

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

21st June 2012

PRESENT:-

Conservative Group

Councillor Wheeler (Chairman), and Councillors Mrs. Hall (substitute for Councillor Smith), Mrs. Hood (substitute for Councillor Watson), Lemmon, Murray and Stanton (substitute for Councillor Mrs. Watson).

Labour Group

Councillors Frost, Rhind, Richards, Southerd, Taylor and Wilkins.

In Attendance

Councillor Atkin (Conservative Group).

FM/3. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillors Mrs. Watson (Vice-Chairman), Smith and Watson (Conservative Group).

FM/4. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 26th April 2012, were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE

FM/5. **ANNUAL TRAINING REPORT 2011/12 AND PRIORITIES FOR 2012/13**

A report was submitted to propose the priority actions for corporate training activities during 2012/13 to support the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan 2009/14. It also provided an overview of corporate training, learning and development activities completed during 2011/12 and the outcomes. The detail of the report provided a review of 2011/12, including a graph showing training days for the year. Sections were then included on the following areas:-

- Review of training activity 2011/12
- Training for front line staff
- National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)
- Modern Apprenticeships
- Work Experience
- Elected Member Training
- MyView Training

The report then looked at the key outcomes from this training activity, particularly in relation to the leadership and management development, health and safety, vocation/professional training and evaluation. The report also

looked at priorities for 2012/13 and detailed proposals for training under the following headings:-

- Leadership and Management Development
- Equality and Fairness
- Health and Safety
- Employment Policy
- E-learning resources
- Soft skills
- Elected Member Training

Further detail was requested on the training for elected Members. It was confirmed that proposals for Member training were being progressed and a further report was requested to a future Meeting of the Committee. A forward plan of training activities was requested and it was felt that training should be provided in-house rather than sending individual Members on training courses. It was requested that Members liaise with their Group's Champion on training needs.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) ***That the priority areas for training and development during 2012/13, which are linked to the delivery of the key priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan 2009/14, be approved.***
- (2) ***That Members note the range of training activities and actions provided during 2011/12.***

FM/6.

CORPORATE EQUALITIES AND FAIRNESS ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12 AND ACTION PLAN 2012/13

A report was submitted on the achievements in 2011/12 and the changes proposed to the Council's approach to equalities, following the implementation of the Equalities Act 2010. It also proposed a new Corporate Equalities Policy Statement for the Council and detailed how the Council had revised its approach to Equality Impact Risk Assessments. Background was provided on the reviews undertaken at the end of March 2012 to take account of recent changes in legislation and best practice. This included the main implications arising from the Equality Act 2010 and key provisions under the Autism Act 2009. Sections of the report covered demonstrating compliance, before looking at the progress made during 2011/12. Updates were provided with regard to the Equalities Act, including a review of all the documentation, policies and procedures. Equality impact risk assessments had been completed and an e-learning training module had been prepared on the requirements. Further areas covered were consultation and engagement, community events and publishing the Council's workforce profile. The report concluded by looking at the planned activities for 2012/13.

Members recognised the training requirements to raise awareness of responsibilities under both the Equality Act and Autism Act.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) *That the new Corporate 'Equalities' Policy Statement be approved as submitted.*
- (2) *That the Action Plan for 2012/13 shown in an Appendix to the report be approved and that the Corporate Equalities and Fairness Scheme Annual Report for 2011/12 be accepted.*

FM/7. **DATA QUALITY STRATEGY 2012/15 AND ACTION PLAN 2012/13**

A report was submitted on the revised Data Quality Strategy that set out how the Council would manage its arrangements for the correct and timely collection of management information, to evidence the achievement of targets. Background was provided, before reporting on progress. Over the last 12 months significant progress had been made against the identified priority actions in the Data Quality Action Plan and the annual Corporate Governance self assessment. Details were provided on the performance reporting arrangement, the arrangements for ensuring data quality in all service plans and the review of all IT security. Data quality was continually being embedded into the organisation. The report included a section on the Data Quality Self Assessment audit undertaken and the resultant findings. It was considered that the systems of control in relation to 24 of 28 indicators provided a good level of control and the Council could place a reasonable level of assurance on the performance measurement systems in place. The remaining four self assessment returns were not considered sufficiently robust or did not evidence the required level of control. In light of the findings, the Data Quality Strategy had been updated.

The report concluded by looking at the Action Plan for 2012/13, which included the adoption of a revised Data Quality Strategy and the roll out of training.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) *That the Committee adopts the revised Data Quality Strategy 2012/15 and Action Plan 2012/13.*

FM/8. **CONSULTATION STRATEGY ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12 AND ACTION PLAN 2012/13**

A report was submitted on the annual Consultation Strategy that detailed how consultation activities would support the delivery of key priorities set down in the Corporate Plan 2009/14. It detailed the achievements made during 2011/12 and their contribution to Council priorities. The refreshed 2012/13 action plan was also submitted.

The key achievements for 2011/12 were summarised in the report covering the following areas:

- Best Companies employee survey
- Citizens Panel Surveys
- LDF consultation

- Swadlincote Town Centre Vision
- Responding to National Consultations produced by the Government
- Budget/Corporate Priorities
- Changes to Area Forums/Safer Neighbourhoods
- Engagement Review

The report then looked ahead, providing information on the range of planned consultation activities for 2012/13. There was discussion about the preferred growth strategy, to replace regional targets. A Member reminded of the previous representations made in response to allocation processes to reduce the housing allocations for South Derbyshire. It was noted that a consultation on the Local Development Framework was due to take place in the following year and Members were urged to engage in this process.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the key consultation achievements for the year ending 31st March 2012 be noted.***
- (2) That the refreshed Action Plan, as shown in an Appendix to the report, which will guide the work of the Council in undertaking consultation with its service users, residents, partners and staff be approved.***

FM/9. **COMMUNICATIONS ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12 AND ACTION PLAN 2012/13**

A report was submitted on the outcomes achieved in external and internal communications during 2011/12. It presented an action plan for 2012/13 that detailed how communication activities would support the delivery of key priorities set down in the Corporate Plan 2009/14.

The Committee had approved a refreshed Corporate Communications Strategy for the Council in September 2010. The Communication Team's external work had increased the awareness of the District Council, whilst improvements in internal communications had had a positive impact on the workforce.

The detail of the report gave examples of the external communications, with a graph showing media coverage over the year. Specific commentary was included on web/social media, elections, free trees and Google maps. Other reported examples were Facebook, Twitter, the corporate campaigns and promoting the District and supporting economic growth. Further sections looked at improved value for money, recycling and lifestyles built on the legacy of the Olympics, together with the improved feeling of safety and security. A section was also provided on internal communications, before looking ahead to 2012/13.

The Communications Team was praised for the quality and quantity of work undertaken with particular reference made to economic development links. It was requested that parish councils be provided with advice and guidance and

this would be investigated. The Communications Champion added his praise and spoke of his work with the team.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) ***That the Committee notes the performance against the Communications Action Plan 2011/12 and approves the Communications Action Plan for 2012/13, as shown in appendices to the report.***
- (2) ***That the continued use of the current Corporate Campaigns until 31st March 2013 be approved.***
- (3) ***That the key communication achievements for the year ending 31st March 2012, be noted.***

FM/10. **ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT 2011/12 AND ACTION PLAN 2012/13**

A report was submitted to give an overview of the Council's health and safety performance, including an analysis of accident data for 2011/12. It reflected the Council's approach in enabling managers and employees to understand and fulfil their health and safety responsibilities. The Health and Safety Action Plan was available electronically and set down the priorities for health and safety work during 2012/13.

The report detailed the main achievements over the year with particular reference to the RoSPA Gold Award. Other sections covered training, the implementation of IT, risk assessments, professional support and an accident analysis. The report concluded by setting out the targets for 2012/13.

The Director of Operations displayed the RoSPA new entrant award and the gold award for health and safety, which had been won for the second year running. Congratulations were recorded on these awards. A question was submitted about first aid training for the refuse teams and it was confirmed that such training and defibrillator training had been provided to all sections of the Council. Another issue discussed was Safeguarding, the potential implications for the Council and training requirements.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee notes the key health and safety achievements and performance for the year ending March 2012 and accepts the Health and Safety Action Plan that sets down the priority actions for 2012/13.

FM/11. **CORPORATE PLAN 2009-14: PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT YEAR END REPORT**

A report was submitted on the out-turn performance at year-end, in relation to the Council's Corporate Plan 2009-14. Appendices to the report gave detail on the progress against Corporate Plan key projects and performance measures. The Corporate Plan consisted of four main themes or priorities. In

March 2011, the Corporate Plan was refreshed. Each theme contained a number of outcomes. This Committee was responsible for the delivery of 4 outcomes within the Value for Money theme. Details were provided in the report and appendices on the key projects, performance measures, service area commentary and efficiency savings.

Arising from the consideration of this item, it was requested that floor plans be provided, to show the location of the respective sections. Additionally, an update to the internal telephone directory was proposed to include an outline of each officer's role. Congratulations were recorded to officers for the performance achieved.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) ***That the achievements and out-turn performance at year-end in relation to the Council's Corporate Plan 2009/14 be noted.***
- (2) ***That where progress has failed to achieve the specified target, the Committee accepts the adequacy of the remedial action taken.***

FM/12. **CORPORATE SERVICES' SERVICE PLAN 2012/13**

It was reported that service plans were a key part of the Council's performance management framework, being an important link between high level plans and strategies and personal performance objectives. The form and content of service plans had been reviewed and amended to capture a number of cross cutting themes. Detail was provided on the content of the service plan, a copy which was appended to the report. This reflected the current priority themes and outcomes within the Corporate Plan and the Sustainable Community Strategy. The Plan would cover a one year period and progress reports would be made on a quarterly basis.

RESOLVED:-

That the Service Plan for Corporate Services be approved as the basis for service delivery for the period 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013.

FM/13. **COMPLAINTS AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS – 1ST OCTOBER 2011 – 31ST MARCH 2012**

An informative report was submitted on the comments, compliments and complaints received during this period. These comprised one comment, 70 compliments and 21 complaints. Tables were included within the detail of the report showing the division to which each related. Statistics were then provided on the Freedom of Information requests received.

RESOLVED:-

That the complaints and Freedom of Information requests, as detailed in the report, are noted.

FM/14. RIGHT TO BUY RECEIPTS – INVESTMENT IN NEW AFFORDABLE RENTED HOMES

A report was submitted that advised Members that when a property was sold under the Right to Buy (RTB) provisions, the Government took 75% of the income, with the remaining 25% being retained locally. In the self-financing settlement for the future operation of the HRA, the Government had predicted the Right to Buy sales for the next 30 years for each local authority landlord. These predictions were based on sale numbers in recent years. The Government then built their predicted income into its own budgeting figures. For South Derbyshire the number of sales ranged from 6 this year and next year through to 11 per annum by year 30.

Prior to 2nd April 2012, the cash discount that any prospective purchaser could obtain on buying their house in South Derbyshire was capped at £24,000. This was the East Midlands capping level – the amount varied according to regional circumstances. On 2nd April 2012, the Government increased the cap nationally on Right to Buy sales to £75,000. This was expected to increase substantially the number of sales beyond the number predicted previously, and the issue at hand was how the income from those additional sales was treated.

The Government had stated that it would allow local authorities to retain all of the additional receipts if the income was used to provide new affordable housing. It had also stated that the maximum amount that could be used from the sales for each property built or purchased could not be more than 30% of the cost of build or purchase. The balance of up to 70% would need to be funded by borrowing.

Options on how the new provision could be delivered were provided within the report, although early signs were that most local authorities would sign the agreement, as it kept the money local. The Chartered Institute of Housing also supported such a stance.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the Committee notes the recommendation of the Housing and Community Services Committee of 14th June 2012 in relation to this matter.***
- (2) That subject to the above, the Council signs the Government agreement to use additional Right to Buy receipts for investment in affordable new homes.***
- (3) That a feasibility budget of up to £20,000 to assist in developing delivery models for the new homes be approved.***

FM/15. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee was asked to review its work programme.

RESOLVED:-

That the updated work programme be noted.

FM/16. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT [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.

MINUTES

The Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on 26th April 2012 were received.

ABANDONED PROPERTY – COUNTY COURT DECISION (Paragraph 2)

The Committee noted an eviction judgement.

LAND AT WOODVILLE (Paragraph 3)

This matter was deferred.

LAND AT MIDWAY (Paragraph 3)

The Committee approved proposals for the marketing and development of an area of Council-owned land.

R. WHEELER

CHAIRMAN