

Deputy Leader

**Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate
Street, Rotherham. S60
2TH**

Date: Thursday, 11 July 2013

Time: 9.30 a.m.

A G E N D A

1. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
3. Apologies for Absence.
4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 10th June, 2013 (herewith). (Pages 1 - 4)
5. National Children and Adult Services Conference and Exhibition 2013, Harrogate International Centre, Wednesday 16th - Friday 18th October, 2013

To authorise the attendance of Councillor P. Lakin.
6. Fund For Change (report herewith) (Pages 5 - 7)
7. Cabinet Reports and Members' Issues (Directors to report).
8. Exclusion of the Press and Public.
The following item is likely to be considered in the absence of the press and public as being exempt under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended March 2006) (information relating to the financial or business affairs)
9. Procurement of Software Licence from Northgate (report herewith) (Pages 8 - 9)
10. Date and Time of the Next Meeting - Monday, 9th September, 2013 at 9.30 a.m.

DEPUTY LEADER
10th June, 2013

Present:- Councillor Akhtar (in the Chair) along with Councillor Sims.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Gosling.

N1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 15TH APRIL, 2013

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 15th April, 2013.

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 15th April, 2013 be approved as a correct record.

N2. SMART PHONE/TABLET SALARY SACRIFICE SCHEME

Consideration was given to a report presented by Phil Howe, Director of Human Resources, which provided information regarding the introduction of a Mobile Phone/Tablet salary sacrifice scheme.

Employees could save between 30 to 50% off the price of a smart phone or Tablet-type device when accompanied with 24 months line rental, dependant on their personal tax rate. There were restrictions placed on tablet-type devices that could be purchased under such schemes as HMRC provisions required that they must be more akin to mobile communication equipment rather than computing devices.

Mobile phone salary sacrifice schemes do not affect the level of pensionable pay for employees who were members of the Local Government Pension or Teacher Pension Schemes. This would make the scheme more attractive to employees and unlike some of the salary sacrifice schemes allowed 3,000 employees on teaching terms and conditions of employment to participate.

The Council would save money on employer National Insurance contributions on the amount of salary sacrificed, currently 10.4% or 13.8% depending whether the employee was in the pension scheme or not. If 100 employees, 1% of the workforce, joined the scheme National Insurance savings were expected to be around £5,000 per annum.

The introduction of a scheme would also increase the number of employees with devices which could be used under the Council's Bring Your Own Device (BOYD) policy.

Resolved:- (1) That the introduction of a salary sacrifice scheme for mobile phones and Tablet Devices be supported.

(2) That an appropriate interim provider be identified whilst a formal procurement exercise is undertaken on a national framework agreement.

N3. AUTHORISATION LIMITS

Consideration was given to a report presented by Jacqueline Collins, Director of Legal and Democratic Services, which detailed how the Council's Standing Orders placed a limit of £500,000 on the total amount value of contracts that may be placed by officers.

For the financial year 2012/13 this limit was exceeded by the Director of Human Resources. This was due to the significant value of vehicles nominally purchased by the Council on behalf of employees, under the salary sacrifice scheme.

The Council's Standing Orders had been revised and approved at the Annual Council Meeting in order to provide assurance that orders were being placed in an authorised manner.

Resolved:- That the additional expenditure for the year 2012/13 and the position, which had been rectified by an amendment to the Council's Standing Orders at the Annual Council Meeting on the 17th May, 2013, be noted.

N4. ROTHERHAM GRID FOR LEARNING - MIGRATION FROM MICROSOFT LIVE@EDU TO MICROSOFT OFFICE 365

Consideration was given to a report presented by Richard Copley, Corporate ICT Manager, which sought approval to invoke Standing Order 35, which permitted exemption from normal Contract Standing Orders. This was to allow Oxford Computer Group, to undertake the upgrade of the Microsoft Live@edu school email service provision to the replacement Microsoft Office 365 service.

Microsoft have announced that they would discontinue the Live@edu service in July 2013 and replace it with their new 'Office 365 for Schools' service. This change would mean that Oxford Computer Group would be required to re-write their integration platform such that the integration between RGfL and Live@edu be removed and replaced with integration between RGfL and Office 365.

As Oxford Computer Group implemented, managed and maintained the existing Live@edu service for the Council they were the only supplier able to upgrade service. No other feasible alternatives existed and the cost for any other organisation to develop an interface would be substantially in excess of the price quoted and the development, testing and implementation processes would cause disruption to users during the transition period.

Resolved:- That the contract for the upgrading of the school's email system and associated re-integration with Rotherham Grid for Learning be exempt from the provisions of Standing Order 47.6.3 (requirement to invite at least three written quotations for contracts with a value of between £20k and £50k) and the contract be awarded to Oxford Computer Group.

N5. RESOURCES PERFORMANCE REPORT 2012-13 - OUTTURN

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 across the areas of:-

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

A summary of the key points was provided in relation to each of the areas.

It was also noted that the structure of the future reports would change given the transfer of some services into other Directorates and that in future the report will be simplified to include only areas of good performance and those areas where there is a cause for concern.

Resolved:- That the report be received and the performance noted.

N6. CABINET REPORTS AND MEMBERS' ISSUES

- (a) Phil Howe, Director of Human Resources, reported on a number of issues including:-
- The changes in reporting lines and structure for the former Resources Directorate.
 - The forthcoming regional meeting on the National Pay Award.
 - The visit to Islington to enquire on their methodology to introduce the Living Wage within the Council and associated contractors.
- (b) Jacqueline Collins, Director of Legal and Democratic Services, confirmed the release of the report on child sexual exploitation.
- (c) Richard Copley, Corporate ICT Manager, gave an update on the current position with regards to new technology and the product by Microsoft which would be subject to rigorous testing.

Concerns relating to the use of the Good for Good Reader app would be investigated.

- (d) Stuart Booth, Director of Finance, confirmed that the Revenue Outturn report for 2012/13 would be submitted to the Cabinet on the 19th June, 2013.

N7. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- That the next meeting take place on Thursday, 11th July, 2013 at 9.30 a.m. and not Monday, 8th July, 2013 as originally advertised.

1.	Meeting:	Deputy Leader
2.	Date:	11th July 2013
3.	Title:	Fund For Change
4.	Directorate:	Resources

5. Summary

Changes to the discretionary social fund, as part of the Welfare Reform Act 2012, saw community care grants and crisis loans abolished from April 2013. Local authorities have been provided with funding to establish replacement local support schemes for vulnerable groups. For Rotherham funding of £773,437 was received for 2013/14 together with administration funding of £163,431.

The scheme that has been developed in Rotherham is known as Fund for Change and it has been built around existing service provision in the Authority and with external parties. It provides grants and loans to vulnerable people who are in urgent need; or under exceptional pressure; or who need support to remain or resettle in the community. The types of help that are available are:

- Small emergency payments for people whose health or safety is at immediate risk and who have no other means of support;
- Interest free loans provided through Laser Credit Union for people who are in financial difficulty and need additional or less urgent support to meet essential expenses; and
- Provision of goods through the Furniture Solutions Team for those needing help to resettle or stay in the community

This report outlines the progress of Rotherham's scheme in the first quarter of 2013/2014 and gives details of spend so far.

6. Recommendations

Deputy Leader is asked to:

- **Note the contents of the report**

7. Details of the Scheme

7.1 In order to qualify for Fund for Change support customers must be resident in Rotherham and be in receipt of one of the following qualifying benefits:

- Income Support
- Income based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income based Employment and Support Allowance
- Pension Credit

An initial telephone assessment determines a person's eligibility for support under the scheme and where people are found to be ineligible for help they are signposted to other agencies, including the DWP, who may be able to help.

7.2 **Emergency Payments** – A process is in place whereby small emergency payments can be processed through the Post Office for qualifying claimants whose health or safety is at immediate risk and who have no other means of support. Recipients are not expected to make repayment in these cases.

7.3 Although this was a large area of expenditure for the DWP under the old Crisis Loans scheme this has not been the case under the Fund for Change. So far emergency payments totalling only £100 have been given as we have found that support through the scheme can be provided more successfully in other ways.

7.4 **Laser Credit Loans** – The majority of successful applicants have been referred to Laser Credit and provided with interest free loans. In the case of claimants wanting the loan to pay for goods, Laser Credit will source the goods which will be funded through the loan.

7.5 The provision of loans through Laser Credit offers a further benefit of providing claimants with advice to help vulnerable customers get back on track with their finances which will hopefully prevent future financial crisis for the people concerned. Additional funding has been provided to enable Laser Credit to increase staffing to meet increased demand as a result of the scheme.

7.6 Figures for the first three months of the scheme show 475 loans have been granted totalling £65,807

7.7 Although the scheme is only in its infancy and many loans are relatively new, the initial repayments which so far total £3,974 are promising. There are however already 27% of loan repayments in default although many by small amounts this may be a concern ongoing. Any repayments are returned to the fund for the provision of future support.

7.8 **Furniture Solutions** – Qualifying claimants who need help to re-settle or stay in the community may be provided with essential furniture items by the Furniture Solutions Team. These claimants will not be expected to repay the value of the goods to the fund.

7.9 Figures for the first three months of the scheme show 18 claimants have been assisted through the Furniture Solutions Team with the total value of the goods provided being £6,748.

7.10 **Bridging Support** – Cabinet agreed that £30,000 bridging support would be allocated from the Fund to assist various advice agencies in providing support for people affected by Welfare Reform.

8. Finance

8.1 Funding of £773,437 was provided to Rotherham by the DWP. Any under spend against this funding can be retained by the authority while any over spend must be met by the authority. At present it is anticipated that the scheme will be delivered within budget.

8.2 Additionally the DWP provided administration funding of £163,431 which it is anticipated will be spent in full in delivery of the scheme.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

It is anticipated that we may see a rise in demand for support under the scheme as the effects of Welfare Reform takes further hold. Ongoing spend will be closely monitored and reported to members.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

None

11. Background Papers and Consultation

None

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