

DEPUTY LEADER
11th March, 2013

Present:- Councillor Akhtar (in the Chair); Councillors Gosling and Sims.

N78. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 11TH FEBRUARY, 2013

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11th February, 2013.

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 11th February, 2013 be approved as a correct record.

N79. OPENING OF TENDERS

Consideration was given to the content of the report which was to note the opening of offers for Insurance Tenders on 11th February, 2013.

Resolved:- That the opening of the offers be noted.

N80. WAIVER OF STANDING ORDER TO AWARD THE CONTRACT FOR LOCAL WELFARE PROVISION (CRISIS LOANS) TO LASER CREDIT UNION LTD

Consideration was given to the report presented by Carol Haywood, Rotherham Partnership Manager, which detailed the changes to the discretionary social fund as part of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 which would see community care grants and crisis loans abolished from April, 2013.

Local authorities would be provided with funding to establish replacement local support schemes for vulnerable groups. Within the timescales available to the Council to interpret and understand the guidance on these changes, obtain information from the Department for Work and Pensions, and establish a system to go live by 1st April 2013, it had not been possible to go fully out to the wider market to seek potential providers.

Taking the above factors into account, the Council wished to award a short term six months contract to LASER Credit Union Ltd to deliver the loan element of the crisis support 'Fund for Change' as there was no alternative local provider of the model the Council and its partners wished to implement. The contract would be retendered at six months for the remaining eighteen months of funding as this allowed time for a full market tender.

There was a requirement to waive Standing Orders so that the contract could be awarded to LASER Credit Union Ltd for a six month period from 1st April, 2013 until 30th September, 2013 with a view to market re-commissioning thereafter.

The exemption from Standing Orders was in accordance with Standing Order 38 (Exemptions) and Standing Order 49.

Further information was provided on the value of the contract, the capital costs work, which would include making the premises used by LASER Credit Union more secure, what would be provided and the reason for contracting this work out rather than dealing with it in-house.

Karl Battersby, Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services, gave a brief update on the transfer of the community care grant and crisis loans that were transferring to the Local Authority from D.W.P. from 1st April, 2013 and the three strands that would be available to vulnerable people.

It was pointed out that the delivery of this service would be somewhat different from the current scheme in that access would not be available twenty four hours a day, but would have to be managed within existing Council resources come 1st April, 2013.

It was anticipated that the delivery of this service would be monitored on a monthly basis with the possibility of grants being rationed or available pro rata to ensure fair access for all. A report was to be submitted to Deputy Leader for information on a regular basis and on completion of a review to Cabinet in four months time.

Resolved:- That the delivery of the local welfare provision (crisis loans) for the period 1st April, 2013 until 30th September, 2013 be exempted from Standing Orders in accordance with Standing Order 38 (Exemptions) and Standing Order 49 (Tender invitation and receipt of tenders) and the contact be awarded to LASER Credit Union Ltd.

N81. PROPOSAL TO PROVIDE INTERNAL AUDIT MANAGEMENT FOR DONCASTER COUNCIL

Consideration was given to the report presented by Colin Earl, Director of Audit and Asset Management, which outlined the proposal to continue the current shared service arrangement with Doncaster Council, which would involve the Director of Audit and Asset Management continuing to lead Doncaster's Internal Audit Service.

As a result of the shared service arrangement Rotherham and Doncaster Councils were able to operate with the two smallest audit teams in South and West Yorkshire (with both being at least 10% smaller than the next smallest service).

In addition to these benefits, Doncaster would pay Rotherham £35,000 per year for the service and it now appears that other authorities were now buying in the service or potentially more interested in collaborating in shared service arrangements.

This might generate future opportunities that an existing joined-up service may be better placed to take advantage of. It was, therefore, considered that a continuing partnership with Doncaster Council would put the service in a stronger position with regard to any opportunities that might arise.

Members welcomed this arrangement and wished to place on record their thanks and appreciation for the continuing success of this service.

Resolved:- (1) That the continuation of the provision of internal audit management for Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council be approved and support be given to the exploration of any further opportunities that might arise with regard to the provision of audit services.

(2) That all those involved in the continuing success of this arrangement be thanked for their work and involvement.

N82. RENEWAL OF AQUA SQL SYSTEM MAINTENANCE AND SUPPORT - APPLICATION FOR EXEMPTION FROM STANDING ORDERS

Consideration was given to a report presented by Stuart Booth, Director of Finance, which sought approval to invoke Standing Order 38, which permits exemption from normal contract Standing Orders to allow AQUA Birmingham to continue to provide the annual support and maintenance for the AQUA SQL system, which held course and learner details for adults enrolled on Skills Funding Agency (SFA) funded projects including Community Learning, the Adult Skills Budget and ESF Co-Financed projects. It also supported the Individual Learner Record in compliance with SFA and statutory reporting requirements.

The AQUA SQL system had been recommended by the SFA as the leading Learner Management Information System (MIS) system, created for recording learner enrolment details, for over fifteen years.

The Local Authority holds a perpetual license and renews the annual support and maintenance of that license on an annual basis.

Resolved:- That the contract for the annual support and maintenance of the AQUA SQL System be exempted from the provisions of Standing Order 47.6.2 (the requirement to invite at least 2 oral or written quotations for contracts with a value of £5000 but less than £20,000).

N83. FIRST DATA PROCUREMENT CARD SUPPORT AND MAINTENANCE

Consideration was given to a report presented by Colin Earl, Director of Audit and Asset Management, which detailed how the Council uses First Data Global Services (Deecal) software for the collation, management, control and allocation of procurement card expenditure. A licensing, maintenance and support contract existed to ensure that the software

continued to operate so that Council departments utilising the procurement cards continued to be capable of delivering services effectively.

The software provided an interface between the Co-operative Bank (the procurement card provider) Visa system and the Council's procurement system which held details of the payment transactions for review and approval by Council officers and ensured the subsequent allocation of expenditure to the correct budgets.

Only First Data could provide the licensing support and maintenance of their own software product.

Any change to an alternative procurement card software provider would require significant time and expense to purchase and develop, as well as support and maintenance cost. There would also be additional costs from Council's financial systems provider (ABS) and the Co-operative Bank to develop the required interfaces necessary to support the procurement card process.

Further information was provided on the number of procurement cards issued and users, the monitoring of spend, customer capability, value for money and market testing.

It was suggested that further consideration be given to users and whether the costs associated with these payment transactions were being fairly distributed.

Resolved:- (1) That the contract for licensing, support and maintenance of the First Data Procurement Card software be approved and exempted from the provisions of Standing Order 47.6.2 (requirement to invite at least 2 oral or written quotations for contracts with a value of between £5K and £20K) and the contract be awarded to First Data Global Services Ltd.

(2) That some consideration be given to the users of the Procurement Card and whether the costs associated with this software were being fairly distributed to users.

N84. LEXCEL INSPECTION OF LEGAL SERVICES

Consideration was given to a report presented by Robert Parker, Democratic Services and Business Support Manager, which set out details of the inspection of Legal Services in January, 2013 under the Lexcel Practice Management Standard of the Law Society.

The Legal Service achieved Lexcel accreditation in 2005 and had maintained the quality badge since that date. Only approximately 25% of Local Authority legal teams have attained the award and was the only Council in South Yorkshire to have achieved Lexcel accreditation.

The external verification would assist the Council in participating fully in any future exploration of Shared Services and the full accreditation details were set out as part of the report.

The Deputy Leader wished to place on record his thanks and appreciation to all those involved in the achievement of this accreditation.

Resolved:- (1) That the outcome of the recent Lexcel Inspection of Legal Services be noted.

(2) That all those involved in this accreditation be thanked for their hard work and input.

N85. TABLET COMPUTING FOR MEMBERS

Consideration was given to a report presented by Richard Copley, Corporate ICT Manager, which provided an analysis of the results of the recent iPad trial by some Elected Members. The trial demonstrated that iPads were useful to Members and that their wider adoption would result in savings to the Council.

Twenty Members took part in the trial, each being issued with an iPad 3, iPad case and keyboard. Several productivity apps were installed on each iPad to allow Members to securely access the Council's data.

All sixty-three Elected Members were surveyed to be able to understand the success of the iPad trial and to gauge the extent to which Members who were not on the trial would be interested in using iPads to assist with Council business.

Thirty-six Members responded to the survey (57%), the results of which were set out in detail as part of the report.

As a result of the trial three options could now be considered:-

- Option 1: Do not offer RMBC issued iPads to Members.
- Option 2: Offer iPads to RMBC Members as a replacement for their RMBC laptop and withdraw printed agenda packs for Members.
- Option 3: Offer iPads to RMBC Members without mandating that RMBC laptops are relinquished, but do withdraw printed agenda packs for these Members.

Discussion ensued on all three options presented, the viability of using Ipad as an optional tool to hard copy agenda packs, the limitations of an Ipad for printing/storage purposes, the need for Members not to use their Council printers to produce agenda papers as this would merely transfer print costs from Directorates to the Members' budget and remove any potential to make savings, the use of Blackberry mobile telephones, the possibility of an Ipad replacing their RMBC laptop, opportunity for use of

personal devices/laptops and the potential for Members to purchase an Ipad through some form of salary sacrifice scheme.

It was also noted new technologies would continue to emerge which would in time address the current limitations of tablet devices. It may mean that there would be devices on the market which would eventually fulfil the role of laptops and tablets.

There was clearly a need for the Council's Corporate ICT Department to continue to monitor and test developments in this field with a view to taking advantage of the efficiencies and savings offered by emerging technologies where a future clear business case existed to do so.

After much deliberation it was suggested that I pads be offered to Elected Members on the proviso that they return their RMBC laptop and relinquish all hard copy agenda packs, receiving them via the mod.gov app. Members who opted for an Ipad and who also had a Council owned Blackberry should also consider swapping this for a standard mobile device for calls only.

Resolved:- (1) That the findings of the iPad trial be noted.

(2) That Elected Members be offered I pads on the basis that their RMBC laptop is returned and relinquish all hard copy agenda packs.

(3) That all options continue to be explored around mobile technology use for Members.

N86. CABINET REPORTS AND MEMBERS' ISSUES

(a) Stuart Booth, Director of Finance, reported the inclusion of the Budget Monitoring Report up to 31st January, 2013 on the 13th March, 2013 Cabinet agenda.

(b) Chrissy Wright, Commissioning Manager, reported on the Healthwatch Rotherham report which was being presented to Cabinet on the 13th March, 2013 confirming the selection of the preferred provider.

(c) Phil Howe, Director of Human Resources, reported on the latest position with regards to the National Pay Award and the situation in respect of discussions with local Trades Unions on changes to meet the budget challenge.

It was also noted that the Employee, Team and Manager of the Year Awards would be presented at the Council Meeting scheduled to take place on the 17th April, 2013.

N87. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- That the next meeting take place on Monday, 15th April, 2013 at 9.30 a.m.