

CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES

RECORD OF DECISIONS taken by the Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor Lee Mason, at his meeting held on Thursday, 17 July 2014 at 10.00 am at the Conference Room A - Civic Offices

Present

Councillor Lee Mason (in the chair)
Councillor Hugh Mason
Councillor David Horne

Officers Present

Kate Kennard, Tackling Poverty Co-ordinator
Ed Woodhouse, Head of Revenues and Benefits
Sue Page, Finance
Mandy Lindley, Third Sector Commissioning Manager

10. Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

No apologies for absence had been received.

11. Declaration of Members' Interests (AI 2)

There were no declarations of members' interests.

12. Local Welfare Assistance Scheme, April 2015-March 2016 (AI 3) (TAKE IN REPORT)

Ed Woodhouse, the Head of Revenues and Benefits, presented his report which set out the demand and where existing provision is being absorbed, where there are gaps, as well as the predictions for the next financial year. He stressed that the existing partnership with Northgate had been effective but this was no longer sustainable without direct funding, and the proposed funding to EC Roberts Centre was not part of the cash limit but from the forecast underspend in the current financial year. If the service stopped completely in March 2015 it would leave those in significant need more vulnerable, and this transition would need to be managed.

Kate Kennard, as PCC's Tackling Poverty Co-ordinator, stressed the importance of assisting with resettlement for those clients with complex needs, to settle into the community and helping those on very low incomes with the provision of basic items. The case studies illustrated how this could help prevent costs to other services by giving help at the initial stage of need. The service is centred on vulnerability, including areas of mental health and domestic violence, and would also increase a person's chances of finding employment.

Questions were asked by members regarding the Lottery bid process and timescale, and what would happen if it was unsuccessful and the authority's statutory responsibilities to help vulnerable residents. The City Council was working closely with the EC Roberts Centre on their bid and an early indication was expected. Councillor Lee Mason, as Cabinet Member, hoped that the Council's recent Notice of Motion which gave support, would add weight to the bid.

It was further asked that Ed Woodhouse look at whether the information on provision on a post code/ward basis could be provided to the Cabinet Member and Spokespersons; he felt this would reflect the known areas of deprivation in the city.

DECISION that the Resources Portfolio holder approves the proposal to provide £90,000 for 2015/16 as matched funding to the EC Roberts 'Fresh Start' bid to the Big Lottery Fund, subject to available funding from underspends.

13. Portsmouth Compact Update Report (AI 4)
(TAKE IN REPORT)

Mandy Lindley, the Third Sector Commissioning Manager, presented the report which sought continued commitment and a formal signing of the Portsmouth Compact Agreement by the Cabinet Member for Resources (this had been separately signed off by the Voluntary Sector Network in June). She outlined the evolution of the document and changes to funding arrangements. In 2013 the Peer Review required the compact to be reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose, and this had been out to consultation. Questions were raised regarding the cost of changing the logo and it was confirmed that there had been no cost to the City Council, and this helped to identify a new brand for all the partners to identify with and this would help raise the profile of the Compact.

DECISION that the Resources Portfolio Holder
(1) notes the changes to the Compact
(2) approves the Council's continued commitment and
(3) signs the Portsmouth Compact Agreement.

14. Budget Outturn 2013/14 - Revenue Cash Limits and Capital Programme (AI 5) (TAKE IN REPORT)

Sue Page, on behalf of the Head Financial Services, presented the report. The revenue expenditure showed an underspend of £839,000, of which £471,000 was controllable underspend, representing approximately 2% of the cash limit. The capital expenditure underspend for 2013/14 was £2,068,751 which included items that had slipped to 2014/15 financial year (as listed in paragraph 7.3 of the report).

Members asked questions regarding the earmarking of underspends; it was confirmed that this year is the first for a new system that does not cap the

level for such use of underspends. It was requested that there be more details given to the Cabinet Member and Opposition Spokespersons regarding numbers and costs of court summons for Council Tax. It was also requested that a further report be brought to this portfolio regarding the progress of the roll out and cost of the Super Connected Cities programme.

DECISION that the content of the report be noted.

(The Cabinet Member for Resources thanked the officers for all of their reports.)

The meeting concluded at 11.15 am.

.....
Councillor Lee Mason
Cabinet Member for Resources