

## **CORPORATE RESOURCES AND HEALTH**

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

**TUESDAY, 30<sup>th</sup> MARCH, 2010**

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

Councillor Mrs Thomas	Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Health
Councillor Shaw	Major Opposition Spokesperson
Councillor Hayes	Minor Opposition Spokesperson
Mr. A. Eastwood	Director of Chief Executive's Department
Mr. S. Arnfield	Director of Corporate Resources
Mr J. Rowlands	Assistant Director Customer Services
Mr. N. Maher	Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships.
Mrs. B. Newman	Policy Accountant
Mr. R. Semley	Communications and Media Manager
Mrs K. Smith	Senior Performance and Improvement Officer
Mr. A. Jennings	Democratic Services Manager

### **53. MONITORING OF EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISIONS**

The Director of Chief Executive's Department submitted a report which monitored the progress of decisions within the portfolio of the Executive Member Corporate Resources and Health.

**The Executive Member NOTED the report.**

## **54. CENTRAL DEPARTMENTS PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD QUARTER 3 2009/10**

The Directors of the Chief Executive's Department and Corporate Resources submitted a joint report that provided the Executive Member with an overview of the central departments service and financial performance for the third quarter 2009/10.

The key findings were as follows:-

- The majority of Q3 targets for key front line services had been met or exceeded;
- The majority of Q3 milestones set out in Service Improvement Action Plans (SIAPs) had been achieved;
- The VFM programme plan had now been formalised and plans were in place to increase staffing to support this work; and
- Overall the central departments were in good financial health, with revenue and capital expenditure on track, healthy balances and efficiency targets on track.

However, the following areas were highlighted as areas that would need additional input from Directors to deliver the recommended improvement actions detailed in the report:-

- The difficult economic environment had had an impact on several of the Council's corporate health measures, as the Authority's ability to influence these outcomes was much lower than in previous years;
- Customer service in the central departments was showing mixed results reflecting the difficult operating environment during the quarter. There was scope to further strengthen learning from complaints and the rate of telephone calls answered within standard;
- Performance in Revenues and Benefits was good with 20 of the 24 indicators on track. Close performance management would be undertaken to ensure that performance of the other indicators improved and that

targets for the remaining quarters were achieved; and

- Financially, land and property income may under-achieve, largely due to difficult economic conditions. Contingencies were in places to mitigate the effects of this shortfall.

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

## **55. CENTRAL DEPARTMENTS THREE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN 2010/13**

The Directors of the Chief Executive's Department and Corporate Resources submitted a report that set out the strategic priorities for the two central departments for 2010/13.

**The Executive Member AGREED the three year strategic plan.**

## **56. UPDATE ON BOROUGHWIDE VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANTS**

The Director of the Chief Executive's Department submitted a report that requested the Executive Member's approval for the distribution of Borough wide voluntary sector grant funding.

The sum of £5,000 had been allocated for grant applications which covered three or more Area Forums. The funding was aimed at supporting groups which organised activities that benefited Bolton and met the Council's main Community Strategy Themes.

The report outlined the requests for grant funding from January to March 2010 which were outlined in Appendix one to the report and totalled £2,317. If the amounts were to be approved in full this would leave an overspend of £364. Therefore, it was proposed that £100 was granted to Bolton Junior Chess instead of the £500 requested due to the group having received

funding from the same grant last year. This would leave £36 to be carried forward to the 2010/11 budget.

The proposed grants were as follows:-

<b>Bolton Mandhata Youth (BMY)</b>	The group wished to buy football equipment such as balls, cones, bibs whistles and shin pads to enable them to start to coach young people aged 8- 19 years of age.	£450	£450
<b>Hayward Social Bowling Club</b>	The group wished to continue to promote indoor bowling along with the health and fitness of older people through the replacement of old equipment	£367.23	£367.23
<b>Bolton Junior Chess</b>	The group wished to host the English Primary School Chess association Under 11's on 8 <sup>th</sup> May 2010. The grant would contribute towards hire of the premises.	£500	£100
<b>Caribbean Elders and UCAN Pensioners</b>	The group was a social networking base for pensioners across the borough. The group wished to provide an excursion for pensioners after the winter months	£500	£500
<b>Withins Trampoline Club</b>	The group wanted to continue to bring trampolining to children. The added funds would enable them to continue to provide facilities to young people across the Borough.	£500	£500
<b>Total</b>		<b>£2317.23</b>	<b>£1917.23</b>

**The Executive Member AGREED the grants as detailed in the report.**

## **57. CORPORATE PROPERTY SERVICES RESTRUCTURE PROPOSAL**

Further to Minute 52 of the Executive Member's last meeting the Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report that set out the details of a proposed restructure of Corporate Property Services to provide a clear focus upon strategic and operational property management and project delivery in support of the Council.

It was explained that property and its pro-active management in terms of strategic direction and operational delivery was a key factor in the majority of the Department's value for money projects/programmes along with the delivery of increased efficiency from the retained space. Consequently, Corporate Property Services needed to provide focus upon strategic integration, operational efficiency in project delivery and property/facilities management.

The current structure did not support the service in responding to these challenges in a coherent and focused manner and put at risk the section's ability to deliver value adding property solutions within the time frames that VFM programmes required to deliver the Council's savings targets.

It was felt that there was fragmentation and duplication of resources between sections and a lack of clear ownership for delivery of the strategic and operational programmes.

In order to respond to these challenges the new organisational structure aimed to provide focus and ownership for strategic planning and service delivery within defined management teams, whilst retaining the principles of programme management.

The new organisation structure aimed to focus upon the allocation of staff resources in a more logical and responsive nature than the current structure, with the objective to increase productivity from all sections to meet the increasing/changing challenges the Council was placing upon the Service and the property portfolio. This would not only provide increased focus

on service delivery but also enhanced flexibility of resources, internal and external, and working practices within a framework of clear objective management.

Flexibility and increased efficiency would be achieved by retaining a small core structure and flexing resources to meet changing workload demands by the use of external resources, i.e. consultants and contract project managers. This would result in sections developing a more programme management role which would allow added value analysis/management through increased customer relationship management and demand/solution challenge in property terms.

The proposal involved a reduction of 1 FTE post, after 2009/10 VFM saving of 2 vacant posts, from 67.5 FTE posts to 66.5 FTE posts. The current structure had 3 FTE posts covered by Agency Staff.

The proposals had been discussed with staff and Union representatives through a formal and informal consultation process and it was anticipated that the new structure would be in place by March, 2010.

It was intended to undertake a post implementation review six months after full implementation and appointment to posts in the new structure, at which time any minor realignments could be considered by the management team. This would also be based upon feedback from the staff via a follow up consultation process.

**The Executive Member AGREED the implementation of the proposed restructure and AUTHORISED the appointment of staff in line with Council selection policy, subject to the approval of the Executive Member Human Resources, Organisational Development and Diversity.**

## **58. USING SOCIAL MEDIA ENVIRONMENTS FOR BUSINESS ADVANTAGE**

The Director of the Chief Executive's Department submitted a report that described the growth and use of social media

environments, how the business potential had been tested and made recommendations for governance and further use of the environments for varied business benefits.

The report explained that Social Media was the combination of channels, platforms, communities, content and tools that was behind the current experience of peer to peer communication or the new 'word of mouth'.

Social media could be broken down into six areas, namely:-

1. Social Networking Platforms;
2. Social Bookmarking Platforms;
3. Content, Applications and Media;
4. Blogging Platforms;
5. Social Gaming; and
6. Social Connectivity Tools

Bolton had a high propensity of people involved in and using these environments and it was felt that the Council should take the opportunity to be listening to what they were saying especially about Council business, but more broadly about community issues.

It was considered that the Council needed to join groups set up by the Borough's community leaders and general public so that the Council could respond quickly with the Council's view before issues became bigger and had the potential to damage the Councils' reputation. The Council could set up groups of its own and encourage people to join them to discuss local issues, events, positive activity opportunities, access to services and other issues which meant that the Council was in the space customers were using and they could discover the Council's information more easily than expecting them to use traditional channels.

One of the main benefits was that use of these environments was free so all publicity and engagement cost was significantly lower than traditional methods and had the potential to target material directly at interested parties who would then pass on and share with their peer networks.

Furthermore, these platforms offered opportunities for the Council and its partners to engage with and create valuable interaction with local communities.

The proposed governance model followed clear guidance issued by the Cabinet Office whose advice was to maximise the potential of these environments for communication and engagement with the public whilst minimising the risk by having clear corporate profiles which customers could recognise as being the “voice of the Council”.

A list of approved Council representatives who would act as the ‘voice of Bolton’ would be maintained by the web team with the link to view who was on the list available at any time from these spaces. This was to give customers assurance that they were communicating with an official representative of the Council and not someone purporting to be from the Council.

The Communications and Marketing section would control Bolton Council’s main Twitter feed and any future corporate news platforms. They would also manage the responses to questions and comments posted on these sites and ensure appropriate feedback was given.

The Communications and Marketing section were currently identifying opportunities and developing a project plan for the next 12 months. This plan would identify key projects and campaigns that would incorporate social media activity, identifying the potential platforms (i.e. Facebook, Bebo, Twitter) to be used for each. It was intended that this would be a flexible plan and new projects would be added where appropriate, depending on the resources available and new and emerging online opportunities identified.

If the proposals were approved a progress report would be submitted in 6/12 months.

**The Executive Member AGREED the proposed governance arrangements and further work to determine the value to the Council of using such low cost high impact environments.**



## **59. FEES AND SERVICES – BOLTON REGISTER OFFICE**

The Director of the Chief Executive's Department submitted a report that proposed an increase in charges for the provision of services currently offered by the Registration Service and sought approval for the introduction of new services with the associated fee structure.

The Registration Services currently carried out several statutory (Marriages and Civil Partnerships) and non statutory functions (Civil Funerals, Naming Ceremonies, and Re-affirmation of vows). The fee structure for these services was historically based on the average charged across the AGMA region. However, the fees had not been increased for some time and had fallen below the AGMA average. Accordingly, it was proposed that the fee structure be formalised by bringing it back into line with the AGMA average and by approval being given to increase the fees annually in line with the inflation index.

The Registration Service also sought permission to introduce a new service offering 'Deed Polls'. The Service currently received many enquires about changing names and at the moment had to direct customers to a solicitor.

The Service also sought approval to introduce charges to cover the administrative costs incurred when changes were made to the time or date of a marriage or civil partnership and when provisional bookings were made. Further details of the proposed charges were detailed in the report.

**The Executive Member AGREED the increased charges for services currently provided by the Registration Service and to the introduction of the new services detailed in the report with the associated fee structure.**

## **60. LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES – SOCIAL SERVICES TEAM**

The Director of the Chief Executive's Department submitted a report that proposed the creation of two fixed term posts within the Legal and Regulatory Services Social Services Team.

The Social Services Team advised on child care, mental health and vulnerable adult matters and acted as the Council's Advocates in Courts, Tribunals and Inquiries.

The report explained that over the last few years the work of the team had increased significantly and consequently the report proposed the creation of a 12 month fixed term lawyer post and a 12 month fixed term legal assistant post within the Social Services Legal Team which would enable the delivery of the service within the current challenging times for public law children work.

Currently a locum was employed and if the proposals were approved there would be a saving of £35,569.76 over 12 months.

**The Executive Member AGREED the report subject to the approval of the Executive Member Human Resources, Organisational Development and Diversity.**

## **CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

**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 and that it be deemed that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in their exemption outweighs the public interest in their disclosure.**

### **61 BOLTON SCENE DESIGN, PRINT AND DISTRIBUTION CONTRACTS 2010/11**

The Director of the Chief Executive's Department submitted a report that outlined the results of the tender process in relation

to the Bolton Scene design, print and distribution contracts 2010-11.

Several options were presented for all three contracts to maximise value for money by balancing costs against quality of delivery.

Given the reduction in the Bolton Scene budget and pressures on communication budgets throughout the council and with partners it was recommended that the number of editions be reduced to 10 editions. This would also help to offset an increase in costs.

Consequently, production of Bolton Scene would move to a five weekly schedule which would see editions produced in May; June; July; August/Sept; early Oct; early Nov; Dec; Jan; Feb and March.

**The Executive Member AGREED Option C for the award of the contracts to the companies detailed in the report's recommendations.**