

THE CABINET

MEETING, 6TH JULY 2015

Councillor Morris	Executive Cabinet Member
Councillor Mrs. Thomas	Executive Cabinet Member
Councillor Peel	Executive Cabinet Member

Cabinet Members

Councillor D. Burrows	Police and Community Safety
Councillor Cunliffe	Public Health
Councillor Chadwick	Highways and Transport
Councillor McKeon	Education and Schools
Councillor Lewis	Housing and Social Inclusion
Councillor Zaman	Development and Regeneration

Other Members in Attendance

Councillor Donaghy	
Councillor Murray	
Councillor Greenhalgh	
Councillor Mrs. Fairclough	
Councillor Cox	
Councillor Allen	
Councillor Hayes	
Councillor Richardson	(as substitute for Councillor Parkinson)

Officers

Mr. P. Najsarek	Chief Executive
Mr. K. Davies	Director of Development and Regeneration
Mr. M. Cox	Director of Environmental Services
Ms D. Ball	Assistant Director
Ms S. Schofield	Assistant Director
Ms L. Ridsdale	Assistant Director
Mrs. H. Gorman	Borough Solicitor
Ms. S. Johnson	Borough Treasurer
Mr. A. Jennings	Democratic Services Manager

Councillor Morris in the Chair.

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors Adia, J. Byrne, A. Ibrahim, I. Ibrahim and Parkinson.

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 11th May, 2015 were submitted and signed as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of apologies from Councillor Lewis.

2. MINUTES OF AGMA/COMBINED AUTHORITY

The Minutes of the meetings of the AGMA/Combined Authority held on 29th May, 2015 were submitted for information.

Resolved – That the minutes be noted.

3. NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT AND AREA WORKING – PROPOSED DEVOLVED PROJECT BUDGETS 2015/16 – 2016/17

The Director of Environmental Services submitted a report that outlined a proposal to save £150,000 from the Neighbourhood Management / Area Working devolved budgets, together with a proposal to devolve the revised budget to Neighbourhood Management / Area Working.

The proposal would leave the amount available for Neighbourhood Management and Area Working at £300,000 with highways funding remaining at £192,000 per annum.

If the revised budgets and allocation to areas were agreed for a two year period, the services would be able to deliver a two year programme of £1.134m as follows:-

£750,000 projects (£450,000 from year 1 and £300,000 from year 2); and
£384,000 Highways (£192,000 from year 1 and £192,000 from year 2)

Delivery would take place over the remaining period up to 31st March, 2017.

It was explained that the allocation to wards was based on a long standing formula (shown below) which increased the level of targeting according to the greatest level of need/deprivation and a clear and agreed framework to guide local decisions by Ward Members in consultation with partners and local people:-

Pot A – Targeted Neighbourhood Renewal (£187,500 for 2015/6 and 2016/17);

- allocate 25% to the existing neighbourhood renewal areas that were within the 15% most deprived areas. Allocation based on population size to ensure both level of deprivation and the scale of need in the area was taken into account.

- as many of the target areas did not correlate exactly with ward boundaries, the budget would be allocated to the appropriate ward based on population.

Pot B – Allocation based on wards (£375,000 for 2015/6 and 2016/17)

- allocate 50% based on relative deprivation across all wards to ensure that deprivation beyond the 11 target areas was taken into account.

Pot C – Flat Rate (£187,500 for 2015/6 and 2016/17)

- for the remaining 15% allocate at a flat rate across all the wards.

Pot D - Highways (£384,000 for 2015/6 and 2016/17)

- allocate as a flat rate across all 20 wards giving each ward £19,200.

The table at Appendix B showed the proposed allocations for 2015/16 and 2016/17.

A proposed framework for guiding decision making at a local level was set out in the report and, in terms of how decisions were made, the current approved framework would be retained. It was explained that the framework helped to ensure that decisions were based on local issues shaped by Ward Members whilst ensuring the Council had appropriate oversight, particularly on those issues related to neighbourhood renewal in the most deprived communities.

The Cabinet indicated that the future operation of area forums would be monitored with a view to possibly providing more flexibility regarding their function.

Resolved – (i) That the proposals to save £150,000 from Neighbourhood Management / Area Working devolved budgets for 2015/16 and 2016/17, together with the devolvement of the revised budget to Neighbourhood Management / Area Working, be approved.

(ii) That a further report be submitted to the Cabinet setting out proposals to achieve the balance of £100,000 budget reduction from staff salaries/non devolved budgets.

4. CROSS CUTTING SAVINGS REVIEW – UPDATE AND EARLY DECISIONS

The Chief Executive submitted a report that set out the approach to the cross cutting savings review, provided an update on progress to date and sought some early decisions, to begin the delivery of savings for this budget round.

Members were reminded that the cross cutting review had been set up to achieve:-

- savings of £5,000,000 as part of the 2015-17 budget round; and
- to make better use of digital communications, in line with Government policy to make Council services easily accessible through “digital by default”, to personalise and direct communication with the public in order to deflect service demand; improve efficiency and ensure 24/7 access to information.

In order to deliver the above it was proposed that the work was organised into two broadly sequential strands:-

- a savings review (based on optimising existing technology and transactional process improvements); and
- a digital strategy to consider investment in new technology to deliver the transformed processes, in support of strategic objectives. This assessment would be made once the Council had developed support processes for the future and considered the impact of further optimising existing ICT capability. This strategy would take account of relevant departmental systems development work.

Supporting work was also being developed including:

- a digital inclusion strategy, internally and externally for the public;
- a review of the complaints policy and process;
- a review of customer access points, drawing on the recent pilot exercise in conjunction with the Library service; and
- development of a social media strategy

The report explained that the savings review comprised two strands, as follows;

- a review and reduction of Council administration functions. Around 400 posts were in scope of this review including administrators, PAs and business support staff in every department, as well as the Children and Adult's social care administration service and Revenue and Benefits support team; and
- a review of the processes and associated systems for transactions that were routed into the Council through the Contact Centre, to establish options to reduce customer contact and therefore resource requirements. In particular Revenues and Benefits assessment function; Environmental Services enquiries and other high volume transactional customer contact.

It was estimated that the majority of savings required would be achieved from a reduction in numbers of posts and in order to deliver a £5m savings target a reduction of 200 FTE posts would be required. The Council was currently operating with the equivalent number of vacant posts and requests for severance / voluntary early retirement and, on this basis, the value of savings required may be achieved consensually.

However, it was unlikely that the vacant posts / severance applications may all be contained within the services they fell within and it was therefore assumed that a process of re-distribution of remaining posts across the services in scope would be required. A process would be determined to achieve

this, with regard to the skills and aspirations of individuals and in consultation with the Trades Unions.

It was proposed to improve on-line uptake of available web-based processes by:-

- Launching a comprehensive service signposting and communications campaign, to encourage the public to deal with the Council via the web and promote on-line services. Further communications would be linked to the launch of the new One Stop Shop, which would be positioned as a supported self-serve environment rather than guaranteed personal customer service.
- Improving and expanding the existing functionality for on line transactions;
- Removing the option to speak to an agent where high quality web transactions were already available and passed through comprehensive user acceptance testing. Approval was therefore sought to remove the “speak to an agent” option from the switchboard as this worked well through automated delivery and also from fly tip notifications and local welfare provision enquiries which had well developed on-line processes and most existing customer contact was via on line self-serve. This would reduce contact centre resource requirements by 2 FTE immediately with scope to make further reductions as the review progressed.

It was emphasised that despite the proposed changes the Council would still take almost 500,000 phone calls per year and operate with a 60 seat contact centre. Furthermore, the option for a “web chat” customer contact channel and a mobile phone “app” would be undertaken over the summer and work would also begin on improvement of the web site design and content.

An examination had also been undertaken with respect to the Council’s complaints policy and process and a revised

procedure was appended to the report, whereby, the response time at stage two would now be 20 working days.

Proposals regarding the Council's social media strategy were explained and would be the subject of further reports, together with the Council's future digital inclusion strategy.

Resolved – (i) That it is noted that the cross cutting work will be organised into two broadly sequential strands: a savings strand and digital strategy.

(ii) That progress on savings activity to date and plans for further work, specifically around systems development, be noted.

(iii) That the removal of a Contact Centre agent from the switchboard, fly tip notifications and Local Welfare provision enquiries within the Contact Centre be approved, on the basis that high quality automated systems are available.

(iv) That the revisions to the corporate complaints policy be endorsed.

(v) That the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Executive Cabinet Member Regeneration and Resources, be authorised to make further establishment reductions as work progresses, in line with the strategy set out in the report now submitted.

5. WASTE SAVINGS 2015 - 17

The Director of Environmental Services submitted a report that set out the details of the plans to achieve the £1.25m savings target for waste previously identified.

Members were reminded that the Cabinet, at its meeting on 10th November, 2014, considered a report entitled 'Financial Forecast and Budget Process 2015-17' which identified the Council's saving target for the period 2015-17 as £43 million which included a savings target for Environmental Services of £5.3 to £6.3 million during 2015-17.

It was explained that the costs of disposing residual waste in Bolton had increased significantly in recent years from approximately £16 million in 2011/12 to approximately £20 million in 2014/15. This reflected new facilities coming on line as part of the Greater Manchester 25 year PFI arrangement, the capital investment in sustainable infrastructure and the rising cost of landfill tax (increasing at £8 per tonne per year) which reached £80 per tonne in 2014/15.

Capture rates showed that the service was capturing a large amount of garden waste, but approximately 23% of garden waste still remained in the grey bins. Food waste showed the lowest capture rate and had significant room for improvement.

The report highlighted that approximately 20% of residents were still not doing any recycling, 20% were recycling everything they could and the other 60% were doing some recycling but not all the time and not all waste streams.

The allocation of the majority of waste disposal costs across the Greater Manchester PFI arrangement was dependent on the tonnages of each waste stream delivered by each authority. As other Greater Manchester authorities introduced changes that significantly reduced the tonnages of residual waste they collected, the cost per tonne of residual waste increased.

The Council currently operated a managed weekly waste collection service, which was introduced in May, 2013 and cost approximately £7.8 million per year.

A potential savings target to achieve £1.25 million had been identified that involved further reducing the amount of waste sent for disposal, through providing slimmer grey bins and more support to further increase recycling.

The above option formed part of the budget consultation in November, 2014 and it was noted that 51% of residents agreed with the proposal to exchange the current 240 litre grey bins for the slimmer 140 litre bins and to continue to collect them every fortnight. Consequently, this proposal was recommended for implementation between June, 2016 and November, 2016.

The total cost of the required investment amounted to £2.624 m which resulted in a payback period of 2.7 years based on projected saving of £1.25 m per annum.

It was proposed to undertake a borough wide engagement campaign during 2015/16 to inform residents of the changes and support them to recycle their waste in the lead up to the changes.

The alternative option of introducing three weekly waste and recycling collections was considered and, although it required lower capital investment, the impact on staff and customers was found to be much greater.

Resolved – (i) That the proposal to exchange all grey 240 litre wheeled bins for 140 litre wheeled bins and to continue to collect all waste and recycling bins at the current collection frequency be approved.

(ii) That the immediate implementation of the replacement bin policy change be approved.

(iii) That the changes to the waste audit policy be approved.

(iv) That it is noted that consideration was given to an alternative way to achieve the savings.

(v) That the Assistant Director of Community Services be authorised to tender for the purchase of the required bins and the associated exchange program.

(vi) That the Director of Environmental Services be authorised to award the contract to the successful company.