

CORPORATE RESOURCES

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

TUESDAY, 30th SEPTEMBER, 2008

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

Councillor Mrs Thomas	Executive Member Corporate Resources
Councillor R. Allen	Major Opposition Spokesperson
Councillor Hayes	Minor Opposition Spokesperson
Mr. S. Harriss	Chief Executive
Mr. A. Eastwood	Director of Legal and Democratic Services
Mr. S. Arnfield	Director of Corporate Resources
Mrs. B. Newman	Policy Accountant
Mr. R. Guenther	Assistant Head of Policy Improvement
Mr. R. Postil	Principal Accountant
Mr. A. Jennings	Democratic Services

31. 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 Resources.

The Executive Member Corporate Resources NOTED the progress of the decisions taken.

32. PROCUREMENT OF A CORPORATE CONTRACT WITH A COMMERCIAL OFF SITE PAPER RECORDS

STORAGE PROVIDER

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report that considered a number of options to facilitate the storage of the Council's paper records off site.

The report explained the strategic context of the proposal and the benefits of moving records to an off site storage facility.

The report examined a number of options as follows :-

Option 1 – the Council to procure a corporate contract with a commercial off site storage provider;

Option 2 – the Council to manage and operate an effectively resourced off site storage facility;

Option 3 – the Council to refurbish the current storage area; and

Option 4 – take no action.

The benefits and risks of each option were examined and it was recommended that Option 1 offered the most cost effective solution; the estimated set up costs were £15,000.

The Executive Member AGREED – Option 1 and to procure a corporate contract with a commercial off site storage provider.

33. ANNUAL OMBUDSMAN LETTER 2007/08

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report that provided the Executive Member with statistics relating to the Council's performance in handling complaints as reported to the Local Government Ombudsman.

A total of 95 complaints were received against the Council in 2007/08 which was a third higher than the previous year, but lower than 2005/06 (116 complaints).

The Council had replied to 33 complaints within 22 days which had been commended .

The Ombudsman had made decisions on 91 of the complaints, although 37 were premature complaints where the Council had not had a proper chance to deal with the complaint. A further 13 lay outside the Ombudsman's jurisdiction ,whilst in 21 cases no maladministration had been found.

Twelve complaints were settled by a local settlement, whereby the Council undertook redress to the Ombudsman's satisfaction.

The Director explained that, in future, an analysis of the complaints and the lessons learned would be provided in the report.

The Executive Member NOTED the report.

34. CORONERS OFFICE – STAFFING

Further to Minute of the Executive Member's meeting held on July, 2008 The Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report that detailed proposals to increase the staffing levels in the Coroner's Office.

Approval was given to appoint 2 additional Coroners Officers on scale 5 to cover long term sickness absences. The Executive Member had requested that a further report be submitted which addressed the current staffing issues and that built additional capacity into the structure to allow the Coroner to cope with an anticipated continuing increase in workloads and to respond to normal office staffing requirements.

The Coroner's Office continued to experience an upward trend in its' workload with 4,088 deaths reported in the 2007 calendar year (compared with 3,049 to Manchester City, 2,578 to Manchester North and 3,217 to Manchester South). The 2007 figure was a 12.5% increase on the previous year. Early indications of the current years' figures suggested that this upward trend was continuing. The number of inquests held within the jurisdiction during 2007 was 548 which represented a

17.5% increase on the previous year

Discussions had been held with the Coroner who had advised that, in order for her office to function at an efficient and effective level which had the capacity to cover foreseeable increases in workload and normal office situations, the existing staffing structure should be amended to include an additional 2 Coroners Officers.

The total cost of the proposals was in the region of £45,000 and the costs of the additional posts would be shared equally between Bolton, Salford and Wigan Councils.

The Executive Member AGREED ,subject to the approval of the Executive Member Human Resources and Diversity, the appointment of two Coroner's Officers on Scale 5.

35. CENTRAL DEPARTMENTS PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD – QUARTER 1 2008/09

The Chief Executive submitted a report that provided the Executive Member with an overview of the performance data and financial outturn for the central departments for the first quarter of 2008/9.

The key findings were as follows :-

- Key corporate health indicators around organisation-wide financial, HR and customer service outcomes, which the three central Departments were leading on, were largely on track ;
- The overwhelming majority of tasks and targets set out in Service Improvement Action Plans (SIAPs) were on track ;
- The vast majority of targets in the revenues and benefits service for quarter one had been met or exceeded ;

- The central departments were making good progress in terms of providing better value for money and were further strengthening this by implementing their value for money strategy;
- The three central departments were in good financial health, with revenue and capital expenditure on track, healthy balances and Gershon efficiency targets being exceeded.

However, challenges remained in some areas and the Executive Member was requested to work with the respective Directors in the three central departments to deliver the recommended improvement actions contained in the report, particularly the following;

- although customer service in the three central departments was good and improving, there is scope to further strengthen learning from complaints, the overall rate and quality of responses to complaints and the rate of telephone calls answered within standard;
- although levels of sickness absence had fallen over the last few years, the Departments needed to ensure that a slight upward trend in the first quarter of 2008/9 was reversed in the remaining quarters; and
- although high performing overall, challenging quarter 1 targets around customer waiting times and resolution of queries in the Contact Centre were slightly missed. This was due to new staff bedding in but was already getting back on track for quarter 2.

Furthermore, the level of benefit fraud investigations and prosecutions dipped in quarter 1 due key data not being made available to the Corporate Resources Department following a national data loss. This had now been resolved and should get back on track in quarter 2.

The Executive Member AGREED to work with Directors to deliver the recommended improvement actions contained in the report and, in particular, to work with the Director of Corporate Resources to address the actions around financial matters detailed in the report.

36. AUDIT COMMISSION – VALUE FOR MONEY PROFILES – CORPORATE RESOURCES

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report that provided an analysis of the Authority's performance in comparison to that of the other metropolitan districts and the statistical nearest neighbouring authorities, for those services contained within the Corporate Resources portfolio.

The comparitors were based upon the Value for Money Profiles produced by the Audit Commission.

The Executive Member NOTED the report.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

The background papers and report in relation to the following item were considered confidential as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and that it be deemed that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in its exemption outweighs the public interest in its disclosure.

37. CONTRACT AWARD FOR RECRUITMENT ADVERTISING SERVICES – URGENT ITEM

In accordance with the Local Authority's Executive Arrangements and Access to Information Regulations 2000, the Chairman of the Corporate Issues Scrutiny Committee had agreed that the following item was urgent and could not reasonably await consideration until the next meeting of the Executive Member.

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report that provided the background for the renewal of the contract for recruitment advertising services which was let by the Council on behalf of a number of AGMA local authorities.

Tenders were invited for Lot 1 – producing and placing recruitment advertisements and statutory and public notices in all media; and Lot 2- designing and carrying out campaigns in the media and creative advertising work for senior appointments.

On the basis of both price and quality criteria, the tenders for Lots 1 and 2 submitted by Tribal Resourcing Limited were the most economically advantageous for the Consortium Members to accept. This would be a conditional acceptance subject to the preferred supplier accepting Bolton's standard terms and conditions as set out in the original tender documentation.

The Executive Member AGREED- that the Lot 1 and Lot 2 tenders received from Tribal Resourcing Limited for Advertising Services be accepted and that the Council awards the contract to the Company on the standard terms and conditions agreed.