

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE (SPECIAL)

14th January 2014

PRESENT:-

Conservative Group

Councillor Lemmon (Chairman), Councillor Hewlett (Vice-Chairman) and Councillors Bale (substitute for Councillor Mrs. Hood), Ford, Harrison, Murray and Smith.

Labour Group

Councillors Frost, Mrs. Heath, Mulgrew, Rhind, Richards and Shepherd.

In attendance

Councillors Atkins, and Mrs. Plenderleith (Conservative Group), and Councillor Dunn (Labour Group).

HCS/28. **APOLOGY**

An apology for absence from the Meeting was received from Councillor Mrs. Hood (Conservative Group).

HCS/29. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Shepherd declared a pecuniary interest in Minute Number HCS/30, as Chairman of South Derbyshire Citizens Advice Bureau.

Councillor Richards declared a pecuniary interest in Minute Number HCS/30, as a Member of South Derbyshire Citizens Advice Bureau.

Councillor Mrs. Heath declared a personal interest in Minute Number HCS/30, due to her involvement with the Market.

MATTER DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE

HCS/30. **SERVICE BASE BUDGETS 2014/2015**

A report was submitted which informed Members of the proposed base budget for 2014/15, with a comparison to the current year 2013/14. It provided an overview of the Committee's main spending areas. It was proposed that the estimated income and expenditure be included in the consolidated budget for the Council for 2014/15, subject to the Council's overall medium term financial position. The report also set out proposals for the level of fees and charges under the responsibility of this Committee for the next financial year. A summary of the Committee's existing Capital Investment Programme was also included.

A large part of the Committee's annual spending on community development, crime prevention, together with sport and health was delivered in partnership with other agencies. This funding was not always secured from year to year

and had been steadily reducing. The Council maintained a grants reserve, which held funding awarded in previous years and was drawn down to meet projects and costs on a yearly basis. Some of this funding was replaced each year. In recent budget rounds, some posts had been mainstreamed into the Council's base budget. This had confirmed on-going resources in supporting local community partnerships, environmental education, together with costs associated with maintaining Swadlincote Woodlands. Although the Council still had access to longer term funding, this was finite unless replaced. Consequently some services could again come under pressure in future years (beyond 2014/15), and this would be kept under review. Furthermore, expenditure of approximately £90,000 per year on parks, and maintenance of open spaces was supplemented by drawing down commuted sums received as part of residential developments. Although current funds would support expenditure for several more years, this funding was also finite and would eventually end if not replaced. This will also be kept under review.

The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was reviewed and updated in October 2013 following the public sector spending review (CSR13), which was reported in the summer. After considering the updated financial position and the projected outcomes from CSR13, Finance and Management Committee approved a further round of budget savings. Consequently, an amount of £500,000 needed to be found from within the current base budget before next year's Budget Round (2015/16) in order to sustain the overall financial position into the future. As part of the strategy, the Finance and Management Committee also approved that all service budgets be scrutinised closely to identify potential savings.

A summary of the Committee's net revenue expenditure was provided in a table within the report and it was estimated to decrease overall between 2013/14 and 2014/15 by £85,037. Further details were provided on the main reasons for this.

The Committee's cost centres were detailed in a further appendix to the report, along with a comparison of changes between 2013/14 and 2014/5 for each cost centre.

Further details were provided on zero based budgeting which had been well used across the Committee's services.

The proposed base budget for 2014/15 did not at this stage, allow for inflation. Allowances for inflation, based on various assumptions regarding price increases etc would be calculated across the main spending heads and in total, held as a central contingency.

Information was provided on the implications of an increase in grants to voluntary bodies.

Details were given on the Council's approved Capital Investment Programme.

An appendix within the report provided a schedule of the proposed fees and charges that would operate from 1st April 2014, together with a comparison to the existing charge.

Amendments to certain fees were identified and agreed as per the resolution.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the proposed revenue income and expenditure for 2014/15 for the Committee's Services as shown in the report, be considered and referred to the Finance and Management Committee for approval.***
- (2) That the proposed fees for 2014/15 as detailed in an appendix to the report be considered and approved, subject to amendments as follows;***
 - Saturday funeral for child between 12 months and 16 years (in addition to the Grant of Right).
Current fee £210.00. Proposed fee £216.50***
 - Sunday/Bank Holiday funeral for a child between 12 months and 16 years (in addition to the Grant of Right).
Current fee £283.50. Proposed fee £283.50.***
- (3) That the amount of all grants to voluntary bodies be increased by 2% for 2014/15.***

(Councillors Frost, Mrs. Heath, Mulgrew, Rhind, Richards and Shepherd requested that it be recorded that they had abstained from voting).

J. LEMMON

CHAIRMAN

The meeting terminated at 6.25 p.m.