

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES**

RECORD OF DECISIONS taken by the Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor Hugh Mason, at his meeting held on Thursday 12 July 2012 at 9.00 am in the Executive Meeting Room, the Guildhall, Portsmouth.

### **Present**

Councillor Hugh Mason (Cabinet Member)  
Councillor David Horne  
Councillor Luke Stubbs

### **Officers**

Ed Woodhouse, Head of Revenues & Benefits  
Jon Bell, Head of Audit Performance & Improvement  
Louise Wilders, Head of Customer, Community & Democratic Services  
Sue Page, Finance Manager  
Mandy Lindley, Third Sector Partnerships & Commissioning Managing  
Peter Smith-Parkyn, Local Democracy Assistant

Councillor Hugh Mason welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### **12 Apologies for Absence (AI 1)**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Donna Jones.  
Councillor Luke Stubbs attended for this meeting.

#### **13 Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **14 Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Update (AI 3)**

The Third Sector Partnerships & Commissioning Manager provided an update to the Resources portfolio holder on the Voluntary and Community Sector infrastructure. She introduced the new tender holders who were Liz Donegan, Head of Services for Community Action Hampshire, Jacky Charman, Voluntary and Community Sector Development Officer and part of the community action in Portsmouth team and Hollie Watson – Project Manager (CAP and Hampshire School for Social Entrepreneurs).

A handout was circulated explaining the role of each of the tender holders.

Community Action Hampshire has established a Portsmouth specific service called Community Action in Portsmouth (CAP) providing support to the voluntary and community sector in the city through a three year contract with Portsmouth City Council. The CAP service provides practical support for groups and organisations through an outreach service and support for voluntary and community sector networks that give a voice to the sector in the city.

Community Action Hampshire is a generic support and development organisation for the voluntary and community sector and is widely recognised as the gateway to the wider voluntary and community/not for profit sector in Hampshire.

Louise Wilders, Head of Customer, Community & Democratic Services said she was delighted that Community Action in Portsmouth had won the tender and that although the tender had only started on 2 July, very good feedback had already been received. Ms Lindley explained that as the new tender holders represented a network, this should enable a balanced view to be received from the voluntary sector. The Cabinet Member for Resources thanked the tender holders for attending the meeting and provided updates.

## **15 Twinning Matters (AI 4)**

Mr Peter Smith-Parkyn, the Local Democracy Assistant advised that two grant requests had been received – one in respect of a grant of £600 to Caen Committee to support the summer job placement in Portsmouth (grant for accommodation – a reciprocal arrangement) and secondly a grant of £500 to support the Caen v Portsmouth participation in the Great South Run. Following discussion the Cabinet Member for Resources supported the applications

### **DECISION:**

**That the Cabinet Member for Resources decided**

- (1) to formally approve a grant of £600 to Caen Committee to support the summer job placement in Portsmouth (grant for accommodation – a reciprocal arrangement); and**
- (2) to formally approve a grant of £500 to support the Caen v Portsmouth participation in the Great South Run.**

## **16 Revenues & Benefits Business Plan 2012 – 2013 (AI 5)**

**(TAKE IN BUSINESS PLAN)**

The Head of Revenues & Benefits introduced the business plan for 2012/13 and said that the Revenues & Benefits Service has achieved a good level of performance in most operational areas during 2011/12. He said that the efficiency of the service has improved by 30% since April 2009, as indicated in the following

- Housing benefit claimant numbers are running at an all time high of around 26,500.
- Expenditure on Housing Benefit & Council Tax Benefit has increased considerably and is at a record level of an estimated £121 million for 2012/13
- Workload has increased by approximately 10% since April 2009.
- Total staff complement has reduced by about 17% since April 2009.
- This equates to an efficiency improvement of 30% since April 2009.

He said that the local taxation service achieved 95.04% in-year collection of council tax and 97.9% for the NDR collection rate. The Head of Revenues & Benefits said that the objectives for the service were set out in section 5 of the report.

The Head of Revenues & Benefits went on to say that there are a number of far reaching changes in progress to housing benefit, council tax and non domestic rates. These changes will radically alter the face of the Revenues & Benefits Service from 2013 onwards. The Localism Act 2011, the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and Local Government Finance Bill 2012 provide some indication of what is to come. He said that a brief summary of the proposals is contained in the report in section 3 which covers

- Council tax reform – April 2013
- Single fraud investigation service – April 2013
- Business rates retention – April 2013
- Universal credit – October 2013 to December 2017
- Move of housing benefit work to DWP – October 2013 to December 2017

#### **DECISION:**

**The Cabinet Member for Resources approves the main objectives set out in this business plan.**

#### **17 Customer, Community and Democratic Services Business Plan (AI 6)**

(TAKE IN BUSINESS PLAN)

The Head of Customer, Community & Democratic Services, Louise Wilders introduced the business plan explaining that the plan is a corporate requirement and sets out the objectives for the service in the medium term (2012-15). The Head of Customer, Community & Democratic Services explained that it has long been a key part of the service's strategy to mitigate the effects of reductions in funding by seeking opportunities to generate income for PCC. To date this has included design services, the sale of advertising in Flagship and other publications, providing print and reprographic services and carrying out surveys for other departments within PCC.

She went on to explain that during 2011/12 this has led to a diversification of income sources, particularly in terms of advertising revenue but also exploring the potential to raise revenue in partnership with the Portsmouth Guildhall Trust by hiring out the Lord Mayor's Banqueting Suite. The Head of Customer, Community & Democratic Services said that the objectives of the CCDS business plan 2012-2015 were set out in section 3 of the business plan and appeared in more detail in tabular form at the end of the plan.

#### **DECISION:**

**The Cabinet Member for Resources approves the plan and the key objectives for the service as set out in the report.**

## **18 Audit and Performance Improvement Service Business Plan (AI 7)**

(TAKE IN PRESENTATION SLIDES)

The Head of Audit & Performance Improvement Service, Mr Jon Bell advised that for simplicity and ease of communication, he had produced the business plan as a slide-deck rather than in the more conventional document format. He went on to say that members had now agreed to proposals to merge the Audit & Performance Improvement Service with Human Resources and Legal Services. Although this means that the service will become part of a larger unit, he said it was still necessary for business planning to take place because the merger of services would not take place until later in the year and because the principal roles and functions of the service will continue into the future albeit as part of a larger service.

With regard to resources, Mr Bell said that all activities in the business plan would be met from existing resources and that no further funding requirements had been identified. The cash limit for the service was £1.3m (net of income). There was also additional funding of £2 million from MTRS for transformation.

Following discussion, it was noted that no specific figures had been included in the plan and the Cabinet Member for Resources requested that detailed figures for the service be forwarded to him and also to Councillors Horne and Jones.

### **DECISION:**

**The Cabinet Member for Resources approved the Audit & Performance Improvement Service Business Plan.**

## **19 Budget Outturn 2011/12 - Revenue Cash Limits and Capital Programme (AI 8)**

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The Finance Manager, Ms Sue Page introduced the report explaining that it compares the actual revenue expenditure outturn for 2011/12 with the controllable cash limit for that year and the outturn capital expenditure to the approved capital programme for this portfolio and provides information to enable an understanding of the reasons for variances. The Finance Manager advised that the outturn of £24,864,643 for the portfolio compared to the revised cash limit of £25,327,700 indicates a net underspend of (£463,057). This represents a variance of (1.8%) compared to the revised budget. The Finance Manager explained that within the portfolio there are services whose budgets are deemed windfall budgets by the city council. These services are council tax benefits, rent allowances, rent rebates, Spinnaker Tower, land charges and district audit fees. These windfall budgets represent income and expenditure which is demand led and is largely out of the control of the budget manager. Consequently any overspending is borne by the city council corporately and similarly any underspending accrues to the city council corporately. If these windfall variances are excluded, the net variance on the portfolio is an underspend of £214,549 (0.85%). The Finance

Manager said that the main areas of variance are included in 5.4 of the report. The revised capital estimate for 2011/12 was £7,180,400, actual expenditure incurred was £3,763,338, an underspend of £3,417,062. She explained that this reduction in expenditure is mostly attributable to slippage in expenditure from 2011/12 to 2012/13 and some changes in the final costs of projects compared to the approved capital estimate.

7.2 of the report lists the higher value schemes that have slipped.

In response to queries, the following matters were clarified

- With regard to 7.4 of the report, the schemes referred to included the telephone project, Oracle replacement hardware and photo voltaics. The Finance Manager explained that these would be picked up in a future report.
- With regard to 5.5 of the report, budget provision of up to £90K for trade union secondments was underspent as there was only one post that had been filled.
- With regard to the figure produced by the Spinnaker Tower of £143K, this was more than predicted and would be reviewed when setting the budget in future.

#### **DECISION:**

**The portfolio holder for Resources noted the content of the report.**

#### **20 Date of Next Meeting (AI 9)**

The date of the next scheduled meeting is 4 October 2012.

The meeting concluded at 10.55 am.

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Signed by Cabinet Member for Resources

VJP/DMF  
20 August 2012  
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