

EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS AND ADVISORY PANEL

WEDNESDAY, 26 JULY 2006

DECISIONS

Set out below is a summary of the decisions taken at the meeting of the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods & Advisory Panel held on Wednesday, 26 July 2006. The wording used does not necessarily reflect the actual wording that will appear in the minutes.

If you have any queries about any matters referred to in this decision sheet please contact .

4. 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.

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.

5. 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 7th 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.

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.

