

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

1st December 2011

PRESENT:-

Conservative Group

Councillor Wheeler (Chairman), Councillor Mrs. Watson (Vice-Chairman) and Councillors Bale, (substitute for Councillor Jones), Hewlett (substitute for Councillor Murray), Lemmon, Smith and Stanton (substitute for Councillor Watson).

Labour Group

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

In Attendance

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

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillors Jones, Murray and Watson (Conservative Group).

FM/61. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Special Meetings held on 29th September and 12th October 2011 and of the Meeting held on 20th October 2011 were taken as read, approved as true records and signed by the Chairman.

Councillor Taylor was welcomed back to the Committee following his illness.

MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE

FM/62. **COMPLAINTS AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS – APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2011**

An informative report was submitted on the comments, compliments and complaints received by the Council for the period 1st April to 30th September 2011. These comprised one comment, 53 compliments and 29 complaints. Tables were included in the detail of the report showing the division to which each related. Statistics were then provided on Freedom of Information (FOI) requests received. It was noted that there was a continuing increase in the number of such requests and it was questioned what proportion of FOI's were from individuals as opposed to lobby groups. Information would be circulated after the Meeting, providing a breakdown. Other issues raised were enquiries relating to deceased persons and there was discussion about a particular complaint submitted.

RESOLVED:-

That the complaints and FOI requests, as detailed in the report are noted.

FM/63. **CORPORATE DOCUMENT RETENTION POLICY**

It was reported that, in accordance with data protection advice and principles, a Document Retention Policy had been produced for the Committee's consideration and adoption. The purpose of the Policy was set out within the report, together with the issues considered, in line with guidance from the Information Commissioner.

Members referred to the Policy, questioning the treatment of particular documents such as the Corporate Plan and media releases. It was confirmed that such documents were kept electronically.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the Committee approves the Document Retention Policy as submitted.***
- (2) That the Committee delegates responsibility to the Head of Corporate Services to ensure that the Policy is kept up to date.***

FM/64. **CORPORATE SERVICES STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP: ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11**

A report was submitted to provide details on the performance of the Partnership after the first year of the contract with Northgate Public Services (NPS). Members were reminded of the background to the appointment of NPS through a seven year contract, commencing in August 2010. The report confirmed the services covered by the contract, and the guaranteed savings that would be achieved. There was a risk/reward mechanism relating to the guaranteed savings for procurement and transformation and figures for the savings achieved were set out within the report. Further sections were provided on Jobs Guarantee/Regional Business Centre, the Performance Framework and Management and Governance Arrangements.

The report then looked at the performance for the period 1st August 2010 to date. Generally, performance had been good with most KPI's being achieved. However, there had been some problems, in particular relating to Finance Services and the failure to produce timely and compliant accounts in accordance with the statutory deadline. Formal action had been taken within the contract and the default mechanism. As previously reported Finance Services would transfer under the direct control of the Council. Next, a section was provided on payroll services, the problems experienced, the formal action taken and the steps taken by NPS to remedy the situation.

Further sections were provided on new systems and the Regional Business Centre, together with savings achieved to date. Tables were included within the report showing the net additional posts recruited and savings achieved. Further sections of the report looked at Income Collection, Procurement,

Transformation-Service Reviews and Governance. Appended to the report was further performance information.

Members reviewed the performance schedules, seeking further information on areas where targets had not been met. Clarification was provided regarding the jobs created and redeployments. It was also suggested that comparative information be provided to Members on performance levels prior to commencing the contract with NPS and this would be supplied.

RESOLVED:-

That the annual report detailing the performance of the Partnership is received.

FM/65. **PROGRESS REPORT ON PROCUREMENT AND BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT WORK PLAN**

A report was submitted to provide details on the activity of the procurement and business improvement work streams. Initially, background was provided on the central Procurement and Business Improvement Unit, together with its key objectives. This Unit also supported the wider transformational work being undertaken through Northgate on retained service reviews. The work of the Unit provided cashable as well as non-cashable savings to the Council and details were reported. Further sections of the report looked at the Business Improvement Board, the financial management system for e-procurement and the identification of cashable savings.

RESOLVED:-

That progress on the Procurement and Business Improvement Plan is noted.

FM/66. **CORPORATE PLAN 2009 TO 2014: PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT (1st JULY TO 30th SEPTEMBER 2011)**

A report was submitted detailing achievements and performance for the quarter ending 30th September 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 key projects, performance measures and performance indicators.

There was recognition of the work undertaken by the Property Team during the recent office moves. Members asked for their thanks to be recorded to these staff and those affected by the disruption. The Chief Executive responded, thanking Members.

RESOLVED:-

That progress for the period 1st July to 30th September 2011 in relation to the Council's Corporate Plan 2009-14 is noted.

FM/67. BUDGET AND FINANCIAL MONITORING 2011/12

The latest budget and financial monitoring report was presented for the Committee's consideration. Initially, this focussed on the General Fund Revenue Account and a table reported the revised budget deficit for 2011/12. In line with normal monitoring arrangements, the position on the revised net expenditure on services continued to be reviewed. A full analysis of each cost centre with variances across each policy committee was detailed in an appendix. Further tables showed performance against budget for 2011/12 as at September 2011 for each Committee and main service area. The tables showed that there would be an overall decrease in net expenditure on services of just under £25,000 and the main variances were detailed in the appendix. Additional commentary was provided, particularly about other cost reductions income.

Next, the report focussed on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Performance on the HRA was shown in a table within the report and no major variances were anticipated to date. Capital expenditure and financing was reported and a further table gave an analysis of capital expenditure as at October 2011. This section included further information relating to the Rosliston Forestry Centre, "Aiming High" grant funding and capital receipts. Finally, the report considered Treasury Management with an analysis of borrowing and short-term investments. This section of the report also looked at credit ratings and the effect on interest. Several major banks and financial institutions had had their credit rating reduced. In response to Members questions, there was further discussion about the Rosliston Forestry Centre and the prudent approach taken with regard to Council investments.

RESOLVED:-

That the latest budget and financial monitoring figures for 2011/12 are approved.

FM/68. CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROPOSALS: PROGRESS ON EVALUATION

It was reported that in September, the Committee approved an updated framework for evaluating new capital investment. A small working group was established to evaluate proposals for expenditure. Bids were then submitted and the schemes were considered and scored by the working group, in accordance with the approved framework.

Resources of up to £1.7m were available for capital investment. A total of 14 bids were submitted, with gross investment value of £6.5m, requiring a Council contribution of £3.7m. As this was well above the amount available, the scoring panel ranked the bids in order of priority. It became apparent that further work was needed. Previously, the Committee had established a Service and Financial Planning Working Group on a task and finish basis. It was proposed to reconvene the Group in December with a report back to the Special Budget Committee on 12th January 2012. Members involved in the Working Group were thanked for their work to date.

RESOLVED:-

That a Task and Finish Service and Financial Planning Working Group be appointed to consider the result of proposals for new capital investment, comprising 5 Members (3 Members of the Conservative Group and 2 Members of the Labour Group) and that Group Leaders confirm nominations in due course.

FM/69. **COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNT AND REFORM**

A report was submitted on the Government's proposals for reforming discounts and exemptions associated with Council Tax payments. The Government had issued a consultation paper and the consultation period ended on 29th December 2011. It was seeking responses to 22 specific questions and views on the main principles contained in the proposals. The Executive Summary set out the proposals in brief before considering the following areas:-

- Paying Council Tax
- Supplying Demand Notices
- Tax on Photovoltaic Solar Panels
- Annexes to Family Homes

A request was submitted for the deferral of this matter. Accordingly, it was agreed that a Special Meeting of the Finance and Management Committee be held later in December for this purpose.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee defers consideration of this matter and that a Special Meeting of the Committee be convened later in December to consider the Government's proposals for Council Tax discount and reform.

FM/70. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee was asked to consider its updated work programme.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee receives the updated work programme.

FM/71. **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 20th October 2011 were received.

PROPOSAL TO INSTALL A GROUND SOURCE HEAT PUMP DISTRICT HEATING SYSTEM TO 18No. FLATS AT BROOK STREET, HARTSHORNE (Paragraph 3)

The Committee approved proposals for this heating system.

REVIEW OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES UNIT – CONSULTATION FEEDBACK AND REVIEW (Paragraph 1)

The Committee approved proposals for a review of the Democratic Services Unit.

R. WHEELER

CHAIRMAN