

EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Executive Board Sub Committee on Thursday, 9 September 2010 in the Marketing Suite, Municipal Building

Present: Councillors Wharton (Chairman) and Nelson

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Harris

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Reaney, G. Ferguson, G. Collins, B. Dodd, M. Lloyd, P. Oldfield, C. Patino and S. Williams

Also in attendance: Councillor Redhead

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

Action

ES26 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd July 2010 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

LEADERS PORTFOLIO

ES27 APPLICATION FOR TWINNING GRANT

The Sub-Committee was advised that two applications for the Town Twinning Grant Scheme had been received. One from St. Martin's Catholic Primary School on behalf of their school, St. Bede's Junior School and St. John Fisher Primary School; the other from Warrington Road Nursery School on behalf of their school, Lunt's Heath Primary School and Simms Cross Primary School. Each Group consisted of three head teachers who wished to visit the school of the Anhui Province in Tongling. The visit would provide an opportunity to continue the educational twinning project which began five years ago. The Groups had been invited to Tongling to continue the primary education twinning programme, including sharing of practice in the support services particularly in primary years. It was noted that the head teachers would also be using their own funds to contribute to the trip.

The application was in line with the Borough's European Strategy, in particular the promotion of international links, which sought to offer the opportunity to participate to the whole population of Halton.

RESOLVED: That both applicants be advised that the Council was not in a position at this time to accommodate these requests.

Strategic Director
Environment and
Economy

ES28 POTENTIAL PROJECT FOR EUROPEAN LIFE FUNDING

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director, Environment and Economy on LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity which was a European Funding programme aimed at delivering the requirements of the Habitats Directive designed to halt the loss of biodiversity in the member states.

It was noted that applications for funding were announced in May 2010. Some initial preparatory work through a partnership approach identified a potential project addressing the long-term management of the Upper Mersey Estuary using an ecosystem services approach.

As the submission date for the application occurred between Executive Board Sub-Committee meetings, a briefing note had been circulated to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Sub-Committee in early August. The report detailed the progress that had been made to date since then and sought approval to proceed with developing the application.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the partnership approach taken to progress a LIFE funding application for the long-term management of the Upper Mersey Estuary be approved;

Strategic Director
Environment and
Economy

(2) Officer time within Environment and Economy continues to develop the concept and to secure external funding sources to potentially draw down €500,000; and

(3) the Strategic Director, Environment and Economy, in consultation with the relevant portfolio holder, be authorised to take all the necessary actions to progress the preparatory work into a successful application.

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

ES29 TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2009/10

The Sub-Committee considered a report, which reviewed activities on Treasury Management for the year 2009/10 in accordance with the Council's Treasury Management Policy Statement.

The annual report covered:

- The current Treasury position;
- Performance Measurement;
- The Borrowing Strategy for 2009/10;
- The Borrowing Outturn for 2009/10;
- Compliance with Treasury limits and Prudential Indicators;
- The Investment Strategy for 2009/10;
- The Investment Outturn for 2009/10;
- Debt Rescheduling; and
- Other issues.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

ES30 TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2010/11 1ST QTR APRIL-JUNE

The Sub-Committee considered a report which updated Members on the activities undertaken on the money market as required by the Treasury Management Policy.

The report provided supporting information on the economic forecast, short-term rates, longer-term rates, temporary borrowing/investments, and investment income forecast. It was noted that all the policy guidelines in the Treasury Management Policy had been complied with.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

ES31 SPENDING AS AT 30 JUNE 2010

The Sub-Committee considered a report which summarised the overall revenue and capital spending position as at 30th June 2010.

In overall terms, revenue expenditure was below the budget profile, however, this was only a guide to eventual spending. It was noted that spending on employees was also below the budget profile; this was primarily due to delays in filling vacancies following the organisational restructuring from April 2010. In addition, the budget included 1% for the pay award, however, the employers had offered a zero increase.

It was noted that income levels were largely in line with budget, as the impact of the economic downturn upon income levels was taken into account when setting the 2010/11 budget.

With regard to capital spending, it was reported that spending to 30th June 2010 totalled £4.4m, which was 60% of the planned spending of £7.3m at this stage. However, this only represented 9% of the total capital programme of £50.5m (which assumed a 20% slippage between years).

The Council's balance sheet was monitored regularly in accordance with the Reserves and Balances Strategy which formed part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The key reserves and balances had been reviewed and were considered prudent and appropriate at this stage in the financial year.

The report also outlined the impact of the significant number of equal pay claims which had been lodged with the Council as part of the national single status agreement. A reserve had been established over recent years, although it was not certain whether this would be sufficient to meet the future cost of such claims.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

ES32 DISCRETIONARY NON DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy which sought Members' consideration of two applications for discretionary rate relief, under the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

The Sub-Committee was advised that under the provisions of Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Authority was allowed to grant discretionary rate relief to organisations that were either a charity or a non-profit making organisation. This relief may also be awarded to Community Amateur Sports Clubs. A summary of the applications was outlined within the report and a list of the associated figures was included.

RESOLVED: That under the provisions of Section 47, Local Government Finance Act 1988, discretionary rate relief be granted to the following organisations at the percentage indicated, for the period from 1st April 2010 or the commencement of liability, whichever is the later to the

Strategic Director
Resources

31st March 2013:

Runcorn Residents Federation

100%

Tenants and Residents Organisations of England

20%

ES33 EXTENSION OF CONTRACTS AND WAIVER OF
STANDING ORDERS

The Sub-Committee considered a request to waive Standing Orders and extend the current Northgate@work and Northgate's Docs on Line contract for a further 5 years.

The Revenues and Benefits Division successfully implemented Anite@work (now known as Northgate@work), a document managing and workflow system, in January 2001. The contract was extended in 2006 and the current contract expired in January 2010. Northgate@work was an integral part of the work process of the division. It was the market leader in the supply of document imaging systems to Local Government, in particular in the field of Revenues and Benefits.

It was noted that an advantage of Northgate@work was that they offered a remote scanning and indexing service. This service had been used successfully during the course of the Northgate@work contract and was only offered by Northgate. In 2001 it was determined that it was more cost effective for the Council to outsource this specialist operation and provision was made in the budget to accommodate this service. As the Northgate@work contract was to be extended then it was necessary to extend the Docs on Line contract at the same time.

Members noted that there were various factors for extending the contract with Northgate including:

- the existing supplier had been used successfully for ten years;
- no conversion of information was necessary;
- no staff training on a new system was necessary, therefore no associated costs;
- there would be no significant additional costs in the setting up of a new system, data mapping and staff training
- the new Doc on Line contract was on more favourable terms and would achieve a saving of existing costs; and
- the current system was compatible with the

Council's Home Working Policy and also supported staff working in various locations e.g. Job Centre Plus and Housing offices.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the Operational Director, Finance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources be authorised to extend the contract for the scanning and indexing of images for the Revenues and Benefits Division to the contractor Northgate Information System at a cost over 5 years of £240,000 and the annual maintenance contract for a cost over 5 years of £30,725;

Operational
Director, Finance

(2) for the purposes of Contract Standing Order 1.6, approval be given on this occasion to the waiver of Standing Orders 3.1 to 3.7 and Procurement Standing Order 4 in light of the exceptional circumstances under the following provisions:

- Standing order 1.6a, as Northgate was the only provider of a remote scanning and indexing system;
- Standing order 1.6c, as the existing system had been operating successfully for ten years and any new supplier would involve the Council in substantial set up and installation costs;
- Standing order 1.6d, as Halton Borough Council had been a reference site for Northgate@work. Due to this relationship Halton Borough Council had been able to negotiate favourable terms for the extension of the contract, which would not be available on the open market; and
- Standing order 1.6e as the provision of a remote scanning and indexing of documents can only be provided by Northgate Docs on Line.

HEALTH AND ADULTS PORTFOLIO

ES34 BEERS, WINES & SPIRITS CONTRACT

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director Adults and Community which outlined the

current position with regard to the Beers, Wines and Spirits Contract. It was reported that the Council had an annual spend of £245,000 Beers, Wines and Spirits, which was split between the Stobart Stadium Halton £228,000 and The Brindley Arts Centre £17,000 per annum.

The Stadium and The Procurement Centre of Excellence had worked together to scope the marketplace and identify an alternative source of supply that would deliver value for money and increase revenue for the authority, whilst addressing efficiency savings around the tender procedure. As such, a variety of tendering opportunities had been identified that would be open for the Council to participate in. These had been benchmarked against the current contract prices to assist with the decision on which procurement route to take.

It was proposed that in order for the Council to participate in a new collaborative Framework Agreement with either Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council as lead representing the Associated Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) or ESPO (Eastern Shires Procurement Organisation) and Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council, the existing contract arrangements which finish at the end of October 2010 be extended for a further 8 months, up to June 2011.

The collaborative opportunity would improve the market profile of the framework by increased aggregated volumes, opportunities of supply to a wider customer base of Local Authorities which would attract key suppliers within this supply chain to influence the market and stimulate competition to deliver improved efficiency savings. In addition, efficiency savings would also be gained from the Council not having to manage the tender procedure independently from reduced resource and time preparing the documentation as this would be done by ESPO.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be accepted; and
- (2) Procurement Standing Orders part 3 be waived.

Strategic Director
Adults and
Community

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

ES35 CASTLEFIELDS VILLAGE SQUARE – LOCAL LETTINGS POLICY

The Sub-Committee considered a report which sought its views on a proposal by Plus Dane Housing Association to introduce a local lettings policy to allocate the new rental properties being constructed as part of the Castlefields Village Square redevelopment. Plus Dane was the developer of the shop units and 16 flats above the shops at Castlefields Village Square. Mindful of the need to do everything possible to protect this investment and the new facilities for the long term benefit of the community, and of the anti-social behaviour problems often associated with local centres and flats over shops particularly, Plus Dane were proposing to introduce a local lettings policy. This would only apply to 16 new flats due to be constructed above the new shops and not the wider estate.

Members considered a copy of Plus Dane's overarching policy framework governing the use of local lettings policies. The framework set out the consultation, implementation and monitoring process and the safeguards in terms of regular monitoring, analysis and review.

In addition, the report outlined the local context of why Plus Dane wanted to introduce a local policy for the Castlefields Village Square area and the proposed criteria to be used to select new tenants. Essentially, introduce two additional criteria on top of the normal conditions, in that applicants must be over 25 years of age and must be either working or engaged in voluntary work within the community.

It was noted that the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board supported this proposal at its meeting on 16th June 2010.

RESOLVED: That the Board support the introduction of a local lettings policy as set out in the report.

MINUTES ISSUED: 15th September 2010

CALL IN: 23rd September 2010

Any matter decided by the Executive Board Sub Committee may be called in no later than 23rd September 2010

Meeting ended at 10.53 a.m.