

EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Executive Board Sub Committee on Thursday, 21 June 2007 in the Marketing Suite, Municipal Building

Present: Councillors Wharton (Chairman) and Harris

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Nelson

Absence declared on Council business: (none)

Officers present: G. Ferguson, J Burgess, R. Dart, M. Murphy and M. Winstanley

Also in attendance: (none)

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE SUB-COMMITTEE

Action

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

ES7 DISCRETIONARY NON-DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF

Under the provisions of Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Authority was allowed to grant Discretionary Rate Relief to organisations who were either a charity or a non-profit-making organisation.

The Sub-Committee considered a report which set out details of an application for Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief from Runcorn War Memorial Club Limited.

The Club was not a profit organisation but was not a registered charity and consequently did not qualify for mandatory rate relief. The application was in respect of Discretionary Rate Relief only. Runcorn Golf Club Limited have previously been granted 10% in Discretionary Rate Relief in respect of the premises at Clifton Road.

RESOLVED: That

(1) under the provisions of Section 47, Local Government Finance Act 1988, Discretionary Rate Relief be granted to the following organisation at the percentage indicated, for the period 1st April 2007 or the commencement of liability,

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whichever is the latter, to 31st March 2009;

Runcorn War Memorial Club Limited 10%

(2) in respect of the following organisation, it was also recommended that they should be granted Discretionary Rate Relief for the backdated element of the charge:

Runcorn War Memorial Club Limited 10%

(from 1st April 2006)

ES8 SMOKE-FREE WORKPLACE POLICY

The Sub-Committee considered a copy of the Council's revised smoking policy to comply with the smoke-free workplace legislation coming into effect on 1st July 2007.

The Council had a statutory duty to comply with the introduction of the provisions of the Health Act 2006 by ensuring all premises were smoke-free if they were used as places of work, including vehicles, from 1st July 2007. Discussions had been taking place with the Trades Unions around the details of how such a policy should be implemented. Whilst the Trade Unions supported the long-term objectives, they had preferred a phased approach to the implementation of some of the provisions in the policy.

In view of the position, and given the key leadership role this council had taken in health issues over many years, it was recommended that the policy be brought in from 1st July 2007.

This would mean that employees would no longer be able to smoke or take smoking breaks within working hours and that smoking would not be permitted within the curtilage of Council owned buildings.

It was recognised that arrangements were being put in place to ensure that any existing smokers who wished to stop would be provided with help to do so. The PCT were providing financial support and putting arrangements in place to support cessation for the community. Employees would be signposted to these opportunities.

Arising from the discussion it was suggested that

- emphasis be placed on the policy applying to employees of the Council in their working

- hours only and not members of the public;
- the need to provide additional receptacles be reviewed after 1st July 2007; and
- the quality and design of no smoking signs needed to be considered.

RESOLVED: That the policy document be approved and adopted.

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ES9 2006/07 FINANCIAL OUTTURN

The Sub-Committee considered a report summarising the final revenue and capital spending position for each department for 2006/07. In overall terms, the revenue underspending of £765,000 had confirmed previous projections highlighted in the quarterly performance management reports. The Council's general balances now stood at £7,110,000.

Within the overall underspend, there had been a few significant variances which were outlined in the report.

It was reported that the Housing Revenue Account had now been formally closed following the housing stock transfer on 5th December 2005 and the resolution of all residual issues and final subsidy claims. The remaining surplus had reverted back to the general fund and had been used to create an investor save.

Capital spending totalled £29.2m which was £1.97m below the revised capital programme. This represented over 93% delivery of the revised capital programme, with the only significant areas of slippage being on housing shared appreciation loans and the major schemes that Widnes Waterfront and 3MG which by their nature and large amount of external partner involvement were particularly difficult to manage.

In respect of school balances, these had reduced to 6.9m. This was made up from balances from individual school budgets (4.2m), standards fund (2.4m) and devolved capital (0.3m). It represented an overall reduction in school balances of 0.8m from the previous year. In addition, there were 1.7m unspent Standards Fund Grant held by Education centrally, which along with the unspent school standards fund grant, must all be spent by 31st August 2007.

Arising from the discussion it was suggested that the

Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board be requested to consider developing a business plan for Halton's Markets' which could be submitted to a relevant Committee for approval.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

MINUTES ISSUED: 26th June 2007

CALL IN: 30th June 2007

Any matter decided by the Executive Board Sub Committee may be called in no later than 30th June 2007

Meeting ended at 10.30 a.m.