

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE MEETING

held in the Sports Pavilion and Community Centre, Coventry Road, Lutterworth

held on 29th January 2013,

commencing at 4.00p.m.

Present:

Councillor Rook (Leader).

Councillors: Mrs. Ackerley, Dann, Golding, Holyoak, Spendlove-Mason.

Officers:, Beth Murgatroyd, Norman Proudfoot,

449 PORTFOLIO HOLDER ACTIVITY

i) Regulatory and Safety

Cllr Golding had attended the pre meeting for the Police and Crime Committee on 28 January 2013 and also on the 28 January he had attended, along with the rest of the Executive members, the Annual Parish Liaison Meeting. He had noted that the attendance from other Councillors had been poor.

ii) Health and Community

Cllr Holyoak commented on the success of the Annual Parish Liaison meeting. He considered that the success of such events was an important part in building perceptions of the Council. It was important to build on such parish engagement through such events as the Planning Conferences

450 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Executive meeting held on 14 January 2013 be approved and signed as a true record.

451 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

None received.

452 TENANCY STRATEGY FOR HARBOROUGH DISTRICT

It was reported that the tenancy strategy attached will provide guidance for registered providers who own social housing in the District about the approach the Council wishes them to take in framing their own tenancy policies, including guidance on the use of new flexible tenancies. Officers would continue to meet with Registered Providers on a quarterly basis.

RESOLVED that

- i) the draft Tenancy Strategy for Harborough District attached as **Appendix A** be approved.

- ii) An annual review of all housing providers in the District be undertaken in order for the Council to maintain and develop a good working relationship with providers

Summary of Reasons for the Recommendations

The Localism Act 2011 places a duty on all local authorities to publish a Tenancy Strategy by 15th January 2013. Whilst the final document will not be published until after this date all the Registered Providers have been involved with the development of the strategy and the draft has been available on the Council's website since November 2012.

The Tenancy Strategy will provide guidance for Registered Providers who own social housing in Harborough District, about the approach that the Council wishes to see them take in framing their own tenancy policies. It includes local guidance on the use of the 'affordable rent' tenure of affordable housing.

The Tenancy Strategy will sit alongside and support the Homelessness Strategy, Housing Strategy and Allocations Policy for the Harborough District, which are currently under review.

The Draft Tenancy Strategy has been considered by the Community Leadership Scrutiny Panel and includes changes recommended by the Panel.

Arrangements for monitoring implementation of the Tenancy Strategy are set out in the report, as recommended by the Community Leadership Scrutiny Panel

453 BAD DEBT WRITE-OFF REPORT –REVENUES AND BENEFITS SERVICE

The Executive considered the write-off of bad debts. It was considered important to write-off bad debts efficiently as this could affect collection rates. With limited resources it was not cost-effective to spend the same amount of time tracing all levels of debt

RESOLVED that the total amounts for Council Tax £43,210.62 as listed in **Appendix B**, National Non Domestic Rates £857,095.87 as listed in **Appendix C** and Housing Benefit Overpayments £7,356.54 as listed in **Appendix D** be written off.

Summary of Reasons for the Recommendations

The Council's Constitution and supporting Financial Regulations delegates the responsibility for writing off individual debts up to and including £1k to the Head of Financial Services under the scheme of delegation. Above this threshold debts (greater than £1k) are written off by the Executive.

Since the deletion of the post of Head of Financial Services this reverts to the Chief Finance Officer, who subsequently delegated this responsibility to the Finance Services Manager.

The Council only writes off debt where it is irrecoverable for example where a customer has died and there are no assets, or a business is bankrupt and has no assets. The only exception to this is where a debt is not cost effective to recover.

The council is prudent in managing debt and makes provision for then in its annual statement of accounts. This ensures that the writing of bad debt has no detrimental affect on service provision or the council taxpayer. In the case of National Non

Domestic Rates the Government meets the cost of writing off bad debt through the 'Pool arrangements'.

In view of the write off amounting to £757,030.05 as listed in appendix B we have revised our contribution to the pool this year to minimise any impact on cash flow for the Council.

Details of accounts with individual values above £1k in respect of National Non Domestic Rates, Council Tax, Housing Benefit overpayments and Sundry Debt are set out in appendices attached to this report.

The table below is for information on the amounts that have been written off for the period 1st April 2012 through to 12th December 2012.

Table 1

Debts Write Off Summary - Period 1st April through to 12th December 2012

Fund	Over £1k	Under 1k	Total
Council Tax	£160,590.48	£34,676.91	*£195,267.39
Non Domestic Rates	£87,022.15	-£5,276.71	*£81,745.44
Housing Benefit Overpayments	£4,591.26	£24.95	*£4,616.21
Grand Totals	£252,203.89	£29,425.15	£281,629.04

The following table is the position of debt raised this year including arrears position percentage terms for what has been written off as at 30th November 2012:

Position as at 30/11/2012	Net Charge raised in 2012/13	Arrears Position	Totals	Written off this year as a percentage
Council Tax (Net of Council Tax Benefit)	£46,454,766.29	£1,511,152.29	£47,965,918.58	0.4071%
Non Domestic Rates (Net of reliefs)	£35,348,572.82	£1,090,382.25	£36,438,955.07	0.2243%
Housing Benefit Overpayments	£594,973.56	£266,130.61	£861,104.17	0.5361%
	£82,398,312.67	£2,867,665.15	£85,265,977.82	

* Percentage calculated is the sum of net collectable debit and arrears when compared with table 1.

The following is the position relating to the Council's Bad Debt provision for as at 31st March 2012 and this is shown below

Council Tax	£549,630
Non Domestic Rates	£712,458
Housing Benefit Overpayments	£258,783

The following table is the position of what has been written off in 2011/12 and includes this as a percentage.

Debts Write Off Summary - Period 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012

Fund	Net Amount Written Off	In Year Net Collectable Debit	Arrears Opening Position	As a percentage
Council Tax	£61,712.17	£45,796,783.48	£2,010,295.98	0.1290%
Non Domestic Rates	£383,723.94	£33,354,609.92	£952,353.95	1.1180%
Housing Benefit Overpayments	£6,687.16	£392,076.61	£296,244.80	0.971%
Grand Totals	£452,123.27	£79,543,470.01	£3,258,894.73	

The following table is the position on what has been written off for 2010/11, 2011/12 and position for 2012/13 for comparative purposes

Fund	Amount Written off		
	2010/11	2011/12	As at 30/11/2012
Council Tax	£118,821.81	£61,712.27	£195,267.39
Non Domestic Rates	£455,866.87	£383,273.94	£81,745.44
Housing Benefit Overpayments	£9,936.22	£6,687.16	£4,616.21

454 ESTABLISHMENT OF EXECUTIVE ADVISORY PANELS

Following the establishment of an Executive Advisory Panel to look at the Redevelopment of the Council Headquarters at the last meeting of the Executive, the terms of reference of this panel needed to be agreed by the Executive. There was also a need to establish a similar panel to support the work on the market hall

RESOLVED that:

- i) that the terms of reference for the Redevelopment of the Council Headquarters attached at **Appendix E** be agreed
- ii) that a seven member politically balanced Market Hall Executive Advisory Panel be established
- iii) that the terms of reference for the Market Hall Executive Advisory Panel attached at **Appendix F** be agreed

Summary of Reasons for the Recommendations

The Council is undertaking two major projects; the redevelopment of the Council headquarters and work to the market hall. The Council's Constitution sets out the role of an Executive Advisory Panel as supporting the Executive in carrying its duties and functions by ensuring that the Executive is adequately informed in the decision-making process. There is a requirement that the Executive will determine the remit of an Executive Advisory Panel within the confines of its role set out above

The meeting closed at 4.40.pm

