

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

23rd June 2011

PRESENT:-

Conservative Group

Councillor Wheeler (Chairman), Councillor Mrs. Watson (Vice-Chairman) and Councillors Jones, Lemmon, Murray, Smith and Watson.

Labour Group

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

In attendance

Councillor Mrs. Plenderleith (Conservative Group) and Councillor Bell (Labour Group).

FM/1. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 17th March 2011 were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

FM/2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Jones and Murray declared a personal interest in respect of the exempt report on the use of the Market hall, as Members of Derbyshire County Council.

MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE

FM/3. **AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE**

Under Minute No. AS/24, an update was provided with regard to the potential clawback of monies, arising from the grant certification report and a detailed report on this would be provided to the Sub-Committee at its September meeting. In response to questions, further information was provided on this matter and with regard to the payroll function.

RESOLVED:-

That the Minutes of the Audit Sub-Committee Meeting held on 6th April 2011 are received and any recommendations contained therein are approved and adopted.

FM/4. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee was asked to review its Work Programme.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee receives the updated Work Programme.

FM/5. **CONSULTATION STRATEGY ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11 AND ACTION PLAN 2011/12**

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 2010/11 and their contribution to Council priorities, together with the refreshed 2011/12 Action Plan.

The key achievements for 2010/11 were summarised in the report, with sections on the Best Companies employee survey, Citizens Panel survey and petitions/e-petitions. The report then looked ahead, providing information on the priorities consultation, the review of consultation arrangements and employee engagement and consultation.

Clarification was sought about the employee consultation related to the best companies award.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the Committee notes the key consultation achievements for the year ending 31st March 2011.***
- (2) That approval be given to the refreshed action plan submitted, which will guide the work of the Council in undertaking consultation with its service users, residents, partners and staff.***

FM/6. **ANNUAL HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT 2010/11 AND ACTION PLAN 2011/12**

A report was submitted to give an overview of the Council's Health and Safety performance, including an analysis of accident data for 2010/11. 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 had been circulated with the report and set down the priorities for health and safety work during 2011/12.

The report detailed the main achievements and included sections on training, the implementation of IT, risk assessments and professional support, together with an accident analysis. The report concluded by setting out the targets for 2011/12.

Reference was made to the Officer Health and Safety group, which was attended by the Member Champion for Health and Safety. It was requested that consideration be given to appointing a further Health and Safety Member Champion from the Opposition Group and a nomination was suggested to this role. A further proposal was to again seek accreditation under the RoSPA Occupational Health and Safety Programme for 2012, given the successes in recent years.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the Committee notes the key health and safety achievements and performance for the year ending March 2011 and approves the Action Plan as submitted, that sets down the priority actions for 2011/12.**
- (2) That Council be recommended to appoint Councillor Bell as a further Health and Safety Champion representative of the Opposition Group.**
- (3) That the Council again seeks accreditation under the RoSPA Occupational Health and Safety Programme for 2012.**

FM/7. CORPORATE EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS SCHEME 2010/11 – ANNUAL REPORT

A report was submitted on the progress made on the Corporate Equality and Fairness Scheme during 2010/11. It included the refreshed Action Plan for 2011/12 and copies had been circulated. The report included priority actions and the key outcomes achieved in 2010/11. Further sections of the report covered progress against the equality framework, the Action Plan for 2011/12 and the impact of the Equalities Act 2010, which replaced previous anti-discrimination laws.

A Member spoke about recent legislation on Autism, which would need to be reflected in the Council's Policy. There was also discussion about the terminology used in this area of Council work.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee notes the key achievements and outcomes of embedding equalities into the day-to-day workings of the Council and the Council's Corporate Equality and Fairness Scheme for the year ending March 2011, together with approving the actions proposed for 2011/12.

FM/8. CORPORATE PLAN 2009-14: PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT (1ST APRIL 2010 TO 31ST MARCH 2011)

A report was submitted detailing achievements for the quarter ending 31st March 2011, in relation to the Council's Corporate Plan 2009-14. The Corporate Plan Action Plan consisted of four main themes, of which this Committee was responsible for actions within the "Value for Money" theme. Details were provided in the report and related appendices on the Corporate Plan actions and performance indicators.

In response to a question, further information was provided on a trace and collect initiative for the collection of council tax arrears.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) *That the Committee notes the Council's key achievements and performance for the year ending 31st March 2011.*
- (2) *That where performance has failed to achieve the specified target, the Committee accepts the adequacy of the response and plans for future action.*

FM/9. **CORPORATE SERVICES – SERVICE PLAN 2011/12**

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, which reflected the current themes and priorities 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 is approved as the basis for service delivery over the period to March 2012.

FM/10. **COMPLAINTS AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS – 1ST APRIL 2010 TO 31ST MARCH 2011**

An informative report was submitted on the comments, compliments and complaints received during this period. These comprised one comment, 65 compliments and 18 complaints. Tables were included in 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 Committee notes the report.

FM/11. **MEMBERS' ELIGIBILITY TO JOIN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME**

It was reported that Members had the right to join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), subject to Council approval. The Council had previously determined not to accept recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) on this point. Members were reminded of the latest IRP report, submitted to Council in April, which had highlighted the importance of the right to join as well as the current economic context. The IRP continued to support the principle that all Members should be eligible to join the LGPS, which left the Council to decide on issues of affordability and suitability.

Consultation had been undertaken with Members, resulting in several expressing that they would or might be interested in joining the LGPS. The financial implications reported an estimated cost of £69,000 per year for the Council's contributions to pension costs.

RESOLVED:-

That Council be recommended to approve a budget of £20,000, funded from the savings in Members' Allowances, to enable Members to join the Local Government Pension Scheme.

FM/12. **USE OF PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE OF NO. 35 MIDLAND ROAD AND LAND AT PENISTON RISE, MELBOURNE**

The Committee was asked to consider the use of capital receipts generated in the last financial quarter, in accordance with the approved policy and the Council's Capital Investment Strategy. Members were reminded of the statutory background relating to the use of proceeds from the sale of housing buildings and land. A proportion was payable to the national capital pool with the remainder being available for the Council to invest in other projects. The Council could avoid the pooling payment if the proceeds were used to provide low cost affordable housing or the regeneration of unused, contaminated or derelict land. To avoid the pooling payment, the funds needed to be earmarked to a defined scheme or project, already approved by the Council and agreed by the external auditor.

The report reminded of the Council's Sheltered Housing Vision and the current policy, before detailing the receipts in the last financial quarter. The sale of No. 35 Midland Road, Swadlincote had generated a capital receipt of £150,000 and the report detailed the land and building valuations, together with the proportionate pooling payments.

The Council had an outstanding commitment for investment in sheltered housing and had been requested in principle that the sale proceeds be used to complete the Sheltered Housing Vision. Members were reminded of the schemes delivered to date. A further option suggested using a proportion of the receipts for the Vision, with the remainder being used for general schemes.

Next, the report covered the easement granted at Peniston Rise, Melbourne, the capital receipt of £50,000 and the required pooling payment of £25,000. The aggregate of both capital receipts was £200,000. The report concluded by looking at the overall situation regarding capital investment. Members commented on the need for Officers to identify further schemes for the future.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee approves the use of capital receipts generated in the last financial quarter, for investment in the Sheltered Housing Vision.

FM/13. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN**

The Committee's approval was sought to the draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan. The Plan was required to identify the opportunities and pressures on the service, to give strategic direction and to project the business into the future. The detailed plan was approved by the Housing and Community Services Committee at its Meeting on 16th June 2011 and its executive summary had been circulated. Whilst it was no longer a Government requirement to have an HRA Business Plan, it was good practice. The detail of the report explained the process undertaken in compiling the new HRA Business Plan.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the Committee approves and adopts the draft Housing Revenue Account Business Plan, as recommended by the Housing and Community Services Committee.***
- (2) That further detailed reports are brought to the Committee later in 2011/12 on specific aspects of the Plan, including treasury management / debt options and a medium-term income strategy.***

FM/14. **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 17th March 2011 were received.

LAND AT OVERSEAL (Paragraph 3)

The Committee agreed proposals for the future use of land in its ownership at Overseal.

PREMISES AT SWADLINCOTE (Paragraph 3)

The Committee approved the temporary use of the former Market Hall premises in Swadlincote.

RELOCATION OF MAURICE LEA MEMORIAL PARK BOWLS PAVILION
(Paragraph 3)

The Committee agreed to the relocation of this Bowls Pavilion.

REORGANISATION OF THE OPERATIONS DIRECTORATE ***(Paragraph 3)***

The Committee approved proposals for the restructuring of the Operations Directorate.

R. WHEELER

CHAIRMAN