

THE EXECUTIVE

Tuesday, 23 December 2003
(3:00 - 4:05 pm)

Present: Councillor C J Fairbrass (Chair), Councillor C Geddes (Deputy Chair), Councillor G J Bramley, Councillor S Kallar, Councillor M E McKenzie, Councillor B M Osborn, Councillor J W Porter and Councillor T G W Wade.

Also Present: Councillor M A McCarthy.

Apologies: Councillor J L Alexander and Councillor L A Smith.

239. Minutes (16 December 2003)

Agreed.

240. Council Tax Base

Noted a report advising of the financial position regarding the treatment of single person discounts for Council Tax purposes.

241. Local Government Provisional Settlement 2004 / 2005 and Budget Considerations for 2004 / 2005

Noted details of the provisional financial settlement for 2004 / 2005, including the Formula Grant Settlement and Formula Spending Share, and the difficult budget pressures to be faced as set out in the report.

Agreed to delegate the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Council, to respond to the consultation on the provisional settlement by the new deadline of 9 January 2004.

242. * Naming of Buildings, Facilities and Roads

Received a verbal report highlighting recent occurrences where suggestions for the naming of buildings and facilities have been discussed and noted that no formal procedures are currently set out in the Constitution.

Agreed, in order that procedure be put in place, that:

1. The naming of buildings, facilities or roads etc, which the Council has commissioned or has direct or indirect influence over, should be reserved to the Executive subject to any statutory requirements; and
2. A report be submitted to the Executive setting out a proposed procedure covering the above so that recommendations can be made to the Assembly.

243. Private Business

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

244. Internal Refurbishment Programme to Low-Rise Dwellings (Kitchen / Rewire Works) - Notification of Tender

Further to Minute 217 (2 December 2003) received a report providing an update on the kitchen and rewire programme. The report also set out details of a proposed interim project partnering arrangement to be entered into, pending the development of longer-term arrangements.

Agreed, in order to enable the completion of properties where works have already commenced, as well as approximately 250 further properties, that:

1. An interim project partnering arrangement be tendered; and
2. The Lead Member for Improving Health, Housing and Social Care and a Member, to be nominated by the Scrutiny Management Board, be appointed to take part in the evaluation and award of the contract in accordance with the Constitution, Part D - Contract Rules.

245. Customer First Implementation

Received a report setting out the basis of the Customer First Business Plan and the implementation of Customer First.

Whilst the implementation of the Customer First initiative is being led by the Head of Customer First, it will be the responsibility of every Director and the following Heads of Services to deliver in their respective areas in order to support this corporate initiative:

- Customer Services - Head of Customer First
- Organisation Structures - Head of Organisational Development and Employee Relations
- Working Environment - Head of Asset Management and Development
- Technology - Head of Information Management and Technology

Noted and reinforced the need for effective consultation with Trade Union representatives and all Members as the Customer First initiative will have important implications for staff.

Agreed the following in order to implement the Best Value Improvement Plan for Customer First and improve customer services across the Council:

1. The Business Plan to be implemented;
2. The option for procurement outlined in paragraphs 7.1 - 7.9 of the report;

3. To waive the tender process under Contract Rule 4.1 (e) to allow officers to appoint PricewaterhouseCoopers to carry out the procurement options appraisal for a fixed priced contract of £12,600;
4. The Programme Management Board to agree the next steps on procurement;
5. Funding for the Customer First initiative to be considered as part of each year's Medium Term Financial Strategy;
6. Chief Officers to agree service level agreements when commissioning contact services through the Customer First programme during the first year and undertake to save the revenue amounts required;
7. Chief Officers to guarantee efficiency savings and resource transference to fund Customer First after the first year of the programme;
8. An earmarked reserve to be set up, as detailed in paragraph 5.2 of the report, to assist with the revenue set up costs in 2004 / 2005 of £2m and in 2005 / 2006 of £800,000 while savings in service costs are being made. The release of this reserve to be delegated to the Director of Finance subject to the achievement of key activities in the project plan and the reviews being undertaken by the project board; and
9. That Roycraft House be reserved for the Foundation Contact Centre, subject to further reports on its practical suitability.

246. Progress Report on the Education Private Finance Initiative Contract

Further to Minute 191 (11 November 2003), noted the current situation with regards to the signing of the Education Private Finance Initiative contract with the preferred bidder, Bouygues Education UK.

247. Emerging Findings From Benefits Fraud Inspectorate Site Inspection

Noted a report setting out the emerging findings from the recent site inspection by the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate and the short and medium term actions being undertaken by officers to address these.

248. * Recruitment of the Head of Older Peoples Services

Received a report seeking to appoint a recruitment panel for the post of Head of Older Peoples services and the appointment of an interim Head of Service.

Agreed, in order to enable the recruitment to the post of Head of Older Peoples Services:

1. That Councillors Bramley, Fairbrass and B Osborn be appointed to the interview panel on the proposed interview date; and
2. To the recruitment of an interim Head of Service for a period of 10 weeks.

249. * Recruitment to the Head of Organisational Development and Employee Relations

Received a report seeking to appoint a recruitment panel for the post of Head of Organisational Development and Employee Relations.

Agreed, in order to enable the recruitment to the post of Head of Organisational Development and Employee Relations, to appoint Councillors Fairbrass, Kallar and McKenzie.

* Item considered as a matter of urgency with the consent of the Chair under Section 100 (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.