

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD

13th May 2008

The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor Robbie Payne (Finance and Efficiency Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Mike Ward, Chief Financial Officer
Graham Frankland, Head of Procurement, Property and Public Protection
John Mennear, Assistant Director (Community Services)
David Dockree, Temporary Estates Manager
Chris Hart, Planning and Commissioning Manager
Jo Wilson, Democratic Services Officer

90. Chief Executive's Departmental Plan 2008/09 (*Chief Financial Officer, Chief Solicitor and Head of Procurement and Property Services*)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To report to the Portfolio Holder the Chief Executive's Departmental Plan containing the key outcomes and actions for 2008/09

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The report and appendix A set out the key objectives and actions within an Action Plan that showed what was to be achieved by the department in the coming year. The Plan also described how the department would contribute to the Organisational Development objectives as identified in the 2008/09 Corporate Plan which would be published in June 2008.

The Plan included proposals from all four divisions within the Chief Executives Department, as well as procurement issues that fall within the remit of the Procurement and Property Services Division within the Neighbourhood Services Department. The Plan would also be used as the basis for the quarterly monitoring reports to the Portfolio Holder.

The Plan would additionally be considered by the Performance Portfolio Holder at the meeting on 16th May 2008.

The Portfolio Holder queried the progress of the EDRMS programme. The Chief Financial Officer advised that data storage had been running successfully for over nine months. Following initial problems a new workflow software package was being piloted for completion of the pilot stage in late Autumn, which should allow live roll out to commence January 2009. The Portfolio Holder also queried current progress on the provision of mobile completion of benefit claims. The Chief Financial Officer reported that this had been ongoing for well over a year now. Public interest had initially been slow but following a recent initiative whereby a donation was made to charity for each mobile claim completed a significant increase had occurred in the first month of the pilot. A further report on progress would be coming back to the Portfolio holder shortly.

Decision

That the plan be approved for distribution.

91. Proposed Licence, Drug Rehabilitation Centre, Whitby Street *(Head of Procurement and Property Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To confirm the Portfolio Holder's approval to the proposed licence as part of a Council building.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Drug Rehabilitation Centre is Council owned and services are delivered under the Safer Hartlepool Partnership arrangements. Hartlepool PCT deliver a specialist substance misuse (drug and alcohol) service and prescribing facility from the property but they now proposed to commission a third party to deliver this service. A licence would be needed to allow the new provider to have some reassurance that rooms would be provided to them to allow the delivery of their service. This would also indemnify the Council against the use of the building

A report on this matter had previously been considered by the Portfolio Holder in November 2007 and details of the revised occupation of the building on licence were provided in the current report. It was proposed that from 1st May 2008 Intrahealth, an independent Peterlee provider, would provide the Substance Misuse Service and General Medical Service. There were also a number of existing multi agency undertakings within the building including the Drug Action Team. The PCT had consulted with the Neighbourhood Forums on this matter.

The financial implications were set out in a confidential appendix to the report.

Information regarding the current opening hours of the Centre was given. The Portfolio Holder asked that an amendment be made within the licence to the wording “community consultation where appropriate” to remove the words “where appropriate”. Officers were also asked to bring a yearly update report back to the Portfolio Holder on the progress of the Centre.

Decision

- i. That a licence be granted subject to the terms proposed and with the removal of the words “where appropriate” in the Designated Hours section of the licence.
- ii. That a yearly update report on this issue be brought back to the Portfolio Holder

92. Sale of Freehold Reversion, 39 Wynyard Road, Hartlepool (*Head of Procurement and Property Services*)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To obtain Portfolio Holder approval to the proposed sale of the freehold reversion of 39 Wynyard Road, Hartlepool

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Council own the freehold interest in the shop premises at 39 Wynyard Road and let the property for a period of 99 years with effect from 30th August 1958 to W. Duncan Limited. At the time of granting 2 other leases were granted on commercial properties on Wynyard Road. The Council had since sold off the freehold of two of the other properties as there was no strategic reason for holding these properties on lease. There is a privately owned flat above the shop.

The Council had now received a request from the lease-holder of 39 Wynyard Road to purchase the freehold interest in this property. This would give the Council an opportunity to rationalise its property holdings. The financial implications were set out in a confidential appendix.

The Portfolio Holder questioned why all the properties had not been sold in bulk. The Head of Procurement, Property Services and Public Protection advised that individual properties had been on separate long-term leases and had all been sustainable developments. Therefore it would have been problematic to sell them altogether. The Temporary Estates Manager advised that the offer received was the best that could be hoped for in the current economic climate. There were no perceived advantages in not selling the property.

Decision

That the proposed sale of the freehold interest in the land be approved subject to the terms proposed.

93. Selling to Hartlepool Borough Council Guide (*Head of Procurement and Property Services*)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To provide an update on the revision of the “Selling to Hartlepool Borough Council – A Guide for Suppliers and Contractors” and to seek the Portfolio Holder’s endorsement.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

A theme of the Council’s overall procurement strategy is that Councils should make it easier for businesses of all sizes to work with the Council, thus allowing the Council to gain access to a broader market place. Additionally a key theme of the National Procurement Strategy of ‘Stimulating Markets’, contained a specific requirement for Councils to publish a “Selling to the Council” guide on its corporate website. In 2005 the Portfolio Holder for Performance Management endorsed the first version of the Selling to Hartlepool Borough Council Guide. It was now proposed that a revised version be published to take account of changes in tendering rules, the introduction of electronic advertising methods, the revision of the Council’s Procurement Strategy, the introduction of Harmonised Contracting Documents across North East authorities and the launch of the Council’s Sustainable Procurement Strategy.

The revised version was attached as an appendix to the report. It was proposed that it be launched at a forthcoming “Meet the Buyer” event and through other supplier communications.

Decision

- i. That the progress made to date be noted
- ii. That the revised “Selling to Hartlepool Borough Council” guide be endorsed

94. Hartlepool Maritime Festival 2008 – Request for Waiver of Contractual Procedure Rules (*Director of Adult and Community Services*)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To request that the Portfolio Holder endorse – for this instance only – a waiver of the contractual procedure rules as they relate to a specific instance (hire provision of staging and audio equipment and operation) that has arisen in operations for this year's Hartlepool Maritime Festival (HMF 2008). Doing this would formalise an existing commitment.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The 2008 Hartlepool Maritime Festival would be the fifth in a biennial series. The event entails the use of specialist contractors for areas such as performance staging and audio equipment. The processes for securing these services have evolved with the festival.

This year's festival will be delivered from two sites with a duplication of staging requirements. The specialist nature of this requirement had previously been met by a locally based audio company with good result at an approximate amount of £12,500. It was now recognised that the sourcing of this equipment should have been tested by obtaining additional quotes from the region. However this had not happened on this occasion and sourcing and confirmation of supply was well underway. Full contractual procedure rules and awareness of the new regulations and guidelines had been provided to the staff concerned.

The report detailed the reasons the correct regulations had not been followed. The Portfolio Holder was requested to note this non-adherence to the standing procurement regulations and give retrospective permission for the existing contract on a one-off basis.

The Assistant Director (Community Services) reported that if the Portfolio Holder refused permission for the existing contract this could cause a major problem given the close proximity of the Festival. The Portfolio Holder indicated that he was disposed to be lenient as a local company had been chosen but he asked that officers make sure that the rules were followed in all subsequent occasions. The Head of Procurement, Property Services and Public Protection advised that officers were confident that they had obtained the best value for money on this occasion but noted the Portfolio Holder's comments which would be taken on board by all staff. The Portfolio Holder went on to wish the officers luck with the Maritime Festival which he was sure would be a success.

Decision

- i. That this single quote for the provision of stage and audio equipment and its operation be authorised and endorsed.
- ii. That it be acknowledged that full training had been given to avoid a repeat of the outcome.

P DEVLIN

ACTING CHIEF SOLICITOR

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