

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY PORTFOLIO

DECISION RECORD

24 July 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
David Dockree, Estates Manager
James Cuthbert, Valuation and Estates Surveyor
Jo Wilson, Democratic Services Officer

1. The Proposed Sale of Land at 7 Victoria Place, The Headland, Hartlepool *(Head of Procurement, Property and Public Protection)*

Type of Decision

Non key.

Purpose of Report

To obtain Portfolio Holder consent to proceed with the sale of land adjoining the rear of 7 Victoria Place.

Issues for Consideration

The Council's Estates Section had been approached by the owner of 7 Victoria Place whose garage is to the rear of 6 Victoria Place expressing concerns over the condition of a Council-owned strip of land adjoining the garage. This land had not been maintained for a number of years and the shrubbery was now growing into his garage causing potential structural damage. The prospective purchaser planned to incorporate this strip of land into his current ownership to prevent further damage.

The financial implications were detailed within the report, the planning application for change of use would not be resisted should the Portfolio Holder agree to the sale of land.

Decision

That the sale of this land on the terms provisionally agreed be approved.

2. Chief Executive's Departmental Plan 2007/08 – 4th Quarter Monitoring Report *(Chief Financial Officer, Chief Solicitor and Director of Neighbourhood Services)*

Type of Decision

Non key.

Purpose of Report

To inform the Portfolio Holder of the progress made against the Chief Executive's Departmental Plan in the fourth quarter of the year.

Issues for Consideration

The report contained background information and detailed how the Finance and Legal Services Division of the Chief Executives Department falls within the remit of the Finance and Efficiency Portfolio with Corporate Strategy and Human Resources reporting to the Performance Portfolio Holder. Issues relating to Procurement Services are also reported to the Finance and Efficiency Portfolio Holder. Details were given of recent performance in relation to the key actions and performance indicators included in the Chief Executive's Departmental Plan 2007/08. These figures showed that of 7 out of 48 Finance actions and 2 of 10 Procurement actions were not expected to be achieved. Detailed information was given as to the reasons. All Legal Services actions had been achieved.

Information was also given as to a number of actions undertaken by the relevant departments. The Chief Financial Officer highlighted in particular current staffing issues within the Legal Services Division.

Decision

That the achievement of key actions be noted.

3. Counter Benefit Fraud Report 2007/08 *(Chief Financial Officer)*

Type of Decision

Non key.

Purpose of Report

To provide accountability to the Portfolio Holder on the performance and effectiveness of the Council's arrangements for discharging its benefit counter fraud responsibilities.

Issues for Consideration

The report provided details of the Council's benefits fraud responsibilities, the framework of controls and operational activities that the Council deploys and evidence of the levels of counter fraud activity and outcomes including formal sanctions that the Council had achieved.

The Portfolio Holder asked if feedback was provided to informants. The Chief Financial Officer advised that this was done unless the information had been given confidentially. He further advised that the current collective DWP/Council benefit overpayment figure was very low when compared with the average for this region.

Decision

That the Council's arrangements and performance in 2007/8 on Counter Benefit Fraud activity be noted.

4.	Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.
	<p>Under Section 100(A)(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 it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs referred to below of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information)(Variation) Order 2006</p> <p>Minute 5 – Briarfields Update (Para 3) This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972, namely information relating to the financial and business affairs of a particular person (including the authority holding the information).</p>

5.	Briarfields Update – <i>Head of Procurement, Property and Public Protection</i> (This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972, namely information relating to the financial and business affairs of a particular person (including the authority holding the information).

	Type of Decision
	Non key.
	Purpose of Report
	This is set out in the exempt section of the minutes.
	Issues for Consideration
	These are set out in the exempt section of the minutes.
	Decision
	This is set out in the exempt section of the minutes

P DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 31 July 2008