
MEETING	EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES AND ADVISORY PANEL
DATE	25 JULY 2006
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS MACDONALD (EXECUTIVE MEMBER), SCOTT (CHAIR), MOORE, POTTER (AS SUBSTITUTE FOR LOOKER) AND R WATSON
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLOR LOOKER

PART A - MATTERS DEALT WITH UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

7. Declarations of Interest

The Chair invited Members to declare any personal or prejudicial interests which they might have in the business on the agenda.

No interests were declared.

8. Minutes

Members noted, with regards to minute 2, that no adequate explanation had been provided to ward members as to why they had not been briefed and consulted on the report on "Proposed Managed Workspace Scheme, Amy Johnson Way, Clifton Moor" before it had been made public. Members also noted, with regards to minute 4, that ward members had not been briefed on "Land at Manor Lane, Rawcliffe" as requested.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Member for Corporate Services and Advisory Panel held on 13 June 2006 be approved and signed by the Chair and the Executive Member as a correct record, with the following amendment:

- (i) To minute 2 (Minutes), to add a sentence to read, "Members noted, with regards to minute 85 (Proposed Managed Workspace Scheme, Amy Johnson Way, Clifton Moor), that the written explanation received by ward members was inadequate".

9. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been one registration to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Michael Hjort, the Director of York Festival of Food and Drink, addressed the meeting regarding agenda item 5 (The Guildhall – Future Investment) (minute 11 refers). He summarised his observations on facilities at the Guildhall and put forward a case for future investment.

10. Forward Plan Update

Members received an update on the Resources Directorate items which were listed on the Forward Plan.

Members expressed concern regarding a failure to consult ward members on property issues in their wards in some instances. They also highlighted the need to allow sufficient time for consultation.

The Director of Resources agreed to issue a written instruction to officers in Property Services to ensure that consultation occurred in all cases in the future. It was noted that the requirements of the new report writing protocol and checks by the Director and the Assistant Director (Property Services) provided additional safeguards.

The Executive Member agreed to discuss the mechanisms for briefing and consulting ward members with officers and to ensure a brief report be brought to the next meeting detailing the outcomes of these discussions.

Members noted, with regards to the formatting of the document, that some of the text in the “comments/generated by” column was not visible as the size of the rows was uniform and requested that settings on the spreadsheet be adjusted to avoid this problem recurring in the future.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

- (i) That the Executive Member be advised to note the update on the Forward Plan;
- (ii) That outstanding information relating to “Proposed Managed Workspace Scheme, Amy Johnson Way, Clifton Moor” and “Land at Manor Lane, Rawcliffe” (minute 8 refers) be provided to ward members as a matter of priority;
- (iii) That discussions be held with officers regarding the mechanisms for briefing and consulting ward members and a brief report be brought to the next meeting detailing the outcomes of these discussions.

Decision of the Executive Member

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: To inform the Executive Member of the update of the Forward Plan and to ensure that fail safe processes are put in place so that consultation always takes place with ward members on property issues in their wards.

11. The Guildhall - Future Investment

Members received a report which sought to update them on recent observations made in respect of facilities at the Guildhall and the possibility of a case for future investment.

The Food and Drink Festival had used the Guildhall for a number of events in September 2005 and as a result of this the Director of the Festival, on behalf of York Hospitality Association, had written to the Chief Executive making a number of observations regarding the facilities at the hall and putting forward a case for investment. These observations were set out in Annex A of the report.

The report presented two options for consideration:

- Option 1 – To decide that no future investment in the Guildhall was appropriate;
- Option 2 – To ask the Corporate Landlord to consider investment options for the Guildhall, in response to the report, as part of the administrative accommodation review.

As the accommodation review had yet to look at long term options for the Guildhall, Members proposed that a report be brought back to the Executive Member for Corporate Services and Advisory Panel within 3 months, which concentrated on short term options which had a “pay back” by 2011. The long term options for the Guildhall complex would then be considered as a part of the accommodation review. Members emphasised that the “pay back” should not be restricted to financial pay back, but could also cover non-financial matters, and officers advised that the report could also consider options which could be funded from available budgets. Officers indicated that short term options would probably relate to issues such as hearing loops, panel partitions and tables, whilst long term options would cover issues relating to heating, power supply and toilet facilities.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

- (i) That Option 2 be approved and the Corporate Landlord be asked to consider investment options for the Guildhall, in response to the report, as part of the administrative accommodation review. Since the accommodation review had yet to look at long term options for the Guildhall, a report be brought back to the Executive Member for Corporate Services and Advisory Panel within 3 months, which concentrates on short term options which have a “pay back” by 2011. The long term options for the Guildhall complex be considered as a part of the accommodation review.

Decision of the Executive Member

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: To ensure future development is sound and good value.

12. Transfer of the Social Care Welfare Benefits Function from Resources Directorate to Housing and Adult Social Services Directorate

Members received a report which sought approval for the transfer of management responsibility for the social care welfare benefits function from the Resources Directorate to the Directorate of Housing & Social Services. This followed the first stage of a review of the discretionary charging system undertaken jointly by the two Directorates.

The current system for administering discretionary charging had three key components, each of which was separately managed and utilised different information and data systems:

- Provision of welfare benefits checks and advice, and gathering of information for financial assessments, carried out by the Benefit Advice section of the Resources Directorate;
- Management of financial assessments, carried out by the Corporate Services section of the Housing & Adult Social Services Directorate;
- Reconciliation of the level of provision with the assessed charge in order to send invoices to customers, carried out by the Charging Unit in the Adult Services section of the Housing & Adult Social Services Directorate.

The report presented the following options for consideration:

- Option 1 – To retain the current structure;
- Option 2 - To manage all components in one section;
- Option 3 – To combine financial assessment and charging functions.

It was reported that the Executive Members for Housing and Adult Social Services and Advisory Panel had considered the report on 17 July 2006 and had approved Option 2.

It was noted that the first bullet point of paragraph 21 should read, “There is a risk that the advantages gained by linking the welfare benefit function of the discretionary charges with the Council’s Resources Team responsible for benefit advice would not be fully realised;” and that the final sentences of paragraph 21 should read, “It is felt that the impact of the risks are higher and more likely to happen, if the proposal is not agreed. Any potential risks can be managed through contingency planning”.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member for Adult Social Services be advised:

- (i) That Option 2 be approved, with the resulting transfer of the management of the benefits advice function from the Resources Directorate to the Housing & Adult Social Services Directorate.

Decision of the Executive Member for Adult Social Services

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel as set out above be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the service.

13. Treasury Management Annual Report & Review of Prudential Indicators

Members received a report which updated them on Treasury Management performance for 2005/06, covering short-term investments, long-term borrowing, the Venture Fund, outturn and including a review of the Prudential Indicators. It also sought approval of a revised Treasury Management Policy Statement and Practices, following a recent review of the Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and subsequent recommendations that local authorities update their policy statements and practices.

As part of the update on Treasury Management performance for 2005/06 it was reported that:

- The Council's average balance available for short term investments had dropped slightly from £29.2m in 2004/05 to £27.6m in 2005/06;
- The Council's long term borrowings started 2005/06 at £80.4m and ended it at £93.4m;
- The balance on the Venture Fund was £1,467k at the start of 2005/06 and £852k at the end;
- The Treasury Management outturn for 2005/06 was £2,628k against an approved budget of £2,526k, which resulted in a small overspend of £102k.

Paragraph 27 and Annex D of the report presented a review of the Prudential Indicators for 2005/06.

The revised Treasury Management Policy Statement and Practices were attached as Annexes E & F of the report.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

- (i) That the performance of the Treasury Management activity in 2005/06, the movements on the Venture Fund and the Treasury Management outturn be noted;
- (ii) That the review of the movements in the Prudential Indicators be noted;
- (iii) That the revised Treasury Management Policy Statement and Practices, attached as Annexes E & F of the report, be approved, subject to the following amendments
 - (a) To the Policy Statement to reflect that the Council now delegated responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of its treasury management policies and practices to the Executive Member for Corporate Services;

(b) To the first bullet point of the section headed "Checks" on page 10 of the Practice Schedules to require bank reconciliation to be carried out monthly from the bank statement to the financial ledger;

(c) To point f) of paragraph 5.1 on page 18 of the Practice Schedules to reflect that the Council's audit committee was called the Audit and Governance Committee.

Decision of the Executive Member

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: In order to comply with the CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice.

Q MACDONALD
Executive Member

D SCOTT
Chair of Advisory Panel
The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.10 pm.