

CORPORATE STRATEGY AND FINANCE

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

WEDNESDAY, 27TH SEPTEMBER, 2006

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

Councillor Morris	Executive Member for Corporate Strategy and Finance
Councillor Rushton	Major Opposition Spokesperson
Councillor Mrs. Ronson	Minor Opposition Spokesperson
Mr. B. Knight	Chief Executive
Mr. S. Arnfield	Director of Corporate Resources
Mr. J. Farr	Principal Policy and Improvement Officer
Mr. A. Jennings	Democratic Services Manager
Mr. J. Kerambrum	Trainee Democratic Services Officer

28. 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 for Corporate Strategy and Finance.

The Executive Member for Corporate Strategy and Finance NOTED the progress on the decisions taken at previous Executive Member meetings as detailed in the Appendix to these minutes.

29. CENTRAL DEPARTMENTS SERVICE AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT – 1ST QUARTER.

The Chief Executive submitted a report which provided the Executive Member with an overview of the key financial and

service performance data from the Central Departments following the end of the first quarter 2006/07.

The report enclosed a number of appendices which provided detailed background information and key improvement actions, including the Central Departments revenue and capital outturn report.

Information was also provided with respect to:

- Quarterly monitored Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's);
- progress against key tasks detailed in Team Service Improvement Action Plans;
- revenue and capital expenditure to date; and
- anticipated gershon efficiency performance.

The Executive Member NOTED the updates on the improvement actions for the priority BVPI's detailed in Appendix A and that further updates on the BVPI's would be received.

30. REVIEW OF CASHIERS

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report which outlined the conclusions of a review of the cashiering facilities provided by the Council at the Town Hall and the Area Offices and proposed a way forward.

The report informed the Executive Member that the number of transactions undertaken by cashiers had declined owing to the increased use of Direct Debit. The decline had increased significantly owing to Bolton at Home's changed arrangements for rent payments.

It was noted that using a company called Allpay, which had arrangements with Post Offices and shops across the Borough, significantly lowered the cost of these transactions and Allpay's

facilities provided a better service per customer.

Consequently, the following draft proposals were suggested:-

- (a) payments of Council Tax using swipe cards at the payment network provided by Allpay introduced with effect from 1st April 2007;
- (b) payments by direct debit to be actively marketed;
- (c) a cashier's service at the Town Hall to continue, but subject to review as to financial viability;
- (d) Farnworth, Westhoughton, Little Lever, Blackrod and Horwich cash collections service only be closed after a transaction period of up to 2-3 months after Allpay introduced;
- (e) an enquiry service providing advice, information and dealing with customer issues to be maintained within each locality but subject to review as to the actual location of the enquiry service to optimise the service offered; and
- (f) information/enquiry points continue to take non-cash payments only.

The benefits were outlined in the report and it was envisaged that net savings of £50,000 per annum could be realised.

Further consultation would be undertaken with Ward members, customers, staff and the Trade Unions and it was hoped that this could take place over the next two months with a report back to the Executive Member.

The Executive Member AGREED, in principle, to the proposals, now detailed, subject to consultation with Ward Members, the public, staff and Trade Unions and that the results of such consultation, together with a business plan, be submitted to the Executive Member for further consideration.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

The background papers and reports in relation to the following item were considered confidential as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

31. BUSINESS RATES WRITE OFFS

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report which requested the Executive Member's approval to write off a number of Business Rates debts.

Extensive checks had been made to ensure there was no opportunity for recovery.

**The Executive Member for Corporate Strategy and Finance
APPROVED –**

**The Business Rate write offs as detailed in the Schedule to
the report now submitted.**