

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

9th September 2010

PRESENT:-

Conservative Group

Councillor Harrison (Chairman), Councillor Murray (Vice-Chairman) and Councillors Bladen, Grant, Lemmon, Mrs. Plenderleith (substitute for Councillor Roberts), Stanton (substitute for Councillor Mrs. Coyle) and Wheeler.

Labour Group

Councillors Richards, Southerd, Taylor and Wilkins.

Independent/Non-Grouped Member

Councillor Pabla.

In attendance

Councillor Atkin (Conservative Group).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillors Mrs. Coyle and Roberts (Conservative Group).

FM/24. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 24th June 2010 and of the Special Meeting held on 29th June 2010 were taken as read, approved as true records and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE

FM/25. **AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED:-

That the Minutes of the Audit Sub-Committee meeting held on 16th June 2010 are received.

FM/26. SCHEME FOR THE RECOVERY OF BUILDING REGULATION COSTS AND ASSOCIATED MATTERS

It was reported that the Environmental and Development Services Committee had considered this matter at its Meeting on 26th August 2010 (Minute No. EDS/16 refers). A report was submitted seeking Members' agreement for a new scheme for the recovery of building regulation costs and associated matters, which was required by new legislation.

The Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 2010 required the introduction, on 1st October 2010, of a new local authority building control charging regime. This was in order that the standards and environment within which local authorities and approved inspectors operated and competed were improved. A copy of the report to the Environmental and Development Services Committee was appended as background.

RESOLVED:-

That the Council adopts the new scheme of fees for the recovery of Building Regulation costs and associated matters, as recommended by the Environmental and Development Services Committee for implementation on 1st October 2010.

FM/27. BUDGET AND FINANCIAL MONITORING 2010/11

The latest budget and financial monitoring report was presented for the Committee's consideration. Initially, this focused on the General Fund Revenue Account and a table summarised the estimated budget deficit for the year, in the sum of £472,192.00. Since the budget was set out in February, several adjustments had been made and these were reported, together with the revised budget position for the General Fund 2010/11 in further tables. The budget deficit was now estimated to be £360,257.00.

In line with normal monitoring arrangements, the position on net expenditure on services had been monitored and reviewed. The revised budget, together with variances identified as at June 2010 were summarised in a table, which showed there would be an overall reduction in net expenditure of approximately £45,000. Specific commentary was provided on variances in the following areas:-

- Environmental Services
- Management, Finance and Property
- Private Sector Housing and Public Buildings
- Leisure and Community Development
- Planning Services
- Housing and Planning Delivery Grant
- Customer Services

Information was then provided on inflation provision and income from Land Charges. In response to a Member's question, Officers confirmed the impact of the Government amending legislation regarding current fees and for personal searches dating back to 2005, which had become recoverable. This section of the report also included information on the area-based grant and car parking enforcement.

Next, the report focused on the Housing Revenue Account. A table showed net expenditure by service area for 2010/11, the approved budget and the projected variances for the year. This showed a net deficit of £28,500 higher than budgeted, which was due mainly to the effect of the final subsidy settlement for 2010/11.

Capital expenditure and financing were reported and a further table showed an analysis of spending by main service or project area. The programme had been updated and no major variances were anticipated at this stage. Specific commentary was provided on growth point and external funding, the local authority business growth incentive grant and capital receipts.

Finally, the report covered treasury management, with an analysis of the Council's borrowing and short-term investments/bank deposits. This section of the report also looked at overall debt liability.

It was questioned whether a feasibility study had been funded from the growth point monies. This related to the Swarkestone Causeway, but there was no knowledge of this having been funded through growth point monies. It was agreed that a written response would be sent to all Members of the Committee on this matter.

RESOLVED:-

That the latest budget and financial monitoring figures for 2010/11 are approved.

FM/28. **REINVESTMENT OF PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE OF HOUSING LAND**

The Committee was asked to consider the reinvestment of housing-related capital receipts generated in the financial quarter. This was in accordance with an approved policy and the Council's Capital Investment Strategy.

Members were reminded of the statutory background and the requirement to return a proportion of proceeds from the sale of housing land and property to a national capital pool. The remaining proportion remained with the Council for investment in other capital projects. The "pooling payment" or a proportion of it could be avoided if the resources were used to provide low cost affordable housing for the regeneration of unused, contaminated or derelict land. It needed to be earmarked to a defined scheme or project already approved by the Council and agreed by the external auditor.

The Strategy provided that a decision on the utilisation of housing capital receipts was made as they were generated. This allowed flexibility and a prudent approach to maintain a balance between providing funds for housing and other general schemes.

During this financial quarter, a capital receipt of £62,500 was received from the sale of land at Grange Close in Melbourne. A series of options were presented for the use of these resources and where appropriate, these showed the pooling payments that would apply.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee approves the reinvestment of Housing Capital Receipts as follows:

- ***50% of the total receipt is allocated to the Sheltered Housing Vision, that is £31,250.***
- ***The remaining money to be allocated to general schemes. In doing this, 50% of it will need to be paid over to the Government under the pooling arrangements. This will leave 50%, i.e. £15,625 to fund further Disabled Facility Grants.***

FM/29. **CORPORATE PLAN 2009-14: PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT (1ST APRIL 2010 – 30TH JUNE 2010)**

A report was submitted detailing performance for the quarter ending 30th June 2010, in relation to the Council's Corporate Plan 2009-2014. The Corporate Plan Action Plan consisted of four main themes, of which this Committee was responsible for actions and relevant performance indicators within the "Value for Money" theme. Full details of key achievements were provided under the initiatives; meeting community needs, increasing efficiency, development of staff and Members, high performing services and high standards of corporate governance. Summary details of actual performance were also provided, including a table showing performance against targets and targets "at risk" of failure. Appendices to the report detailed performance indicators for value for money and financial performance.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee notes the Council's key achievements and performance for the quarter ending 30th June 2010 and where performance has failed to achieve the specified target, the Committee accepts the response submitted.

FM/30. **CONSULTATION STRATEGY ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10 AND ACTION PLAN 2010/11**

The Committee received the Consultation Strategy report for 2010/11, together with achievements made during 2009/10 and the refreshed 2010-15 Consultation and Community Engagement Strategy and Action Plan.

The detail of the report included sections on the key achievements for 2009/10, with commentary on the Place Survey results, employee consultation and engagement and the Citizens' Panel. Further information was provided on the Consultation and Community Engagement Strategy. Looking ahead, there were sections on managing the 2010 Place Survey, use of the Citizens' Panel, further employee engagement and consultation, the impact of the Sustainable Communities Act and e-petitioning arrangements.

A Member spoke about the importance of consulting with service users, explaining a particular problem for people at properties affected by a development in Swadlincote. Officers responded, explaining the action already taken on this matter and proposals to investigate this further. A question was also submitted about changes to the Citizens' Panel and the ongoing discussions with Derbyshire County Council.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) ***That the Committee notes the key consultation achievements for the year ending 31st March 2010.***
- (2) ***That the refreshed 2010-15 Consultation and Community Engagement Strategy and the action plan to guide the work of the Council in undertaking consultation with its service users, residents, partners and staff be approved as submitted.***

FM/31. **COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10 AND ACTION PLAN 2010/11**

The Committee was informed of the outcomes of the first year of the consolidated Communications Team. An action plan was presented for 2010/11 that detailed how communication activities would support the delivery of key priorities, as set down in the Corporate Plan 2009/14. The first annual report detailed the achievements of the new strategic approach to external and internal communications and gave an evaluation of the effectiveness of the 2009/10 corporate campaigns.

The detail of the report included information on the following campaigns undertaken in 2009/10:-

- Leisure and lifestyle features in the Burton Mail
- Launch of the Etwall Leisure Centre

- Cleaner South Derbyshire Campaign
- Beat the Crunch Campaign
- The Value for Money Campaign
- Swim4Life Campaign

Further sections looked at brand and corporate identity guidelines, e-communications and achievements made in the communications section. Looking ahead, the report highlighted the National Reputation Campaign, the development of corporate campaigns linked to the delivery of key priorities, developing internal communications and work with the South Derbyshire Partnership and others to promote partnership projects. Congratulations and thanks were recorded to the Communications Team for the achievements made.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the refreshed Corporate Communications Action Plan for 2010/11 be approved as submitted.***
- (2) That the Committee notes the key communication achievements for the year ending 31st March 2010.***

FM/32. **MEMBER DEVELOPMENT AND INDUCTION PROGRAMME**

Members were reminded that the Council had signed up to the East Midlands Regional Councillor Development Charter. This was a vehicle for improved corporate performance of local authorities, through the development of their Councillors.

The Council had a variety of learning and development processes in place for its Members and the opportunities and required actions to work towards this Charter were reported. In order to achieve success and gain the Charter, the Council needed to provide evidence to meet the following Charter standards:-

- Commitment to Councillor development
- Strategic approach to Councillor development
- Learning and development is effective in building capacity
- Councillor development promotes work/life balance and citizenship

It was felt that considerable work had already been undertaken that would count towards achieving the Charter. One of the standards required a structured induction process to be in place. It was considered this should be developed as a priority, in readiness for implementation immediately following the District Council elections in May 2011. A Working Panel was proposed, which could meet on a regular basis. The composition of the Working Panel was discussed and it was suggested that the two Member Champions for training be appointed.

RESOLVED:-

That a Working Panel comprising Councillors Lemmon and Southerd be established to develop a Member Development Programme, including working towards the East Midlands Regional Councillor Development Charter Standards and the formulation of a structured induction programme for all Members, for implementation following the District Council Elections in May 2011.

FM/33. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee was asked to review its work programme.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee receives the updated Work Programme.

FM/34. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT [ACCESS TO INFORMATION] ACT 1985**

RESOLVED:-

That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in brackets after each item.

MINUTES

The Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on 24th June 2010 and of the Special Meeting held on 29th June 2010 were received.

EVALUATION OF INSURANCE TENDERS (Paragraph 3)

The Committee awarded a contract for the provision of insurance service.

WRITE-OFF: COUNCIL TAX, HOUSING BENEFIT OVERPAYMENT, SUNDRY DEBTORS (Paragraph 1)

The Committee approved the write-off of sums due to the Council in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules.

J. HARRISON

CHAIRMAN