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MEETING	EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS AND ADVISORY PANEL
DATE	26 JULY 2006
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS LANCELOTT (CHAIR), POTTER AND WALLER (EXECUTIVE MEMBER)
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLORS HALL AND B WATSON

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#### **11. 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.

#### **12. Minutes**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2006 be approved and signed by the Chair and Executive Member as a correct record.

#### **13. Public Participation**

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

#### **14. Air Quality Update**

Members considered a report which provided an update on the outcome of the recent Air Quality Support Grant (AQSG) applications made to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). Three AQSG bids were made in relation to the council's ongoing Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) work. The report provided an overview of the planned expenditure of the AQSG and required a decision to be taken on the amount of AQSG to be accepted from DEFRA.

In March 2006 officers submitted three AQSG bids to DEFRA to support the council's air quality work during 2006/2007. The amounts bid for were:

Air quality monitoring = £25,000  
Air quality modelling = £43,000  
Air quality action planning = £59,000

Due to a national shortfall in the amount of grant available, York had been provisionally allocated the following amounts of AQSG for 2005/2006:

Air quality monitoring = £10,000  
Air quality modelling = £15,000

Air quality action planning = £30,000

Two options were presented to Members:

(a) To accept air quality grants from DEFRA totalling £55,000 and allow the air quality projects outlined in the report to proceed.

(b) To reject some or all of the air quality grants from DEFRA and revise the planned air quality projects for 2006/2007 accordingly.

Members queried how much it would cost to proceed with the high profile poster campaign, as part of the Air Quality Information Dissemination Project. Officers stated they could investigate the cost of undertaking a poster campaign but this cost would depend on what Members wanted to do.

#### Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised that

(i) Option (a) should be accepted and staff be thanked for their hard work in progressing LAQM;

(ii) Option (b) should be refused.

#### Decision of the Executive Member

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

REASON: It represents the most appropriate way of funding the continuation of LAQM in the city. This is a statutory undertaking that contributes towards the corporate priorities on improving the health of residents and encouraging the use of public, and other environmentally friendly, modes of transport.

No other source of funding for LAQM has been identified. Refusal to accept all, or part of, the provisional grant would limit progress on corporate priorities relating to health and transport.

#### **15. Response to Audits in Commercial Services, "Appointment and Use of Sub-Contractors" and "Recruitment and Selection."**

Members considered a report which detailed the actions Neighbourhood Services (formerly Commercial Services) had taken in response to the recommendations from two audits completed in Jan 2006, surrounding issues raised through the whistle blowing policy in August 2005.

This report was brought to members following a request from the Commercial Services EMAP of March 7<sup>th</sup> 2006. There were two audits

arising from whistle blowing which detailed issues in Commercial Services in three main areas.

- Irregularities in appointing staff
- Irregularities in the appointment and use of sub contractors
- Failures of supervision and irregularities in the payment of sub contractors

The details of the allegations made by the whistle blowers and the conclusions from the investigations were contained within the reports attached as Annex 1 and Annex 2. Many of the allegations were proved to be unfounded, however the audits did highlight many control weaknesses and it was these issues which were addressed in this report.

This report made reference to the recommendations in the audit reports, the action taken to address each recommendation and the timescale for completion. Much of the work around the use of sub-contractors was already being formulated as part of a review of the building department taking place before, during and after the audit. This report was for information only, consequently there were no decisions required.

Members noted that there were several items that were still outstanding and requested a report back on any items that were not completed within the timescales detailed in the report.

#### Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised to note the contents of the report and request a report back on any items that are not completed within the timescales as set out in the report.

#### Decision of the Executive Member

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

REASON: To update Members of the response to the recommendations from two audits completed in Jan 2006, surrounding issues raised through the whistle blowing policy in August 2005.

CLLR WALLER  
EXECUTIVE MEMBER

CLLR LANCELOTT  
CHAIR OF ADVISORY PANEL

The meeting started at 4.35 pm and finished at 5.00 pm.

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