

EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Executive Board Sub Committee on Thursday, 8 September 2011 in the Marketing Suite, Municipal Building

Present: Councillors Wharton (Chairman), Harris and Nelson

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Reaney, G. Ferguson, B. Dodd, A. McNamara, S. Riley and K. Hall

Also in attendance: None

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

		<i>Action</i>
ES25	MINUTES	
	<p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 9th August 2011 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p>	
	RESOURCES PORTFOLIO	
ES26	SPENDING AS AT 30TH JUNE 2011	
	<p>The Sub-Committee considered a report which summarised the overall revenue and capital spending position as at 30th June 2011.</p> <p>In overall terms, revenue expenditure was marginally below the budget profile, however, this was only a guide to eventual spending. It was noted that spending on employees was above the budget profile; this was primarily due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the delay in negotiating new premium pay arrangements with the Unions;• staff turnover was much reduced and lower than assumed in the budget; and• spending on agency staff, overtime, casual staff and consultancy costs.	

It was reported that steps had been taken to control spending in these areas. In addition, certain budgets savings approved for 2011/12 had yet to be achieved, premium/overtime (£750,000), street lighting on rural roads (£40,000) and running costs associated with asset disposals (£250,000).

Members were advised that the economic downturn was affecting income. A number of income budgets were below their profile including market rents, industrial estates rents, land charges, social care charges and licence fees. These budgets would be closely monitored during the year to ensure the overall budget was balanced.

With regard to capital spending, it was reported that spending to the 30th June 2011 totalled £7.5m, which was 75% of the planned spending of £9.9m at this stage. However, this only represented 12% of the total capital programme of £64.1m (which assumed a 20% slippage between years). Members were advised that the main areas of programme slippage to date were in respect of Castlefields Regeneration and the Local Transport Plan schemes.

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, which was now considered sufficient to meet the future cost of such claims.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) a further report be submitted to the Executive Board on the steps available to achieve a balanced budget at the end of the year; and
- (3) future quarterly Spending reports be submitted to the Executive Board for consideration.

Operational
Director Finance

The Sub-Committee considered a report which outlined the spending profile for the current ICT infrastructure requirements for 2011/12. Members were advised that in order to support the current demand for technology growth and replacement, the authority required an investment in the region of £1.3m this year in relation to the £1.1m capital budget made available.

It was noted that all projects had been identified and through smart procurement tactics, financial year-end discount opportunities, detailed specification and programme management the budget was expected to support the current requirement. In addition, all capital investment would be targeted to the maintenance and support of existing equipment that had become no longer viable, in terms of spare parts and its operational ability. Every effort would be made to comply with the full programme requirement through additional income generation and effective purchasing.

Members also received an update on the new 'Lync' telephony solution, which had targeted installation dates between October and December 2011 and the device replacement strategy, which had been reviewed and new device strategies were now in place.

RESOLVED: That the Board supports the ICT Capital Programme.

ES28 TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2010/11

The Sub-Committee considered a report which reviewed activities on Treasury Management for the year 2010/11 in accordance with the Council's Treasury Management Policy Statement.

The annual report covered:-

- Capital activity during the year;
- Impact of this activity on the Council's underlying indebtedness (the Capital Financing Requirement);
- Reporting of the required prudential and treasury indicators;
- Overall treasury position identifying how the Council had borrowed in relation to this indebtedness and the impact of investment balances;
- Summary of interest rate movements in the

- year;
- Detailed debt activity; and
- Detailed investment activity.

In addition the report provided details of the outturn position for treasury activities and highlighted compliance with the Council's policies previously approved by Members.

Members noted that the unexpected change of policy on Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) lending arrangements in October 2010 resulted in an increase in new borrowing rates of 0.75% to 0.85% without an associated increase in early redemption rates. This made new borrowing more expensive and repayment relatively less attractive.

RESOLVED: That the actual 2010/11 Prudential and Treasury Indicators in this report be approved and the Annual Treasury Management Report for 2010/11 be noted.

ES29 TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2011/12: 1ST QUARTER:
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 background, economic forecast, short term rates, longer term rates, temporary borrowing/investments and new borrowing. It was noted that all the policy guidelines in the Treasury Management Policy had been complied with.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

ES30 DISCRETIONARY NON-DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources which sought Members' consideration of four applications for discretionary non-domestic 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 list of the associated figures was included.

RESOLVED: That

(1) 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 1st April 2011 or the commencement of liability, whichever is the later to 31st March 2013:-

Halton Haven Hospice	20%
SHAP Ltd.	20%

(2) in respect of the following organisation, it is also recommended that they should be granted discretionary rate relief for the backdated element of the charge from April 2010 or the commencement of liability, whichever is the later; and

Halton Haven Hospice	20%
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(3) under the provisions of Section 47, Local Government Finance Act 1988, the following applications for discretionary rate relief be refused:-

Runcorn Golf Club	20%
Widnes Golf Club	20%

Strategic Director
Policy and
Resources

HEALTH AND ADULTS PORTFOLIO AND NEIGHBOURHOOD, LEISURE AND SPORT PORTFOLIO

ES31 BOARDWALK EXTRA CARE HOUSING SCHEME

The Sub-Committee was advised that the development of extra care housing was a strategic priority for the Council given the ageing profile of the local population. Housing Associations were asked to take this into account when formulating their development proposals for submission to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) under the 2011/15 National Affordable Housing Programme.

The HCA had now notified Housing Association bidding consortia of the amounts of grants awarded to them and the number of dwellings that must be developed in return, and invited them to enter into framework delivery contracts. Prior to doing this Housing Associations that were proposing to develop supported housing schemes were checking with local authorities whether or not revenue

support would be available. Only schemes which had support would have their funding confirmed and housing associations had been asked to secure confirmation as soon as possible. Details of three HCA bids submitted by Housing Associations in Halton were outlined to the Committee.

Of the three proposals, the Council had been made aware of the details surrounding the Cosmopolitan development. It was noted that Plus Dane would not be proceeding with their proposal and Riverside were unable to confirm whether or not their scheme was to be included in their revised offer to the HCA.

It was therefore proposed that the Cosmopolitan proposal to develop 90 extra care housing flats at the Boardwalk, West Bank, Widnes be supported by the Council. Following consultation, planning permission for extra care housing was approved by the Council's Development Control Committee on the 12th April 2010.

Members were advised that in conjunction with the Scheme of Delegation and Procurement Standing Orders namely 1.8.1, emergency procedures, the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and relevant portfolio holders, considered and supported the proposals outlined in the report before this formal meeting.

RESOLVED: That

(1) after consultation with the Leader and Portfolio Holders for Neighbourhood, Leisure and Sport and Health and Adults, the Chief Executive has under delegated powers (Matters of Urgency, Constitution) determined that subject to the 90 units of extra care accommodation being constructed by Cosmopolitan Housing Association, the Council agree to provide funding through the Support People programme for relevant housing support costs at an estimated cost of £100,000 per annum; and

(2) the Council enters into the necessary legal agreements to give effect to the reported decision.

Chief Executive

(NB: Councillor Nelson declared a Personal Interest in the following item of business as Chair of Governors of The Grange School.)

ES32 SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

The Board considered:

- (1) whether Members of the press and public should be excluded from the meeting of the Board during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be considered, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972; and
- (2) whether the disclosure of information was in the public interest, whether any relevant exemptions were applicable and whether, when applying the public interest test and exemptions, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed that in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED: That as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it is likely that, in view of the nature of the business, exempt information will be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES PORTFOLIO

ES33 BSF UPDATE

The Sub-Committee received a report by the Strategic Director Communities which provided an update on the outcome of the Financial Close of the Building Schools for the Future programme and an outline of the extra work commissioned through external consultants. In addition a waiver of Standing Orders was sought in order that continued support could be procured from the existing consultants without the need to go to the market place and obtain 3 written quotes.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the final implications of the delay in financial

close from March 2011 to June 2011 be noted; and

(2) the Operational Director, Children's Organisation and Provision be authorised to award contracts for Legal, Financial ICT and Technical Support in light of the exceptional circumstances outlined in the report and in accordance with Procurement Standing Orders 1.8.2 (c) Standing Orders 3.1 and 3.2 be waived on this occasion.

Strategic Director
Children and
Enterprise

MINUTES ISSUED: 13th September 2011

CALL IN: 20th September 2011

Any matter decided by the Executive Board Sub Committee may be called in no later than 20th September 2011

Meeting ended at 11.00 a.m.