

CORPORATE STRATEGY AND FINANCE

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

WEDNESDAY, 24th OCTOBER, 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 D.A Wilkinson	Minor Opposition Spokesperson
Mr. S. Harriss	Chief Executive
Mr. S. Arnfield	Director of Corporate Resources
Mr D Grogan	Assistant Director Democratic Services
Mr. P. Marsh	Assistant Director Corporate Property Services
Ms. C. James	Head of Strategic Projects
Mr. A. Stephenson	Asset Manager
Mrs. C. Sutton	Head of Strategic Development
Ms. C. Riley	Neighbourhood Renewal Officer
Mrs. V. Ridge	Principal Democratic Services Officer

48. 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.

49. PROPERTY PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report which provided details of the performance of the Council's land and property portfolio and its Corporate Property Services function, including:

- (a) the 2006/07 out-turn results in relation to the Corporate Asset Objectives and the associated suite of performance indicators as detailed in the draft 2007 Corporate Asset Management Plan; and
- (b) progress in relation to Corporate Property Services' 2007/08 Service Improvement Action Plan.

The report provided details with respect to the following areas;

- corporate asset objectives;
- performance results;
- benchmarking;
- the asset management programme for 2007/08; and
- corporate property services – service improvement action plan 2007/08.

The report, together with information contained in the draft 2007 Corporate Asset Management Plan, detailed many initiatives where the Council's land and property assets contributed to the fulfilment of its strategic aims and objectives. It set out how the Council's resource was being managed and developed in such a way as to provide value for money and property that was fit for purpose and relevant for the Council's customers in 2007 and beyond.

The Executive Member NOTED -

(i) the performance out-turn data for the suite of land and property performance indicators for 2006/07 as detailed in Appendix 3 of the draft 2007 Corporate Asset Management Plan;

(ii) the suite of Land and Property Performance Indicators currently used by Corporate Property Services and that indicators will form a part of future Property Performance Reports; and

**(iii) the progress made to the end of the second quarter in respect of the delivery of Corporate Property Services' 2007/08 Service Improvement Action Plan ; and
APPROVED -**

(iv) the proposal to receive a Property Performance Report from the Director of Corporate Resources on a six-monthly frequency commencing October 2007.

50. ASSET TRANSFER

The Chief Executive submitted a report which provided the Executive Member with details of the Quirk Review – Making Assets Work and outlined details of the Community Assets Programme which was being administered by the Big Lottery Fund on behalf of the Office of the Third Sector.

It was explained that support for delivery of public services by social economy organisations was growing, both in scale and importance, and that this role was increasingly being recognised by Government as demonstrated in the Third Sector Review. There was considerable interest in the transfer of assets (land or building) from the public sector to third sector organisations which was centred on the contribution asset

transfer could make to a range of social and economic objectives.

The Quirk review into community management and ownership of assets recognised the advantages that could be realised by community organisations taking on management and ownership roles. These included significant benefits in terms of community well-being, cohesion and capacity for self-help as well as presenting opportunities for generating wealth through job creation and the use of facilities. The Quirk review examined the barriers which may be preventing more communities managing and owning assets.

The Big Lottery Fund was delivering the £30 million funding for Community Assets on behalf of the Office of the Third Sector and the Community Assets Programme offered grants for the refurbishment of local authority buildings in England, enabling their transfer to third sector ownership for the use of the whole community.

An audit of Council assets was currently underway to fully identify voluntary and community sector occupancy in Council property including length of lease, contract documentation, and responsibilities

Further work would need to be undertaken to determine a clear process for assessing future requests for asset transfer which would need to consider a number of issues including:

- Relevant policies and plans e.g. land and property policies;
- Sustainable Community Strategy – in line with main aims and priority themes;
- Council's Change Programme;
- Potential development opportunities;
- Capacity and skills of the third sector organisation involved;
- Use by wider community; and
- Sustainability of the asset.

However, it was explained that the idea of asset transfer was not a new concept in Bolton and that there were a number of examples where long term leases had been awarded to voluntary and community groups.

The report concluded that there was some significant work to be undertaken prior to any assessment of a transfer of asset including the completion of an audit of Council assets, together with the development of a clear policy.

Furthermore, it was unlikely given this position that the Council would be able to identify any assets that were eligible for the Community Assets Programme given that the Big Lottery fund would not fund projects where an asset had not already been identified for transfer and where the partnership between the Council and the Third Sector was not already strong. The imminent deadline for the Community Assets Programme of 15th November, 2007 was likely to make this prohibitive.

Since the report had been written the Executive Member was advised that Sunnyside Community Centre could be a potential scheme for the Community Assets Programme and, following further investigations, if suitable, it was proposed that a bid be submitted.

The Executive Member AGREED that, dependent upon further investigations and, if suitable, a bid be submitted for the Sunnyside Community Centre to participate in the Community Assets Programme.

51. PROPOSED PAPER STORAGE PROJECT WITH ROYAL BOLTON HOSPITAL NHS TRUST

Councillor Morris declared a personal interest in the undermentioned item as he is Chairman of the Bolton Hospital Trust.

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report which proposed that the Council joined with Royal Bolton Hospital NHS Trust to develop a joint project with the

aim of procuring a contract with an off site paper storage provider for the efficient and effective storage of paper records.

It was considered that the Council's current storage sites were inadequate for the storage of paper records and that a joint solution would introduce economies of scale.

The Executive Member AGREED that the Council joins with Royal Bolton Hospital NHS Trust to develop a joint project with the aim of procuring a contract with an off site paper storage provider for the efficient and effective storage of paper records .

52. UPDATE ON PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE CHALLENGES CONDUCTED BY THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HUMAN RESOURCES PERFORMANCE AND DIVERSITY

The Chief Executive submitted a report that provided the Executive Member with an update on progress with the portfolio performance challenges conducted to date by the Executive Member for Human Resources, Performance and Diversity.

This report included an overview of:

- Compliance with Performance Management and Corporate Business Planning Framework (CBPP) minimum standards within Adult Services and Environmental Services;
- Improvement actions agreed; and
- A provisional rolling programme of future challenges.

The Executive Member was reminded that as part of the Executive Member for Human Resources, Performance and Diversity's new responsibilities a rolling programme of portfolio performance challenges began in August ,2007. To date two portfolios (Adult Services and Environmental Services) had presented their approach to performance management and business planning and had been tested for full compliance against the corporate minimum standards.

The report explained that progress in these two areas was very strong and full details were outlined in the report ,together with a provisional programme to complete this work across all portfolios.

The Executive Member AGREED –

(i) the improvement actions proposed and to work with Directors and Executive Members to drive them forward as part of their performance work ;and

(ii) the future rolling programme of portfolio challenges as detailed in the report .

53. FORMER COMMUNITY COLLEGE BUILDING - CLARENCE STREET

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report that recommended that the former community college building on Clarence Street be offered for sale by way of tender.

A development brief was being prepared for consideration at the next meeting which would guide the development of the wider area. This would recommend that the property would be suitable for a variety of uses including residential conversion.

The Executive Member AGREED to the sale of the property on the open market by tender and that the outcome of the tender exercise be reported to a future meeting of the Executive Member.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

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

54. WRITE OFF OF UNCOLLECTABLE DEBT

The Executive Member AGREED the write offs as set out in the appended schedules.

55. LAND AT CROFT STREET

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report that set out a proposed course of action for the sale of an area of land at Croft Street ,together with the sale of 287-289 Manchester Road .

The Executive Member AGREED –

(i) to the sale of the Council owned land by auction as outlined in the report ; and

(ii) to the sale of 287-289 Manchester Road by order of the Court by auction as outlined in the report .

56. THE WATER PLACE AND LE MANS CRESCENT-EMERGENCY POWERS

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report which detailed the use of the emergency powers procedure to agree

terms to facilitate the disposal of the Water Place site and the acquisition of the existing facility on Le Mans Crescent.

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

57. CAPITAL RECEIPTS PROGRAMME 2007/08

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report which advised the Executive Member of the latest position relating to the capital receipts programme.

The Executive Member NOTED the report.

58. HORWICH LOCOMOTIVE ESTATE

The Director of Corporate resources submitted a report which detailed the main terms and conditions for the acquisition of an area of land at the Horwich Locomotive Estate to help deliver the comprehensive regeneration of the site with a view to improving employment in the area .

The finance for the acquisition had been identified from a number of sources which were detailed and the Executive Member Development had agreed use of capital funds from the REDD capital budget .

The Executive Member AGREED – the transaction as outlined in the report and authorised the Director of Legal and Democratic Services to complete the documentation .

59. LAND AT PENNINE ROAD ,HORWICH

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report which detailed the provisionally agreed terms for the disposal of an area of land at Pennine Road Horwich for the erection of 8 houses for shared ownership and social rental purposes.

The Executive Member was reminded that under the General Disposal Consent (England) 2003, authority was given to the

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

- (a) The promotion or improvement of economic wellbeing ;
- (b) The promotion or improvement social wellbeing; and
- (c) The promotion or improvement of environmental wellbeing.

and the difference between the unrestricted value of the land to be disposed of and a consideration for the disposal did not exceed £2m.

The Director of Corporate Resources also reported that the proposed sale had been advertised in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 and tabled eleven letters of objection from local residents. These related to planning matters which had previously been considered by the Planning and Highways Committee as part of its consideration of the planning application in respect of the development.

The Executive Member AGREED-

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