

THE EXECUTIVE

Tuesday, 23 September 2003
(7:00 - 8:40 pm)

Present: Councillor C Geddes (Vice-Chair, in the Chair), Councillor J L Alexander, Councillor G J Bramley, Councillor S Kallar, Councillor B M Osborn, Councillor J W Porter, Councillor L A Smith and Councillor T G W Wade.

Also Present: Councillor Mrs V M Rush.

Apologies: Councillor C J Fairbrass and Councillor M E McKenzie.

114. Minutes (16 September 2003)

Agreed, subject to the following amendment for clarification:

Minute 108 - Budget Monitoring, replace the second paragraph with the following:

Noted:

1. The potential budget overspend of £600,000 in the Education, Arts and Libraries Department and the actions taken within the Housing and Health Department to address pressures on the Housing General Fund Budget and the Housing Revenue Account; and
2. The emerging budget pressures within the Social Services Department.

Agreed, that the Director of Education, Arts and Libraries to ensure that action is taken to rectify the current projected overspend on Education.

115. Statement of Accounts 2002/2003

Deferred.

116. Revenue Outturn 2002/2003

Deferred.

117. Environmental Sustainability in Barking Town Centre

Withdrawn - not circulated.

118. Consideration of Support for the Alcohol Advisory Service

Received a report providing a summary of the issues surrounding alcohol treatment services in the Borough in light of the request to the Council for financial support to relocate the Alcohol Advisory Service. The service is currently the only provider of alcohol treatment in the Borough and is required to move from its current premises by December.

Noted that there are significant developments in the national agenda for alcohol treatment that may have an influence on the future commissioning of alcohol services in the Borough, including the imminent release of a National Alcohol Strategy.

Agreed:

1. Not to make a capital investment for accommodation for the Alcohol Advisory Service until after a review of the Service and its role within a local Alcohol Strategy, yet to be published, is confirmed: and
2. That a further report be submitted to the Executive as soon as possible presenting an initial assessment of the implications of the National Alcohol Strategy and options for the location of the Alcohol Advisory Service beyond the December deadline for vacating the current premises.

119. Development of Employment Strategies

Received a report setting out details of two draft strategies that will help to ensure that local businesses are supported in order to up-skill their employees and unemployed people are supported into jobs.

Noted that funding streams are available and that the Council is well placed to lead partnership activity, help unemployed residents through its own recruitment by placing employment conditions in the contracts it places and including training activities in Section 106 agreements.

Agreed, in order to improve residents' access to well paid employment, which the key route to tackling social exclusion:

1. To adopt the draft strategies attached as appendices to the report as the basis for consultation with external partners; and
2. That further detailed reports be submitted on the role that the Council can play as a major employer, purchaser of services and planning authority.

120. Private Sector Housing Grants Strategy

Deferred.

121. IT for Members

Received a report providing an update on the IT for Members project, which included options for reducing the higher than expected connection charges associated with heavy usage making savings in the central printing budget. The report outlines three options for the replacement of the existing Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) lines with Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Lines (ADSL), in order to improve performance and reduce costs. These are as follows:

- a) Point to Point BT IP Stream Broadband;
- b) BT Business Broadband; and
- c) BT Home Broadband.

The report also provided an update on the number of Members currently connected to the Council's computer network and savings which can be made in computer training arrangements.

Agreed, in order to produce savings through a reduction in central printing costs, computer connection charges and training arrangements, to:

1. Option A, as detailed in the report as the preferred option to move from ISDN to ADSL connection for all Members to the Council's computer network.

This is a spend-to-save proposal with capital investment funded through the Customer First initiative that will result in sustainable, predictable revenue savings on call and print charges, offering an all in-house solution resulting in better security and one point of call for 'help desk' facilities;

2. Encourage the balance of Members to be connected to the Council's computer network in order to improve electronic communications, which will lead to savings being made to central printing budgets, as part of the three year programme of cuts;
3. Provide Members with the opportunity to take up the European Computer Driving Licence qualification as the means for training in the use of computers and the software provided; and
4. A further report being submitted to look into the issue of telephone use by Members and the provision of out of office hours IT support.

122. Private Business

Agreed to exclude the public and press for the remainder of the meeting, as the business was confidential.

123. Treasury Management Annual Report 2002/2003

Deferred.

124. Extension of Term Contract for Maintenance of Catering Equipment

Received a report proposing an extension of the current Term Contract for six-months to cover the period between the expiry of the current contract and start of a new Term Contract; for which tenders will be sought.

Consideration was given to a two-year extension to the current contract; however, this would contravene the European Directive on Service Contract Value Criteria. The time required to advertise, tender and implement a new term contract will be approximately six months.

Agreed the extension of the current Term Contract for Service, Maintenance and Repairs of Catering Equipment in Public Buildings and Schools with J. Scott and Sons Ltd to 31 March 2004 in order to provide an efficient and cost effective service for the repair of catering equipment.

125. Update on Contracting Issues

Received a report providing an update on the following tendering and contracting issues:

- Provision of Care in Housing with Extra Care Accommodation (Saywood Lodge Site).
- Residential Care Provision in the Community for People with Mental Health Problems.
- Preferred Provider Accreditation for Home Care Providers.
- Out of Office Hours Service for the Home Support Service.

Agreed to nominate Councillor B Osborn to take part in the evaluation and tender processes as set out in the report, in accordance with the Council's Constitution Part D (Contract Rules) Paragraph 3.6.

126. Upgrade of Disc Storage System

Deferred.

127. Selection of Registered Social Landlords for Barking and Dagenham's Preferred Partners Panel and Allocation to new Housing Projects

Deferred.

128. Older People's Commissioning and Financial Strategy

Deferred.