

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE (SPECIAL)

5th January 2012

**PRESENT:-**

**Conservative Group**

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

**Labour Group**

Councillors Dunn, Mrs. Heath, Mulgrew, Rhind, Shepherd and Tilley (substitute for Councillor Richards).

**In attendance**

Councillors Atkins, Mrs. Plenderleith and Watson (Conservative Group).

HCS/50. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillors Harrison, Mrs. Hood (Conservative Group) and Richards (Labour Group).

**MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE**

HCS/51. **SERVICE BASE BUDGETS 2012/2013**

A report was submitted which informed Members of the proposed base budget for 2012/13, with a comparison to the current year 2011/12. 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 2012/13, 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 2011 ahead of the Government's detailed financial settlement for local authorities. Pressure remained on the medium term position with the continuing economic situation and the possible reductions in central funding beyond 2012/13. During this budget round, all services were asked to look closely at current spending and adopt a 'zero based' approach to budgeting.

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 2011/12 and 2012/13 by £113,000. 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 2011/12 and 2012/13 for each cost centre.

The proposed base budget for 2012/13 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, and it was confirmed that, due to the reduction in the Council's general grant funding for 2011/12, no increase had been applied for this period, although the base level of funding was maintained.

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 2012, together with a comparison to the existing charge.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the proposed revenue income and expenditure for 2012/13 for the Committee's Services be referred to the Finance and Management Committee for approval.***
- (2) That the proposed fees and charges for 2012/13 as detailed in an Appendix to the report, be recommended for approval.***
- (3) That the amount of all grants to voluntary bodies be maintained at the current level with no inflationary increase for 2012/13.***

HCS/52. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

**RESOLVED:-**

*That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in brackets after each item.*

**REVIEW OF HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES (Paragraph 1)**

*The report was noted and recommendations, as detailed within the report, were approved.*

J. LEMMON

CHAIRMAN