

## **CORPORATE STRATEGY AND FINANCE**

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

**WEDNESDAY, 24TH JANUARY, 2007**

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

Councillor Morris	Executive Member 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. K. Davies	Director of Development and Regeneration
Mr. D. Mee	Head of Estates
Mr. B. Colquitt	Asset Strategy Manager
Mr. R. Hanna	Business Manager
Ms. C. James	Head of Strategic Projects
Mrs. B. Newman	Policy Accountant
Mr. J. Farr	Principal Policy and Improvement Officer
Mr. A. Jennings	Democratic Services Manager

### **52. 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.

With respect to accommodation at Le Mans Crescent, the Director of Corporate Resources confirmed that the necessary works were progressing on time and within the budget set.

**The Executive Member for Corporate Strategy and Finance NOTED the progress of the decisions taken at previous**

**Executive Member meetings as detailed in the Appendix.**

### **53. LONG TERM PERFORMANCE TRENDS 2001-2006**

The Chief Executive submitted a report which provided the Executive Member with an overview of available data showing performance trends over the past five financial years.

By way of background information, this report had been compiled following discussions at a previous Executive Member meeting where more information on long-term performance was requested, beyond the year on year analysis contained in existing regular “dashboard” reports. Following discussions with both Members and Officers, a total of 32 indicators had been identified for inclusion in the report.

The report explained that in absolute terms, 72% of the 32 indicators showed an improvement in performance between 2001-02 and 2005-06; however, around a fifth had declined over the past five years and appropriate action was being taken to improve performance. Though these calculations represented a selection of the Council’s existing Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI), this data reflected a generally positive direction of travel in the performance of key services.

The report went on to state that Bolton’s performance, compared to other similar authorities, had improved well since 2001-02 with respect to these indicators. The proportion of indicators within the bottom quartile had halved to 15% while the proportion within the top two quartiles had risen from 48% in 2001-02 to 52% in 2005-06.

The report concluded by stating that, whilst the selection of the BVPIs presented a comprehensive assessment of performance over the past five years, this data was indicative of continued improvement across a wide range of services.

**The Executive Member NOTED –**

- (i) **the long-term performance trends identified in the report and AGREED -**
- (ii) **that future annual long-term performance trends continue to be submitted; and**
- (iii) **to support and reinforce the role of Executive Members in working with officers to drive performance improvements across all portfolios.**

#### **54. LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT 6 MONTH REVIEW AND LSP ANNUAL REVIEW**

The Chief Executive submitted a report which provided the Executive Member with information on the outcome of the recent 6-monthly assessment of Bolton's Local Area Agreement undertaken by Government Office North West.

By way of background information, the report explained that in April, 2006, Bolton's Local Area Agreement (LAA) was agreed by Bolton Vision Partnership and Central Government via Government Office North West (GONW) and with Bolton Council as the Accountable Body.

The report explained that under the terms of the Local Area Agreement, it fell to GONW to oversee 6-monthly reviews of Bolton's performance against the targets contained in the LAA. Attached to the report was the first 6-monthly review of Bolton's LAA prepared by GONW based on a self- assessment submitted by Bolton's LSP. GONW had awarded Bolton's LAA a 'green light', the top rating, both for its progress to date and its direction of travel overall. However, it was stated that at this stage only 25% of the targets in the LAA were monitored quarterly, so the report did not provide a full picture of LAA performance. A first full annual review report was due in June, 2007 and this would be an important milestone in terms of Bolton's LAA. The Executive Member queried the Council's procedures for achieving value for money with respect to NRF schemes and it was explained that an appraisal was undertaken for each scheme and that the Audit Commission

examined the issue of VFM overall as part of its direction of travel statement.

The GONW expressed the view that effective partnership working, strong LAA governance and robust performance management arrangements had meant that good gains were already being made in terms of improving outcomes for the local community. However, within their report GONW did identify a range of issues that would warrant further consideration by the LSP:

- the 6 monthly Statement of Grant Usage revealed a slow build up of relevant expenditure. Action was being taken by the Council and its partners to address this; and
- the report highlighted a number of risks around achieving LAA outcomes, indicating a number of areas where performance was currently not on target. These issues had however already been identified by the Council and its partners, with robust plans in place to get performance back on track.

**The Executive Member NOTED –**

- (i) the performance issues around the LAA highlighted in this report and AGREED:-**
- (ii) that a full report on the final LSP “traffic light” assessment 2006 and further regular reports on LAA performance be submitted; and**
- (iii) to support and reinforce the role of Executive Members and Area Forums in working with officers to drive performance improvements across all LAA blocks.**

**55. CENTRAL DEPARTMENTS SERVICE AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT – QUARTER 2 2006/07**

The Chief Executive submitted a report which provided the Executive Member with an overview on the key financial and service performance data from the central departments following the end of the second quarter 2006-07.

The service and financial performance from the three central departments showed the following:-

- (a) performance against Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) was good, with 60% showing an improvement compared with the same period last year;
- (b) a new approach to monitoring Service Improvement Action Plans (SIAPs) had delivered improvements, and work was continuing to deliver further improvements;
- (c) revenue and capital expenditure to date was largely to plan; and
- (d) Gershon efficiency performance was on track.

The report also enclosed a number of appendices, which provided detailed background information and key improvement actions, including the Central Departments' Revenue and Capital outturn report, 2006-07.

The report stated that improvements in performance were anticipated for all over the coming quarters. Performance against these measures would be updated quarterly at future Executive Member meetings.

The Director of Corporate Resources reported that with respect to invoices paid within 30 days (BV8) this had increased to 90% in the 3rd quarter.

**The Executive Member NOTED –**

- (i) **the second quarter performance dashboard; and  
ENDORSED -**
- (ii) **the updates on the improvement actions for the  
priority BVPIs detailed in Appendix A and AGREED:-**
- (iii) **to continue to receive updates on the BVPIs as  
detailed in Appendix A.**

## **56. NOW PEOPLE – ON-LINE JOBS**

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report which sought approval to exempt Standing Orders to let the ICT support for the Now People On-Line Job system to Zen Internet Ltd.

The report stated that Bolton MBC led a partnership on behalf of AGMA for the provision of an on-line recruitment system. This system was developed through Government funding by Zen Internet Ltd.

In terms of the financial implications the report explained that, as the lead authority for the Now People partnership, Bolton MBC had agreed to sign the contract between Zen Internet and Now People. The individual local authorities would then sign separate agreements with Bolton MBC. The legal documentation had been prepared by the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, and agreed with all partners. The total cost to the partnership would be £31,500 per annum with a total of £63,000 over the two years of the contract.

The report explained the following reasons for requesting exemption from Standing Orders to place the ongoing support and maintenance contract with Zen Internet Ltd:-

- the Now People solution was developed specifically with the needs of the public sector in mind;
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the Now People product was considerably cheaper than any other product which had come to the partnership's attention;

- the Now People's development and support of the system was also providing a viable option for other local authorities, which may lead to a reduction in costs even further; and
- having developed the software from the beginning according to Now People's requirements, Zen understood the product and were able to adapt and improve it quickly and cost-effectively.

#### **The Executive Member AGREED –**

**To the exemption of Standing Orders relating to contracts to allow the ICT support contract for the Now People On-Line Job system to be let to Zen Internet Ltd.**

#### **Confidential Items**

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

#### **57. ASSET MANAGEMENT – SOFTWARE AND SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT**

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report which detailed investigations undertaken with respect to two options to upgrade the current Corporate Property Services Asset Management System and other software utilised for the effective management of property and construction related services.

The current system used the SQL version of IPF Asset Manager to manage property data with two associated systems namely, MARS used to log and track reactive maintenance

work and MERCURY used to manage capital projects.

The IPF system had a number of limitations in terms of scope, accessibility and functionality.

Following a tender exercise two options were identified:-

- (a) implement an alternative integrated system;
- (b) upgrade to the new IPF.net system and develop the peripheral MARS and MERCURY systems to provide effective interfaces.

Site visits had been made to those local authorities using the system and the report explained the key considerations identified, together with the costs.

The report concluded that updating to the IPF.net system and development of DBP software (MARS system) was the most appropriate for the following reasons:-

- (1) It had the advantage of continuity with the existing provider;
- (2) it provided all the features that the Council required;
- (3) it was the most economically advantageous;
- (4) it would be the easiest and most economical system to transfer data to and implement and train personnel in;
- (5) it provided greater flexibility in terms of the Council's policy to eventually have all IT systems integrated into the ORACLE platform; and
- (6) it provided the solution which would provide least disruption and greatest short/medium term benefit.



The proposal would be funded using the funds currently utilised for financing the existing system and via the additional income gained through increased in-house productivity/efficiency which would reduce the call on consultants.

**The Executive Member APPROVED –**

**The procurement of the IPF.net Asset Management Software on an annual rental basis for a three year contract period and associated hardware, together with the development of existing DBP software systems.**

## **58. REDEVELOPMENT/DISPOSAL OF WESTHOUGHTON MARKET**

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report relating to the possible redevelopment of Westhoughton Market and interim arrangements during the redevelopment period.

A report had also been considered by the Executive Member for Development at his meeting on 22nd January, 2007 setting out a revised proposal for the market which would involve temporary accommodation for the market.

The Executive Member for Development had agreed to:-

- a) continue to negotiate with Melrose Developments on the basis of the new proposal and to proceed to produce an action plan for the redevelopment of the Market, such negotiations to include discussions regarding using the market hall for community use; and
- b) to consider the use of Ditchfield car park for the temporary relocation of the market and to approach the owner of the Mill Street site for the purpose of the temporary car park.

Discussions had been ongoing with Melrose Developments for the redevelopment of the market which had resulted in a

revised scheme and the report had been deferred at the Executive Member's last meeting to allow consultation with ward members regarding the proposal. The Executive Member was informed of the results of the consultation and, following a request from Westhoughton Town Council, he requested that officers keep the Town Council informed of developments regarding the scheme.

Details of a petition received were also presented.

The proposal included the relocation of the market during the development period and the costs had yet to be identified. The costs of the "fit out" works would also be the responsibility of the Council.

Consequently, two funding options had been identified to assist with the costs.

- (a) utilise a proportion of the capital receipt; and
- (b) utilise part of the District Centre Improvement Fund.

**The Executive Member for Corporate Resources CONCURRED with the decision of the Executive Member for Development and AGREED that the temporary relocation of the market be funded via the capital receipt, subject to details of the likely costs being reported to the Executive Member.**

## DECISION MONITORING

EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR  
CORPORATE STRATEGY AND FINANCE

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM & DECISION	ACTION/ PROGRESS
13th December, 2006	<u>Tipping on Land at Starcliffe Street, Farnworth</u>  The Executive Member APPROVED -	
	(i) the negotiated reduction in charge to each resident of Starcliffe Street, as detailed; and	Letters have been sent out to residents explaining the agreed decision. The content of the letter was agreed with Ward Councillors. The arrangements for organising the gating is being led by the Area Fora team.  Director of Corporate Resources will be writing to each resident confirming that the charge is now £300 and that if unpaid it will remain as a local land charge without interest.
	(ii) to the writing off of the debt of £23,525 and that funds allocated for alley gating be used to fund the proposed gating.	Funds allocated corporately
13th December, 2006	<u>Print and Publishing Services Unit</u>  The Executive Member APPROVED -	
	(i) the merger of the current Images and Publishing Services Units within Legal and Democratic Services from 1st April, 2007;	

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM & DECISION	ACTION/ PROGRESS
	<p>(ii) the transfer of remaining Images staff and necessary budgets from Environmental Services to Legal and Democratic Services from 1st April, 2007;</p> <p>(iii) the creation of posts of Print and Publishing Services Manager and Graphics Technician, subject to the approval of the Executive Member for Human Resources and Diversity; and</p>	Interviews for Print and Publishing Services Manager to be held on 30 <sup>th</sup> January, temporary arrangements in place to cover graphics issues until new Manager in post.
	(iv) that the Director of Legal and Democratic Services be requested to review the structure and bring forward a revised structure to meet the business needs of the new Unit, including a job description and person specification for the deputy post.	
13th December, 2006	<p><u>Corporate Records Manager</u></p> <p>The Executive Member AGREED -</p>	
	to the establishment of a permanent post of Corporate Records Manager at Scale PO2, subject to the approval of the Executive Member for Human Resources and Diversity.	Report approved by Executive Member Human Resources on 13 <sup>th</sup> December, 2006 and appointment now made.
13th December, 2006	<u>Aggregate Financial Monitor Half Year 2006/07</u>	
	<p>The Executive Member NOTED -</p> <p>(i) that net revenue expenditure can currently be contained within the budget provision and that the current</p>	<p>Balances position informs Budget Strategy.</p> <p>No Action required</p>

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM & DECISION	ACTION/ PROGRESS
	forecast of available balances at 31st March, 2007 is £6,501,000;	
	(ii) that capital expenditure can also be contained within available resources; and	
	(ii) that although capital expenditure exceeds the prudential indicator set in February, 2006, the indicator be not amended at the present and that it be reviewed once the outcome of the application for Capitalisation Directive for the equal pay claim is known.	Outcome of application for capitalisation directive is awaited. Expected February.
13th December, 2006	<u>Cashiers and Area Office Review</u>  The Executive Member APPROVED -	Further consultations undertaken and work continues to develop the marketing and publicity material, first of which is planned for January with an on-going campaign through to May 06.  Contractor now appointed and schedule of work being developed.
	the way forward for cashiers as set out in the report and that a suitable publicity campaign be undertaken.	
13th December, 2006	<u>Redevelopment/Disposal of Westhoughton Market</u>  The Executive Member DEFERRED the report.	Further discussions with Ward Members and report to this meeting.
13th December, 2006	<u>Accommodation Le Mans Crescent</u>  The Executive Member AGREED -	

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM & DECISION	ACTION/ PROGRESS
	(i) to the relocation of those staff detailed in the report to Le Mans Crescent;	Proposals being actioned. Report to Executive Member for Development re serving of the notice.
	(ii) to the investment of £800,000 to bring the accommodation up to a usable standard; and	
	(iii) to exempt standing orders in order to let the work to one of the Council's current building refurbishment contractors in order to ensure that the work can be completed on time and within the budget estimate now set.	