

# FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD

22 August 2007

The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. in Belle Vue Community Sports and Youth Centre, Hartlepool

## **Present:**

Councillor Robbie Payne, Finance and Efficiency Portfolio Holder

Officers: John Morton, Assistant Chief Financial Officer (Financial Services)  
Colin Bolton, Building Consultancy Manager  
Mic Bannister, Principal Procurement and Finance Officer  
Emma Dixon, Estates Manager  
Jo Wilson, Democratic Services Officer

## **21. Chief Executive's Departmental Plan 2007/08 – 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Monitoring Report** *(Chief Financial Officer and Chief Solicitor)*

### **Type of decision**

Non-key.

### **Purpose of report**

To inform the Portfolio Holder of the progress made against the Chief Executive's Departmental Plan 2007/08 in the first quarter of the year 2007.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

The progress against the actions contained in the Chief Executive's Departmental Plan 2007/08 and the first quarter outturns of key performance indicators. Details of actions and performance indicators which were not expected to meet their prescribed targets, and the reasons for this, were outlined for the Portfolio Holder. Revisions to a number of completion dates were requested.

### **Decision**

That the achievement of key actions and first quarter outturns of performance indicators be noted and the proposed revisions to completion dates as detailed in the report be agreed.

## **21. Legionella Management and Control** *(Head of Procurement and Property Services)*

### **Type of decision**

Non-key.

### **Purpose of report**

To update the Portfolio Holder on the outcome of the Barrow in Furness inquiry and progress with regard to the management and control of legionella bacteria water systems within all properties owned and/or run by the Council.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

Following the incident in Barrow in Furness the Health and Safety Executive had organised public hearings with an independent chair. The resulting report explained the technical steps needed and the essentials of good health and safety management that could prevent a similar tragedy. Six major failings had been defined, details of which were given including the current position within Hartlepool Borough Council.

The new national guidance now recommended that all organisations have a Policy in place for the control of Legionella bacteria, indicating the responsibilities of those involved. The draft policy was attached as an appendix to the report. The financial implications were also outlined.

The Portfolio Holder expressed his support for the recommendations, saying this was a serious issue which was often not taken seriously.

### **Decision**

- i. That the report be noted
- ii. That the Legionella Policy Document be endorsed
- iii. That the necessary arrangements be put in place with relevant staff and within all Council buildings to meet the policy and additional control measures highlighted
- iv. That the budget pressures be supported.

## **22. The Quirk Review of Community Management and Ownership of Public Assets** *(Head of Procurement and Property Services)*

### **Type of decision**

Non-key.

### **Purpose of report**

To inform the Portfolio Holder of current information and guidance on the

management and ownership of public assets.

**Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

As part of the work around the Local Government White Paper ‘Strong and Prosperous Communities’ Barry Quirk, Chief Executive of Lewisham Council, was commissioned to review the issue of community ownership and management of public assets. The terms of reference were to find ways to overcome barriers to community management and ownership of assets, taking into account the need to manage risk. Details were given of the principal conclusions and key issues contained within the report, along with the Council’s position and response to each.

The Portfolio Holder indicated he was not happy with the proposals. However he felt he had no alternative other than to endorse them. The Estates Manager affirmed that officers would have to take care on this issue but problems would only arise at the time and could not be anticipated. The Portfolio Holder further requested that when the Corporate Asset Management Plan was brought forward for his consideration a section on this issue be included for presentation by the Legal Services Manager.

**Decision**

That the report be noted and the outcomes of the Quirk review be endorsed for inclusion in the Corporate Asset Management Plan.

**23. Purchasing Power and Local Economic Growth** (*Head of Procurement and Property Services*)

**Type of decision**

Non-key.

**Purpose of report**

To update the Portfolio Holder on work that is underway in Hartlepool to assess how public agencies can use their purchasing power to promote local economic growth whilst working within the confines of procurement regulations.

**Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

The National Procurement Strategy for Local Government requires the Council to use procurement to help deliver the Council’s Corporate Objectives and its elements of the Community Strategy. The Council’s Strategic Procurement Team, in conjunction with the North East Centre of Excellence, had undertaken a benchmarking exercise to obtain an indication of the impact of Council spend on the local economy using a methodology developed by the new Economics Foundation called the Local Multiplier 3. Details were given of how this analysis was carried out and the subsequent findings.

**Decision**

- i. That the progress made in assessing how public agencies could use their purchasing power to promote local economic growth be

noted

- ii. That the Head of Procurement and Property Services be authorised to identify further opportunities to strengthen the Partnership's involvement in the programme

## **24. Land at Greenock Road, Hartlepool** *(Head of Procurement and Property Services)*

### **Type of decision**

Non-key.

### **Purpose of report**

To obtain Portfolio Holder approval to the proposed land transaction.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

In March 2007 the Performance Management Portfolio Holder approved the sale of an area of land at Greenock Road, Hartlepool, to Endeavour Housing Association. Endeavour had subsequently started to develop 10 social rented semi-detached properties on the land. As a condition of their planning permission Endeavour were required to provide enhanced landscaping to the adjacent public open space. Although this land is Council owned it is a Custodian piece of land and its development as enhanced public open space would render it unsaleable in the future. The Council had a requirement under the Property Agreements resulting from the disaggregation of Cleveland County Council in 1996 to dispose of this land and it was proposed that Endeavour buy the land to release it from the Property Agreement before gifting it back to the Council to continue to maintain as Public Open Space.

### **Decision**

That the land transaction be approved subject to the terms proposed.

## **25. Land at Queens Meadow Business Park** *(Head of Procurement and Property Services)*

### **Type of decision**

Non-key.

### **Purpose of report**

To obtain Portfolio Holder approval for the disposal of land to One North East at Queen's Meadow Business Park.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

One North East had expressed interest in purchasing an area of land at Queens Meadow Business Park. This land had been incorrectly included within an area which was proposed to be leased to Rivergreen Development for industrial uses. One North East had identified that this land was included in error and approached the Council with a view to purchasing the land to

rectify the mistake.

**Decision**

That approval be given to the transaction subject to the value stated at number 2 in the exempt section of the report.

**26. “The Firs”, Westbourne Road, Hartlepool** (*Head of Procurement and Property Services*)

**Type of decision**

Non-key.

**Purpose of report**

To inform the Portfolio Holder on proposals for the future of this property which had been declared surplus to requirements by Adult and Community Services.

**Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

“The Firs” has been used by Social Care and Health within the Adult and Community Services Department for approximately 40 years. After recent legislation residents of “The Firs” vacated and for the last two years Adult and Community Services Officers have used the property as a base. It has been recognised that this use was not the most efficient way of working and it was proposed that these staff be located elsewhere. Adult and Community Services had therefore declared the property surplus to their requirements. Officers on the Council’s Strategic Resource and Asset Programme Team and Corporate Asset Management Group had been contacted to see whether their respective departments had a requirement for the property. As yet no responses had been received and should this situation continue it was proposed that the property be placed upon the open market.

The Portfolio Holder indicated that he would prefer staff to continue using the property until the final sale was concluded. The Estates Manager advised that security measures on the part of the new owners could be part of the contract.

**Decision**

That the Estates Manager be authorised to place the property on the open market, subject to the terms proposed.

**J A BROWN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

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