

**THE CABINET  
10th August, 2010**

Present:- Councillor Stone (in the Chair); Councillors Akhtar, Doyle, Hussain, St. John, Lakin, R. S. Russell, Sharman, Smith and Wyatt.

Councillor Whelbourn (Chairman of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee)

**C39 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.**

There were no questions.

**C40 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 items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in those paragraphs, indicated below, of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act (information relates to finance and business matters).

**C41 CUSTOMER SERVICE CONTACT**

Mark Gannon gave a presentation in support of a report by the Strategic Director of Finance setting out a proposal to undertake a Customer Service Consolidation Programme of Council customer facing services in partnership with RBT and to refresh the Council's Customer Access Strategy.

The Council believed enhanced value for money could be secured through the consolidation of all customer service activities into one consistent organisational structure and, in doing so, placed the Council in a stronger budget position going forward. This programme would also assist the Council in delivering services most appropriately when it relocated to Riverside House in 2012.

The report referred to work that had been undertaken looking at the existing customer service functions not currently delivered through RBT and set out proposals for consolidating them into a single consistent customer service structure. The objectives and scope of the programme were set out in the report together with the initial findings, refresh of the Customer Access Strategy and the proposed approach to consolidation.

Failure to progress with the consolidation programme meant that the Council would not fully realise the available efficiencies and

improvements in customer service provision.

Cabinet Members supported these proposals to achieve first class customer services.

Resolved:- (1) That the objectives of the consolidation programme be endorsed.

(2) That the proposal to consolidate customer services be approved.

(3) That the principles and model for a refreshed Customer Access Strategy be approved.

(4) That officers be authorised to open negotiations with RBT on the commercial arrangements for the programme.

(Exempt under Paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Act – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any person (including the Council)/ information connected to labour relations matters)

## **C42 RAW MARSH JOINT SERVICE CENTRE**

The Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services reported on the options available to deliver customer services within the Rawmarsh locality given the present lack of funding.

Following a review of services already provided within the locality of Rawmarsh and Silverwood, it had been identified that it was possible for the Council to deliver a customer service facility to the community at a reduced cost by developing the existing Rawmarsh Library and by utilising community facilities provided by the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector and at Neighbourhood Centres, in the short term.

The report set out the options to deliver a customer service facility within Rawmarsh together with the corresponding costs, in lieu of the current proposal to develop joint facilities with Rotherham NHS for the short term.

Resolved:- (1) That the options of developing the Barbers Avenue site as a Health Centre with alternative provision for Council Services, in the short term be pursued.

(2) That discussions take place with Ward representatives before details are finalised.

(3) That consideration be given to providing a Sports Changing Room at Barbers Avenue.

(Exempt under Paragraph 3 of the Act – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any person (including the Council))

#### **C43 BOSTON CASTLE**

The Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services submitted a list of options on a way forward for the Boston Castle restoration scheme having regard to the present lack of funding.

A Letter of Acceptance to the preferred contractors had been delayed to allow Members to review the situation in light of wider budgetary decisions.

Councillor Hussain provided information on the value of Boston Castle to both local residents and people from Rotherham and many other visitors.

Cabinet Members expressed disappointment that funding was not now available to proceed with this scheme as expected.

Resolved:- That Option 2 be the preferred option to renovate the Castle with Option 3 being a minimum recommendation and that the necessary capital funding required to deliver Option 2 or 3, as appropriate, be identified from within the initial capital allocation to Boston Castle.

(Exempt under Paragraph 3 of the Act – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any person (including the Council))

#### **C44 CAPITAL RECEIPTS**

The Leader introduced a report by the Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services outlining the steps required in order to produce additional capital receipts in 2010/ 11 from the sale of property assets to reduce the Council's capital borrowing requirements.

The Council was, in general terms, under a fiduciary duty to obtain best consideration from the sale of its property assets. The quickest method of sale was normally to place assets in a property auction but this must be judged against the potential to exclude certain types of purchasers who would not wish to bid at risk. Larger developers would not buy at auction as contracts were exchanged at the fall of the hammer and, at that stage, planning permission for their particular form of development had not been sought even though a generic planning permission may be in place. Therefore, there was

a professional judgement to be made and an individual assessment to determine the best method of marketing for each asset.

Appendix 1 of the report submitted illustrated the assets which were being marketed/ required to be marketed in 2010/ 11 in order to achieve receipts this year and in 2011/ 12. There was a mixture of marketing methods designed to bring best consideration from individual sales.

Resolved:- (1) That authority be given to proceed in the manner described in the report to maximise the potential to achieve capital receipts while discharging fiduciary duty to act in the best interests of Council Tax payers.

(2) That the previous decisions to market the sites listed be re-affirmed.

(3) That it be noted that Legal Services would need to give these asset sales priority.

(4) That the Director of Asset Management be authorised to market the assets as set out in the report submitted.

(5) That the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) be authorised to complete the necessary documentation to achieve the property sales targets.

(Exempt under Paragraph 3 of the Act – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any person (including the Council))

## **C45 LOCALITIES REVIEW STRATEGY**

Councillor Akhtar introduced a report by the Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods and Adult Services on the need to carry out a review of the way in which the Council delivered services at a locality level, seeking to ensure that the Council delivered neighbourhood based services in the most effective and efficient manner in line with the funding constraints that were being imposed on the Council.

It was proposed that the review of locality arrangements should concentrate on:-

- Identifying opportunities for reducing duplication and improving the

alignment of activities

- Achieving efficiencies and savings through more streamlined integrated working arrangements
- Co-locating locality teams, streamlining access channels and rationalising accommodation requirements.

The review would need to closely align with the findings of other reviews currently taking place particularly in relation to customer access and governance structures. It was also proposed that further work take place to determine the key functions, service outcomes and organisational form that such a neighbourhood management service could take.

The work was being carried out in advance of the forthcoming comprehensive Spending Review as this may result in further financial pressure for local authorities and a need to reconsider the extent of the service the Authority was able to provide.

Resolved:- (1) That the report and the staffing implications arising from the proposal be noted.

(2) That the Strategic Director of Neighbourhood and Adult Services submit proposals concerning an appropriate and efficient structure and operating framework for the local delivery of services.

(3) That the revised structure and timescales for its implementation be submitted to Cabinet.

(Exempt under Paragraph 3 of the Act – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any person (including the Council))

#### **C46 LOCALITIES REVIEW SAVINGS**

Councillor Akhtar introduced a report by the Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods and Adult Services identifying the opportunities to rationalise Council-owned assets in 3 Wards. It sought to ensure that the Council delivered locality based services from buildings that were fit for purpose, economical and sustainable.

Assets were currently being mapped to enable the Council to determine whether it was making best use of the property and land it owned. It was anticipated that a complete initial review of Borough-wide assets would be completed by the end of October, 2010.

Resolved:- (1) That the 10 properties within the Maltby, Hellaby and Wickersley Ward be retained.

(2) That the sale of Nos. 10 and 10a Attlee Close, Maltby, be approved.

(3) That the sale of Maltby Building Works Depot be approved.

(4) That the possible sale of Church Lane Community Centre, (subject to a full options appraisal and satisfactory negotiations with existing lessee) be approved.

(5) That a full review of Pavilions across the Borough be undertaken.

(6) That it be noted that a full review of Neighbourhood Centres was currently being undertaken.

(7) That Ward Members be kept informed of the position.

(Exempt under Paragraph 3 of the Act – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any person (including the Council))

#### **C47 TACKLING THE IN-YEAR BUDGET PRESSURES - NEIGHBOURHOODS AND ADULT SERVICES**

The Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods and Adult Services submitted proposals from the Directorate to deliver in-year savings to help the Council contain unforeseen budget pressures including decisions to cut funding to local authorities by the new Coalition Government.

The total savings that could be achieved in-year amounted to approximately £1.044M and would be achieved by deferring programmes previously approved but not started and by reducing some of the existing services.

Staff related proposals took account of consultation requirements and assumed an effective date of 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2011.

Resolved:- (1) That the in-year saving proposals, set out in the report submitted, be approved and the implications for staff and customers arising therefrom noted.

(2) That a further report be submitted by the end of September, 2010, detailing the outcomes of the reviews and providing implementation plans for the reconfigured services including Neighbourhood Wardens and Neighbourhood Partnerships.

(3) That full consultations take place with all customers and staff.

(Exempt under Paragraph 3 of the Act – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any person (including the Council))

#### **C48 COMMISSIONING STRATEGY**

The Leader introduced a report by the Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods and Adult Services outlining the approach to be taken to review the efficiency and effectiveness of commissioning activities across the Council, to identify opportunities for savings and propose changes to processes, priorities and the organisation.

The review had 3 main objectives:-

- Examine the effectiveness of the existing commissioning arrangements
- Identify the opportunities for efficiency gains and savings, focusing initially on high spending areas
- Develop options to create a structure that delivered better strategic alignment of commissioning activity across the whole Council

The review would potentially impact on the way the Authority engaged and worked with partners and there would be a range of change management issues to address if new commissioning arrangements were moved towards. The implementation of any new arrangements would be critical to the ability of the Council to make maximum use of all available resources and respond to financial and demographic challenges facing the Council.

Resolved:- (1) That the report and the staffing implications arising therefrom be noted.

(2) That the Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods and Adult Services review the strategic and operational commissioning functions to quantify the total resources required and to design an appropriate structure and operating framework.

(3) That a further report be submitted on the revised structure and timescales for its implementation.

(Exempt under Paragraph 3 of the Act – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any person (including the Council))

#### **C49 TACKLING THE IN-YEAR BUDGET PRESSURES - CHILDREN AND**

## YOUNG PEOPLES SERVICE

The Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services submitted proposals from the Directorate to deliver in-year savings to help the Council contain unforeseen budget pressures including decisions to cut funding to local authorities by the new Coalition Government.

The total savings that could be achieved in-year amounted to £1.502M with £179,000 from the Revenue Budget and £1.323M Area Based Grant reduction. The proposals would be achieved by deferring or ceasing programmes planned but not started and by reducing some of the existing services.

Staff related proposals took account of consultation requirements and assumed an effective date of 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2011.

Resolved:- (1) That the in-year saving proposals set out in the report submitted be approved with the exception of:

(a) the proposal at 7.2.2 relating to Building Schools for the Future which requires further work to determine its viability

(b) the proposal at 7.2.4 relating to school meals

(2) That a further report be submitted by the end of September, 2010, detailing the outcomes of further work to produce savings in-year and thereafter.

(Exempt under Paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Act – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any person (including the Council)/ information connected to labour relations matters)

## C50 COUNCIL-WIDE FINANCE FUNCTION

The Strategic Director of Financial Services reported on the need to carry out a review of the council's finance functions in light of recent Government funding announcements and the prospects for the Council's budget in the medium to longer term as well as ensuring that the Council was best equipped to deliver financial services in an efficient way over the next 3-5 years.

The proposal was to develop a new structure which would be fit for purpose to deliver the Council's finance functions and capable of adaption when circumstances changed. The aim was to strengthen the finance function at a time of severe financial challenge whilst



reducing the net cost.

Resolved:- (1) That the report and the potential staffing implications arising from the proposal be noted.

(2) That the Strategic Director of Financial Services review the finance functions across the Council and devise a structure that will enable all the functions to be efficiently and effectively managed and deliver optimum value for money.

(3) That the revised structure and timescales for its implementation be submitted to Cabinet.

(Exempt under Paragraph 2 of the Act – information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual)