

FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 12 JULY 2018

Present: Councillor P D Simpson, Chair

Councillors: T P Brindley (Vice-Chair)
S J Carr
E Cubley
S Easom
D A Elliott (substitute)
R I Jackson
P Lally
G Marshall
P J Owen
J C Patrick (substitute)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S A Bagshaw, M Radulovic MBE and A W G A Stockwell.

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor S J Carr declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 10, as he had previously donated to Hope Nottingham through his Nottinghamshire County Council divisional fund, minute number 9 refers. Councillor W J Longdon declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 11, as he had previously donated to St Helen's Church through his County Council divisional fund, minute number 10 refers. Councillor J C Patrick declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 12 she is a trustee of Citizens Advice Broxtowe, minute number 11 refers.

2 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2018 were confirmed and signed subject to an amendment to include Councillor S J Carr on the list of attendees.

3 REFERENCES

3.1 Leisure and Environment Committee

17 April 2018

St Helen's Church Gates – Repair and Refurbishment

The Committee considered the works required to repair and refurbish the main entrance gates at St Helen's Church, Stapleford. The churchyard at St Helen's was classed as a closed churchyard and the grounds together with the boundary are maintained by the Council under Section 215 of the Local Government Act. It was noted that the work required would cost £15,000.

RESOLVED that £15,000 be allocated within the 2018/19 capital programme for the works to repair and refurbish the gates at St Helen's Church, Stapleford to be funded from capital contingencies.

3.2 POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

4 July 2018

Care Leavers' Council Tax Reduction Scheme

The Council has the discretion to reduce the council tax liability for individuals or prescribed groups as it thinks fit. This discretion is exercised in accordance with section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The proposed scheme is in addition to the Council's Local Council Tax Support Scheme and would provide assistance to people living within the borough who had previously been in care and meet the appropriate qualifying criteria.

The Committee noted that a recommendation was made by the Policy and Performance Committee that a supplementary capital estimate of £5,700 for software to administer the Care Leavers' Council Tax Reduction Scheme be approved with funding from 2018/19 capital contingencies.

RESOLVED that a supplementary capital estimate of £5,700 for software to administer the Care Leavers' Council Tax Reduction Scheme be approved with funding from 2018/19 capital contingencies.

4 REVIEW OF COUNCIL FINANCES

The Committee noted the report which set out the findings of a review of the Council's financial position, including seven specific areas identified for further potential examination as a response to the challenging financial environment the organisation faces.

5 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS UPDATE AND OUTTURN POSITION 2017/18

The revenue and capital outturn position for 2017/18 was reported to the Committee alongside an update on progress with the preparation of the draft annual statement of accounts for 2017/18. The reports also put forward the revenue and capital carry-forward requests for the 2018/19 financial year and informed the Committee that the Policy and Performance Committee would be tasked with considering variances to the revenue estimates.

The Committee noted that reserves had increased and that there was under-spending in various departments.

There had been a write-off of irrecoverable arrears totalling £81,650 pertaining to repairs invoices and it was questioned, given the timeframe that these covered, as to whether consideration should have been given to these sooner. It was noted that there was now a process linked through the sundry debts system to write off debts where all attempts at recovery had failed to ensure that arrears were written off in a more timely fashion.

Discussion followed regarding the use of agency staff by the Council. It was requested that a profile be prepared including length of service for all agency staff. The difficulties in appointing staff permanently when they were being asked to cover maternity leave or long term sickness was discussed.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. The accounts summary for the financial year ended 31 March 2018 subject to audit, be approved.**
- 2. The revenue carry forward requests outlined in section 2 of appendix 1 be approved and included as supplementary revenue estimates in the 2018/19 budget.**
- 3. The capital carry forward requests outlined in appendix 2b be approved and included as supplementary capital estimates in the 2018/19 budget.**

6 TREASURY MANAGEMENT

The Committee noted the annual report of the year ending 31 March 2018. There was a discussion about Minimum Revenue Provision that included the clarification that this was guidance set out by government and it required councils to make full financial provision for the lifetime of any loan. Consideration was given to what would happen to any debts the Council had if it were to be abolished.

7 GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET AMENDMENTS 2018/19

The Committee considered a number of amendments to the General Fund revenue budget for 2018/19 and for additional one-off budget allocations to address particular issues.

It was noted that there was no current budget for the Individual Electoral Registration Government Grant, and that there had been no additional funding to take people off this register.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. The amendments to the General Fund 2018/19 revenue budget as set out in the appendix be approved.**
- 2. An additional 2018/19 budget allocation of £30,000 to ICT Services for interim staff to assist delivery of capital schemes be approved.**
- 3. An additional 2018/19 budget allocation of £28,000 to Finance Services for interim staff to assist with final accounts work be approved.**

8 CAPITAL BUDGET VARIATIONS 2018/19

The Committee considered the approval of a number of capital budget variations in respect of the 2018/19 financial year, in particular the purchase of an intelligent scanning module. It was noted that Nottinghamshire County Council was to return £11,250 to the Council because it had not spent the Handy Person Adaptation Service as planned. The Council would be able to spend this on Disabled Facilities Grants in the 2018/19 financial year.

There followed a discussion about the Housing Management System upgrade. It was noted that good progress continued to be made on the project with an allocation of £60,000 being proposed to fund software enhancements to allow the collection of rent by Direct Debit. Debate progressed on to the Legal Case Management System, which was being implemented to create efficiencies in the Legal Department.

RESOLVED that the capital budget variations for 2018/19 as set out in appendices 1 and 2 of the report be approved.

9 GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS, CHARITABLE BODIES AND INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED IN SPORTS, THE ARTS AND DISABILITY MATTERS 2018/19

The Committee considered requests for grant aid in accordance with the provisions of the Council's Grant Aid Policy.

Nuthall Age Concern Day Centre had put forward a request for a grant of £500. It was proposed by Councillor P D Simpson and seconded by Councillor T P Brindley that the award be made as requested. On being put to the meeting the motion was carried.

Consideration was given to a grant request from Hope Nottingham. It was proposed by Councillor P D Simpson and seconded by Councillor T P Brindley that an amount of £4,000 be awarded. An amendment to the motion was proposed by Councillor S J Carr and seconded by Councillor G Marshall that an award of £7,000 be made. On being put to the meeting the amendment was defeated and the motion to award Hope Nottingham £4,000 was carried. It was requested that it be made clear to Hope Nottingham that the Committee would welcome a further application for grant aid with more detail regarding the specific projects that would be funded as a result of the award.

RESOLVED that the applications be dealt with as follows:

	£
Nuthall Age Concern Day Centre	500
Hope Nottingham	4,000

10 CAPITAL GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS 2018/19

The Committee gave consideration to a request from St Helen's Church, Stapleford for a capital grant in accordance with the provisions of the Council's Grant Aid Policy. The request was for a grant of up to £5,000 toward the cost of a multi-purpose courtyard within the new Community Annexe. It was proposed by Councillor P D Simpson and seconded by Councillor T P Brindley that an amount of £5,000 be awarded. On being put to the meeting the motion was carried.

RESOLVED that a grant of £5,000 be made in respect of the application from St Helen's Church Stapleford.

11 CITIZENS ADVICE BROXTOWE - GRANT AID 2018/19

Consideration was given to the application for grant aid from Citizens Advice Broxtowe. The application had been submitted along with a request for a commitment for the repetition of the award in the financial years 2019/20 and 2020/21. This would be subject to a Service Level Agreement.

The value of the work of Citizens Advice Broxtowe was noted and it was proposed by Councillor P D Simpson and seconded by Councillor T P Brindley that an award of £73,750 including £10,000 towards the annual rental of accommodation in the Council Offices, be made to Citizens Advice Broxtowe.

RESOLVED that £73,750 be awarded to Citizens Advice Broxtowe, including £10,000 towards the annual rental of accommodation in the Council Offices and a commitment to the same in 2019/20 and 2020/21, subject to the relevant Service Level Agreement.

12 UNIVERSAL CREDIT

A report was put before the Committee regarding the Council's current position on Universal Credit roll out in Broxtowe. The Council had been informed that it would receive £28,546 for this in 2018/19 and it had been identified that Citizens Advice Broxtowe would be best placed to provide the required support for those residents who are not Broxtowe tenants.

There was concern about what digital support would look like and that the level of support that vulnerable claimants would receive and the level of funding that had been assessed by the Welfare Reform Group.

Debate progressed on to rent arrears where work was taking place across the Council to mitigate risk. It was expected that Universal Credit would be rolled out in the borough in November 2018. Funding from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) would be pro-rated from November and it was expected that the Council would be able to provide further assistance to the CAB in the following financial year.

RESOLVED that a supplementary revenue estimate of £19,550 in 2018/19 for the provision of Personal Budgeting Support for Universal Credit claimants through the CAB funded by DWP grants be approved.

13 CAVENDISH LODGE, BEESTON - OPTIONS FOR DISPOSAL

The Committee noted the options for the disposal of Cavendish Lodge, Beeston.

14 COMMITTEE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Members noted the current position with regard to the implementation of the committee management system and highlighted the capabilities of the system for councillors and members of the public.

15 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REVIEW OF BUSINESS PLAN PROGRESS - SUPPORT SERVICE AREAS

The Committee noted the progress made in achieving the Business Plans for Resources, Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services, and ICT and Business Transformation, in addition to the current Key Performance Indicators for 2017/18.

It was noted that the current figure for complaints acknowledged within three days was 92.5%. It was also noted that there had been a 13.64% reduction in rent arrears.

16 FEEES FOR CANVASS DUTIES

The Committee considered the proposed fees for canvass duties.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. The revised fees for the personal canvass as set out in the appendix of the report be approved.**
- 2. The canvass fees be included in the Council's Pay Policy when it is next updated.**

17 BEESTON SQUARE STREET ART

The Committee examined a proposal to use the remaining Henry Boot artwork contribution from The Square Phase 1 in Beeston to be allocated to street art. The quality of the art work that had already been commissioned was praised.

An amendment to the recommendation was proposed that the approval of the design of the final scheme should be delegated to the Interim Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the three group leaders. On being put to the meeting the amendment was carried.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. A supplementary revenue estimate of £8,200 be approved in 2018/19 for Beeston Square street art funded from the Henry Boot allocation.**
- 2. The approval of the design of the final scheme be delegated to the Interim Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the three group leaders.**

18 DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS - GRANTS CASEWORKER

The Committee considered the appointment of a temporary part time Grants Caseworker to assist with the Disabled Facilities Grants process.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. A temporary part time Grants Case Worker as set out in the report be appointed.**
- 2. Authority to extend the contract be delegated to the Chief Executive based on need and the level of Disabilities Facilities Grant capital grant allocations received**

19 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Work Programme. It was agreed that that a report on Agency Staff would be added to the 24 September 2018 meeting.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme, as amended, be approved.

20 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that, under Section 100A of the Local Government Act, 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

21 BEESTON SQUARE PHASE 1 - ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

The Beeston Square annual report 2017/18 was noted.

22 IRRECOVERABLE ARREARS

RESOLVED that the arrears in excess of £1,200 on national non-domestic rates, council tax, rents, housing/council tax benefit overpayment and sundry debtors as set out in the report be written off and to note the exercise of the Interim Deputy Chief Executive's delegated authority under financial regulation 5.9 be noted.

23 CAVENDISH LODGE, BEESTON - OPTIONS FOR DISPOSAL - APPENDICES

RESOLVED that officers be authorised to accept the best offer that is in line with the valuation contained within the report for Cavendish Lodge or return to the Committee with information should offers be deemed unacceptable.