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MEETING	DECISION SESSION - EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING & ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES
DATE	26 JANUARY 2010
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS MORLEY (EXECUTIVE MEMBER)
IN ATTENDANCE	CLLR ALEXANDER, CLLR SIMPSON-LAING

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### 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Executive Member was invited to declare at this point in the meeting any personal or prejudicial interests he might have in the business on the agenda. No interests were declared.

### 2. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Decision Session – Executive Member & Adult Social Services held on 27 October 2009 be approved and signed by the Executive Member as a correct record.

### 3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - DECISION SESSION

It was reported that there had been 4 registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

**Representations** were received from the Co-Chairs of the Valuing People Partnership Board regarding agenda item 7 (Revenue Budget Estimates 2010-11 – Housing and Adult Social Services). They informed the Executive Member that they were concerned that the Social Services Policy post would be removed. They stated that this post provides key organisational and admin support to the Partnership Board and was a key point of contact and without it the Board would suffer. They confirmed that the Board provides improvements for people with learning disabilities and that the Social Services Policy post was critical to achieve these results.

**Representations** were received from Heather McKenzie who spoke on behalf of Unison regarding item 7 (Revenue Budget Estimates 2010-11 – Housing and Adult Social Services).

She raised the following issues of concerns:

- There had been a lack of consultation with staff.
- Outsourcing of the Training & NVQ Team
- Reduction in Social Care Staffing

She stated that the reduction of posts in the Social Care Team would have a huge effect on staff and the delivery of the service. Staff had confirmed that workloads were currently high and the proposed job cuts had resulted

in anxious staff concerned how they would deliver the service with a reduction in the team. Ms McKenzie informed the Executive Member that staff from the Hospital's Discharge Team had also confirmed that the workload was already high and a cut in the team could delay discharges. She added that the drop in jobs could result in vulnerable people suffering if the service was overworked and could actually turn out to be more expensive for the Local Authority.

She asked the Executive Member not to recommend the proposed job cuts as the impact would have a long term and damaging effect to the Council.

**Representations** were received from Councillor Tracey Simpson-Laing who spoke on an issue within the Executive Members remit. She asked the Executive Member to consider asking officers to produce a report on the Housing Waiting List and the Unmet Needs of Housing in conjunction with the Strategy Housing Team. She commented on the current housing situation and stated that there were 42 families living in flats with 6 families of 2 or more residing in one bed roomed flats, resulting in overcrowding. Cllr Simpson-Laing stated that 25 families, some with young children or babies were living above the ground floor, which was a health and safety risk. These living arrangements were not appropriate and she requested officers review this situation.

**Cllr Simpson-Laing** also commented on the empty properties across the city and she discussed how if managed properly they could be brought back into affordable homes. Between 2008/9 423 properties were empty and only 19 were brought back into use. Cllr Simpson-Laing suggested officer's review this situation and work to turn more empty properties back into affordable homes.

**Representations** were received from Councillor James Alexander who spoke on item 4 (Comments from the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee Regarding the Referral from the Executive on Overspends in Adult Social Services). Councillor Alexander stated he was giving this statement in his capacity as a Councillor not as Chair of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee nor on behalf of his political grouping. He made representations regarding the Executive Members lack of engagement with the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee by failing to attend their meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2010.

#### **4. COMMENTS FROM THE HEALTH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REGARDING THE REFERRAL FROM THE EXECUTIVE ON OVERSPENDS IN ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES**

The Executive Member considered a report that detailed the comments from the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the referral from the Executive regarding overspends in Adult Social Services.

The Chair of the committee, Councillor Alexander and the Scrutiny Officer gave an update and informed the Executive Member that, in the Scrutiny Committee opinion, the overspend had been clearly caused by an increase in demand for the services provided and was due to low funding for care

compared to the national average. Furthermore, the service was aware of the risks of an overspend while entering the financial year and although savings in the service had been found, the full financial position of the service had not been fully addressed through the breadth of the financial year. Cllr Alexander added that due to a lack of information regarding the possible impact upon budgets for the next financial year and the effect this would have on service users, the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee did not feel it was in a position to recommend ways of off-setting the increase in demand that the Executive requested. This had obvious budgetary connotations and the Committee had felt they were not therefore in a position to give recommendations without the information regarding an overall picture

The Executive Member stated that one of the reasons he did not attend the meeting in January was because he felt the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee were trying to anticipate the budget and were asking for information on the budget proposals that had not been published or finalised.

RESOLVED:

- i. That the Executive Member notes the contents of Annexes B 1 & 2.
- ii. That a summary of the Executive Members comments will be included in the Health & Overview Scrutiny Committee report which will be considered by the Executive on 16 February 2010.

Reason: To address the concerns raised by the Executive referral.

## **5. PETITION RELATING TO THE PROVISION OF DOUBLE GLAZED WINDOWS**

The Executive Member considered a report that advised him of a petition received relating to the provision of double glazed windows and provided an update on the current provision.

The officer gave an update and informed the Executive Member that the petition had been presented at Council on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2009 with 133 signatories requesting that council owned homes in the Monkton Road area be fitted with energy efficient double glazed windows. He stated that under the Decent Homes Standard the key building component regarding windows was the window frame and not the type of glazing. The windows in the homes in Monkton Road area were not the only ones that had not met the criteria for replacement; approximately 1900 homes do not have double glazing. The cost to replace all windows would be approximately £5.7m.

The Executive Member considered the petition and noted that the Housing Revenue Account would be depleted if all 1900 homes were offered double glazing. He suggested officers revisit this once the outcome of the government Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Subsidy Review and the review of the HRA Business Plan was complete.<sup>1</sup>

RESOLVED:

- i. That the Executive Member notes the information in the report.
- ii. That the Executive Member considered the petition and requested a future review be considered following the HRA (Housing Revenue Account) Business Plan review.

Reason: To ensure that a strategic planned approach is taken to reviewing the HRA Business Plan and stock investment decisions

Action Required

1. A future review to be considered following the HRA BH (Housing Revenue Account) Business Plan review.

## **6. NON RESIDENTIAL CHARGING POLICY**

The Executive Member considered a report that asked him to amend the Non Residential Charging Policy, following consideration of the consultation outcomes and the Equalities Impact Assessment.

The officer gave an update and commented on the responses to the Social Care Fairer Charging Survey. Since the report had been written officers had received further replies which had taken the response rate to 38%. Officers agreed to send the latest responses to the Executive Member.<sup>1</sup>

Officers confirmed that the council's current non residential charging policy disregards 35% of Disability Related Allowances (DRA) in lieu of an individual assessment of Disability Related Expenditure (DRE). In financial terms this was equivalent to anything between £7 and £40 per week depending on the individual circumstances, with an average for current customers of £36 per week. Officers added that a benchmarking exercise had been completed and the results of this confirmed that the York policy remains one of the most generous policies with regard to disability related expenditure, as the average amount allowed in other authorities who take 100% of disability related benefits was £16 per week.

In answer to the Executive Members questions the officer confirmed that many customers would continue to receive free care but approximately 475 customers potentially face an increase in charge. Each individual customer would be assessed on their disability related expenditure needs and each individual would be assessed before any change in policy.

The Executive Member agreed that York would be falling inline with other Local Authorities but that the increase could have a big impact on the individual customer. He agreed option 2 but asked officers to incorporate a transitional measure and that any increase in charges should not exceed £25 per week for the next municipal year. The officer agreed to contact the Executive Member to update him on the financial impact the transitional period would have.<sup>2</sup>

RESOLVED: That the Executive Member considered the outcome of the consultation and the Equalities Impact Assessment and agreed Option 2, amending the current non residential charging policy with effect from April 2010 with the following condition:

- Any increase in charges should not exceed £25 per week for the next municipal year.

Reason: To generate additional income whilst still ensuring consistent application to the Fairer Charging Guidance.

Action Required

1. Send the Exec Member the latest responses to the Social Care Fairer Charging Survey BH  
BH
2. Update the Exec Member on the financial impact the transitional period will have.

**7. REVENUE BUDGET ESTIMATES 2010/11 - HOUSING AND ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES**

The Executive Member received a report as part of the consultation on the 2010/11 budget process. The report presented the budget proposals for Housing and Adult Social Services and included:

- the revenue budget for 2009/10 (Annex 1) to show the existing budgets
- the budget adjusted and rolled forward from 2009/10 into 2010/11
- the cost of pay and price increases, increments and settlement of pay and grading appeals for the portfolio
- proposals for budget service pressure costs and savings options for the portfolio area (Annexes 2 and 3)
- fees and charges proposals (Annex 4)
- the Housing Revenue Account (Annex 5).

The Director of Housing and Adult Social Services gave an update on the directorate's financial position and areas on which there were significant financial pressures. He confirmed that given the need for significant savings it had not been possible to completely avoid proposals that would have some implications either for staff or service levels.

In response to the verbal representations made the Director stated that the removal of the Social Services Policy post would not effect the council's service to the Valuing People Partnership Board and due to a high volume of staff achieving NVQ's the requirement for staff training had decreased and that the alternate ways of providing training and the NVQ service would result in a more cost effective service.

The Director informed the Executive Member that the proposal to look at savings in social care assessment would need to be handled very carefully to ensure that essential services were not affected. It would be subject to very careful consideration and a rigorous assessment process, which included looking at the risk to customers and staff, legislative requirement, proven customer demand and the Council's corporate objectives. He added that the Social Care Strategy post and Equalities and Information post provided much needed support to the development and improvement of services. If savings were made in these areas then it would be important for the new department of Adults, Children and Education to explore how strategic support was provided.

Officers went through the key issues in the report and the forthcoming Housing Revenue Account review. They also stated that the Social Inclusion Working Group would be considering the budget proposals at their meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2010 and would feed their comments to the Executive and the Executive Member for Housing and Adult Social Services.

Full details of the budget would be considered by the Executive on 16 February 2010 and then Budget Council on 25 February 2010.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. That the Executive Member considered the budget proposals for consultation for Housing & Adult Social Services.
- ii. That the Executive Member confirmed that the proposals were in line with the corporate priorities.
- iii. That the report be referred to the Executive for consideration.
- iv. That any issues arising from the Equalities Impact Assessment be taken into consideration when the Executive considers the final budget proposals.

Reason: As part of the consultation on the Housing & Adult Social Services budget for 2010/11

Cllr Morley, Chair

[The meeting started at 4.00 pm and finished at 5.30 pm].

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