
MEETING	EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES AND ADVISORY PANEL
DATE	20 MARCH 2006
PRESENT	COUNCILLOR MACDONALD(Executive Member), COUNCILLOR SCOTT (Chair of Advisory Panel), COUNCILLORS BRADLEY, HOLVEY, LIVESLEY, LOOKER and MOORE (Advisory Panel Members)

PART A – MATTERS DEALT WITH UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

77. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Councillor Holvey declared a personal prejudicial interest in agenda item 9 (Proposed Managed Workspace Scheme) as he had been involved in a previous meeting regarding this matter and had voted on the issue. He left the room and took no part in the discussion or decision on the item.

78.† EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following:

Annexes A-D to agenda item 8 (National Non-Domestic Rates, Sundry Debtors, Council Tax and Overpaid Housing Benefit Accounts Submitted for Write-Off) (minute 84 refers) on the grounds that they contained information which was likely to reveal the identity of an individual and information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person. This information was classed as exempt under paragraphs 2 & 3 of Schedule 12A to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Annex A and Annexes 1 and 3-7 of Annex E to agenda item 9 (Proposed Managed Workspace Scheme, Amy Johnson Way, Clifton Moor) (minute 85 refers) on the grounds that they contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person.

This information was classed as exempt under paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972.

79. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2006 be approved and signed by the Chair and the Executive Member as a correct record.

80. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

81. FORWARD PLAN UPDATE

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

The update had been prepared before work and consultation had taken place to consider any changes that might happen as a result of the proposed new Constitution. Some reports might be removed because they would be dealt with under delegated powers and meeting dates had yet to be finalised. An accurate and updated version of the Forward Plan would be provided for Members at the next Executive Member and Advisory Panel (EMAP) meeting in June.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised to note the update on the Forward Plan.

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.

82. FMS REPLACEMENT PROJECT – PROJECT SUPPORT STAFF

Members received a report which outlined the staffing requirements for the Financial Management System (FMS) Project.

The report explained that to achieve the implementation date of April 2008 a dedicated project team, consisting of 2 project support officers, and a part time project administrator, was required.

Members were informed of the potential risks involved with replacing the system and were therefore pleased to see that sufficient support was being given to the Project Manager to ensure the smooth change over to the new system.

Members were informed that the intention was to purchase an 'off the shelf package' which might result in a number of business processes needing to be changed to allow for optimum efficiencies. The system would have an expected lifespan of 5 years after which time it would have to be reviewed to ensure up-to-date functionality.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised:

- (i) That it be agreed that 2 FMS project support officer posts be established for a minimum of 2 years;
- (ii) That it be agreed that 0.6 FTE administrative assistant post be established for a minimum of 2 years.

Decision of the Executive Member

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

REASON: To achieve the implementation date of April 2008.

83. RESOURCES SERVICE PLANS: 2006-2007

Members received a report which presented the 2006/07 service plans for the Resources Directorate for approval and comment, including the amended Property Services service plan and the proposed monitoring and reporting arrangements for the service plans.

Members had been presented with the six service plans for the Resources Directorate in January 2006 as part of the revenue budget estimate proposals for 2006/07. No significant changes had subsequently been made to the service plans for Audit & Risk Management, Business Management, Financial Services, IT&T, and Public Services. Significant alterations had been made to the Property Services service plan and the revised version was attached as Annex 1 of the report.

It was proposed that performance and financial monitoring reports were prepared for Members as follows:

- First Monitor: September 2006 EMAP
- Second Monitor: December 2006 EMAP
- 2007/8 Planning & Budget report: January 2007 EMAP
- Out-turn report: Estimated - June 2007 EMAP

The reports would contain the following projections and updates:

- Financial Performance
- Best Value Performance Indicators
- Customer First Indicators
- Staffing Performance Indicators
- Key Service Plan actions – to be reported by each Assistant Director, but as a minimum, to contain updates on Critical Success Factors.

Members were concerned that they had been asked via an email rather than at a public meeting, to approve those service plans originally put before them on 17 January 2006, as not all Members had retained their copies of the plans.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised:

- (i) That the content of the report be noted and acknowledged;
- (ii) That the proposals for monitoring of progress be agreed;
- (iii) That the Resources Service Plans issued on 17th January 2006, along with the amended service plan for Property Services attached at Annex 1, be approved.

Decision of the Executive Member

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

REASON: To improve and monitor performance.

84.† NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES, SUNDRY DEBTORS, COUNCIL TAX AND OVERPAID HOUSING BENEFIT ACCOUNTS SUBMITTED FOR WRITE-OFF

Members received a report which sought approval to write-off irrecoverable accounts, each one over £2,000 in value, for National Non-Domestic Rates (Annex A), Sundry Debtors (Annex B), Council Tax (Annex C) and Housing Benefit Overpayments (Annex D). It also provided details of the value of other irrecoverable accounts under £2,000 that had been written-off under delegated authority in the current financial year.

Paragraph 4 of the report provided a breakdown of the £186,122 write-offs where each debt had a greater value than £2,000 and the £1,122,233 where each debt had a value of less than £2,000.

In regard to the recovery of overpayment of housing benefit, the Members were informed that the authority was able to claim 40% of the debt from ODPM and therefore had made every effort to recover at least 60%. This was often done by recouping a small amount every week from ongoing benefit payments but the debt had therefore taken a long time to recover.

All methods for recouping debt had been fully explored i.e. the threat of bailiffs / court action, and it had now been decided that the amounts listed above were irrecoverable.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised:

- (i) That the write-off of the amount of £186,122, as shown in paragraph 4 of the report (with individual debts listed in the appendices to the report), be approved, taking note that each debt has a value greater than £2,000;
- (ii) That the write-off of £1,122,233 of accounts valued at less than £2,000 for the 6 month period to 20 March 2006 (as shown in paragraph 4 of the report), under the Head of Finance's delegated authority, be noted.

Decision of the Executive Member

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

REASON: To keep the accounts up to date.

85.† PROPOSED MANAGED WORKSPACE SCHEME, AMY JOHNSON WAY, CLIFTON MOOR

Members received a report which updated them on the progress achieved in determining the best solution for the replacement of Parkside Commercial Centre and 4 Fishergate with a new managed workspace scheme at Clifton Moor, and sought approval of the property related transactions which resulted from this.

In July 2004, the Executive had authorised officers to pursue an option whereby the current sites were sold to a developer who financed and built a new facility, which on completion was leased to the Council. Individual units could then be sublet to small businesses. Officers were asked to undertake negotiations to establish the best financial and property solution and report back, together with advice on the procurement of the management service for the proposed scheme. A separate report, attached at Annex E, was being taken to the Executive Leader and Advisory Panel, recommending selection of the scheme which was most appropriate for delivery of the service, and dealing with the procurement issues.

Confidential Annex A detailed the proposed basis for the sale of the Council owned land at Amy Johnson Way to the developer and the proposed basis for the lease of the completed development by the Council. The report explained that the marketing of the freeholds of the Parkside Commercial Centre site and the 4 Fishergate site for sale was subject to relocating the existing tenants and, for the former, agreeing a land exchange with the Caravan Club.

Members had previously queried whether this item would be considered at this meeting and it was noted that ward members had not been given prior notice of the item before it became public. A ward member (Councillor Moore) requested that a written explanation be given as to why this had not happened particularly as this was not the first time this issue had been raised.

Members also expressed concern as to the scale of the proposed new build but received confirmation that all requirements had been fully considered by Economic Development earlier in the process.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised:

- (i) That the land at Amy Johnson Way be sold on the basis outlined in paragraph A1 of Annex A of the report;
- (ii) The City Council take a lease of the completed development on the basis outlined in annex A, paragraph A2.
- (iii) That subject to relocating the existing tenants, and agreeing a land exchange with the Caravan Club, the freehold of the Parkside Commercial Centre be sold, providing an offer is received equal to or in excess of the value stated in Annex A paragraph A9.
- (iv) That subject to relocating the existing tenants, and to there being no need related to the Council's accommodation review, that the freehold of 4 Fishergate be sold, providing an offer is received equal to or in excess of the value stated in Annex A paragraph A10.
- (v) That a written explanation be provided to the ward member as to why ward members had not received prior notification of this item before the agenda was published.

Decision of the Executive Member

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

REASON: To progress with the replacement of Parkside Commercial Centre and 4 Fishergate with a managed workspace scheme at Clifton Moor.

Q MACDONALD
Executive Member

D SCOTT
Chair of Advisory Panel

The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.00 pm.