

# **FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD**

2<sup>nd</sup> May 2006

**Present:**

Councillor Peter Jackson (Finance and Performance Management Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive  
Lisa Anderson, Research Officer  
Emma Dixon, Senior Estates Surveyor  
Graham Frankland, Head of Procurement and Property Services  
Joanne Machers, Chief Personnel Services Officer  
John Mennear, Assistant Director (Community Services)  
John Morton, Assistant Chief Financial Officer  
Mike Ward, Chief Financial Officer  
Pat Watson, Democratic Services Officer

## **72. Chief Executive's Departmental Plan 2006/07** *(Assistant Chief Executive)*

**Type of decision**

Non-key.

**Purpose of report**

To report to the Portfolio Holder the Chief Executives Departmental Plan containing the key objectives and actions for 2006/07.

**Issue(s) considered by the Portfolio Holder**

The Chief Executive's Departmental Plan 2006/07 was attached as Appendix A, and 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 contributes to the Organisational Development objectives as identified in the 2006/07 Corporate Plan which would be published in June 2006. The Portfolio Holder was asked to note that the Departmental Plan would be subject to minor alteration should the contents of the Corporate Plan be amended prior to approval by Cabinet.

The Departmental Plan would be used as the basis for the quarterly monitoring reports to the Portfolio Holder.

**Decision**

The Portfolio Holder approved the draft Chief Executives Departmental Plan 2006/07 and accepted that it could be flexible.

**73. Burn Valley Centre, Elwick Road** (*Head of Procurement and Property Services*)

**Type of decision**

Non-key.

**Purpose of report**

To request authority to dispose of the property.

**Issue(s) considered by the Portfolio Holder**

Brief background and details of how the property became surplus to requirements were given. The financial implications were outlined in the report and a plan was attached.

**Decision**

The Portfolio Holder granted authority to market the property and dispose of the freehold interest.

**74. Land Exchange, Hartlepool Transport Interchange** (*Head of Procurement and Property Services*)

**Type of decision**

Non-key.

**Purpose of report**

To request Portfolio Holder approval to a proposed land exchange which would facilitate the Transport Interchange Scheme.

**Issue(s) considered by the Portfolio Holder**

The report contained background to the proposed land exchange and a summary of the proposed terms, subject to which the exchange would take place. A plan of the area was provided.

### **Decision**

The Portfolio Holder granted authority to exchange land subject to the terms proposed, as outlined in the report, and looked forward to early progress.

## **75. Procurement Strategy Update** *(Head of Procurement and Property Services)*

### **Type of decision**

For information.

### **Purpose of report**

To provide an update on the development of the Council's Procurement Strategy.

### **Issue(s) considered by the Portfolio Holder**

The report highlighted the significance of the strategy and the Council's progress to date was detailed under the following headings:

- NPS Milestones (progress indicated in Appendix 1);
- Doing business electronically;
- Spend analysis;
- Procurement guidance;
- Contract Procedure Rules;
- Stimulating the market and community benefits;
- Selling to the Council Guide;
- 5 Year Procurement Plan;
- Efficiency Strategy;
- Collaboration;
- Business Process Re-engineering (BPR)

The Portfolio Holder was confident that, following a small number of problem areas initially in relation to the Council's new Financial Management System, all priority areas were being met.'

### **Decision**

The Portfolio Holder noted the report and progress to date.

## **76. Phoenix Centre, Hindpool Close** *(Assistant Director (Community Services) and Head of Procurement and Property Services)*

### **Type of decision**

For information.

### **Purpose of report**

To provide the Portfolio Holder with information relating to an offer made to the Council from the administrators of Central Residents Association and request approval as to the proposed way forward.

### **Issue(s) considered by the Portfolio Holder**

The report contained an outline to the background of the offer, information relating to the restrictive covenant imposed in the initial Conveyance and detailed the options for the Council. A time limit of 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2006 had been given for the Council to respond to the offer from the liquidators.

The report detailed the financial implications and advised that the Estates and Asset Manager had contacted Service Departments to establish whether any have a requirement for the property. It had been explained that there would be the requirement for a clear business case to be established and that the property use would need to fund the purchase and maintenance of the property.

The recommendation of the joint report was that no response be given to the liquidators at this time in order to provide for any potential uses that may arise before the expiry of the 3 month time that the Council has to purchase the property.

### **Decision**

That the Portfolio Holder noted the report and indicated that no offer should be made for the property unless a proven business case by the Council, or the Council with others, is brought forward for purchase and future use. If this does transpire then a further report should be brought back to the Portfolio Holder. The Portfolio Holder asked that “the Officers vigorously pursue the use of the building by outside bodies as this is an important building in the heart of the community and every effort should be made to ensure that it is not allowed to remain closed for a lengthy period of time”.

## **77. Custodian Properties** *(Head of Procurement and Property Services)*

### **Type of decision**

For information.

### **Purpose of report**

To advise the Portfolio Holder on work currently being undertaken with regard to Custodian Properties alongside Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton Councils.

**Issue(s) considered by the Portfolio Holder**

The report contained an outline of the Council's interest in the Custodian Properties, focusing in particular on The People's Centre, Raby Road. The report of the 4 District Surveyors on the future of the Custodian Property Stock and the Financial Implications were attached as exempt appendices to the report - (exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government Access to Information (Variation Order 2006)), namely, information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

**Decision**

The Portfolio Holder noted the report and requested that another report be presented when there are further developments.

**78. Viewpoint – Citizen's Panel Results** *(Assistant Chief Executive)*

**Type of decision**

For information.

**Purpose of report**

To inform the Portfolio Holder of the results of the 18<sup>th</sup> phase of Viewpoint, Hartlepool Borough Council's Citizen's Panel that had been distributed in November 2005.

Also to provide some information on the use of past Viewpoint results.

**Issue(s) considered by the Portfolio Holder**

The Portfolio Holder received a detailed report of the results achieved in the latest Viewpoint questionnaire that had included Customer Satisfaction, Refuse and Recycling, Cultural and Recreational Activities, Transport, and Hartlepool Borough Council as an Employer. The Research Officer gave an oral summary of the main results and some feedback on how results from previous surveys had been used.

The Portfolio Holder commented that he considered the Viewpoint surveys to be very useful and requested that relevant parts/results be circulated to other Portfolio Holders and Scrutiny Forums.

**Decision**

The Portfolio Holder noted the results of the survey.

## **79. Counter Benefit Fraud Reports 2005/6** *(Chief Financial Officer)*

### **Type of decision**

For information.

### **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.

### **Issue(s) considered by the Portfolio Holder**

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. A Referral Evaluation Matrix was attached as an appendix to the report.

### **Decision**

The Portfolio Holder:

- (a) noted the Council's arrangements and performance in 2005/06 on Counter Benefit Fraud activity and congratulated Officers on the good results.
- (b) asked for a further report on progress in two or three months time.

## **80. Local Government Access to Information**

Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public were 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 Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

Minute 81 – Land at Lynn Street (Para 3 – namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

## **81. Land at Lynn Street** *(Head of Procurement and Property Services)*

### **Type of decision**

Non-key.

**Purpose of report**

To advise the Portfolio Holder of developments in relation to land in Lynn Street, the nature of the Council's interest in the land and future implications.

**Decision**

Portfolio Holder views were sought on the proposed course of action. The decision is indicated in the exempt minutes.

**J A BROWN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

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