

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE (SPECIAL)

15th January 2013

PRESENT:-

Conservative Group

Councillor Lemmon (Chairman), Councillor Hewlett (Vice-Chairman) and Councillors Ford, Harrison, Murray and Smith.

Labour Group

Councillors Dunn, Mrs. Heath, Mulgrew, Rhind, Shepherd and Stuart.

In attendance

Councillors Atkins, and Mrs. Hood (Conservative Group).

HCS/45. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillors Harrison and Mrs. Hood as a voting Member of the Committee (Conservative Group).

MATTER DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE

HCS/46. **SERVICE BASE BUDGETS 2013/2014**

A report was submitted which informed Members of the proposed base budget for 2013/14, with a comparison to the current year 2012/13. 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 2013/14, 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 was reduced for 2011/12 following CSR10. 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, but had reduced since CSR10. 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, and 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 would come under pressure in future years, in particular around cultural and arts related activities, and crime prevention. 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.

The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was reviewed and updated in October 2012 ahead of the Government's detailed financial settlement for local authorities. Pressure remained on the medium term position with continuing reductions in government grant as set out in the 2010 Spending Review. During this budget round, all services were asked to look closely at current spending and adopt a 'zero based' approach to budgeting where possible.

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 2012/13 and 2013/14 by £26,326. Further details were provided on the main reasons for this.

The Committee's cost centre's were detailed in a further appendix to the report, which showed a line-by-line analysis of the budgets, as contained in the Council's main accounting system, with a breakdown of charges between 2012/13 and 2013/14 for each cost centre.

The proposed base budget for 2013/14 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 2013, together with a comparison to the existing charge. It was proposed that contrary to the report, the following fees and charges remained the same;

a) Saturday funeral for a child between 12 months and 16 years (in addition to the Grant of Right). This fee remain at £210.00.

b) Sunday/Bank Holiday funeral (in addition to the Grant of Right) for person whose age exceeds 16 years. This fee remain at £283.50.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the proposed revenue income and expenditure for 2013/14 for the Committee's Services be referred to the Finance and Management Committee for approval.**

- (2) That the proposed fees and charges for 2013/14 as detailed in an Appendix to the report, and subject to the amendment shown above, be recommended for approval.**
- (3) That the amount of all grants to voluntary bodies be increased by 2.6% for 2013/14.**

(Councillor Shepherd wished that it be recorded that he abstained from voting, as he was Chairman of the Citizens Advice Bureau).

J. LEMMON

CHAIRMAN

The meeting terminated at 6.30 p.m.