
MEETING	EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES AND ADVISORY PANEL
DATE	10 JUNE 2008
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS HEALEY (CHAIR), JAMIESON-BALL (EXECUTIVE MEMBER), MOORE, PIERCE (VICE-CHAIR) AND GUNNELL

1. 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.

2. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Annexes 1 - 3 to Agenda Item 6 (Review and Strategy for the Commercial Property Portfolio – Future Investment Strategy – Minute 6 refers) on the grounds that they contain 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).

3. MINUTES

Under Minute 65, Cllr Moore highlighted to officers that he had managed to trace 3 of the NDR debtors, which bailiffs had asked members to write off, in five minutes from Company House and queried what procedures were in place to check the debtors before being passed to the bailiffs. It was reported that there were no procedures in place and that the bailiffs did the Company House checks. Officers agreed to look into these matters.

Under Minute 68, Cllr Pierce queried whether there had been any changes to the LHA rates. It was reported that there had been 2 small changes relating to a couple of the room rates, and that officers were still waiting for confirmation from the DWP about receiving the £100 000 bid.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting held on 18 March 2008 be approved and signed as a correct record.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

5. FORWARD PLAN UPDATE

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

It was agreed that a report on the Consultation Review on the IT Strategy be added to the forward plan for the meeting in October 2008 and a report on the Wider Property Review looking at alternative investment strategies, as detailed in Minute 6, be added to the forward plan for the meeting in July 2008.

RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan be updated and noted.

REASON: To inform the Executive Member.

6. REVIEW AND STRATEGY FOR THE COMMERCIAL PROPERTY PORTFOLIO – FUTURE INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Members considered a report which outlined the future investment strategy for the Commercial Property Portfolio, as requested by the Executive on 20 November 2007, and set out options for allocating the budget made available at Council on 21 February 2008 for reviewing this Portfolio.

The options available for Members were recommended as follows:-

A) To carry on with the position approved in autumn 2007 and adopt the categorisation of the properties in Exempt Annex 1 giving delegation to sell and reinvest to the Director of Resources, subject to consultation, with the exception of the properties contained in the second part of list B and those in lists C and D. The consultants budget approved at Council on 21 February could be partly utilised on a property by property basis for sales advice and acquisitions, condition surveys and other expenses.

B) To put the process in sub-paragraph A above on hold pending a wider review by suitably qualified firms of finance and property consultants, which would include alternative investment strategies, including those options listed in paragraph 6 above. The names of three organisations that could be approached for quotations to give this wider range of advice were listed in Exempt Annex 2. The selection of a consultant would be based both on the price and quality of their service.

It was highlighted that the wider property review had come about from a Conservative Group amendment at Budget Council in February 2008. Members agreed that there was a need to find out what the aims and objectives were behind the amendment before progressing with the wider review and therefore it should be deferred to the next EMAP meeting. The Chair agreed to meet with officers to discuss the Conservative Group amendment and the scope for the wider review. As Option A was not related to the wider property review, Members agreed that Option A should be approved to go ahead.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised

- (i) That the report be noted and Option A in paragraph 8 be approved¹;
- (ii) That Option B, the wider property review looking at alternative investment strategies be deferred until the July EMAP meeting for clarification on how the review should proceed.

Decision of the Executive Member

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

REASON: So that the council's Commercial Property Portfolio may be modernised, made more efficient and may be aligned more closely to Corporate Objectives and service property needs for the future in response to the budget approved by Council.

Action Required

1. To implement Option A, namely adopt the categorisation of the properties in Exempt Annex 1 giving delegation to sell and reinvest to the Director of Resources, subject to consultation, with the exception of the properties contained in the second part of list B and those in lists C and D. SA

7. RESOURCES PERFORMANCE & FINANCE OUTTURN REPORT

Members received a report which combined performance and financial information for the Resources Directorate for 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 net expenditure for the Directorate was £4,554k compared to a budget of £6,090k, a total underspend of £1,536k. This was a variance of 2.3% compared to the gross budget of £67,646k. The overall underspend was

significant however there were a number of projects which had slipped and which would require budget to be carried forward into 2008/09 if they were to be successfully implemented. Paragraph 108 detailed carry forward requests of £660k which mainly relate to the FMS project and various IT&T projects.

Members were asked to choose to support all, some or none of the carry forward requests detailed in paragraph 108 of the report.

Members requested a break down on the job scales for the male/female split. Officers reported it was currently broken down into about 90 pay grades, but the information could be provided in groups such as lower grades, higher grades, principal grades and chief officer grades.¹

Members queried why the Council had failed to receive any LPSA reward and how much reward they could of received. Officers reported that recruitment to the Benefits Team and turnover had been issues, but there was now two permanent benefits advisors who do visits on request. It was further reported that the reward would have been £327.9k and the Council would get a percentage of the overall amount for the number of the 12 targets hit. Members requested that clarity on whether some of the LPSA reward could be received be provided by email.²

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised:

- (i) That the financial and service performance reported be noted;
- (ii) That the year end financial situation be noted;
- (iii) That the improvement in performance achievements be noted;
- (iv) That officers across the directorate be thanked for their hard work;
- (v) That the carry forward requests be approved to go forward to the Executive.³

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.

Action Required

1. To provide information on the pay scales for male/female split in groups such as lower grades, higher grades, principal grades and chief officer grades. SA SA SA
2. To email Members to provide clarity on whether some of the LPSA reward could be received.
3. To refer the carry forward requests to the Executive.

8. AUDIT AND FRAUD SHARED SERVICE – PROGRESS REPORT

Members received a report which advised of the progress which had been made to date in developing the audit and fraud shared service initiative with North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC), and to recommend a few working adjustments to the proposed scope of the shared service project (as previously set out in the original Outline Business Case).

Members had two options to consider at this stage in the project process. The first was to agree the minor changes to the Outline Business Case as set out in paragraphs 9-10. The second option was to leave the scope of the project unchanged. The first option was recommended.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised:

- (i) That the progress which had been made in developing the audit and fraud shared service to date, and the work required to develop the full Business Case/Project Implementation Plan (prior to final Member approval) be noted and welcomed;
- (ii) That the minor changes to the scope of the shared service project (as set out in paragraphs 9-10) be approved.¹

Decision of the Executive Member

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

REASONS: To enable Members to consider the progress made to date and the next steps in the development of the shared service. To enable Members to agree the scope of the services to be included in the project.

Action Required

1. To implement the minor changes to the scope of the shared service project (as set out in paragraphs 9-10).

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9. INSURANCE SERVICES OUTTURN REPORT 2007/08

Members considered a report which informed of the progress made by the Insurance service during 2007/08.

Members were asked to consider the uninsured risk exposures contained at Paragraph 10 and whether insurance cover should be procured. The report advised that with the increasing number of domestic terrorism incidents and the move to Hungate providing a higher profile target Members, as part of this report, might again wish to consider whether they

wished to procure this type of cover. The risk remained low at this time and any decision could be again reviewed prior to the move to Hungate.

Members highlighted that there had been theft from other council properties besides schools, including from the Mansion House. Officers reported that unless these thefts had been reported to them they would not be aware of them happening and it was difficult to obtain this information.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised:

- (i) That the contents of this report be noted;
- (ii) That insurance cover should not be procured in respect of the uninsured risks set out at paragraph 10 of this report, but the Theft from Property Cover be reviewed in a year's time and the Terrorism Cover be reviewed after the move to Hungate.

Decision of the Executive Member

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

REASONS: To advise Members of the progress made by the insurance team in delivering an effective and efficient insurance service to the Council. To allow Members to take an informed decision on whether to extend the Council's insurance portfolio to risks that were currently uninsured.

10. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT & REVIEW OF PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

Members considered a report which updated the Executive Member on Treasury Management performance for 2007/08 compared against the budget taken to Council on 21 February 2007.

The report summarised the economic environment over the 2007/08 financial year and reviewed treasury management performance in the following areas:

- Borrowing,
- Investments,
- The Venture Fund,
- Treasury Management Outturn and
- The Prudential Indicators.

Members queried as to why there was such a large underspend. Officers reported that there would be an underspend in Resources of £3.8m and

this was due to a large number of carry forwards where funding had been committed to projects not yet completed.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised:

- (i) That the 2007/08 performance of the Treasury Management activity, movements on the Venture Fund and the Treasury Management Outturn be noted;
- (ii) That the movements in the Prudential Indicators be noted;
- (iii) That officers be congratulated for the achievements made in Treasury Management;
- (iv) That the proposed policy on the Minimum Revenue Provision as set out at Annex E and Paragraphs 29 to 32 be adopted.¹

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 Public Services Code of Practice and the CIPFA Prudential Code.

Action Required

1. To adopt the policy on the Minimum Revenue Provision SA as set out at Annex E and Paragraphs 29 to 32

11. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2007/08

Members considered an outturn report which advised of activity in the area of Information Management during 2007/08. It dealt with the work of the Information Management Officer (IMO). It was for information and no decision was required, but members had previously requested further information about this developing area of the Council's work.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised:

- (i) That the report be noted.

Decision of the Executive Member

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

REASON: To demonstrate continuing recognition of records and information management as a corporate function in accordance with the Records Management Code of Practice.

12. CORPORATE PROCUREMENT TEAM OUTTURN REPORT 2007/08

Members considered a report which informed of the work and progress of the Corporate Procurement Team during 2007/08.

The medium term action plan was a 3 year action plan that comprised 63 core actions scheduled up to 2010 and designed to achieve the step change improvements as set out in the above continuums. Appendix A of this report set out progress to date in each area. In summary, 12 tasks had now been completed and a further 21 were in progress. Of the remaining 30, most related to the delivery of new technology (FMS (Financial Management System) & SCMS (Supplier and Contract Management System)) and were not yet scheduled for completion.

Members requested that in future reports, Annex B was produced in a larger font and the different priorities were shown in colour or in a separate column.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised:

- (ii) That the contents of this report and the progress made by the Corporate Procurement Team to date be noted.

Decision of the Executive Member

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

REASON: To advise Members of the progress made to date in delivering an effective and efficient procurement service to the Council.

13. CHAIR'S REMARKS

Through the Chair, Members formally thanked Simon Wiles for all his hard work during his tenure with the Council.

Cllr Healey, Chair

Cllr Jamieson-Ball, Executive Member

[The meeting started at 5.05 pm and finished at 8.10 pm].