

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE MEETING

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

held on 5 December 2016,

commencing at 5.00p.m.

Present:

Cllr Pain (Chair),  
Councillors: Bannister, Brodrick, Hallam, King, and Rickman

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs Page

Officers: D. Atkinson, S. Hamilton, B. Jolly, B. Murgatroyd, N. Proudfoot, S. Riley and V. Wenham

### 318 PORTFOLIO ACTIVITY

#### Wellbeing and Localities

Cllr Rickman reported that he had started work on his new Portfolio. He would be shortly attending a meeting with Voluntary Action South Leicestershire (V.A.S.L.). Eighteen applications for the Community Grants had been received by the closing date totalling £59,118, and £50k was available. An assessment would shortly be made to determine which grants are valid.

#### Environment and Regulation

Cllr Bannister reported that the Environment and Regulatory team had launched a "Tip-off" campaign to highlight the issue of fly tipping. Good press coverage was received which has resulted in an increase in reporting of fly tipping. Investigations had led to the first Penalty Notice being issued, and work was continuing with other cases.

#### Finance and Assets

Cllr King reported that the roof repairs to the Symington Building had now been completed and staff had moved back into their normal working environment. Cllr Hallam and himself had recently attended a joint meeting of the Leicestershire Partnership, joint Revenue and Benefit Committee. He had also attended a Local Government Association training session on finance, procurement and commissioning.

#### Strategy / Economic Development

Cllr Pain reported that he would be attending an event in London on the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2016 as Market Harborough was one of the three contenders in the Large Market Town category of the Great British High Street Awards.

A note of thanks was asked to be recorded to the Harborough Chamber of Trade and Commerce, Sustainable Harborough and all the private companies that had supported the bid.

### 319 INFORMATION EXCHANGE

There was no information exchange.

### 320 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr's Hallam and Mrs Page.

### 321 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 10 October 2016 and the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016 be approved as a correct record.

### 322 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Cllr Pain declared a personal, non-pecuniary interest in the item on the Lightbulb Project Business Case. The nature of these interest was that Cllr Pain is a County Councillor.

Cllr Pain declared a personal, non-pecuniary interest in the item on Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2017/18. The nature of the interest was that Cllr Pain is a County Councillor.

### 323 PERFORMANCE, END OF QUARTER TWO 2016/17

The Executive was presented with details of the performance of the Council against the Corporate Delivery Plan for Quarter 2 of the 2016/17 financial year. At the end of Quarter 2: 4 (6.7.0%) Key Activities had been completed. 46 (76.7%) Key Activities had a status of Green, 9 (15%) had Amber status. 0 Key Activities (0%) were classed as Red status. 1 Key Activity (1.7%) was withdrawn and deferred until the 2016/17 year.

RESOLVED that the performance of the Council at the end of the Quarter 2 of the 2016/17 financial year be 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. Performance Reports are submitted to both Scrutiny and the Executive on a quarterly basis.

### 324 CORPORATE RISK AND OPPORTUNITY REGISTER: QUARTER 2, 2016/17

The Executive considered the Council's Corporate Risks and Opportunities at the end of Quarter 2 of the 2016/17 year. It was reported that no new Corporate Risks or Corporate Opportunities had been added to the Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register during Quarter 2 of the 2016/17 year.

One risk was removed from the Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register during Quarter 2 of the 2016/17 year. The one Corporate Risk that was removed is *CR 11: Constitution is limited in its delegations and flexibility and leads to delayed decision-making.*

The reason for the removal of CR 11 is due to the fact that at its meeting on 27 July 2016, the Council partially approved a revised Constitution. Following this the Constitutional Review Committee, at its meeting on 27 October 2016, considered some additional revisions. These additional revisions would be considered at a future Council meeting. This matter is no longer considered to be a Corporate Risk.

Full details of the risks and opportunities, including scores and mitigating actions, were attached at Appendix A to the report.

The Executive congratulated the Officers on demonstrating that the Council's risks are being well managed.

RESOLVED that the items contained within the Council's Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register, as set out in 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.

### 325 2016/17 REVENUE AND CAPITAL MONITORING - QUARTER TWO

The Executive was presented with high level budget monitoring information for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016 and the forecast outturn position for the revenue and capital budget for 2016/17 was highlighted.

The Council's 2016/17 net budget requirement, as approved by Council in February 2016, is £11.824 million. The financial position at the first quarter, to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016 is forecasting overall a projected underspend of £900k (7.6%) of the approved budget at the end of the year, as detailed in Appendix A to the report.

The Council continues to perform well on its core income targets with the key income areas of Garden Waste exceeding its initial target by £395K and Development Control fees by £172K. Against both of these are additional costs of the gain share arrangement with FCC and extra planning agency staff to manage the high planning workloads. Advance notifications of significant reserved matter applications for the Airfield Farm SDA area indicate that planning fee income is likely to exceed £1 million in 2016/17, though this has not yet been factored into the budget forecast.

The increase in uptake of the Garden Waste collection service has meant that 57% of the costs of the garden waste collection costs are covered by subscriptions compared to 46% of the costs covered by subscriptions included within the original business case.

There has been an increase in the forecast surplus from quarter 1 of £289K. This is primarily accounted for by increased net savings in direct costs of service (£213K), savings on net borrowing costs (£147K) offset by a number of minor variances on central items.

In February 2016 the Council approved £1.170 million of savings and income generation proposals. An assessment has been undertaken with the majority of the proposals being achieved in 2016/17 as planned.

Through the final accounts process a review was undertaken of year-end creditors that had still not been paid 12 months on. This has identified a large creditor that subject to a forensic review of any outstanding liability could need to be reversed and be credited to the revenue budget.. This may result in a windfall income within the consolidated income and expenditure account in 2016/17.

The outturn at the end of Quarter Two resulted in an increase in the General Fund Balance of £900k. The revised MTFs reported in the Efficiency Plan Update has factored £611K of this into the three year financial strategy already.

The Council approved a capital programme in February 2014 of £4.883 million. On the 5<sup>th</sup> September, the Executive approved capital carry-forwards of £1.487 million and associated funding from the 2015/16 Capital Programme. Further approvals for additional funding for The Symington Building roof, S106 Grant approvals and other in-year capital amendments (actioned by the S151 Officer) totalling £61K has increased the approved budget to £6.672 million.

Since the end of September there have been two further capital schemes totalling £90K that require formal capital approval by Council; An upgrade of the CCTV Infrastructure and replacement of car parking machines.

RESOLVED that

- i) The net expenditure against the budget for the quarter to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016 set out in Appendix A to the report be noted.
- ii) The Capital Programme expenditure for the quarter to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016 as set out in Appendix B to the report be noted.
- iii) The additions to the Capital Programme (as detailed below in table 1 and 2) be approved, and that the slippage of capital schemes into 2017/18 (as detailed below in table 3) be approved.

**Table 1**

<b>Capital Schemes</b>	<b>£000's</b>
Approved Programme (Council, 22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2016)	4,883
Slippage from 2015/16 (subject to approval by Executive, 5 <sup>th</sup> September 2016)	1,487
<i>Schemes approved in year:</i>	
The Symington Building Roof Repairs – Additional Costs (6th June) – funded from capital receipts reserve	121
S106 Grants Approvals –funded from S106 contributions	210
<i>Schemes recommended for inclusion into the Capital Programme</i>	
Harborough Leisure Centre Car Park – funded by HDLT Revenue Contribution	8
Property Appreciation Loan – funded from Capital Receipts Reserve	12
Addition Disabled Facility Grant arising from increased grant from the Better Care Fund	41
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,762</b>

**Table 2**

<b>Additional Schemes recommended for inclusion in the Capital Programme</b>	<b>£000's</b>
Upgrade of CCTV Infrastructure	54

(funded by Revenue contributions of £14K from Control Centre Budget, £40K Corporate Contingency)	
Replacement of Car Parking Machines (funded by increase in unsupported borrowing in excess of the £90K already in the capital programme)	46
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>90</b>

**Table 3**

<b>Capital Slippage</b>	<b>SLIPPAGE TO</b>
	<b>2017/18</b>
	<b>£000s</b>
<b>Council Offices</b>	
Symington Building Planned Maintenance	13
<b>Market Hall</b>	
Air Conditioning & Chiller Replacement	72
Lift Upgrade	29
Boiler Replacement	47
Controls Upgrade	9
Market Hall Planned Maintenance	34
<b>Flood Prevention</b>	
Flood Wall & Piling - Commons Car Park	98
<b>ICT Transformation Programme</b>	
ICT Workstream	9
ICT Hardware Refresh	15
Broadcasting of Council Meetings	10
<b>Harborough Innovation Centre</b>	
Café	68
Draught Lobby	47
<b>District Growth Plan Priorities</b>	
Business Move On	3,005
<b>Investing For The Future</b>	
Garage Sites Re-development - Paget Street	342
Garage Sites Re-development - St Cuthbert's Av	152

Garage Sites Re-development - Naseby Square	530
<b>Total Capital Schemes</b>	<b>4,480</b>

### Summary of Reasons

The Council's financial performance up to 30 September 2016, together with known commitments for the remainder of the financial year, indicates that the General Fund Revenue Account is likely to outturn approximately £900k under below the approved budget of £11.824 million.

### 326 BAD DEBT WRITE OFF (REVENUES & BENEFITS)

The Executive was advised on the debts which have been written off this financial year under delegation for the revenue and benefits service area, as outlined in Appendix A to the report.

The Portfolio Holder was commended on his tenacity in championing this issue.

RESOLVED that the total amounts for Non Domestic Rates £10,628.38 as listed in Appendix A to the report be written off.

### Summary of Reasons

The Council's Constitution and supporting Financial Regulations delegates the responsibility for writing off individual debts up to and including £10k to the Senior Partnership Manager (Revenues and Benefits) under the scheme of delegation. Above this threshold debts (greater than £10k) are written off by the Executive.

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 them in its annual statement of accounts. This ensures that the writing off of bad debt has no detrimental affect on in year service provision or the council taxpayer. In the case of National Non Domestic Rates the Government meets 50% of the cost of writing off bad debt and the remainder is met by the major precepting bodies through pooling arrangements.

The table below is for information on the amounts that have been written off for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 through to 7<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

Fund	Debts Written Off greater than £10k (Previously authorised)	Debts Written Off under £10k (Reported previously)	*Debts Written Off this period under £10k	Totals
Council Tax	£0.00	£35,035.02	£29,770.28	£64,805.30
Non Domestic Rates	£1,931.79*	£19,962.64	£21,142.58	£43,037.01
Housing Benefit Overpayments	£0.00	£1,456.62	£0.00	£1,456.62

Members are requested to note what has been written off this period as shown in the above table.

- \* The debt written –off greater than 10K has reduced by £16,592.20 from the last report following a successful claim against the liquidators of the Furniture Barn which was placed in administration

The table below is what this means as a percentage when compared with debt due against each heading as shown. Total collectable is the sum total if the net charge raised to include gross arrears outstanding as at 7<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

<b>Position as at 7th November 2016</b>	<b>Net Charge raised in 2016/17</b>	<b>Arrears Position</b>	<b>Total Collectable</b>	<b>Amount written Off</b>	<b>Percentage shown below is derived from the amount written off when compared with Total Collectable</b>
Council Tax (Net of Council Tax Support)	£53,297,853	£1,815,785	£55,113,638	£64,805.30	0.12%
Non Domestic Rates (Net of reliefs)	£40,423,563	£252,605	£40,676,168	£43,037.01	0.11%
		<b>Due inclusive of arrears</b>			
Housing Benefit Overpayments	£357,727	£838,433		£1,456.62	0.17%

The table below is an analysis of what has been written off in previous years.

This also shows the position for what has been written off this financial year.

<b>Fund</b>	<b>Year 2013/14</b>	<b>Year 2014/15</b>	<b>Year 2015/16</b>	<b>Year 2016/17</b>
Council Tax	£118,303.47	£181,958.43	£44,091.47	£64,802.30
Non Domestic Rates	£81,496.64	£138,412.42	£106,933.39	£43,037.01
Housing Benefit Overpayments	£29,354.90	£16,001.15	£5,425.59	£1,456.62

### 327 FOXTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Executive considered a report detailing the recommendations of the Examiner into the Foxton Neighbourhood Plan including a tabled addendum detailing modifications to the report. It was noted that the addendum did not affect any of the recommendations in the report

The Council is committed to supporting the neighbourhood planning process across the Harborough District. Helping communities wishing to carry out neighbourhood plans is identified in the Corporate Plan 2016 as a way to deliver the priority ‘to develop places in which to live and be happy’.

The Foxton Neighbourhood Plan (‘the Plan’) has been produced by the Foxton Neighbourhood Plan Group, led by the Parish Council as the Qualifying Body, in conjunction with the local community. The Plan provides for housing levels within the minimum requirement set out in the Harborough District Core Strategy, 2011 whilst also taking account of the emerging Harborough District Local Plan. The Plan also addresses issues relating to: the countryside, renewable energy, tranquillity, Foxton Green

Zone, area of separation, biodiversity, the canal and Foxton Locks, heritage, design, local green Space, trees, housing mix, affordable housing, retention of key services, and water management.

The Examination Version of the Foxton Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to the Council on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2016. Following initial verification checks, a six week period of public consultation on the Plan was held running from 4<sup>th</sup> July to 16<sup>th</sup> August 2016. A total of 12 responses were received, each making multiple representations on most aspects of the Plan.

The Council, with the agreement of Foxton Parish Council, appointed Andrew Matheson as the Independent Examiner in September 2016. All the representations received on the Examination Version of the Plan were forwarded to the Examiner for consideration. The Examiner was satisfied that all the responses could be assessed without the need for a public hearing.

The examination took place between 5<sup>th</sup> August and 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016. The role of the Examiner is to consider whether a neighbourhood plan meets the Basic Conditions. In order to do this the Plan must: have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State; contribute to the achievement of sustainable development; be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area; and be compatible with European Union obligations and, not breach, nor be in anyway incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights

The Examiner's Report into the Plan was sent to the Council on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2016 and was made available to the public on the Council's website shortly after.

The Examiner's report acknowledged the amount of work that has gone into preparing the Plan, and that 'community involvement has been at the heart of the Plans production'.

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 set out that if the Council agrees to the recommendations of this report, it must publish a 'Decision Statement' on the Plan. This must set out the Council's decision on the Foxton Neighbourhood Plan and the reasons for making that decision. It is normal practice for the date of the Referendum to also be specified. The suggested changes will then be made to the Plan ready for publication as one of the specified documents that must be in place in order to allow the Referendum to proceed.

The date for the Referendum is provisionally set for 26<sup>th</sup> January 2017. Therefore, the final version of the Plan and other relevant documents must be on Harborough District Council's website at least 28 working days before that date. The Council will also need to ensure that the publication of 'notice of referendum' takes place at least 25 working days before the Referendum.

The Referendum will follow a similar format to an election. All those registered to vote within the Neighbourhood Area will be given the opportunity to be involved in the Referendum. Local residents will receive a ballot paper with the question;

'Do you want Harborough District Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Foxton to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?'

Residents will be given the opportunity to vote 'yes' or 'no'. If more than 50% of those voting in the referendum vote 'yes' then the Local Planning Authority is required to 'make' the plan (adopt the Plan, with the Plan becoming the Development Plan for Foxton alongside the Core Strategy). Under the approved Neighbourhood Planning Scheme of Delegation 'making' the Plan will be done by Officers as soon as possible after a favourable Referendum result. If the result of the Referendum is "no", then nothing further happens. The Parish Council will then have to decide how it wishes to proceed.

A note of thanks was asked to be recorded to Foxton Parish Council.

The Executive requested that a summary of the Council's position in relation to Neighbourhood plans is circulated to the Committee.



RESOLVED that

- i) The Independent Examiner's recommended changes to the Foxton Neighbourhood Plan be accepted in full as set out in the schedule at Appendix A and the tabled Addendum, and the recommendation that the amended Foxton Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to a Referendum of voters within the Parish of Foxton to establish whether the Plan should form part of the Development Plan for the Harborough District be noted.
- ii) The holding of a Referendum relating to the Foxton Neighbourhood Plan on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2017 that will include all of the registered electors in Foxton Parish be approved.

### Summary of Reasons

The Examiner's report into the Foxton Neighbourhood Plan was received on the 7<sup>th</sup> November 2016, with an updated report on the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016. The Examiner considered the Plan along with the representations received when the Plan was published by the Council. The report recommends to the Council that, subject to the modifications proposed (as set out in Appendix A to the report), the Plan should proceed to a Referendum.

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, (Regulation 18) sets out that the matters that the Council should consider at this stage in the Neighbourhood Plan making process. In short, the Council must consider each of the recommendations made by the Inspector in their report, including the reasons for them, and decide what action to take in response to each recommendation (as set out in Appendix A to the report).

It is considered that the recommended modifications should be incorporated into the Plan and noted by the Executive in order to ensure that the Plan is robust, sound, meets the Basic Conditions and comprises a user-friendly and efficient document. Liaison with Foxton Parish confirms that they are happy to accept these recommendations. On this basis, the Plan should then proceed to a referendum in Foxton Parish to determine if local people support it.

### 328 LIGHTBULB BUSINESS CASE

The Executive received a report on the Lightbulb Business Case for transforming practical housing support in Leicestershire and the allocation of the Disabled Facilities Grant funding through the Better Care Fund and the support from the Council to the Better Care Fund.

In 2013, Leicestershire's Housing Services Partnership developed the Housing Offer to Health in conjunction with the Chartered Institute of Housing. This set out how local housing services can support and promote the health and wellbeing of Leicestershire citizens; offering to concentrate the collective efforts of the 7 District Councils on developing services to help health and social care partners achieve Better Care Fund objectives. This work was subsequently adopted by the Leicestershire Health and Wellbeing Board.

The Programme Board sets the direction for the programme and the Corporate Director (NP) represents the Council on this board. The Steering Group supports the Programme Board on an operational level and the Regulatory Services Manager represents the Council on this group. On a wider level, the progress of the project is reported through the Unified Prevention Board, to the Integration Executive and Health and Wellbeing Board. There is district authority representation on the Unified Prevention Board and Integration Executive. The Health and Wellbeing Board has member representation.

The concept of Lightbulb was one of a number of practical opportunities to emerge from this work; now part of the Unified Prevention Offer for Leicestershire. The County and District Councils made a

partnership bid to the Department for Communities and Local Government and were successfully awarded £1m Transformation Challenge Award in 2015/16 to take this concept forward.

The current picture of housing support in Leicestershire is both fragmented and can be complex to navigate. Support is funded and managed across two tiers of eight local authorities meaning it is difficult for customers to know where to start. The Council has always recognised the complex nature of the disabled facilities grant process and since 1996 the grants have been administered through a Home Improvement Agency which does provide the applicant with additional support through the process; however this model is not currently replicated throughout the County.

Waiting times within the various parts of the system can be lengthy and uncoordinated, delaying the social, health and economic benefits to be gained from supporting individuals to continue to live independently in their homes and missing opportunities for more holistic solutions.

Lightbulb included the creation of the Housing Support Co-ordinator role which will bring together functions currently carried out across District and County Councils and provides a single point of contact for the service user. The locally developed Housing MOT Checklist provides a toolkit to identify a range of non complex housing support needs and deliver and co-ordinate person centred solutions.

The Lightbulb programme will result in improved housing expertise and self help at key contact and triage points (the Adult Social Care Customer Service Centre and First Contact Plus), together with locally based Lightbulb teams delivering the housing support offer.

Lightbulb pilot projects have been running over the past 12 months to test out elements of this new service model and provide an evidence base to support the case for transformation. Analysis and outcomes from these pilot projects have shown: Improved customer experience through reduced waiting times and putting the customer at the heart of the process; significant potential savings to the local health and care economy through helping to reduce falls, emergency admissions and length of hospital stay; process efficiency gains, with potential to reduce the delivery cost of Disabled Facilities Grants by working collaboratively across Leicestershire.

It is proposed that the Lightbulb Service model set out in the Business Case is supported as the future mechanism for delivering the housing support offer across Leicestershire and that further work is undertaken to move towards implementation of this model across the County by October 2017. Officers will work with the Lightbulb Team to develop the detailed operational model for Harborough residents. A copy of the Business Case is set out at Appendix A to the report.

The Council has used a Home Improvement Agency (HIA) to administer the Disabled Facilities Grants since 2001. The current HIA contract is with Papworth Trust and under the terms of the current contract it can be extended to October 2017. This extension will bring it in line with the full implementation of the Lightbulb Service across the county. As the Council has already outsourced this service through the use of a HIA, the likely preferred delivery model under Lightbulb is to delegate the service to the host authority.

Since 2015 there has been a significant change in the way that central government funding for the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants is paid to local authorities. Instead of central government making direct payment to each local housing authority to help them meet the cost of these grants, the funding was paid directly through the Better Care Fund (BCF). As well as the funding from government to help meet the costs of the DFG's, the Council has always provided "top-up" funding to meet the needs.

RESOLVED that

- i) The potential benefits of service transformation and integration set out in the Lightbulb Business Case be noted.
- ii) The principle of the Lightbulb Service model set out in the Business Case (as per Appendix A to the report) is agreed.

iii) The Corporate Director (NP) is given delegated authority in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder to progress the practical actions set out in the Business Case to support implementation of the Lightbulb Service model within the authority and across the County.

iv) The Corporate Director (NP), in consultation with the Head of Legal Services, explores the possible delegation of the Disabled Facilities Grant function to the Lightbulb host authority, including the governance and oversight/performance monitoring arrangements and a further report be brought back to the Executive to consider the outcome of this work.

v) The Corporate Director (NP) is given delegated authority, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder and Section 151 Officer, to the receipt and payments between the Better Care Fund and the Council.

### Summary of Reasons

The Lightbulb business case sets out a new, integrated model for housing support that would:

- Deliver savings to the health and care economy by maximising the part housing support can play in keeping people independent in their homes; preventing or reducing care home placements or demand on other social care services, avoiding unnecessary hospital admissions/readmissions or GP visits and facilitating hospital discharge
- Improve the customer journey; making services easier to access and navigate and ensuring the right solution is available at the right time with the right outcome
- Provide efficient, cost effective service delivery, particularly in relation to the delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants
- Align the Disabled Facilities Grant funding with the implementation of the Better Care Fund plan to ensure best use of funding to meet the demand for disabled adaptations and other preventative initiatives within the Better Care Fund plan.

The Council currently administers the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) process through the home improvement agency Papworth Trust. There is the ability within the current contract to extend it to October 2017 to align it with the full implementation of the Lightbulb project.

### 329 WASTE COLLECTION REVIEW (GARDEN WASTE)

The Executive considered a review of the implementation of the Garden Waste service and considered the fees for year two of the service commencing April 2017.

In April 2016, the Council introduced a chargeable Garden Waste service, having been a free service previously since 2003/04. The annual fee per bin was set at £40. The chargeable green waste service has been very successful with total bin subscriptions numbering 18,937 as at 24 November 2016. Overall, the system operated effectively and the Council delivered a good quality service with very few issues arising. Over a two week period 18,937 green bins are emptied, equating to 302,992 collections from April 1<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016. The total number of complaints regarding the operational garden waste service is 46 for the same period. This equates to 0.015%, showing how well the service has bedded in and is operating across the district.

The Council has identified streamlining opportunities to further improve the service and reduce costs. This includes not completing the label with customers' details prior to distribution and not including a unique reference number on the sticker. This will reduce administrative time and allow requests to be dealt with more quickly.

In accordance with the Council decision of 23 February 2015 (General Fund Revenue Estimates and Capital Programme item 2.7), that the S.151 Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Financial and Commercialisation is able to determine fees and charges, it has been agreed to retain the fee for Garden Waste per bin at £40 for 2017/18.

### Christmas Tree Collection

The Budget position for 2016/17 is as follows;

Garden Waste Service 2016/17	Approved Budgets £	Additional Budgets linked to Gain share £	Updated Budget £	Spend to the end of September £	Projected Outturn £	Variance £
Core Contract for 9250 Lifts	766,200	192,880	959,080	383,491	959,080	-
Garden Waste Recycling Gate Fees	242,900		242,900	92,771	160,608	- 82,292
Garden Waste Administrator/Agency	27,465		27,465	29,229	42,729	15,264
Other Supplies and Services (AMEC, Website Development, Consumerables etc)	-		-	5,012	11,600	11,600
Income	- 360,000	- 192,880	- 552,880	- 745,760	- 552,880	-
Sub Total	676,565	-	676,565	- 235,257	621,137	- 55,428

The above table demonstrates that the garden waste service is performing well.

The favourable budget position arising from the uptake of the service presents an opportunity to include a free Christmas Tree collection for all subscribers as a goodwill gesture for a 2 week period in mid January 2017. FCC has agreed that the cost of this service will not exceed £10,000, less than 50p per subscription.

RESOLVED that

- i) The review and the proposed process the Garden Waste service for 2017/18 is noted.
- ii) A free Christmas Tree collection is provided for all Garden Waste subscribers in January 2017.

### Summary of Reasons

To allow the subscription process to commence in January 2017.

### 330 NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM EXECUTIVE ADVISORY PANELS

The Executive considered the work and recommendations of the Local Planning Executive Advisory Panel.

RESOLVED that

- i) the record of the following meeting be noted:

Local Planning Executive Advisory Panel: 17 October 2016 (as set out at Appendix A) and 14 November 2016 (as set out at Appendix B).

- ii) The recommendations contained in the meeting notes for the Local Planning Executive Advisory Panel held on 17 October 2016 and 14 November 2016 (draft) be considered.

### Summary of Reasons

The arrangements for the Executive Advisory Panels require that they report back to Executive with notes of their meetings.

The notes of the Panel meeting held on the 14 November 2016 are in draft format as they will not be reported to the Panel for approval until its next meeting (on 12 December 2016). The draft notes were sent to the Chairman and Panel members for comment to ensure that they captured the views expressed by the Panel at its meeting.

### 331 CAR PARKING STRATEGY

The Executive received a report on the Car Parking Strategy (as set out in Appendix A to the report), and the questions and summary of responses to the consultation on the Strategy, as set out in Appendices C and D to the report.

The public consultation on the car parking strategy and proposed changes to the (Off Street Parking Places) Order, ran from 19<sup>th</sup> October 2016 until the 15<sup>th</sup> November 2016 and 127 responses were received. The majority of responders, over 60%, were from Market Harborough and 15% from Lutterworth or the surrounding area.

The consultation set out a number of recommendations covering various aspects of the car parking strategy including

- a) Proposed changes to the parking tariff.
- b) Making best use of the car parking assets including:
  - Reviewing the options for the existing car parks, including the re-designation of car parks to ensure maximum availability of spaces to meet future demand including providing the right mix of long and short spaces
  - Reviewing the access, layout and signage of car parks
  - Looking at the possibility of widening the “pop and shop” scheme (bay with 30 minute free period) to other car parks in the district.
  - Ensuring adequate provision of disabled bays in the car parks.
- c) Exploring alternative payment methods
  - Chip and pin/cashless payment options on the machines in the car parks
  - The introduction of pay by phone systems
- d) Ensure adequate provision for those with a particular requirement
  - Coach parking
  - Electrical charging points

Council has the responsibility to determine the level of car park charges and tariffs (minute 681 c-2004/05). The Executive on the 10<sup>th</sup> October 2016 considered the tariff structure set out in table 1 below and agreed that it should go out to consultation before being recommended to Council as an amendment to the Off-Street Parking Places Order.

Table 1

Car park	Up to 1 hour	Up to 2 hours	Up to 3 hours	Up to 4 hours	Over 4 hours
Current Short-stay	N/A	70p	£1.20	£1.70	£3.20
Lutterworth	<b>N/A</b>	<b>£1.00</b>	<b>£1.50</b>	<b>£2.50</b>	<b>£4.00</b>
Market Harborough Short stay	<b>N/A</b>	<b>£1.00</b>	<b>£1.50</b>	<b>£2.50</b>	<b>£6.00</b>

Current Long-stay	£1.20	£2.20
All long stay car parks	<b>£2.00</b>	<b>£4.00</b>

The proposed tariff structure received the highest number of objections with 80% of respondents disagreeing with the changes. A number of responders were concerned that the price increase would deter visitors and shoppers away from the towns and the increase in the long stay tariffs would have an impact on workers and displace cars on to street parking areas.

The concerns of the responders are appreciated, however this is the first price increase since 2012.

There were a number of objections regarding the proposed introduction of charges at Symington Recreation Ground car park as it would have a detrimental impact on users of the area especially at weekends. The proposal is to recommend to Council that if charges are introduced, they are restricted to weekdays only.

In exploring alternative payment methods, there is a transaction charge for using both cashless and pay by phone payment methods. During the year there have been a lot of changes in regards to transaction costs with the introduction of the Interchange Fee Regulations and whilst the cost of the transaction charge has been reduced, it would not be deemed appropriate to pass this charge on.

However to reduce the financial risk further, it will be possible to set a minimum payment level on the use of cashless payments for pay and display machines. The recommended threshold level for cashless transactions should be in line with the highest long stay car parking tariff.

A note of thanks was asked to be recorded to the Executive Working Group and Officers in putting together the comprehensive strategy.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The Car Parking Strategy as set out in Appendix A to the report is approved;
- ii) The Executive Working Group is re-convened to consider the detailed plans for coach parking and electrical charging points. The Working Group will also be briefed on the outcome of the additional work around the transaction charges;
- iii) The principle of setting permit prices which will be applied once Council have approved the new tariffs is approved.

**RECOMMENDED to Council that the following amendments to the Off Street Parking Places Order are considered :**

- a) Amending the off-street car parking tariffs as set out in Appendix B of the report;
- b) Re-design the car parks to amend the number of long and short stay spaces;
- c) Introduce charging at Symington Recreation Ground car park for Monday to Friday;
- d) Introduce alternative payment methods;
- e) Introduce electrical charging points;
- f) Develop the provision of coach parking and;
- g) Remove some private car parks from the Order.

### Summary of Reasons

The current car parking strategy was published in 2008. Whilst there is no legal requirement for a Council to provide car parking facilities, they do play an important part in promoting the vitality of the town centres.

The Executive Committee of the 10<sup>th</sup> October 2016 approved the consultation of the draft Car Parking Strategy and proposed changes to the (Off Street Parking Places) Order.

### 332 DELEGATION OF INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICES

The Executive received a report to consider the delegation of the Internal Audit Services currently provided by the Welland Internal Audit Partnership to the Local Government Shared Service (LGSS) from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017.

The primary role of the Internal Audit Service is to objectively examine, evaluate and report on the adequacy of the Council's internal control environment as a contribution to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources and the management of risk. Internal Audit also advises on, carries out and directly supports investigations into suspicions of fraud or financial irregularity.

In accordance with Section 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011, the Chief Finance Officer and the Chief Executive shall be responsible for maintaining an adequate and effective internal audit of the Council's accounting records, control systems and financial transactions including any operations affecting the financial arrangements or the finances of the Council. The Internal Audit Section shall comply with the current CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government, in undertaking its functions.

Since November 2009, this requirement has been achieved through a joint arrangement with the Welland Internal Audit Partnership. As well as Harborough, the partnership provides internal audit services to Rutland (who act as the host authority), Melton, East Northants and Corby.

Since the retirement of the Head of Internal Audit in March 2014, and two unsuccessful attempts to recruit to the post, the team has been managed by the Local Government Shared Service (LGSS) on an interim basis, with this arrangement due to end in March 2017. The S151 Officers of the constituent Councils acknowledges that whilst performance is good and costs are low, the existing model is not sustainable in the long term and has concluded that either alternative arrangements need to be made or the existing arrangements needs to be formalised to secure the long term provision of the service.

In terms of performance, the Council acknowledges that the existing service managed by LGSS is good and that the performance level is high (measured in terms of the % completion of the audit plan by the end of March and feedback from staff which has been very positive). The Audit and Governance Committee itself has also commented on the positive performance of the audit team and the quality of the work produced. This view was also supported by the Governance and Audit Committee when it met on the 27th July 2016.

It is the collective view of the S151 Officers of the current constituent Councils that the preferred model is for the delegation of the service to LGSS and the transfer of existing staff to LGSS. This is because it builds on existing performance, allows familiarity and resilience and will be at no extra cost than the current amount paid to the Welland Internal Audit Partnership.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The function of the provision of Internal Audit Arrangements, currently provided through the Welland Audit Partnership, to LGSS from the 1st April 2017 is delegated;
- ii) The S151 Officer in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services is authorised to enter into such arrangements and take such steps as are necessary to implement the delegation.

### Summary of Reasons for the Recommendations

To ensure the ongoing provision of Internal Audit Services to the Council from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017.

### 333 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2017/18

The Executive received a report to consider options for the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2017/18 following the consultation in the summer, and to delegate the setting of the Council Taxbase to the S151 Officer based on the council tax support scheme in place at the time of determining the tax base.

The Local Government Finance Act 2012 set out measures that required all Council Tax billing authorities to devise a local Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme to replace the previous Council Tax Benefit Scheme. The scheme only applies to claimants of working age as people of pensionable age have a prescribed scheme laid down by Central Government.

The scheme was introduced in 2013/14 alongside all the Leicestershire Districts and the County Council with the aim of a broadly similar scheme across the County. This was achieved, though different contribution rates were determined locally, Harborough rate was a minimum contribution rate of 15%. Across the County a discretionary Council Tax hardship fund was introduced and jointly funded. It provides support to those experiencing financial hardship from the introduction of the scheme.

The Local Council Tax Support Scheme is a scheme of discounts for council taxpayers on low incomes. The cost of these is met from the Council's General Fund budget. Within Harborough 1,409 households of working age who must contribute at least 15% of their Council Tax Bill and 1,899 pensioners are eligible for 100% support.

Since 2013/14, each local authority has been required to adopt its own CTRS (a national scheme of council tax benefit applied before that year). The Council's scheme was approved in 2013. In order to make any material changes to the approved scheme, legislation requires that a full public consultation must be conducted. The public consultation was conducted over the summer and summarised as set out in Appendix C to this report.

The County Council made a formal representation during the consultation and is keen for the schemes to be revised to;

- a) Improve the fairness of support levels and, where possible, have consistent schemes across Leicester and Leicestershire, and
- b) Maximise Council Tax income available to the Council and wider public sector.

The Council commissioned some modelling of what the impact would be on certain groups of claimants and the analysis of the modelling is set out at Appendix A to the report. The modelling indicates that the most significant impact will be on low income employed or self employed households and in respect of lone parents. The impact is significant in percentage terms for all working age claimants. At the moment claimants of pensionable age are not impacted upon by any changes.

There are significant changes in the welfare arrangements including universal credit alongside housing benefit and rent changes and caps.

A key component of these changes is that individuals will be expected to pro-actively manage their finances rather than payments being paid directly to landlords. It is also expected that claimants may experience a number of timing delays in respect of receipt of other benefits. Against this context, the payment of council tax may not be the first priority compared to other priorities, for example rent. This could lead to increased arrears and potentially additional costs linked to being in arrears.

Linked to the Council Priority of support to the vulnerable it is recommended that the Council do not adopt any change to the current scheme for 2017/18 whilst the impact on individuals/households of other welfare changes is quantified.

There is a requirement to consider the scheme annually and any changes would be subject to appropriate consultation.



## **RECOMMENDED to Council that**

- a) The Council Tax Support Scheme is retained at 15% for 2017/18.
- b) The other changes detailed in the consultation (detailed in paragraph 4.10 (a) to (c) of the Report in the 2017/18 scheme are not implemented.
- c) The setting of the Council tax-base for 2017/18 and subsequent years is delegated to the S151 Officer.

### Summary of Reasons

To agree a Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2017/18 taking into account the responses from the consultation undertaken during the summer.

### 334 SECTION 100A LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

RESOLVED that the public and press be excluded from the following items on the grounds that the matter 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.

### 335 THE SYMINGTON BUILDING; STAFF LIFT REPLACEMENT

RESOLVED that:

- (i) The replacement staff lift procurement process commences in January 2017 ahead of a decision on the Capital Programme by Council in February 2017.
- (ii) An exemption from the Statement of Required Practice for Procurement ('The SORP') requirement for an "open" tender for works over £50,000 is sought on the basis that special circumstance apply in this instance and that a selected shortlist of 5 no. suitable lift contractors will be asked to submit a tender (defined as the act of making a formal offer for a contract).

### Summary of Reasons

To ensure that if the Capital Programme is approved by Council in February 2017 that the works are undertaken at the optimum time in July 2017 to reduce the impact on partners and building users.

To ensure that the award of a contract provides the best value for money.

The meeting closed at 6.41 pm.