for the purpose of assessing employment commencements and monitoring the progress of outstanding Local Plan allocations as at 31st March 2002.

The Leicestershire County Structure Plan allocated 195 hectares of employment land to be made available in Harborough District for the Plan period 1991-2006. The Structure Plan provision was a District-wide figure that is not split into urban and rural.

In the last year 01/04/01 - 31/03/02, 27.18 hectares of employment land had been commenced within the Harborough District. Commencements within the District for the plan period to 2002 indicated that a total of 151.01 hectares of employment land had been commenced. This represented 77.4% of the Structure Plan allocation. The majority of the development had taken place at Magna Park and it was anticipated that the commencement figure would decrease significantly over the next two - three years as Magna Park nears completion.

The Planning Officer was requested to amend Appendix A to read "EM/10 Lubenham" and not "EM/10 Market Harborough".

RESOLVED: that the Executive notes the current situation regarding employment land availability as at 31st March 2002.

Reason:

Monitoring employment land availability enables Officers to assist and promote economic prosperity within the District.

258 - ALLOCATED EMPLOYMENT SITES DRAFT ACTION PLAN

In August 2001, Harborough District Council commissioned a study to identify the reasons/factors behind the lack of take up on various allocated employment sites contained within the current Harborough District Local Plan.

The Landmark Planning study was completed in December 2001 and put forward a recommended strategy, attached as an appendix to the report, of which the main headings were:

- There is no need for immediate concern
- Prioritisation
- Be firm
- Review
- Be proactive
- Design
- Rural regeneration

It was reported that the draft Action Plan had been produced using the above headings from the consultants' recommended strategy.

The current action plan will run from the 2nd September 2002 to 31st August 2003 and will then be updated on an annual basis. Three sites had been identified as priorities. These sites are:

1. Land east of Rockingham Road, Market Harborough (MH/6)
2. Land south of Harborough Road Kibworth (KB/2)
3. Airfield Farm was granted consent on 23rd July 2002.

The report was welcomed by the Executive as it was important for rural regeneration. It was requested that the Planning Policy Users' Group and the Leicestershire Development Agency be included in partners when considering the development of related rural regeneration strategy. It was requested that at Appendix A point 6, Kibworth be included. It was confirmed that the consultation period would be for six weeks and would commence mid-August 2002.

RESOLVED: that the Executive:-

- i) approve the draft Action Plan on improving the take up of allocated employment sites within the District for consultation with the private sector;
- ii) a further report be prepared for the Executive on comments on the action plan received through the consultation period.

Reason:

The joint implementation of the action plan between Harborough District Council and the private sector will assist in bringing allocated employment sites forward for development, thus improving the economic prosperity of the District.

259 - COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION ON FUTURE PROVISION OF COUNTY COUNCIL RESIDENTIAL HOMES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

The County Council Cabinet had decided to seek the views of residents, carers, staff and partner agencies on the proposals for seven homes to remain as County Council homes and seven others to continue as homes for older people but with the ownership transferring to the independent sector.

It was suggested that the report was out of date as Mr. Milburn had recently scrapped the care standards which were now not mandatory but just good practice. The Executive expressed serious concern with the long term viability of a transferred property.

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RESOLVED: that:-

- i) a housing stock options appraisal be commissioned, covering the full range of options for the future repair, maintenance, ownership and management of the Council's Housing Revenue Account housing stock;
- ii) the survey be commissioned jointly with as many other Welland Partnership Authorities as wished to participate;
- iii) once the costs of the work were established, funds be made available from HRA balances to engage consultants to carry out the appraisal.

Reason:

The Stock Option Appraisal and its subsequent implications is a major piece of work for the Council and it cuts across several of the Council's visions including affordable and decent homes, community participation, responsible and efficient services and formed an important element of the housing best value review.

261 - SECTION 100A (LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972)

RESOLVED: that except for those Members present not being Members of this Executive the public and press be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting on the grounds that the matter yet to be discussed involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 8 and 9 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

262 - LUTTERWORTH SPORTS CENTRE

The Executive were updated on the financial issues relating to the Lutterworth Sports Centre.

RESOLVED: that:-

- i) additional contributions be transferred to the Magna Park Section 106 monies identified for the Lutterworth Sports Centre from those capital receipts identified in the report;
- ii) the criteria and parameters of this project, as set out in Appendix C of the report be approved.

Reason:

Members considered the financial statement of the report, together with the Notes to Statement as to costs, estimates and funding sources, which informed the Executive's options on viability and negotiations for the procurement of services to achieve the project.

The Meeting closed at 8.21 p.m.