

STRATEGY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

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

WEDNESDAY, 1st OCTOBER, 2008

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

Councillor Morris	Executive Member Strategy and External Relationships
Councillor R. Allen	Major Opposition Spokesperson
Councillor Hayes	Minor Opposition Spokesperson
Mr. S. Arnfield	Director of Corporate Resources
Mr. P. Marsh	Assistant Director Corporate Property Services
Ms. C. James	Assistant Director of Partnerships and Neighbourhood Renewal
Mr. A. Jennings	Democratic Services Officer

35. 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.

36. COUNCIL CHAMBER CONFERENCING SYSTEM

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report that detailed proposals for a replacement sound system in the Council Chamber.

It was explained that the current microphone system in the Council Chamber consisted of a number of boundary microphones suspended from the ceiling.

The current system was showing signs of ageing and loss of performance and the Director of Legal and Democratic Services had been asked to identify an alternative system which could be installed with the minimum of disruption to the fabric of the chamber.

Alternative solutions had been examined including a fixed microphone system and portable, conferencing systems. In accordance with Council financial procedures, quotations were sought from 3 suppliers, one for a fixed microphone solution and two for a portable, wireless solution.

Following examination of the fixed system which was deemed unsuitable details were sought on conferencing systems which were portable and removed the necessity to undertake major installation work within the Council Chamber. The conferencing system differed from a fixed microphone system in that it was battery operated and wireless with each Member having their own portable delegate unit containing an individual microphone and speaker. This type of solution was capable of being added onto at anytime without the need to replace existing equipment. It was also flexible in that the requisite number of delegate units could be set out as required and removed when meetings had finished, thus the disadvantage of a fixed microphone system of having large numbers of microphones being on view at all times would be removed. The system could also be used in other rooms of the Town Hall or even off site if required. Recent advances in wireless technology had also resulted in significant reductions in the cost of this type of equipment.

The Executive Member AGREED - that the quotation received in respect of the Bosch DCN wireless conferencing system in the sum of £34,884.69, excluding VAT, be accepted.

37. EAST LODGE HEATON CEMETERY

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report which sought the Executive Member's agreement to the type of boundary fencing with respect to East Lodge and grounds at Heaton Cemetery in light of its disposal to a community group.

Two types of fencing were proposed either the fleur de lys style at a cost of £19,200 or a simpler design costing £13,850.

The Executive Member AGREED - the fleur de lys style style of fencing at a cost of £19,200 and that the proposed works be agreed with the Chief Planning Officer and be included in the Corporate Resources Capital Programme to be funded by capital receipts and that the lease for the property contain a condition to maintain the fencing at this standard.

38. NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL DELIVERY

The Assistant Director of Partnerships and Neighbourhood Renewal submitted a report that proposed new working arrangements aimed at increasing the delivery of neighbourhood renewal to implement the aims of the Council and its partners as set out in the Community Strategy and to ensure that "narrowing the gap" became core business for the Council and its partners.

The report provided the Executive Member with details with respect to the following :-

- The context of neighbourhood renewal;
- Support for delivering and coordination of neighbourhood renewal;
- Bolton at Home and transforming estates ;
- Area working and its overall context;
- Target areas;
- Partnership groups/targeted areas – it was proposed that 9 partnership groups be established (details in appendix 1 to the report) to include elected members; community and voluntary sector representatives and stakeholder agencies to cover 11 identified targeted areas;
- Stakeholder groups;
- Community involvement; and
- Area based grant.

The Executive Member AGREED – the proposals now detailed to deliver neighbourhood renewal.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

The background papers and reports in relation to the following items were considered confidential as defined in paragraphs 3 and 5 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.

39. GREAT LEVER CHILDREN'S CENTRE ,PAULHAM STREET – EMERGENCY POWERS

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report that explained the use of the emergency powers procedure to agree the terms and conditions for the lease of the nursery at the Great Lever Children's Centre to Great Lever Nursery Ltd.

The Executive Member NOTED the use of the emergency powers procedure.

40. FARNWORTH MARKET PRECINCT

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report that informed the Executive Member of the latest position regarding the redevelopment of Farnworth Market Precinct.

The company involved had requested an extension to the contract period and, in order to enable the developers to include the redevelopment of the market within their development scheme, it would be necessary for the proposal to be exempt from standing orders relating to contracts.

The Executive Member APPROVED- (i) the amended format of the documentation and that the Director of Legal and Democratic Services be requested to conclude the necessary legal formalities and that the procurement of the development works be exempt from standing orders relating to contracts; and

(ii) that arrangements be made to improve the communication with ward members, whereby, the opportunity is provided to meet with the developers every six months.

41. AGRICULTURAL PORTFOLIO STRATEGY REVIEW

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report that provided the Executive Member with a review of the Council's Agricultural Portfolio and sought the Executive Member's opinion and authority to proceed with one of the strategy options presented for consideration.

The Director of Corporate Resources had undertaken a review of the entire holding on a farm by farm basis giving consideration to the physical condition of the holdings and

liabilities, rent and capital receipts, the ability to improve the Council's financial position and also the Council's social aims.

Having considered the findings internally it was decided to commission a report from an Agricultural Specialist to advise on the validity of the findings and to offer further suggestions as to how the portfolio could be taken forward.

The report considered a number of options .

The Executive Member AGREED to the adoption of the policy described in 3.5 of the report ,now submitted, and to proceed with a managed programme of disposals incorporating regular updates on progress to the Executive Member and that the Director of Corporate Resources be requested to undertake a planning appraisal of the Portfolio with a view to maximising value.

42. SITE OF FORMER QUEEN STREET COMMUNITY CENTRE

The Director of Corporate Resources sought the Executive Member's authority for the disposal of the site of the former Queen Street Community Centre to Age Concern and Farnworth Little Theatre to assist with the delivery of the Active Ageing Programme and the physical and social regeneration of the area.

The Executive Member APPROVED –

(i) the disposal for the Council owned land to Age Concern and Farnworth Little Theatre by way of long leases at a peppercorn rent which will be at a rate less than market value;

(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 well-being of the area as set out in

the General Disposal Consent (England) 2003; and NOTED

(iii) the open market value of the land .