

STRATEGY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

A record of decisions made by the Executive Member with responsibility for Strategy and External Relationships on:-

WEDNESDAY, 1st APRIL, 2009

following consideration of the matters detailed below in the presence of:-

Councillor Morris	Executive Member Strategy and External Relationships
Councillor J. Walsh	Major Opposition Spokesperson
Councillor Hayes	Minor Opposition Spokesperson
Mr. S. Harriss	Chief Executive
Mr. S. Arnfield	Director of Corporate Resources
Mr. A. Eastwood	Director of Chief Executive's
Mr. P. Marsh	Assistant Director Corporate Property Services
Ms C James	Assistant Director, Partnerships and Neighbourhood Renewal
Mr M Kane	Special Projects and Partnership Manager
Ms M Martin - Matthews	Head of Strategic Resources
Mrs S Bailey	Principal Democratic Services Officer

65. MONITORING OF EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISIONS

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report which monitored the progress of decisions within the portfolio of the Executive Member Strategy and External Relationships.

The Executive Member Strategy and External Relationships NOTED the progress of the decisions taken.

66. THE HAULGH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

The Director of the Chief Executive's Department submitted a report which updated the Executive Member as to the current development of the Haulgh Community Partnership (HCP) and the changes made since the original purpose of the three year support package was approved.

The Executive Member was advised that the original purpose of the support package was to help the HCP to sustain the developments made by them and enable them to become self supporting. However, the decision to wind down the Partnership was driven by the significant improvements in the area, which was once plagued by crime and anti social behaviour.

The HCP had so far received £5000 of the £30,000 which had been spent on delivering the tasks of the exit strategy. It was anticipated that up to a maximum of £10,000 was needed to ensure the exit strategy was complete. It was recommend that in future residents be signposted to organisations such as Bolton Community & Voluntary Service (CVS), Neighbourhood Management & Bolton at Home for further support.

The Neighbourhood Manager for Tonge with the Haulgh would lead on future developments for this area and would be responsible for ensuring that local residents were involved. The Neighbourhood Manager would lead a strategic partnership group covering Tonge with the Haulgh and had been tasked with developing a neighbourhood action plan that would identify the priorities that needed to be addressed.

Local residents who were interested in developing a Resident Association or Action Group for the Haulgh would be able to access support via Bolton CVS.

The Executive Member AGREED the current developments and activity to wind down the Haulgh Community Partnership and replace it with the developing approach to neighbourhood management in the area.

67.BOLTON DORMANT TRUSTS

The Director of the Chief Executive's Department submitted a report which updated the Executive Member as to the latest development regarding Bolton Dormant Trusts and the transfer of these funds to the Community Foundation for Greater Manchester.

It was explained that four dormant trusts had been identified to the value of approximately £63,180.90 (as at January 2009) with the original purpose of the fund either out of date or no longer in existence.

Community Foundation for Greater Manchester (CFGM) which was a not for profit organisation and had a recognisable track record in freeing up and managing dormant trusts, signed an agreement to manage the Bolton Dormant Trusts Fund (BDTF) on behalf of the Council. This process had involved the liberation of four dormant funds which have been added to the Foundations 'capital pot' which would form community capital, held in perpetuity for the benefit of current and future generations. The interest on the fund would be given back to Bolton via a unitised model which would enable the funds to be distributed locally.

All four dormant trusts to the value of £63,180.09 were transferred to CFGM in January, 2009 and were as follows:-

- Christopher Westhead Award - £680.15
- Sister Alice Ingham Memorial Fund - £384.84
- John Goodenday Prize Fund - £59,879.25
- McAvoy Prize Fund - £2,236.25

The interest earned on this investment would be transferred to the Big Bolton Fund managed by Bolton CVS.

The Executive Member NOTED the progress that has been made to release the Dormant Trusts Funds that the Council previously managed and the future developments of the Big Bolton Fund.

68. 2009/12 CORPORATE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report that sought approval of the draft 2009/2012 Corporate Asset Management Plan (AMP).

The AMP highlighted the Council's key successes and performance improvements in asset management terms over the last year, and looked ahead to what further improvements would be achieved, in conjunction with the Council's partners over the next three financial years and beyond.

The Executive Member APPROVED the 2009 – 2012 Corporate Asset Management Plan and that the Director of Corporate Resources be authorised to submit a report to the Council, recommending approval of the Plan.

69. REVENUE FUNDED ORGANISATIONS-GRANT ARRANGEMENTS AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO GROUPS

The Director of the Chief Executive's Department submitted a report which sought approval for grant agreements from the Miscellaneous Grants Fund and to develop three year funding agreements with nine of the ten voluntary and community groups specified in the report, and a grant agreement covering 2009/10 for Bolton Equalities Centre (BEC) formally BREC.

The Executive Member had previously agreed that officers explore the feasibility of three year funding arrangements with the voluntary sector. Local criteria for developing three year agreements with voluntary and community groups had since been developed and approval was requested to negotiate these agreements with nine of the ten voluntary groups (with the exception of BEC) and to delegate the development of the detail including service specifications and levels of funding to officers in the Chief Executive's Department.

The details of the three year agreements would be worked up and presented to the Executive Member at the earliest opportunity. In order for the groups to continue their work in the Borough while these agreements were being negotiated, the Executive Member was asked to approve their 2009/2010 allocations which were essentially the first year of a three year agreement (with the exception of BEC). Details of these interim allocations were as follows:-

Group	2009/2010 £
Bolton Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB)	171,155
Octagon Theatre Trust	143,936
Bolton Council for Voluntary Service (CVS)	139,398
Bolton Volunteer Centre	56,213
Bolton Equalities Centre (BEC)	45,711
Bolton District Victim Support & Witness Service	30,836
Bolton Shopmobility	23,973
Bolton Community Transport and Furniture Services	23,050
Relate	14,732
Bolton Unemployed Workers Advice Centre	11,892
TOTAL	660,896

The Executive Member was reminded that property rental support was provided to a number of organisations in Bolton.

A list of all groups receiving property rental support and the value of that rental support for 2009/10 was detailed in the report.

The Executive Member AGREED -

(i) the level of grant for 2009/2010 (year one of a three year agreement) to each of the voluntary sector organisations that are funded via a grant agreement with the Council as detailed in section 3 of the report;

(ii) that officers in the Chief Executive's Department continue discussions with groups regarding the development of three year funding arrangements with the detail presented to a future Executive Member meeting for approval as part of the Council's value for money/efficiency agenda, whereby, local criteria for developing three year agreements includes the approach to realise savings from those groups that receive more than £30,000 per annum; and

(iii) the continued property rental support to the groups identified at section 5 of the report.

70. AREA BASED GRANT ARRANGEMENTS

The Director of the Chief Executive's Department submitted a report which detailed :-

- (a) the current commitment to projects from the Area Based Grant (ABG) Flexible Fund;
- (b) the results of the review of the funding streams within the ABG;
- (c) a proposed performance management framework for the ABG funding streams and ABG Flexible Fund;
- (d) arrangements for the deployment of further ABG Flexible Fund; and
- (e) recommendations for the allocation of additional resources from the ABG Flexible Fund and Performance

Reward Grant (LPSA2).

The Executive Member was informed that the review of the funding streams contained within the ABG had now been concluded and there appeared to be little scope to release funds, since most funding streams that made up the ABG were paid to the Council for the delivery of either statutory or high priority services. However, the current level of demand from the LSP Thematic Partnerships from the ABG Flexible Fund programme was significantly higher than the available funds. Departments in receipt of ABG (excluding ABG Flexible Fund) had therefore been requested to consider whether it was possible to make 3% annual efficiencies within their ABG funding streams for 2009/10 and 2010/11 to support the ABG Flexible Fund. Departments had also been requested to release any unspent funds at the end of each financial year to support the ABG Flexible Fund in future years.

This had resulted in £378,632 being released for 2009/10 and £370,323 for 2010/11 to support the ABG Flexible Fund.

It was also proposed that projects be not permitted to carry-forward any unspent funds (except in the case of capital projects where commitments had already been made) and that these underspends be used along with the funding released from ABG funding streams to support the delivery of Community Strategy targets which had been identified as priority / high risk areas, along with other high priority projects (e.g. supporting Bolton's response to the economic downturn / Queens Park / UCAN Centres / All Souls).

Year 2 was also over-programmed and as with Year 1, it was proposed that projects be not permitted to carry forward any unspent funds. It was also proposed that for Years 2 and 3 a more robust performance management framework be put in place, in order to ensure that the programme delivered on target.

Furthermore, in terms of expenditure, from Year 2 all projects should be at least 80% on profile in Quarters 1 and 2, and at least 90% on profile in Quarter 3. It was recommended that a failure to meet minimum spend targets triggered an assessment at the Quarterly Project Performance Review to determine whether or not it was possible to get the project back on profile by the end of the year. Where it was clear that the project could not get back on profile, recommendations to reduce the project funding allocation would be agreed with the Theme Lead / Partnership.

The ABG Flexible Fund was currently fully committed but as a result of departments making efficiencies with existing ABG funding streams, around £750,000 had been released to support the ABG Flexible Fund. Furthermore, it was expected that up to £800,000 in unspent funds could be released from existing ABG Flexible Fund projects for this year.

As an interim measure to deploy funds for 2009/10, Theme Leads / Partnerships had been invited to consider what additional activities may be needed to support the delivery of the Community Strategy 3 Year Plan.

The Theme Leads had now submitted requests for changes to existing allocations / additional funding.

Children's Services had proposed that they released £500,000 from their Connexions budget to support additional Education Social Workers. This £500,000 would be funded through efficiencies that had been made in the Connexions budget for 2009/10 and 2010/11. They had also proposed that since the Standards Fund could be used to support some of the Extended Schools Start Up Costs, that for 2009/10, £433,000 be released from this budget to support the Youth Services Core Offer.

In terms of the additional funding requests the amount of funding available was significantly lower than the amount released from the ABG Funding Streams / under-spending projects (details of the proposals were contained in Annexes 2

and 3). The Strategic Resource Unit would undertake further work with partnerships to prioritise these requests, firm up proposals and ensure that any additional activity was supporting the priority areas of the Community Strategy.

However, since some activities were clear priorities which needed to start in the immediate future, it was proposed that some projects be approved now, and others be provided with outline approval, subject to an assessment of their contribution to the delivery of the priority areas of the Community Strategy, and to funding being available.

It was proposed that the Executive Member delegate authority to the Chief Executive to approve those projects seeking outline approval, (subject to endorsement by the Executive Member at the next meeting.)

Approval was sought for the following high priority activities:-

(a) Bolton's Response to the Economic Downturn

The total value of the package was £500,000 in each of the next two financial years to be supported on an equal basis between ABG Flexible Fund and mainstream Council resources.

(b) Queens Park (Plus Community Building)

ABG Flexible Fund Request 2009/10 - £250,000

(c) Bolton UCAN Centres

ABG Flexible Fund Request 2009/10 - £227,481
ABG Flexible Fund Request 2010/11 - £256,008

(d) All Souls Church

ABG Flexible Fund Request 2009/10 - £150,000

The Executive Member AGREED -

(i) the proposed performance management framework and future arrangements for the deployment of ABG Flexible Fund;

(ii) grant approval for the projects highlighted in paragraph 5 of the report, including provision for activities originally funded via the Deprived Areas Fund;

(iii) to grant outline approval for the proposals highlighted in Annex 2 of the report and to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to consider and approve these proposals fully; and

(iv) to note the results of the review of the ABG funding streams

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

The background papers and reports in relation to the following items were considered confidential as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and that it be deemed that, in all the circumstances of each case, the public interest in their exemption outweighs the public interest in their disclosure.

71. COLLEGES CO – LOCATION – EMERGENCY POWERS

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report setting out the reasons for the use of the emergency powers procedure to approve the proposed development agreement in order to maintain the progress with the construction work with respect to the colleges co-location project.

The emergency powers process had also agreed the following :

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(i) the disposal of part of the Council owned former Deane Road playground to Bolton Community College by way of long lease at a premium and a peppercorn rent to be included as part of the 'land swap' with Bolton Community College; and

(ii) approval of the terms of the land exchange between the Council and Bolton Community College.

The Executive Member NOTED the report.

72. BRIDGE HOUSE POOL STREET

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report setting out provisional terms and conditions for the lease of Bridge House, Pool Street by Urban Outreach.

The grant of the lease was subject to the approval of planning permission for the change of use.

Under the General Disposal Consent (England) 2003, authority was given to a local authority to the disposal of land where it considered that the purpose for which the land was to be disposed was contributing to the achievement of any one or more of the following objectives in respect of the whole or any part of its area, or of all or any persons resident or present in its area:-

- the promotion or improvement of economic wellbeing;
- the promotion or improvement social wellbeing; or
- the promotion or improvement of environmental wellbeing

and for the difference between the unrestricted value of the land to be disposed of and a consideration for the disposal not

exceeding £2m.

The Executive Member AGREED –

(i) the leasing of Bridge House to Urban Outreach on the ten year term outlined, with a break clause being included in the lease of the fifth year and that the Director of the Chief Executive's Department be authorised to complete the necessary legal documentation; and

(ii) that the purpose for which the land is to be disposed of at an undervalue is likely to contribute to the promotion of improvement of social wellbeing of the area as set out in the General Disposal Consent (England) 2003.

73. WESTON HOUSE, WESTON STREET – MAKKA MOSQUE CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY CENTRE

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report that detailed a request from the Makka Mosque Cultural and Community Centre to lease Weston House following the vacation of council staff from the building.

The property would be surplus to requirements as part of the Council's drive to reduce office accommodation by 20% by April, 2010.

The Group wished to utilise the building to address displacement from their existing premises during reconstruction and the need to secure additional space to meet the growing needs of the community which they served.

The Executive Member AGREED the request from the Makka Mosque to lease Weston House ,subject to a satisfactory business/development plan from the Mosque being received and the finalised terms being concluded under the Director's delegated authority, and to the proposed use receiving the necessary planning approval.