

APPENDIX 4

Environment Scrutiny Committee – Minute Extract

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2007/08 to 2009/10.

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Highways, Transportation and Waste Management, Director of Community Services and the Director of Resources the purpose of which was to provide information on the proposed 2007/08 to 2009/10 Medium Term Financial Strategy. A copy of the report, marked 'B', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

Community Services – Environment

- i) The £30,000 reduction of environmental grants to private individuals, particularly with regard to planting schemes was a matter of concern as this could send out mixed messages and be construed as contrary to the County's efforts to ensure the planting of more trees. It was also noted that the proposed reduction may only have a marginal impact on any private tree planting schemes.
- ii) Whilst it was not possible to accurately estimate the percentage increase in income which the Developer Contributions Co-ordinator post would generate, the new post would not only seek to minimise any shortfall in the receipt of S106 contributions but to ensure that the County Council's interests were best represented when consideration was given to revised developer funding arrangements by Central Government.

Highways and Transportation

- iii) The additional £200,000 provided for environmental maintenance such as amenity grass cuts which had been put in to reinstate savings in the last year's budget was welcomed.
- iv) The proposed total saving of £200,000 from 2008/09 to 2009/10 on reactive maintenance could cause a level of deterioration of kerbs, footway repairs and drain covers that would adversely affect residents, particularly those in rural areas.
- v) The proposed charges for skip permits, scaffold permits and street café licences, which were to be introduced were noted. The view was expressed that the level of charges, particularly for street café's needed to be set with care to avoid affecting the viability of small traders businesses and to ensure that the quality of town centre environments was not adversely affected. Members asked that consideration be given to discussion with district councils in relation to the licensing and charging arrangements relevant to these issues. Concern was also expressed as to the use of vehicles in lay-bys for advertising purposes.

- vi) In recognition of the impact of the recent decision of the Development Control and Regulatory Board to agree to planning permission for the Enderby Park and Ride Site, the view was expressed that the Cabinet may wish to give consideration for a feasibility study, for the development of a community forest and other environmental measures on the eastern side of the M1 and a green initiative to utilise the green space between the site and Enderby, to include the Alderbury Burial Ground.
- vii) Approximately 13% of large roundabouts had now been sponsored as a result of the contract provision with a marketing agent. Those roundabouts without sponsorship, whilst still being subjected to grass cuts, would not have enhanced provision of bedding plants and shrubs as stipulated in the contracts. The contract with the marketing agent envisaged a significant increase in revenue from sponsorship in the coming and subsequent years.
- viii) The provision for the advanced design of the proposed Melton bypass in the capital programme for £75,000 in 2008/09 and £100,000 was to enable a bid to be submitted in the next LTP funding round within the next 18 months.
- ix) The findings of the Scrutiny Review Panel on the management and maintenance of highway schemes would be progressed within the Highways Efficiency Review which was expected to generate substantial efficiency savings.

Passenger Transport

- x) The inclusion of the Leicester to Loughborough Ivanhoe service within the Department for Transport's new East Midlands' rail franchise was welcomed.
- xi) The integrated passenger transport unit, set up in April 2006 and managed by the Highways, Transportation and Waste Management Department was projected to make significant efficiency savings of £0.588 million in 2007/08. The Committee would be kept informed of the unit's progress and development.

Waste Management

- xii) The recently introduced innovative waste site management contract at 13 recycling and household waste sites based on compaction of waste requiring reduced haulage was welcomed. There was confidence that the anticipated savings of £1.19 million would be achieved because the contractors stood to gain proportionately from efficiencies. There was already evidence of improvements.
- xiii) £6 million out of a total of £10 million revenue investment in service improvements over the three year medium term financial strategy was being spent on waste management. This emphasised the importance to which the County Council attributed to working in partnership with

the districts to reduce landfill, increase recycling and meet its waste management targets.

It was moved and seconded that:

- a) the Cabinet be requested to:
 - i) reconsider the £30,000 reduction of environmental grants (in relation to tree planting schemes) to private individuals;
 - ii) reconsider the structural maintenance revenue saving (including reactive maintenance) that is scheduled for 2008/09 and 2009/10 including, by use of reserves.
 - iii) bring forward the review of the use of non-essential signs to 2007/08 and use the additional saving of £50,000 to increase the budget for reactive maintenance in 2007/08.
 - iv) allocate a sum in the region of £30,000 to fund a feasibility study for a community forest/community green initiative to mitigate the environmental impact that may arise from the establishment of a Park and Ride site in Enderby.
 - v) increase the funding provision for Melton By Pass Advanced Design by an extra £25,000 in the 2007/08 Capital Programme to ensure the proposed capital bid would be robust and have a greater chance of success.
- b) That the Director of Highways, Transportation and Waste Management be requested to submit a briefing paper on charging for street café licences and other proposals for increased charging.
- c) That the Director of Community Services be requested to submit a briefing paper on Section 106 funding, including shortfalls and the work of the Developer Contributions Co-ordinator.

An amendment was moved by Mr Hunt and seconded by Mr Bill that:

“The following be added at the end of the motion:

That the provision made for environmental maintenance be maintained and enhanced to ensure that un-sponsored roundabouts are appropriately planted during the current financial year and that appropriate consultations to facilitate joint working in this area with the district/borough councils are investigated.”

The amendment was put and not carried, 4 members voting for the amendment and 6 against.

The original motion was put and carried.