

DEPUTY LEADER
19th November, 2012

Present:- Councillor Akhtar (in the Chair).

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillor Gosling and Sims.

N37. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 8TH OCTOBER, 2012

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 8th October, 2012 be approved as a correct record.

N38. LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY ISSUES AND LIVING WAGE

Consideration was given to a report presented by Phil Howe, Director of Human Resources which provided information on the current levels of pay in the Council and pressures to respond to the Trade Union sponsored 'Living Wage' campaign.

It was acknowledged that in this period of austerity and pay restraint, the situation in respect of relative pay levels was something that was receiving more publicity. Increases in the National Minimum wage rates at a time when Local Government (unlike other public sector employers) had had to apply a pay freeze which meant both this benchmark rate plus those rates paid to some comparable occupations in the private sector had significantly narrowed or in some isolated instances even overtaken our rates of pay.

A recent comparison of various comparator jobs had been undertaken and would suggest that even allowing for other sectors not being held back by national pay restraint the rates being paid in general at the bottom end of the Council's pay structure still remained in excess of private sector rates.

Currently there was a significant campaign from the TUC and individual Trade Unions lobbying Councils to support a drive towards paying a 'Living Wage' assessed at £7.45 per hour. Rotherham had more than 1500 employees paid below this level in occupations such as cleaning, catering, grounds maintenance and waste collection labourers. The implications of a migration to such minimum levels would be significant for Rotherham's job evaluated pay structure and indeed overall costs/budget pressures. It should be noted that a move to a minimum rate of £7.45 would result in an immediate cost to the Council of over £900K plus an additional £1m from incremental progression (subject to satisfactory performance). An additional 850 colleagues in schools could also be affected giving a further potential cost of over £600K plus equivalent incremental pressures if applied.

The Council remained committed to supporting national pay bargaining and was awaiting the outcome of proposals in respect of next year's pay settlement (2013/14) and had already committed to reinstating incremental progression next year. Increments due to our lowest paid on grades A and B were applied this year as a concession to in some way address the consequences of the recession affecting the low paid. The national pay negotiations were anticipating some form of offer to the workforce this year albeit in the light of

continuing budget challenge this was anticipated to be minimal and may include balancing changes to some terms and conditions of employment and/or bottom-loaded effect to support lower paid. These were still to be determined, but would be sought to be applied whatever was agreed nationally.

It was acknowledged that this was a very emotive area and that a briefing note should be provided for the Deputy Leader to share with all Members.

Resolved:- That the update on National pay negotiations be received and the proposed approach to pay and benefits, including the continued promotion of various relevant initiatives to support Council employees, be noted.

N39. TABLET COMPUTING

Consideration was given to a report presented by Richard Copley, Corporate ICT Manager, which sought approval for a trial of Council issued tablet computers as a potential alternative to Council issued laptops.

In view of the developments outlined in the report, it was now possible to offer tablets to Members which would be made on a trial basis initially, in order to test their suitability as laptop replacements and to judge their effectiveness in reducing our reliance on paper agenda packs.

The trial would run until the end of March, 2013 at which time a report would be presented to the Deputy Leader on the outcomes of the trial.

The exact make and model of tablets to be trialled was yet to be determined, but one of the aims of the trial would be to help identify the most suitable tablet for Members. It was proposed, therefore, that a variety of tablet types were trialled.

There would be no requirement for Members to return their current laptop whilst they were trying a tablet device at this stage, but should the trial lead to a wider deployment then the proposal would be that Members and officers must choose between a tablet or laptop as it would not be possible financially to provide both.

It was noted that many Members and officers already accessed the Council's systems from their personal tablets and smartphones using the secure Good app. The same solution would apply during the trial, the only difference being that the tablets would be Council owned and issued rather than belonging to the individual. As with employee owned devices the Council issued tablets would not connect to the corporate data network, but would instead use the public Council WiFi which was available in several Council buildings. They would also be able to connect to other public WiFi networks and the user's own WiFi at home.

It should be noted that it was not currently possible for the Council to control all parts of a tablet device. This was not currently the case for Council issued laptops. Tablet devices work in a way which meant that the only parts of the tablet which could be centrally controlled were:-

- Any system within the Good for Enterprise container – this currently included email, calendar, contacts, web browsing, web based Council applications, the Intranet.
- Any system delivered through a thin client window (under the Thin Client model the applications were installed on servers in the data centre and no processing was done on the end user's device. This gave much greater flexibility and choice as to the variety of devices that could be enabled access from).

It was pointed out that any Council data which resided within the Good app or the thin client window was protected against loss and was remotely removed in the event of a device being lost or stolen. All other parts of the tablet were uncontrolled. As with "Bring Your Own Device", this did not pose a data security risk as it was not permitted for data to be transferred out of the Good app or the thin client window to other areas of the tablet.

In order to comply with the Council's Information Security Policy steps would be taken to limit the possibility of the user using the tablet's own browser (outside of Good) to visit inappropriate websites. Similarly there was a need to minimise the risk of the user installing inappropriate apps, such as games, from the App Store or Market Place. Configuration changes would be implemented before issuing the device which would restrict some of this functionality. There were no such concerns when an individual was using a device that they owned as they were at liberty to install games and browse sites as they see fit. As part of the trial the best options would continue to be reviewed for securing tablets in order that data remained safe whilst not impacting usability for Members.

Further information was provided on the usability options and the functionality for Members and officers, which also included thin client technology.

Discussion ensued on the costs associated with the proposed trial, which would result in savings to the Council through reduced costs in hardware and in printing agenda documentation, the stability and resilience of the WiFi network, security, portability and transportation and the exploration of technological advances in software.

Resolved:- That the proposed trial of tablet devices amongst Members of the Planning Board and the Cabinet be approved.

N40. CABINET REPORTS

Phil Howe, Director of Human Resources, referred to a report that would be submitted to the Cabinet shortly on "Public Health" detailing proposals about various reporting arrangements and detailing where this new function would best 'sit' within the Council structure when formally transferring to the Council in April 2013.

Resolved:- That the information be noted.

N41. MEMBERS' ISSUES

There were no outstanding Members' issues to report.

(THE CHAIRMAN AUTHORISED CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEM IN ORDER TO PROGRESS THE INFORMATION REFERRED TO)

N42. RESOURCES PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR 2012/13 - QUARTER 2

Consideration was given to a report presented by Sue Wilson, Performance and Quality Manager, which summarised the performance by the Resources Directorate against current measures and key service delivery issues during Quarter 2 across the areas of:-

- Commissioning, Policy and Performance.
- Financial Services.
- Human Resources and Payroll.
- Internal audit and Asset Management.
- Legal and Democratic Services.

Work continued to review services and embed planning processes and priorities within the Directorate. A series of benchmarking reviews were recently undertaken to assess the value for money that Resources services provided when comparing with comparable public and/or private sector benchmarking information. The reviews were carried out in conjunction with critical friend Directors who provided valuable challenge and support to the Service Managers and the key findings would be presented to the Deputy Leader at a number of pre-arranged briefings.

Discussion ensued on the presentation of the information and the new layout and narrative was supported.

Resolved:- That the performance achieved against key priorities and indicators be noted.

N43. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:- That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act (as amended March, 2006 (information relates to finance and business affairs).

N44. PROCUREMENT OF COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SOFTWARE

Consideration was given to a report presented by Colin Earl, Director of Internal Audit and Asset Management, which set out details of the requirement for the Council to adopt a local Council Tax Support Scheme from 1st April 2013, and the need for the continuation of the current software for administering Council Tax and Council Tax Benefit to be further developed and updated.

An exemption from Standing Orders was required to enable the Council to procure new, additional software development as the provision of the CTS software could only be supplied by the current supplier.

Resolved:- That the contract for the purchase of CTS software be exempt from the provisions of Standing Order 48.1 (requirement to invite between three and six tenders for contracts with an estimated value of £50k or more) and the purchase be made from the current supplier.

N45. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- That a further meeting be held on Monday, 17th December, 2012 at 9.30 a.m.