
MEETING	EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES AND ADVISORY PANEL
DATE	11 SEPTEMBER 2007
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS HEALEY (CHAIR), JAMIESON-BALL (EXECUTIVE MEMBER), LOOKER (OPPOSITION SPOKESPERSON), PIERCE AND HOLVEY (SUBSTITUTE)
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLOR R WATSON

16. Declarations of Interest

Members were invited to declare at this point in the meeting any personal or prejudicial interests they might have in the business on the agenda.

None were declared.

17. Exclusion of Press and Public

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

Annexes A, B, C, and D to Agenda Item 8 (National Non-Domestic Rates/Sundry Debtors/Council Tax And Overpaid Housing Benefit Accounts Submitted For Write-Off) on the grounds that it contains information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual and relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person. This information is classed as exempt under paragraphs 2 and 3 of Schedule 12A to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as revised by The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006).

Annex B to Agenda Item 9 (Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation) on the grounds that it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, including the authority holding that information. This information is classed as exempt under paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as revised by The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006).

18. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting held on 24 July 2007 be approved and signed as a correct record.

19. Public Participation

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

20. Forward Plan Update

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

Members agreed to defer Agenda Items 10,11, and 12 (Minutes 25, 26 and 27 refers) and that the meeting on 30 October be reinstated to consider these deferred items and the following items on the Forward Plan, to be brought forward from the meeting scheduled for December:

- Insurance Mid Term Monitoring Report
- Contract Design Management (CDM) Regulations
- Review and Strategy for the Commercial Portfolio

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised:

- (i) That the update on the Forward Plan be noted;
- (ii) That the meeting on 30 October be reinstated to consider the 6 items listed above.

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.

21. Resources First Performance & Financial Monitor:

Members considered a report which combined performance and financial information for the Directorate of Resources for Monitor 1, 2007/08. The performance element covered key and Council Plan indicators and projects, and the financial aspect dealt with capital, revenue and Treasury Management variances.

The report advised that the directorate was forecasting a net underspend of £505k compared to a budget of £4,655k. This was a forecast variance of 0.8% compared to the gross budget of £65,198k.

Members queried whether there was a way to measure staff sickness so that long term sickness was omitted and suggested that the median could be used instead of the average. Officers reported that the figures were produced centrally, but would investigate what options there were to produce more informative sickness figures.

The Executive Member congratulated officers on getting the York Customer Centre (YCC) resolved over the summer and improving its performance, and on the ongoing improvements in benefits performance particularly new claims.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised to:

- (i) Note the current financial situation
- (ii) Note performance, achievements and comments
- (iii) Approve the accounting approach of using revenue reserves for dealing with the Property Trading account to be approved by the Executive
- (iv) Approve the adjustments to the capital programme subject to approval by the Executive.

Decision of the Executive Member

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

REASON: In accordance with budgetary and performance monitoring procedures.

22. Shared Service Initiative for Audit & Fraud Services in the North Yorkshire Region

Members received a report which advised Members of discussions between York and North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) regarding the business benefits of moving towards a shared service solution for internal audit and fraud services.

Members had two options to consider. The first option was to confirm the agreement, in principle, to enter into a shared audit and fraud service with NYCC, together with the proposed interim shared management arrangements. The second option was to seek alternative measures to address the existing constraints on service capacity and resilience. The first option was recommended. A detailed options appraisal would be undertaken before moving to phase II of the process.

Members raised concerns about whether the planned programme of work would continue to be met and that there would be no diminution in services. Officers reported that they would ensure that there was no loss or prejudice to the council's own audit plan, and that exit strategies would be incorporated, in case the shared service did not go according to plan.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised to:

- (i) Note the officer discussions to date and the agreement, in principle, to develop a shared service solution with North Yorkshire County Council for the provision of audit and fraud services;
- (ii) Approve the proposed shared management arrangements as set out in this report (phase I of the proposal) from 1 October 2007 until at least March 2008, but with the option to extend this period by up to 12 months;
- (iii) Approve the commitment of resources to the arrangement on the basis of the existing audit and fraud service levels and costs.

Decision of the Executive Member

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

REASON: To enable Members to consider future collaboration with North Yorkshire County Council in the delivery of internal audit and fraud services.

23. National Non-Domestic Rates/Sundry Debtors/Council Tax And Overpaid Housing Benefit Accounts Submitted For Write-Off

Members considered a report which asked for Member approval to write-off irrecoverable accounts each one over £2,000 in value, for National Non-Domestic Rates (Annex A), Sundry Debtors (Annex B), Housing Benefit Overpayments (Annex C) and Council Tax (Annex D) as per the attached confidential Schedules.

Members were presented with two options:

Option 1 - to approve for write-off the amount of £186,253 shown in para. 4 (the individual debts are listed in the attached confidential annexes).

Option 2 - not to approve the total write-off figure as shown in para. 4

Members requested that in future reports the personal details of individual debtors, excluding businesses, were not included.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised to:

- (i) approve for write-off the amount of £186,253 shown in para. 4, (the individual debts are listed in the attached annexes), taking note that each debt has a greater value than £2,000.
- (ii) note the amount of £283,583 (shown in para. 4) of accounts valued at less than £2,000 written off in the 6 months to 10th August 2007 under the Head of Finance's delegated authority.
- (iii) request officers not to name individuals in future public or private reports, subject to legal advice on Members interests.

Decision of the Executive Member

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

REASONS: To allow prudent management of the Authorities debt portfolio;
To inform the Executive Member.

24. Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO)

Members received a paper which advised Members of the financial performance of the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) contained in Confidential Annex B.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised to:

- (i) note the contents of this report;
- (ii) consider the proposed actions contained at paragraph 12 in Confidential Annex B and refer to the Executive for a decision
- (iii) ask officers to keep Members up to date with progress.

Decision of the Executive Member

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

REASONS: To inform the Executive Member.
To seek Members views on future financial planning before referring to the Executive for a decision.

25. Supplier & Contract Management System (SCMS)

Members received a report which informed Members of the progress made in implementing and deploying the Supplier and Contract Management System (SCMS) at City of York Council.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised to:

- (i) defer the report to the meeting in October

Decision of the Executive Member

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

REASON: To allow more time for discussion on decision items on the agenda and to balance the number of items on the Forward Plan more evenly between meetings.

26. Introduction of the Local Housing Allowance

Members considered a report which advised members of the introduction of the Local Housing Allowance from April 2008 and its implications for the calculation and payment of Housing Benefit. This report was for information only and no decision was required.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised to:

- (i) defer the report to the meeting in October

Decision of the Executive Member

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

REASON: To allow more time for discussion on decision items on the agenda and to balance the number of items on the Forward Plan more evenly between meetings.

27. Update On Gershon Efficiency Savings

Members considered a report which was for information only and gave an update on progress against the Gershon efficiency targets in the light of the 2006/07 out-turn (backward look) and the 2007/08 forecast (forward look).

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised to:

- (i) defer the report to the meeting in October

Decision of the Executive Member

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

REASON: To allow more time for discussion on decision items on the agenda and to balance the number of items on the Forward Plan more evenly between meetings.

28. Review and Strategy for the Council's Commercial Property Portfolio

Members considered a report which introduced the strategic review of the commercial property portfolio which was currently being prepared, and invited Members' views on the process and options.

Officers gave a presentation which covered the following points:

- Corporate Asset Management Plan
- Non-operational properties
- Operational Properties
- Criteria for holding the premises
- Summary of Income and Outgoings
- Benchmarks for properties
- Action Plan for the Future

Officers advised Members to contact them with any additional requests or with any questions regarding the full strategic review of the commercial portfolio.

Members requested that the Resources Scrutiny Board's report on Property Management be acknowledged in the review where relevant.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised that:

- (i) The report be received and noted as an introduction to the full strategic review of the commercial portfolio to be presented to the next meeting.
- (ii) The views of Members expressed at this meeting be taken on board and addressed in the full review.

Decision of the Executive Member

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

REASON: To provide an input into the commercial property review and inform the full report due at the next meeting.

C JAMIESON-BALL
Executive Member

P HEALEY
Chair of Advisory Panel

The meeting started at 5.40 pm and finished at 7.40 pm.