

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE MEETING

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

held on 15 June 2015,

commencing at 5.00p.m.

Present:

Cllr Pain,
Councillors: Bannister, Hallam, King, Liquorish

Officers: Ann Marie Hawkins, Beverley Jolly, Beth Murgatroyd, Norman Proudfoot,
Simon Riley and Verina Wenham.

41 PORTFOLIO HOLDER ACTIVITY

Cllr Liquorish announced that he had attended the Community Safety Partnership meeting on 12 May 2015 He had attended the Scrutiny Commission on 1 June 2015 and the Community Leadership Scrutiny Panel on 11 June 2015

42 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 16 March 2015 and the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 13 April 2015 be approved as a correct record.

43 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Mrs Page

44 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Cllr Hallam declared a personal interest in Report 12 Garage Sites The nature of the interest was that one of the people involved was known to him . He left the meeting for consideration of this item

45 GRANTING OF EASEMENT

It was reported that Anglian Water has undertaken substantial flood alleviation works in recent months including installing an underground pipe to take any flood water. The pipe runs from Coventry Road, through The Square and the Commons Car Park to the River Welland. This work has been undertaken using their powers under the Water Industry Act 1991.

However, Anglian Water require an easement to be granted to allow water to be discharged in to the River Welland.

As the works would prove a major benefit to the town centre, it is suggested that the Council does not pursue a fee for the same.

RESOLVED that

- i) the granting of the easement to Anglian Water to allow discharge of flood water in to the River Welland be approved.

- ii) authority be delegated to the Corporate Director – Resources in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Portfolio Holder Financial and Commercialisation to grant the easement.

Summary of Reasons

The easement is required to allow discharge of flood water in to the River Welland.

46 BAD DEBT WRITE-OFF(REVENUES AND BENEFITS)

The Executive considered the write-off of debts for revenues and benefits. It was noted that the Council makes provision within in statement of accounts for debt write-off . The write-off can be met from the provision.

RESOLVED that the total amounts for Non Domestic Rates £25,295.33 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 (including the District Council) through pooling arrangements.

The table below is for information on the amounts that have been written off for the period 1st April 2014 through to 25th March 2015.

Table 1 – Bad Debt amounts written off: 1st April 2014 – 25th March 2015

Fund	Debts Written Off greater than £10k	Debts Written Off under £10k (Reported previously)	*Debts Written Off this period under £10k	Totals
Council Tax	£0.00	£181,958.53	-£536.42	£181,422.11
Non Domestic Rates	£67,889.73	£70,457.05	£31,640.43	£169,987.21
Housing Benefit Overpayments	£0.00	£16,001.15	£0.00	£16,001.15

Members are requested to note what has been written off this period as *shown in Table 1 above.

Table 2, below, highlights the value as a a percentage when compared with debt due against each heading as shown. The total collectable sum is the total of the net charge raised to include gross arrears outstanding as at 25th May 2015.

Table 2 – Value of Bad Debt written off against headings shown

Position as at 25h May 2015	Net Charge raised in 2015/16	Arrears Position	Total Collectable	Percentage shown below is derived from the amount written off when compared with total collectable
Council Tax (Net of Council Tax Support)	£50,100,977	£1,947,183	£52,048,160	0.35%
Non Domestic Rates (Net of reliefs)	£39,758,606	£700,565	£40,459,171	0.42%
		Due inclusive of arrears		
Housing Benefit Overpayments	£59,966	£656,616		2.44%

Table 3, below, is an analysis of the debts which have been written off in previous years.

This also shows the position of the debts written off during this financial year to date.

Table 3 – Debts written off 2012/13 – 2015/16 (to date)

Fund	Year 2012/13	Year 2013/14	Year 2014/15	Year 2015/16
Council Tax	£276,108.98	£118,303.47	£181,958.43	-£316.23
Non Domestic Rates	£1,135,724.74	£81,496.64	£138,412.42	£31,574.79
Housing Benefit Overpayments	£9,922.96	£27,354.90	£16,001.15	£0.00

47 CLIMATE LOCAL ACTION PLAN

It was reported that in April 2013 Harborough District Council had agreed to sign up to the Local Government Association Climate Local Initiative. This was seen as an important reputational step to show that the Council were mindful of their responsibility as a community leader, with a role in encouraging a reduction in emissions across the District and helping ensure that communities are more resilient to impacts of climate change including events such as flooding and extreme weather.

In January 2014, the Environment Co-ordinator post was filled, with a remit of producing the Action Plan.

A draft Action Plan, was completed in Summer of 2014. The Action Plan was aligned to the Corporate Plan and priorities, the emerging Local Plan and Home Energy Conservation (HECA) report.

In January 2015 a Scrutiny Task Group met to consider the plan. The Scrutiny Task Group accepted the Action Plan in the main and made some useful suggestions for the implementation of the plan, particularly around Council emissions and green travel, fuel poverty and planning and design. The comments made were incorporated, where possible.

The Executive noted that the Actions contained in the Action Plan will be delivered through existing and emerging Corporate / Service Plans. There are no specific additional resource implications of adopting the Action Plan. Some Actions may help to deliver long term resource savings for the Council and residents/business by promoting investment in renewable energy solutions and energy efficiency.

RESOLVED that Executive approve the Climate Local Action Plan, as set out in Appendix A.

RECOMMENDED to Council that the Climate Local Action Plan be adopted as Council policy (Appendix A refers)

Summary of Reasons

In April 2013 Harborough District Council agreed to sign up to the Local Government Association Climate Local Initiative.

Climate Local superseded the Nottingham Declaration Initiative. It was launched in 2012. As of April 2014 there were 87 local authorities signed up to action. Harborough District Council was a signatory to the Nottingham Declaration.

Under Climate Local, the Council committed to developing an action plan to guide all activity on climate change, including opportunities to work in partnership. Progress on activity is to be published annually. The Action Plan, once adopted, will be reported on annually, on the Council website, with the information also made available through the Local Government Association Knowledge Hub. The draft Action Plan for Harborough is included as Appendix A.

48 FLOOD RELIEF GRANT SCHEME

The Executive considered an approach to manage and allocate funding given by the Government to assist properties that were flooded in the district during the period of 1st April 2013-30 November 2013. There were different types of funding available to homeowners and businesses

There was a grant of up to £5000 to home owners and businesses (Repair and Renew Grant) that have been flooded to help fund additional flood resilience or resistance measures for homes and businesses. There was a published list of types of work that are eligible for assistance under this scheme. Assistance could also be paid retrospectively provided that the works have not already been funded through insurance claims. The grants were intended to fund measures over and above the costs of repairs that would normally be covered by insurance. The grants would not cover standard repairs or to provide compensation and they must be used only for improvements to the fabric of the premise that would have a benefit of reducing the impact and cost of subsequent flooding on the property.

There was business rate flooding relief The scheme provided 3 months rate relief irrespective of how long the flooding or business impact lasted. Empty properties are not normally covered by the scheme.

With regard to homeowners, where residents had to vacate their property as a result of flooding they are entitled to a council tax rebate for as long as they were unable to return home. During the flooding event in 2013 the Council is not aware of any residents that had to vacate their property due to flooding therefore it does not anticipate that it will receive any applications for this support.

Businesses that have been flooded or whose business has been adversely affected by flooding could apply for assistance if they meet the eligibility criteria(Business Support scheme). Businesses eligible for this scheme will have to demonstrate they have sustained hardship and significant loss of trade as a result of the flooding. Support for this fund is available to help small and medium sized businesses to develop and implement business recovery plans. This grant can help businesses that were indirectly affected by flooding but it is not to be used to reward poor business practice such as no insurance or for routine business costs that are recoverable elsewhere.

The local authority has the discretion to set a maximum grant and the average claim from other similar recovery schemes was around £2,500. Based on this information the maximum grant allowed for affected businesses in Harborough will be £2,500

It was noted that the deadline for submission of claims for a grant was 30 September 2015
Officers were thanked for their work on this scheme and it was noted that a report had been submitted to the County Council on partnership working with Anglian Water to help prevent a future occurrence

RESOLVED that the operation of: the following be approved

- a) the Discretionary Business Rates Flooding Relief scheme;
- b) the Repair and Renewal Scheme;
- c) the Council Tax discounts scheme; and
- d) the Business Support Scheme

Summary of Reasons

Following the severe weather and flooding in the winter of 2013/14, the Government announced a package of measures to support affected homes and businesses. In the original announcement, assistance was only available to properties that were flooded between the 1st December 2013 and 31st March 2014, however the scheme has now been extended to include the period between 1st April 2013 and 30 November 2013. This period covers the flooding that occurred in Market Harborough town centre in 2013 enabling local businesses and homes affected by the flooding to benefit from financial support.

49 END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT 2014-2015

The Executive considered the Council's performance against the 2014/15 Corporate Delivery Plan and Performance Indicators at the end of Quarter Four of the 2014/15 year.

RESOLVED that the performance of the Council at the end of Quarter Four of the 2014/15 year be noted.

Summary of Reasons

The presentation of quarterly performance information to Members and managers is part of the Council's Performance Management Framework.

50 CORPORATE RISK AND OPPORTUNITY REGISTER QUARTER 4 2014-2015

The Executive considered information on the Council's Risks , Opportunities and associated mitigating actions at the end of Quarter Four of the 2014/2015 year.

RESOLVED that the Council's Corporate Risks, Opportunities and associated mitigating actions (attached at Appendix A to the report), be noted.

Summary of Reasons

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

51 NOTES FROM EXECUTIVE ADVISORY PANELS

The Executive received the notes of the Executive Advisory Panels.

RESOLVED that: the records of the following meetings held by Executive Advisory Panels be noted:

- The Local Planning Executive Advisory Panel: 28 January 2015 (Appendix A)
- Member Development Executive Advisory Panel: 04 March 2015 (Appendix B)
- Local Planning Executive Advisory Panel: 18 March 2015 (Appendix C)

Summary of Reasons

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

52 PLANNING OBLIGATIONS –DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

It was reported that following a decision by the Executive ,an updated Supplementary Planning document was prepared at the end of 2013, but further work was deferred owing to the ongoing Government consultation on potential changes to the thresholds for seeking planning obligations from small residential sites (usually sites of less than 10 dwellings), particularly to deliver affordable housing. Revised guidance was issued in September 2014 and the draft document takes account of this guidance.

The Local Development Scheme 2014-2017 as updated (January 2015) includes a commitment to prepare a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) relating to Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing in order to help facilitate the process of making planning obligations.

The draft document consolidates and updates all previous guidance issued in respect of affordable housing including the use and application of commuted sums. The document also incorporates a protocol developed on behalf of local authorities in Leicester and Leicestershire to help ensure that there is a common approach to determining whether obligations are CIL compliant.

Consultation on the draft would be on the Harborough District Council element of the document The Executive requested that the document be made more accessible by including an index and commented how pleased they were to see the positive inclusion of a section on Broadband provision at Section G

RESOLVED that the Draft Supplementary Planning document, attached as Appendix A be approved, and

RECOMMENDED to Council that the Draft Supplementary Planning document be approved for release for public and stakeholder consultation.

Summary of Reasons

To enable the Executive to consider a draft Supplementary Planning Document and to issue it for a period of public consultation.

53 MARKET HARBOROUGH TRANSPORT STRATEGY

It was reported that, building on the work that was carried out to develop the Core Strategy, Leicestershire County Council was proposing to undertake work to develop a Transport Strategy for Market Harborough and wished this to be undertaken jointly with the District Council. District Council Officers support this approach as having an up to date Transport Strategy in place for Market Harborough will support the work the preparation of the up to date Local Plan and will make an important contribution to ensuring that the Local Plan is sound. It will also support other work the Council may wish to pursue in future such as the preparation of a master plan for Market

Harborough town centre. Officers of each Council have met to discuss this proposal further and have developed a short brief for the project to outline the key stages, timescales and anticipated costs.

The purpose of the Transport Strategy is to investigate traffic conditions in the town, identify key issues and propose and test possible solutions to improve movement by different modes of transport. The Market Harborough Transport Strategy will enable all potential options for transport improvement within the town to be explored and agreement reached on the appropriate solutions, taking into account existing committed development proposals, future funding streams and the likely level of future growth which will be identified in the Local Plan during 2015/16.

The study also has clear linkages to the delivery of the draft Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) Implementation Plan 2015/16 which was approved by the County Council Cabinet on 16 March and which included the following Key Action;

“Undertake a study of transport conditions in Market Harborough town centre, with the intention of being able to identify potential options for addressing issues by no later than end March 2016”

This timetable has implications for the overall cost of the project and its scope. In order to achieve the timetable, it will be necessary for the County Council to utilise additional external consultancy advice during Phase 1 and also Phase 2. The indicative budgetary cost for Phase 1 is therefore £100,000, with a further £100,000 forecast for Phase 2. The County Council have currently committed £100,000 in their approved budget The District Council will also need to allocate up to £100,000 towards this project and will require approval by Council since this level of expenditure has not been built into current budget estimates for 2015/16.

The Executive requested that officers look at widening the consultation to include a community stakeholder event They also questioned how realistic the timescales were . Officer stated that the County Council had already started to carry out work on the project. The County Council considered that the timescales were achievable and on that basis officers considered the timescales realistic.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that

- i) the proposal for a Transport Strategy for Market Harborough be undertaken jointly with the County Council;**
- ii) funding of £100,000 be allocated to this project, to be funded from the Council's earmarked General Reserve Fund.**

RESOLVED that the progress be reported to the Local Planning Executive Advisory Panel , the relevant Portfolio Holder and the Harborough Highways Partnership and the final Strategy be brought back to the Executive in April 2016.

Summary of Reasons

To provide a comprehensive transport framework for the town in order to

- a) renew long term priorities for future investment to aid movement of goods and people whilst maintaining the attractiveness of the town;
- b) establish solutions and schemes which are capable of attracting funding and implementation over the period 2011-2031,
- c) support the Local Plan and development of a potential Market Harborough town centre masterplan by providing a clear evidence of transport priorities and solutions.

54 COUNCILLOR ICT PROVISION

RESOLVED that this report be deferred until September pending feedback from the pilot ICT scheme involving new members

Summary of Reasons

To allow consideration of all relevant information before making a decision

55 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

56 RELOCATION OF LIFELINE AND ASSOCIATED SERVICES

The Executive considered the relocation of the Council's Lifeline service and other services based at Clover Court. It was reported that the Lifeline, CCTV & ICT Back Up Services are currently located in 2 flats within Clover Court, Hearth Street, Market Harborough. The property is owned by Seven Locks Housing Ltd..

The Community Alarm service protects and promotes the wellbeing of elderly and other vulnerable persons via a 24 hour monitoring system. There are approximately 3100 units across Harborough, Melton and Rutland linked to the Council's control centre, based at Clover Court, Market Harborough. The Council is currently contracted to provide Lifeline services to Melton Borough Council and approximately 200 customers mainly through charitable housing providers.

The service also acts as the CCTV Centre for the Council, hosting and monitoring the equipment for the Market Harborough & Lutterworth systems. This links to the HART (tackling retail theft) and the Pubwatch (tackling anti-social behaviour) schemes both impacting on the safety of the community within the centre of Market Harborough.

In addition to its primary function, the Lifeline service, also provides the Council's out of hours emergency call handling service and acts as the co-ordinator for the Council's existing lone worker system. The property, also, hosts the Council's IT back up data.

The Council has received notice dated 17 March 2015 under the terms of the lease between Seven Locks Housing & Harborough District Council to vacate the property at Clover Court no later than 2 July 2015. Following negotiations between the Council and Seven Locks Housing, an extension through to 3 October 2015 has been agreed. The Executive considered the options open to the Council, it expressed its disappointment at the lack of notice from Seven Locks Housing to vacate the property

RESOLVED that the Lifeline Service and other services based at Clover Court be re-located.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- i) to make an addition to the 2015/16 Capital Programme of £46K to fund the relocation of the Contract Centre (outlined in 6.2 of the report)**
- ii) to approve a drawdown of £63.1K from the Earmarked General Reserve Fund to fund the relocation of the Contact Centre (outlined in 6.2 and 6.3 of the report)**
- iii) to approve the Heads of Terms for the proposed lease to enable re-location of the services as outlined in 6.4 of the report and Appendix C of the report and that authority is delegated to the Corporate Director – Resources in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Portfolio Holder Financial and Commercialisation to finalise the Lease.**

RESOLVED that authority be delegated to the Corporate Director – Resources in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Portfolio Holder Financial and Commercialisation to undertake any necessary actions to facilitate the re-location within the necessary timescales, subject to appropriate budgets being in place, including but not limited to applying for any necessary planning consents.

Summary of Reasons

To ensure that there is continuity of services and the Council is able to comply with its contractual obligations.

To ensure adequate financial resources are available to deliver the re-location.

To ensure that a suitable alternative location for delivery of services is provided.

Cllr Hallam left the room for consideration of this item

57 REDEVELOPMENT OF GARAGE SITES

Following a review of options for the Council's remaining garage sites, consideration was given to the options available to the Council. It was noted that whilst there are several options available to ensure that the Council achieves best value, the optimal options would be for the Council to develop the sites, either alone or in partnership, as such the Council should focus on taking an active part in the development of the three garage sites.

Following the legal advice received from Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council the Head of Legal and Democratic Services was requested to write to the relevant Minister about unintended consequences of the Assets of Community Value legislation and the need to address this issue urgently.

RESOLVED that

- i) the Council explores the option to act as developer for the sites, utilising the allocated resources in the approved Capital Programme.
- ii) the procurement of a construction contract be procured, in accordance with the SCAPE/empa ii national framework contract, to allow the production of a full business case which will be presented to the Executive for approval.
- iii) Authority be delegated to the Corporate Director - Resources in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to obtain vacant possession of the Garage Sites as necessary, including the termination of the vehicle access licences at St Cuthbert's Avenue, Great Glen.
- iv) Authority be delegated to the Corporate Director - Resources in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, s. 151 officer and Head of Legal and Democratic Services to submit an application to register the proposed Lubenham and Great Glen developments with the Homes & Community Agency's Help to Buy scheme
- v) Authority be delegated to the Corporate Director - Resources in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and Head of Legal and Democratic Services to appoint a residential adviser to inform the development of a Full Business Case.
- vi) Authority be delegated to the Corporate Director - Resources to submit the necessary planning applications in respect of the schemes to inform the development of the Full Business Case.
- vii) the interim position of the projects outlined in Appendix C3 (Naseby Close/Newcombe Street) be noted

Summary of Reasons

To satisfy Corporate Delivery Plan 2013/14 Objective CA9 "Ensure financial and other assets are maximised and managed efficiently" and to further good asset/property management of the Councils assets.

To realise the maximum benefits from the Council's assets.

To commission the development of a Full Business Case for these three sites to be presented to a future meeting of the Executive.

The meeting closed at 6.16 pm