

# **FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD**

13<sup>th</sup> March 2013

The meeting commenced at 4.00 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

**Present:**

Councillor: Paul Thompson (Finance and Corporate Services Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Chris Little, Chief Finance Officer  
Graham Frankland, Assistant Director (Resources)  
John Mennear, Assistant Director (Community Services)  
Dale Clarke, Estates and Asset Manager  
David Hart, Strategic Procurement Manager  
Roy Horseman, Principal Revenues Officer  
Jo Stubbs, Democratic Services Officer

Also Present: Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher

## **63 Irrecoverable Debts – Council Tax** *(Chief Finance Officer)*

**Type of decision**

Non-Key

**Purpose of report**

To seek approval to write-out a number of Council Tax debts which are now considered to be irrecoverable.

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

The Chief Finance Officer reported on the council tax accounts with outstanding debts of £1000 or more together with the reason for each debt remaining unrecovered and sought the approval of the Portfolio Holder to write out the debts. Details of the individual debts were set out in confidential appendices to the report – the appendices contained exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) (para. 3). It was noted that over £35 million

in Council Tax was successfully collected each year which equated to 99.2% of the total amount owed.

### **Decision**

That irrecoverable Council Tax debts to the value of £15,081.95 be written off.

## **64 Treasury Management Advice Arrangements** *(Chief Finance Officer)*

### **Type of decision**

Non-Key

### **Purpose of report**

To detail proposals for extending the existing contract for Treasury Management Advice Services.

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

In September 2012 the Portfolio Holder approved the extension of the current Treasury Management Advice contract with Sector for a further year. Subsequent investigation had identified that additional savings could be achieved by entering into a 3-year contract. Details were given by the Chief Finance Officer of the benefits which would arise from the continued use of Sector and the reasons that officers were recommending that this service be exempt from the usual procurement route. He highlighted that there would be a clause written into the contract to allow annual breaks with no financial penalty. Details of the financial savings were set out in a confidential appendix to the report - the appendix contained exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) (para. 3).

The Portfolio Holder expressed concern at extending the contract without testing the market. The Chief Finance Officer explained that there were only two providers of this particular service and that given the current transitional period the Council were in regarding treasury management it made sense to stick with the current provider. He suggested that a caveat be put into the recommendation that a procurement exercise be undertaken at the end of the 3 years however the Portfolio Holder felt that this would be unnecessarily restrictive to the new governance of the Council.

### **Decision**

That the Chief Finance Officer enter into a three-year contract with Sector to continue to provide Treasury Management advice until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

## **64 Commissioning and Procurement Strategy 2013-2014** (Assistant Director (Resources))

### **Type of decision**

Non-key

### **Purpose of report**

To provide an update and seek endorsement of the Commissioning and Procurement Strategy for 2013-2014.

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

The Strategic Procurement Manager gave detailed information on the proposed Commissioning and Procurement Strategy for 2013-2014 as set out in an appendix to the report. This would sit alongside the new Contract Procedure Rules which had been revised as part of the Council's Constitution following changes to the Council's governance arrangements.

Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher highlighted the recommendation that further minor amendments might be made following completion of the consultation. He was concerned that a strategy of such importance to the future governance of the Council had not been fully investigated by the future Chairs of the Policy Committees. The Assistant Director (Resources) advised that the strategy document was updated annually but could be reviewed at any time. The Portfolio Holder suggested that endorsement of the strategy be delayed until the new governance arrangements were in place or at least until the future leaders under those governance arrangements had been given the opportunity to consider the detail of the strategy. Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher highlighted that he was happy with the procurement principles and aspirations contained within the strategy but felt that these aspirations needed to be identified through the entire process. By debating the strategy with the new Policy Committee Chairs the document would be strengthened and performance management developed.

The Portfolio Holder commented that Council spending should be kept as local as possible in order to reignite the local economy. He also requested that an addition be made to 'Heads of Service, Managers and Team Leaders' (Section 2.1.3) regarding staff development so that heads of service were aware of the requirements of the strategy. He agreed that it made sense for the Policy Committee chairs to be given the opportunity to evaluate the strategy as they would be ultimately responsible for its implementation. He

asked that consideration of the strategy be deferred until his April meeting and that the chairs of the Policy Committees be invited to that meeting to give their feedback. The Strategic Procurement Manager was asked to arrange a briefing session for the chairs prior to the meeting on the detail of the strategy.

### **Decision**

- I. That endorsement of the Commissioning and Procurement Strategy for 2013-2014 be deferred to the April meeting of the Finance and Corporate Services Portfolio.
- II. That all chairs of the Policy Committees be invited to that meeting to give their feedback on the strategy document
- III. That briefing sessions be arranged prior to that meeting to inform the Policy Committee chairs on the detail of the strategy

## **65 Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006**

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 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.

**Minute 66 - The West Hartlepool Technical Day School Old Boys RUFC (Assistant Director, Resources)** (This item contained 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) para 3).

## **66 The West Hartlepool Technical Day School Old Boys (WHTDSOB) RUFC (Assistant Director (Resources)**

### **Type of decision**

Non-key

### **Purpose of report**

To consider an approach from WHTDSOB to assist the long term

sustainability of the club.

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

Detailed within the closed section of the minutes

**Decision**

Detailed within the closed section of the minutes

The meeting concluded at 5:05 pm

**P J DEVLIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

**PUBLICATION DATE: 19 March 2013**