

## **CORPORATE STRATEGY AND FINANCE**

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

**WEDNESDAY, 26<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2007**

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

Councillor Morris	Executive Member Corporate Strategy and Finance
Councillor J. Walsh	Major Opposition Spokesperson
Councillor Hayes	Minor Opposition Spokesperson
Mr. S. Arnfield	Director of Corporate Resources
Mr. K. Davies	Director of Development and Regeneration
Mrs. M. Stoney	Assistant Director Legal and Democratic Services (Legal)
Mr. P. Marsh	Assistant Director Corporate Property Services
Mr. A. Jennings	Executive Support Manager

### **41. 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 Corporate Strategy and Finance.

**The Executive Member Corporate Strategy and Finance NOTED the progress of the decisions taken.**

### **42. CORPORATE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report that sought the Executive Member's approval to the draft 2007 Corporate Asset Management Plan (AMP) which highlighted the Council's key successes and performance improvements

in asset management terms over the last year, and looked ahead to what further improvements aimed to be achieved, in conjunction with the Council's partners, over the next twelve months and beyond.

The report examined the Council's performance in relation to the corporate asset objectives and the headline performance results were detailed .

The asset management programmes for 2007/08 were detailed and the key tasks within the programmes were summarised as follows:

#### Strategy tasks

- Implementation of a Corporate Property Management Model by April 2008. This would deliver improved corporate management as a consequence of a more corporate approach to the use of land and property assets and more effective corporate and cross service working; and
- A further office accommodation reduction of 5% by April 2008 based on the out-turn figure for 2006/07;

#### Business planning tasks

- Implementing Framework Agreements for building and maintenance work by April 2008; and
- Provide internet access for clients to property data via the Council's new asset management software system by April 2008.

#### Asset performance improvement tasks

- Review of the operational buildings in the north east of the Borough by December 2007;

- A further reduction in the Required Maintenance liability on the Operational Estate by 5% based on the out-turn figure for 2006/07;
- Improve physical access to the Council's public buildings – 50 % of public buildings (falling within the definition of BVPI 156) fully accessible to and suitable for people with a disability by April 2008;
- Achieve the capital receipts target of £3.35m;
- Develop/implement a three year planned maintenance programme;
- To continue to use the Council's land and property assets to achieve strategic development and regeneration opportunities within the Borough.

**The Executive Member APPROVED the 2007 Corporate Asset Management Plan ,subject to the approval of the Council .**

#### **43. WESTHOUGHTON MARKET**

The Directors of Corporate Resources and Development and Regeneration submitted a joint report that set out a range of measures designed to secure a long term sustainable future for Westhoughton Market.

The report recommended that the following measures be implemented ;

- Internal enhancements of Westhoughton Market ;

the Council's Corporate Property Services had raised concern over the condition of the steel framework of the building and the general state of the electrics within the building ;

- A rent free period for 6 months reviewable after 3 months ;
- Attract niche traders such as antiques and arts and crafts ;
- Improved marketing, promotion and signage ; and
- Traders to work at both Westhoughton and Horwich markets potentially doubling their trading days .

Each of the above was explained in greater detail in the report .

The report set out the full costs of implementing all of the measures outlined above. In addition to the 2007/08 allocation of District Centres Improvement Fund monies (DCIF) for Westhoughton, there was an additional and completely separate £60,000 of DCIF previously allocated to Westhoughton Market and this could be used for capital works, which would need to be matched with £60,000 from Corporate resources.

<b>Element</b>	<b>Costs</b>
Internal Enhancements	£113,000 including partitioning
Rent Free Period	Cost neutral
Marketing and Promotion	£6,000
Signage	£1,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£120,000</b>
<b>Costs</b>	

The report had also been approved by the Executive Member Development at his meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> September ,2007.

The Director informed the Executive Member of the views of Westhoughton Town Council and ward members.

**The Executive Member APPROVED –**

- (i) the range of measures as outlined in the report;**
- (ii) the investment of £60,000 from corporate resources;**  
**and**
- (iii) that a further report be presented that will review the success of the range of measures following their implementation.**

**CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

**The background papers and reports in relation to the following items were considered confidential as defined in paragraphs 1 and 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.**

**44. DEANE ROAD DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report which apprised the Executive Member of progress with respect to the development of sites in the Deane Road area as part of the Colleges co-location project .

The Colleges had a requirement to submit a bid for full funding for the relocation which should include the terms upon which the Council were willing to dispose of the site. The Colleges were currently scheduled to submit the “in principal bid” to the Learning and Skills Council Capital Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2007.

The Executive Member was reminded that he had agreed terms on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2006 to sell the land to Bolton Community College and Bolton Sixth Form College. The sites were originally valued in June 2006 and revalued in February

2007; the updated values were detailed in the report .

**The Executive Member NOTED –**

- (i) the loss of income from Deane Road and Stanley Street Car Park as a result of the development and agreed that such sites only be transferred to the College when actually required for the co – location project ;and APPROVED**
- (ii) the disposal of the land to Bolton Community College as seen, with no Council liability to fund any unforeseen site remediation costs;**
- (iii) that the request for a deferred payment for the land until September 2010 be not agreed ;**
- (iv) that a potential land swap with the Community College for the Manchester Road site be approved ,in principle ,and that the Directors of Development and Regeneration and Corporate Resources be authorised to negotiate such an arrangement on the basis of a “like for like “ valuation ; that the outcome of these negotiations be reported once the District Valuer has valued the sites and that ,in the event that a land swap is not feasible, the Directors be authorised to pursue the development of a joint marketing approach with Bolton Community College in respect of Council land contained within the Westbrook Development Brief and Bolton Community College land on Manchester Road;**
- (v) that the Director pursue terms to allow the Council to provisionally market the College’s sites included in any land swap , prior to such sites transferring to the Council’s ownership ; and**
- (vi) that a further report be submitted regarding the other educational sites as now discussed .**

#### **45. FARNWORTH MARKET PRECINCT**

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report that apprised the Executive Member of the current position regarding the redevelopment of Farnworth Market precinct .

The Executive Member was reminded that he had considered a report at his meeting in July,2007 detailing progress to date with respect to negotiations to redevelop Farnworth Market Precinct and the adjoining market area and had agreed to fund the funding gap by Prudential borrowing and authorised the grant of a 250 year lease and the provision of a temporary market facility on Asda Square.

Discussions had continued with the developers and they had amended the format of the documentation which was detailed .

It was also explained that the temporary market facility on Asda Square had now been determined as being too small for the number of stalls to be accommodated and Highway Engineers had agreed that the additional stalls could be accommodated on the north side of Brackley Street on the highway .

#### **The Executive Member APPROVED –**

- (i) the amended format for the documentation;**
- (ii) the amendments to the alienation clause following full consideration of the points now raised in this respect and noted that this amendment does not guarantee that the development will be delivered by the current Head Lessee; and**
- (iii) the amended arrangements for the temporary market .**

#### **46. CORONERS SERVICE – WEEKEND OUT OF HOURS SERVICE**

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report which outlined proposed arrangements for the formal introduction of a weekend service by the Coroners Office and recommended the payment of a premium to the Coroner to acknowledge the additional demands placed on the Service .

It was explained that a recent report commissioned by The Coroners Society of England and Wales had highlighted the need to formally recognise in financial terms, the additional demands placed on the availability of Coroners.

In view of this, the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, as Proper Officer, had reviewed the current arrangements in place within the Coroners Office in recognition of an increasing demand for the Coroner to be available over weekend periods and outside of what was described as normal office hours. To date current, ad hoc, arrangements had been able to cope with demands but it was now felt that these needed to be formalised if the service provided was to be efficient and effective.

**The Executive Member AGREED - subject to the concurrence of the Executive Member for Human Resources and Diversity:-**

**(i) to augment the salary of the Coroner by the premium detailed in the report in recognition of the increasing demands placed on the Coroner in relation to out of hours and weekend availability as evidenced by the recommendations contained in the report of PricewaterhouseCoopers, Chartered Accountants ;and**

**(ii) to a formal scheme of weekend working being introduced for the Coroners Office, the exact terms of which to be delegated to the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, as Proper officer, in consultation**



**with the Assistant Chief Executive ,subject to the formalisation of the out of hours provision between the Proper Officer and the Coroner.**

#### **47. LAND AT BRADFORD ROAD GREAT LEVER**

Further to Minute 40 of the Executive Member's last meeting the Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report which sought the Executive Member's approval to dispose of an area of land at Bradford Road Great Lever to the St Vincent Housing Association at less than the market value owing to poor ground conditions.

Investigations had shown that groundwater levels at the site were relatively low .

The land was to be used to construct 33 affordable housing units.

The Executive Member was reminded that Under Section 31 of the Housing Act 1985, the Council may dispose of land for the purpose of providing housing of any description for such consideration as can be reasonably obtained in the circumstances, notwithstanding that a higher consideration might have been obtained if the land were to be disposed of for housing of another description, or for another purpose.

#### **The Executive Member APPROVED –**

**(i) the transaction as outlined in the report at less than market value and authorised the Director of Legal and Democratic Services 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.**

**DECISION MONITORING**

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR  
CORPORATE STRATEGY AND FINANCE**

Date of Meeting	Item and Decision	Action and Progress
29th August, 2007	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>AGGREGATE FINANCIAL MONITOR FIRST QUARTER 2007/08</b></p> <p>The Executive Member NOTED the report and requested the Council to raise the limit on fixed rate borrowing to 96% of the total for 2007/08.</p>	A further monitoring report will be prepared for the Executive Member meeting 21 <sup>st</sup> November 2007 providing an updated position.
	<p><b>VAT MONITOR 2006/07</b></p> <p>The Executive Member NOTED –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) a full VAT recovery was achieved in 2006/07;</li> <li>(ii) a full VAT recovery is anticipated in the current and future years;</li> <li>(iii) action may be required to manage the VAT position when the Council becomes involved in property acquisition for future development, expenditure on replacing or upgrading crematorium equipment or providing premises for onward letting; and</li> <li>(iv) future changes in expenditure projections; service delivery methods or VAT regulations may affect VAT recovery and these will be monitored and subject to further reports at the appropriate time.</li> </ul>	No further action has been necessary. The next formal review will be reported as part of the 2008/09 Capital Programme proposals in February 2008.

	<p>LAND AT MANOR COURT ,HARWOOD_</p> <p>The Executive Member AGREED –</p> <p>(i) The transaction as outlined in the report and authorised the Director of Legal and Democratic Services to complete the necessary legal documentation; and</p> <p>CONSIDERED –</p> <p>(ii) That the purpose 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.</p>	<p>Legal instructed</p> <p>Draft documentation with Solicitors</p>
	<p>LAND AT BRADFORD ROAD GREAT LEVER</p> <p>The Executive Member AGREED – that this item be deferred for further information regarding the proposed site.</p>	<p>Further report on this agenda</p>