

FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 7 OCTOBER 2021

Present: Councillor G Marshall, Chair

Councillors: S J Carr
B C Carr
E Cubley
T A Cullen (Substitute)
S Easom
E Kerry
P J Owen
S Paterson
M Radulovic MBE
P Roberts-Thomson
P D Simpson
C M Tideswell (Substitute)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Lally and E Williamson

26 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor T Cullen declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 as she was Chair of the Beeston Rylands Community Association minute number 33 refers.

Councillor S Paterson declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 as she supported The Helpful Bureau minute number 33 refers.

Councillors M Radulovic MBE and G Marshall declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 6 as they were both on the Beeston Town Centre board minute item 31 refers.

Councillor S Easom declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 6 as being a Director on the Liberty Leisure board minute number 31 refers

Councillor G Marshall declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 due to his association with Beeston Civic Society minute number 33 refers

Councillors P J Owen and PD Simpson both declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 10 as they were Nuthall Parish Councillors minute number 34 refers.

27 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2021 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

28 **CHARGING FOR LAND CHARGES INFORMATION**

This item was moved to the beginning of the Committee agenda at the request of the Chair.

The Committee considered the option of offering a paid-for service to Personal Search Companies. Under s8 of the Local Land Charges Act 1975, anyone may make a personal on-site inspection of the Land Charges Register at the Council Offices. The person who identified the Land they wish to search were allowed to inspect the relevant record on the Local Land Charges Register. A registering Authority was not expected or obliged to assist further. However, since COVID-19 lockdown in March 2020, responses to search enquires had been undertaken by the Council's Land Charges Officer and e-mailed out to Personal Search Companies. Around one hundred search results had been e-mailed out each month to Personal Search Companies.

The Local Land Charges Act 1975 gave Councils power to set fees for the provision of Local Land Charges Services, this would not apply to personal searches. This fee had been set at zero. A charge could be passed on with supplying environmental information obtained from a personal search. Regulation 8 (3) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. The enhanced chargeable e-mail service would be based on staff time incurred in the preparation and extraction of information and the cost incurred in printing or copying the information and sending to the requester.

It had not been determined how many Personal Search Companies would take up the offer of the enhanced service.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. The introduction of an optional paid for enhanced e-mail service to PSCs be approved.**
- 2. The fee for the enhanced service be set by the Executive Director in consultation with the Chair of the Committee.**

29 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2021/22 TO 2025/26 AND BUSINESS STRATEGY 2022/23

Members were updated on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and the progress with the delivery of the Business Strategy.

There had been an underspend of £2.121m on the General Fund revenue budget in 2020/21 this had resulted in a General Fund balance of £6.873m. This was reported at the 8 July 2021 Finance and Resources Committee.

There were a number of issues concerning Local Government finance that would have a major impact upon the financial position of the Council. They included the uncertainty on the outcome of the Government's Spending Review 2021, the delayed Fair Funding Review and the current and ongoing economic and financial impact of COVID-19.

Two other budget pressures impacting on the Council's 2022/23 budget were the cost of a rise in employer's National Insurance contributions and the financial impact of the market supplements that had been necessary to recruit and retain key staff across the Council.

Discussions ensued surrounding the financial impact and the effects COVID-19 had on the Council budget including significant loss of income at Liberty Leisure Limited, commercial rents and car parking. The Business Strategy 2022/23 and 2023/24

proposals highlighted potential additional income or reduced expenditure, Initiatives within both the Business Strategy and Commercial Strategy and the General Fund Revenue Budget.

RESOLVED that the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Business Strategy 2022/23 in the appendices be approved.

30 BUDGET CONSULTATION 2022/23

The Committee was advised on the budget consultation process for 2022/23 and the proposed timetable and budget scrutiny process. Section 65 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 places a duty upon local authorities to consult representatives on non-domestic rate payers before setting the budget.

For 2022/23 a budget consultation process was proposed similar to that adopted previously using a web-based survey that was published through social media. Promotional activity would include social media messages, email-me bulletins, press releases, website promotion and direct engagement with groups, organisations and individuals on the Council's stakeholder map.

Members thought that a clearer introduction to the budget consultation would be helpful and provide addition information on topics. further questions could be added into the consultation based on climate change, child play areas and whether the resident is a Council tax payee.

RESOLVED that the budget-setting process for 2022/23 and the Budget Consultation questionnaire be approved.

31 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/22 UPDATE

Members were asked to approve the revised Capital Programme for 2021/22. The previous year's Capital Programme had been delayed due primarily to the effects of the pandemic and national restrictions on activity. The outturn report for 2020/21 had identified carry forward budgets of £8,495,900 into 2021/22. All the projects were being reviewed to ensure all timescales were revised and phasing expenditure matched activity.

The new projects that required budget amendments included:

- Purchase of two new electric vehicles for mobile cleaning staff
- Further Beeston Square Redevelopment
- Technical Infrastructure Architecture
- Leisure Facilities Strategy-Feasibility Study for Bramcote Leisure Centre.

Members queried options regarding Beeston Town Centre and they were all encouraged to feed ideas through their own party Leader into the Beeston Town Centre Board.

RESOLVED that the capital budget variations for 2021/22 as set out in the appendix be approved.

32 GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET AMENDMENTS 2021/22

The Committee considered the number of amendments to the General Fund Revenue budget for 2021/22.

The revenue budget amendments required were associated with food hygiene, discretionary housing payments, ICT technical infrastructure, wellbeing and the employee establishment. The effects of the amendments would be to increase the anticipated withdrawal from the Council's General Fund balances.

RESOLVED that the amendments to the General Fund revenue budget 2021/22 as set out in the appendix be approved.

33 GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS, CHARITABLE BODIES AND INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED IN SPORTS, THE ARTS AND DISABILITY MATTERS 2021/22

Members considered the requests for grant aid in accordance with the provisions of the Council's Grant Aid Policy from 2nd Kimberley Scout Group, The Helpful Bureau, Beeston Rylands Community Association, Beeston Civic Society/Beeston Street Art and Hope Community Gospel Choir.

RESOLVED that the Grant applications be dealt with as follows:

2nd Kimberley Scout Group	£7,000
The Helpful Bureau	£10,000
Beeston Rylands Community Association	£350
Beeston Civic Society/Beeston Street Art	£1,329
Hope Community Gospel Choir	£400

34 GRANT AID REQUESTS FROM NUTHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Members were asked to consider requests for grant assistance in accordance with the protocol for the consideration of grant aid to parish and town councils.

Two grant aid requests had been received from Nuthall Parish Council for consideration. £2,590 towards the purchase of two new outdoor defibrillators to be installed in the Horsendale and Mornington areas of the parish and the second request was for funding of £1,905.00 towards the cost of traffic management for its Remembrance Sunday Parade.

Discussions ensued around the facilities provided in locations around the Borough and maintenance of the equipment once installed. Talks had been taking place with East Midlands Ambulance Service where the most incidents had taken place and how comprehensive lifesaving equipment could be installed across the borough including equipment for diabetic emergencies.

Members agreed to approve the grant aid request towards the cost of traffic management at the Remembrance Sunday Parade and to defer the grant aid request towards the purchase of two new defibrillators until another Finance and Resources Committee when a detailed programme of proposals of equipment across the borough would be provided.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. The Grant aid request of £1,095 towards the cost of traffic management at its Remembrance Sunday Parade in 2021 be approved.**
- 2. The grant aid request for up to £2,590 towards the purchase of two new defibrillators be deferred to allow for a wider programme of proposals of equipment across the Borough.**

35 CAPITAL GRANT REQUEST - EASTWOOD TENNIS CLUB

Members considered the request for capital grant aid in accordance with the provisions of the Council's grant aid policy from Eastwood Tennis Club. It was proposed that it would be better to include it as part of the Eastwood Levelling up bid within the health/wellbeing strategy and to withdraw this item from the agenda.

RESOLVED to withdraw the capital grant aid request and include as part of the Eastwood Levelling up bid.

36 BUSINESS RATES -JOINT PROPERTY INSPECTOR

The Committee noted the content of the report from the Joint Property Inspector in relation to business rates.

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

The Committee noted the performance and progress made in achieving the actions in the Business Plans 2021-24 for the support service areas.

38 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the work programme.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme be approved.

39 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 involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 3, 5 and 12 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

40 TRAM COMPENSATION UPDATE

RESOLVED that the final adjustments to the claim be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive and in consultation with the Chair of this Committee and the three main party Leaders.

41 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 Deputy Chief Executive's delegated authority under financial regulation 5.9.