

**HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE MEETING**

held in the Council Chamber, The Symington Building, Adam and Eve St, Market Harborough

held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2016,

commencing at 5.00p.m.

Present:

Cllr King (Chair),  
Councillors: Bannister, Hallam, Liquorish & Mrs Page.

Officers: D. Atkinson, B. Jolly, G. Keeping, N. Proudfoot, S. Riley and V. Wenham.

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER ACTIVITY**

**Communities**

Cllr Mrs Page announced that:

She had attended the Annual Parish Liaison Meeting on 27 January 2016

In relation to Quarter 3 performance:

- 100% of victims reporting anti-social behaviour to the council as risk assessed for vulnerability
- The Community Safety customer survey showed that:

It was easy to report to the Council	Staff understood concern	Satisfied with the way the Council dealt with the complaint	Sample size	Engagement rate (number of people spoken to who were happy to do survey)
88%	86%	78%	19	92.5%

**Business Planning & Performance**

Cllr Liquorish announced that he had attended:

27 January 2016 – meeting with UNISON.

**Environment & Regulation**

Cllr Bannister announced that:

Consultations on the Public Space Protection Orders have concluded and will be reported to the Regulatory Committee in March 2016.

He had attended a meeting with the Market Harborough Canine Association.

**Finance & Commercialisation and Planning & Regeneration**

Cllr King announced that he had attended:

3 February 2016 – Leicester & Leicestershire Members Advisory Group (MAG)

5 February 2016 – General Meeting of East Midlands Councils

**INFORMATION EXCHANGE**

Cllr King informed the meeting that he was delighted that Harborough Market had been declared "Britain's Best Small Indoor Market 2016" in the National Association of British Market Authorities Great British Market Awards.

## TOPICAL ISSUES

None were raised.

## APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology had been received from the Leader.

## MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 11 January 2016 be approved as a correct record.

## DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Cllrs Mrs Page and Liquorish declared that they were members of Leicestershire County Council.

## COUNCILLOR ICT PROVISION

The Executive considered a report that reviewed the feedback received from participants in the Google Chromebook pilot and determine whether the technology was suitable to be the standard ICT equipment offering for all councillors. The report also suggested that an investigation take place into the suitability of providing mobile phones with email and calendar functionality only to Councillors.

### RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Councillor Chromebook pilot be continued for a further three months; and
- (ii) That the suitability, for councillors, of a Harborough District Council supplied mobile phone, providing e-mail and calendar functionality only, be investigated.

### Summary of Reasons

It is necessary to review the services offered to councillors to enable them to gain access to Council information systems; ensuring that a suitable and cost effective solution is provided.

This review and its resulting decisions will help formalise ICT provision, clarifying the level of service expected and provided. Standardised equipment and services will provide consistency for Harborough District Council's (HDC's) councillors, remove duplication of equipment & services and increase their usability.

Councillor feedback from the Chromebook pilot has been mixed. However, the officers using the devices have provided positive feedback. An extension of the pilot will allow more councillors to use a Chromebook, increasing the feedback received and helping to confirm whether implementation of Chromebooks is a suitable solution for councillors.

Councillors will continue to be able to use an ICT device of their own to gain access to HDC systems instead of HDC provided ICT equipment. However, councillor's equipment can only be used where a current Citrix client is available and supported. Whilst Citrix clients are available for a number of Operating Systems HDC ICT's Citrix client knowledge is predominantly based around Microsoft Windows; work on other Operating Systems is performed on a "best endeavours" basis.

HDC ICT's support of councillor equipment will be limited to support for the Citrix software required to connect a nominated single device to HDC systems.

Feedback received suggested that a potential option for councillors might be the provision of mail and calendar functionality (rather than a full desktop environment) via a mobile phone. Work is currently being performed to upgrade the Council's mobile phone infrastructure and the potential for councillors' use of this new infrastructure will be evaluated. Due to device size a mobile phone solution is not suited to attachment viewing or content creation; councillors would need to use their

own ICT equipment for this type of content rich work instead of an HDC mobile phone if one was to be supplied.

If the mobile phone based solution was to be offered, the Council would supply councillors with one device only, minimising cost and simplifying support. That is, the Council would provide councillors with a computer or a mobile phone, but not both.

#### PLANNING OBLIGATIONS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

The report had been deferred to a future meeting of The Executive, in accordance with Section 2.07 of Part 4(4) of the Council's Constitution.

#### CORPORATE PLAN AND CORPORATE DELIVERY PLAN

The Executive noted the Corporate Delivery Plan which identified high-level Expected Outcomes of the Key Activities, which would add depth to what the Critical Outcomes will mean for communities in the District. It also contains the headline Performance Indicators and Risks connected to these Key Activities.

It was reported that the number of Key Activities proposed in the 2016/17 Corporate Delivery Plan was currently around 57, 4 more than in the 2015/16 Corporate Delivery Plan.

At its Meeting on 21 January 2016 the Resource and Performance Scrutiny Panel considered the proposals set out in the papers; no suggested changes or amendments were proposed by the Panel.

#### **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

- (i) That the draft Corporate Plan for the 2016/17 year, as set out at Appendix A to the report, be approved; and**
- (ii) That the draft Corporate Delivery Plan for the 2016/17 year, as set out at Appendix B to the report, and the format of the Strategic Performance Dashboard for the 2016/17 year, set out at Appendix C to the report, be approved.**

#### Summary of Reasons

The Corporate Plan and Corporate Delivery Plan are documents which outline the Council's Vision, Priorities, Critical Outcomes and associated Key Activities. Both of the documents are underpinned by the Council's vision, which is: "Working with communities in a vibrant, safe and prosperous District."

Four priorities have been identified for the 2016/17 year. Both the Corporate Plan and the Corporate Delivery Plan are structured around the delivery of these four priorities:

- Working with communities to develop places in which to live and be happy.
- Provide public services which are effective and deliver value for money.
- Encourage a vibrant and sustainable business community intent on prosperity, employment and learning opportunities.
- Support the vulnerable in the communities where they live.

The Corporate Plan for the 2016/17 year is the overarching public document which sets out the Council's vision for the District, its ambitions and priorities and how it will work with its partners and the community to ensure that living in, working in, and visiting the District is the best possible experience. It is based on information about the area and customer feedback and identifies how the Council will achieve its long-term vision:

The Corporate Delivery Plan 2016/17 is the Council's annual high-level plan that sets out how it will deliver its vision and priorities through Critical Outcomes and Key Activities during the forthcoming financial year. There should be a clear 'golden thread' that links these two documents.

## RISK AND OPPORTUNITY MANAGEMENT, QUARTER 3

The Executive considered the Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register at the end of Quarter 3 of the 2015/16 year, which was set out at Appendix A to the report; the Register sets out the Council's Corporate Risks and Opportunities. Corporate Risks and Opportunities are defined as issues that may have a significant impact on the delivery of the Council's vision and priorities. They are identified, monitored and managed via the Council's Risk and Opportunity Strategy Board which meets on a quarterly basis.

The Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register was last considered by the Officer Risk and Opportunity Strategy Board on Friday 8 January 2016. At this meeting a number of amendments to the Register were made to reflect progress on actions which had been identified to:

- reduce the likelihood of risks occurring, the impact the risk would have if it were to occur, or both; and
- monitor opportunities.

At the end of the third quarter of the 2015/16 year there were 19 risks and opportunities on the Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register. Full details of the risks and opportunities, including scores and mitigating actions, were attached at Appendix A to the report.

### RESOLVED:

That the items contained within the Council's Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register (attached at Appendix A to the report) be noted.

### Summary of Reasons

Monitoring of the Council's Corporate Risks and Opportunities is prescribed by the Council's Risk and Opportunity Management Framework.

## PERFORMANCE, QUARTER 3

The Executive were presented with details of the performance of the Council against the Corporate Delivery Plan for Quarter 3 of the 2015/16 financial year. The report consisted of:

- Appendix A: Key Activities in Detail - a performance summary of each of the Key Activities identified in the Corporate Delivery Plan for the 2015/16 year including a status, progress comment and next steps.
- Appendix B: Strategic Performance Dashboard - the Council's key performance indicators for each priority. The Dashboard is designed to provide an overview of how the Council is performing. The Council's Performance Management database contains information on a wider range of performance indicators including further indicators from the Corporate Delivery Plan and operational indicators. Exceptions are being addressed through one-to-one Portfolio Holder meetings and the Performance Improvement Board. The status of these items is categorised as either 'Green' (on or better than the set target), 'Amber' (within a tolerance of 5% below the target) or 'Red' (5% or more below target). The Direction of Travel column indicates whether the indicator has changed status since the previous month. Direction of Travel is stated as either 'Better', 'Same' or 'Worse'.

It was reported that at the end of Quarter 3 there were five Amber and three Red Key Activities. Three Key Activities were complete and 41 were Green

### RESOLVED:

That the performance of the Council at the end of the third quarter of the 2015/16 financial year be received and noted.

### Summary of Reasons

Performance is monitored and reported on to Officers and Members on a quarterly basis as part of the Council's Performance Management Framework, which was approved by the Executive on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2015. Performance Reports are submitted to both Scrutiny and the Executive on a quarterly basis.

## LOCAL PLAN – LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME REVIEW

The Executive considered a report that provided an update on the preparation of the Local Plan and specifically:

- the need to undertake/ update a number of additional evidence studies;
- a request for delegated authority to award a tender for the preparation of a comprehensive Infrastructure Development Plan; and
- a revised timetable for the Local Plan for inclusion in an updated Local Development Scheme.

Updated Evidence Study Requirements - arising out of changes to Government advice and evolving sub-regional policy context, there was a need to prepare additional evidence documents and update a number of existing key evidence documents. This was to minimise the risk of the Local Plan being found unsound at examination. The key additional/updated evidence studies were:

- Joint Housing and Employment Needs Assessment (HEDNA) - formerly known as the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)
- Joint Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)
- Gypsy and Traveller Site Identification Study
- Playing Pitch Strategy
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) (incorporating Community Facilities study)
- Cemetery Study

Officers reported that they were progressing the procurement of these studies to inform the Pre Submission version of the new Local Plan and avoid excessive programme delay.

Award of Tender for Infrastructure Delivery Plan Study - the preparation of an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) was reported as a key element of the evidence-base required to inform the emerging Local Plan and in particular housing and employment land allocations. The study would:

- audit a wide range of existing physical, utility and community infrastructure across the District
- identify new infrastructure requirements, including costs, delivery responsibilities, funding, timing etc. to enable the delivery of the Local Plan proposals
- identify funding gaps, and inform the need for preparing a Community Infrastructure Delivery Schedule.

The IDP would be a "live" document and an important future resource for the Council to monitor the adequacy of infrastructure provision in the District. In the light of this, officers had commenced procurement of the IDP Study (incorporating a Community Facilities study intended to address the need for new community and village halls required as a result of planned new development), with tenders due to be returned on 15th February 2016. The cost of the study was estimated to be in the range of £50,000 to £75,000. To ensure that there is no delay in awarding this contract, it was recommended that delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning and Regeneration to award the contract, subject to a maximum fee of £75,000. This would ensure that the IDP Study is commissioned as soon as possible following the return and thorough evaluation of tenders.

Update of Local Development Scheme - although there had been no slippage to date, the need to undertake additional or updated evidence had resulted in a detailed review of the Local Plan Programme to ensure that the right balance was struck between speed of preparation and ensuring that the plan was not found unsound at examination. It was considered necessary to revise the adopted Local Development Scheme (LDS) based on the following key dates:

- Publication of Draft Submission Local Plan for consultation– Late 2016
- Submission for Examination –Spring 2017
- Examination Hearing- Summer 2017

### RESOLVED:

- (i) That the commissioning of additional studies required, as set out in Table 1 of the report, be noted;
- (ii) That authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Regeneration to award the contract for preparation of an Infrastructure Delivery Plan up to the limit of £75,000; and

- (iii) That the Local Plan timetable, at Appendix A of the report, be approved for inclusion in an updated Local Development Scheme and that authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Regeneration to make any necessary changes to up date and publish the updated Scheme.

Summary of reasons:

To keep members informed of evidence requirements for the Local Plan, to ensure that the Local Plan has a sound and robust evidence-base and that the important Infrastructure Delivery Plan study procurement is not delayed and to meet legal requirements.

IDOX SUPPORT & MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

The Executive considered a report relating to entering into a 5 year maintenance and support contract with the Council's current supplier, IDOX plc, which is a major provider of local authority software solutions with a customer base of 380 local authorities nationally.

HDC has been a user of systems developed by IDOX plc (and its predecessors) for many years and has invested a substantial resource, both financial and in time, in acquisition and development of these systems to support front-line business functions.

Regular reviews of the continued suitability of the software to support business functions are undertaken and changes made where appropriate. The software is wide-ranging in its application and the ICT infrastructure which has been developed to support them is complex, so any such changes need to be carefully planned and resourced. The proposed agreement would see a small annual saving of £2862, which would amount to £14,313 over its five-year life.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Council enter into a 5 year maintenance and support contract for software systems provided by IDOX plc (listed in Appendix A to the report) under the Local Authority Software Applications (LASA) Framework Agreement.

Summary of Reasons

Due to the size of the contract the Council is required to periodically re-tender for the licensing, support and maintenance of the systems listed in Appendix A to the report to ensure that it remains compliant with EU procurement regulations and directives.

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) looks ahead at the Council's financial position, in order to identify funding sources and potential issues. The Strategy (set out in Appendix A to the report) provides a forecast of potential resource gaps over the period and provides the strategic context for the Council's corporate plan and business planning process.

Government indicative funding figures for the next four years indicate that the Government funding for Harborough District will reduce from £5.389 million in 2016/17 to £3.566 million in 2019/20 (a decrease of a third). During the period of the MTFS there is also a major shift in Government funding by 2020 with the cessation of Revenue Support Grant and proposals to increase business rate retention to 100% by 2020. This creates significant volatility during this MTFS Period. The MTFS will therefore be reviewed and updated regularly.

The MTFS is a complex document with many interdependencies which will be revisited over the next four years and be subject to change. The key drivers within this MTFS are:

- Increased use of the Business Rate Retention Reserve
- Council Tax Increases of 1.99% from 2017/18
- Planned Use of Reserves
- Efficiency Plan Targets rising from £300K in 2017/18 to £1.2 million in 2019/20
- Funding anticipated pressures in respect of pay costs and inflation

The MTFS will form the basis of formulating an Efficiency Plan for the Council. This is required to secure a four year funding settlement from the Government and to address the emerging resource

gaps identified from 2017 to 2020. Initial forecasts indicate that savings/income could be delivered through a phased increase over the MTFS period, as below:

	Efficiency Plan Target
	£000s
2017/18	300
2018/19	600
2019/20	1,200

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

**That the Medium Term Financial Strategy, attached at Appendix A to the report, be approved.**

Summary of Reasons

Financial management is an important function within the Council, which is recognised through the Finance Portfolio and the Council's annual business planning framework. The Council operates in a difficult financial and economic environment requiring a strategic and focused approach to financial planning for the short to medium term.

GENERAL FUND REVENUE ESTIMATES AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Executive considered the 2016/2017 budget and capital programme. The draft budget was prepared against continued reduction in central Government funding as the Government addresses the public sector deficit. The reduction in central Government funding announced in the provisional settlement was higher than expected for much of local government as the speed of the withdrawal of Revenue Support Grant appears to be earlier in the parliament than forecast. The Council's core funding from Government (excluding New Homes Bonus) decreased by 19% between 2015/16 and 2016/17 (compared to the MTFS forecast of a 12% reduction). However, the Government has introduced a new definition of core spending power which includes New Homes Bonus. On this measure Government funding is anticipated to decrease by 11.3% by 2019/20 (compared to an all England reduction of 0.5%). The success in house building and bringing empty properties back into use has generated £802K grant in respect of year six of the New Homes Bonus scheme resulting in an increase of core spending power of 3.3% between 2015/16 and 2016/17. However, a recent consultation paper on the future of the new homes bonus means that the Council needs to balance the use of the bonus as a core funding source and to put some of the increase in an earmarked reserve to prepare for a potential reduction in New Homes Bonus in the future.

The Council estimated budget requirement in 2016/2017 was £11.877 million. This was based on estimated expenditure of £33.639 million and income, including Government grants, of £21.762 million.

The Capital Programme for the next three years continued the targeting of Council resources to the Council's priorities of business growth, vibrant communities and housing. During 2015/16 approvals were granted for redevelopment of the three retained Garage Sites in Market Harborough, Great Glen and Lubenham. This initiative is using the Council's land holding and prudential borrowing powers to bring forward plans for low cost and affordable housing. On sale of the properties, the Council should generate a positive capital receipt; these were identified in the business case and also in the Capital Programme.

Council on the 22nd June 2015 considered a report on a proposed scheme to develop business Move On space for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) on the Airfield Farm Site. To date external funding bids have been submitted to secure Growth Fund monies and European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF). Announcements on whether these have been secured are awaited. The Capital Programme is based on the funding scenario linked to the ESIF bid. If this was secured there would be some ineligible costs that would have to be funded (probably from capital and earmarked revenue reserves). Any utilisation of reserves for ineligible costs for this scheme has not yet been factored into the draft budget. The funding of these would be considered as part of the detailed business case which would be brought back to Council for approval.

The Capital Programme also provides for planned maintenance of the Council's assets; this totals £351K over the next three years. Specific investment projects in The Symington Building and Harborough Market have been included within the Capital Programme to ensure that these buildings operate efficiently and that longer term maintenance liabilities are not created.

The Capital Programme also identifies some investment required in the Harborough Innovation Centre. Schemes such as the investment in developing the Café will generate additional income from the operator of the café and increase the attractiveness of the centre for conferences.

The Capital Programme continues to retain support for Disabled Facilities Grant (DFGs) at £300K per year. This remains a Council priority. Recent announcements by Government of increased funding for DFGs over the course of the parliament and efficiencies anticipated from the county wide Lightbulb programme should allow more people to remain in their own homes through the provision of aids and adaptations.

The indicative Capital Programme for the next three years total £9.892 million with the funding assumption that £7.998 million of external funding and/or capital receipts will reduce the need for unsupported borrowing over this period. The unsupported borrowing over this period is estimated to be £1.895 million. The Programme includes £313K of slippage from the 2015/16 Capital Programme.

With regard to Business Rates, the Government introduced in 2013/14 a Business Rate Retention Scheme with the aim of incentivising local growth and the ability to retain part of the business rate growth locally. Growth is compared to a Government determined baseline at the beginning of 2013/14. The Council entered into a pooling agreement for the 2015/16 financial year with the other Leicestershire Districts, City Council and the County Council in order to allow a share of business rate growth being retained regionally and targeted at economic growth through LLEP. Through being in a pool, it is anticipated that over £3 million of retained business rate growth (on top of that retained by individual Councils) will have been retained within the County to be distributed via the LLEP. The DCLG assume that pools continue from year to year unless the pool dissolves or re-constitutes itself. There were no policy changes in the provisional Local Government finance settlement that would prevent the Council remaining within the pool.

Looking forward, the Government will be increasing the retention of business rates from the current 50% to 100% by the end of the parliament. A consultation paper is expected to be issued in the near future setting out the Government's intention in this area. It is clear that this will be the major driver in respect of funding for the future and that the Council should encourage business growth through its strategies and decisions.

The budget assumes that £624K of the retained business rate growth reserve will be utilised in supporting the revenue budget in the following areas. In addition, the full £1.117 million of the estimated retained business rate growth in 2016/17 is forecast to be transferred into an earmarked reserve. The Council has been able to continue the initiative commenced in 2015/16 to provide £200K of support to businesses and apprenticeships.

The Council's Section 151 officer had provided an assurance statement that concluded: "In my opinion, the estimates are sufficiently robust to allow the Council to set the revenue budget, capital programme and council tax for 2016/17. The budget strategy, level of reserves and proposed MTFs provide a sound approach for balancing the budget in future years."

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

- (i) that the 2016/17 General Fund Revenue Account Net Expenditure Budget of £11,877,581, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be approved resulting in no increase in the District Band D Council Tax for 2016/17;**
- (ii) that authority be delegated to the S151 Officer in consultation with the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Financial and Commercialisation to make any necessary amendments to the Budget, following receipt of the final local government settlement, prior to consideration by full Council;**
- (iii) that the General Fund Budget, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be approved; and**



**(iv) that the Capital Programme, as set out in Appendix E to the report, be approved.**

Summary of Reasons

The Council must statutorily set a balanced budget to discharge its duties and responsibilities by the 11th March. The duty to recommend a budget to the Council rests with the Executive.

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 following item on the grounds that the matters yet to be discussed involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

EXTENSION OF CONTRACT – HARBOROUGH INNOVATION CENTRE

The Executive considered an exempt report concerning an extension to the Council's contract with Oxford Innovations for the management and provision of services at the Harborough Innovation Centre.

The Executive resumed in public session and

RESOLVED:

- (i) That a contract extension with Oxford Innovation, in accordance with the proposal detailed in Appendix A to the report, be approved; and
- (ii) That authority be delegated to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the S151 Officer to agree the deed of extension and to undertake any necessary actions.

Summary of Reasons

To ensure the continuation of the management and provision of business support services at the Harborough Innovation Centre in line with provisions within the existing contract and to secure increased value for money in the operation of the Harborough Innovation Centre and to provide increased business support activity within the centre and through outreach services across the District.

The meeting closed at 6.21pm

