

APPENDIX

Extracts taken from Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet of 21 September 2005

MATTER REFERRED TO COUNCIL FOR CONSIDERATION

61/05 - **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY/STRATEGIC PLAN 2005/2008:** Further to Cabinet Minutes 38/05 and 53/05 the Strategic Policy Officer submitted a written report on the outcome of the stakeholder consultation in connection with the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2006/07 to 2008/09/Strategic Plan for 2005/2008 previously approved by Cabinet for planning and consultation purposes.

As part of that consultation, the Leader invited Councillor Andrew Jones, Chair of the Council Resources Overview and Scrutiny Commission, to present the findings of both the Community Services and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Commissions and also those of the Council Resources Overview and Scrutiny Commission itself, which had taken an overview role in responding to the Executive on these issues. In submitting a summary of comments, Councillor Jones drew attention to the consensus of Scrutiny in respect of the most popular and least popular corporate priorities and, in respect of the Council's budget for 2006/2007, the most important area for additional expenditure, (should this become available), which had been identified as that of recycling and waste management. The Commissions had also made a number of detailed, but minor comments, which the Leader agreed to take into account when revising the strategic plan in conjunction with the Strategic Policy Officer.

The Strategic Policy Officer then acquainted Cabinet with the other stakeholder responses received which showed that, overall, each of the category groups consulted agreed with the Council's long term vision. In respect of the budget for the forthcoming year, a majority of the category groups agreed that in order to achieve the lowest Council Tax rise as a priority, the Council should not undertake additional expenditure. There was, however, as with Scrutiny, agreement across all category groups that any additional expenditure in 2006/2007 should be spent on recycling and waste collection.

In thanking Scrutiny and the other stakeholder respondents for their contribution to both the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Strategic Plan, the Cabinet concluded that the consultation exercise had indicated broad agreement with the future priorities and spending proposals and, therefore, recommended the adoption of these documents by Council on 12 October 2005.

RECOMMENDED (UNANIMOUSLY):

That (1) the outcomes of the stakeholder consultation on the draft Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy and its broad agreement with the proposals in the Plan and Strategy be noted and the Leader in conjunction with the Strategic Policy Officer agree the finalised versions of both documents, taking into account the number of detailed, but minor amendments, arising from the consultation process; and

(2) the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2006/2007 to 2008/2009 together with the Strategic Plan 2005-2008 as amended be approved.

(5.32 pm – 5.43 pm)

MATTERS DEALT WITH BY CABINET

62/05 - **MAJOR CONSTRUCTION SCHEMES – PROJECT MANAGEMENT CODE OF PRACTICE:** The Head of Property Management submitted a written report, together with an accompanying Project Management Code of Practice for major construction schemes to replace the Corporate Project Management Guidance Notes issued in 1997 for major schemes/works. The new Code of Practice followed from the break-out space investigation, and had been prepared having regard to the findings of the HIC Break-Out Space Panel of the Council Resources Overview and

Scrutiny Commission. In undertaking this exercise one of the outcomes had been to produce a concise and usable Code, readily understood and one not being bureaucratic in its application. The Officer acknowledged the valued contribution made to this work by the Scrutiny Panel and, at this juncture, the Leader invited the Chair of the Council Resources Overview and Scrutiny Commission, Councillor Andrew Jones to speak to the report of Scrutiny, which was considered by Cabinet in conjunction with that of the Head of Property Management.

Councillor Jones explained the work undertaken by the Panel and reinforced the Officer view of the need to arrive at an appropriate Code which was not bureaucratic to administer. The Chair acknowledged that the vast majority of the findings of Scrutiny had been adopted in the revised Code now before Cabinet, with the exception of the view held by the Panel that all major Contracts, including those relating to housing "new build" should be subject to the requirements of the Code. Upon the advice of the Head of Property Management, Cabinet agreed that this should be the case. Councillor Jones also raised the concerns of the Panel regarding the definitions of Council and non-Council projects favouring the option to treat all projects on a similar basis, with an assessment being made as to the appropriate reporting procedures based on risk. In responding to this point in particular, those smaller projects with a significant risk exposure, the Head of Property Management referred Cabinet to 1.3 of the Code of Practice, which stated that the Code was to be used for guidance for small construction projects and which also required the production of a good quality brief, one of the conditions of such being a risk management register. Councillor Jones considered that this would now address the findings of the Scrutiny Panel.

In noting the agreement now reached over the outstanding issues, Cabinet wished to record its appreciation for the work undertaken, both by the Scrutiny Panel and Officers in bringing forward the new Code of Practice.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY):

That (1) the Project Management Code of Practice as set out in Appendix A to the report be adopted for general corporate use in respect of major construction schemes;

(2) the various modified forms as set out in Appendix B be adopted for use in conjunction with this Project Management Code of Practice and used in Departments of the Council in drawing up and administering construction contracts; and

(3) the incorporation of the findings of the HIC Break-Out Space Panel of the Council Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the revised Code be noted.

Reason for making decisions:

The previous guidance notes are now out of date and in need of revision and updating.

It is necessary, following the Cabinet adoption of the HIC Break-Out Space Panel findings to pay due regard to those findings by incorporating them into the new Code of Practice.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

To continue with the present outdated guidance notes would expose the Council to a higher level of risk on large construction projects. This option is, therefore, rejected.

(5.43 pm –5.48 pm)

(D)

68/05 - **CPA 2005, VALUE FOR MONEY SELF-ASSESSMENT – INITIAL DRAFT:** The Strategic Policy Officer submitted a written report presenting the initial draft Value For Money (VFM) Self-Assessment document for consideration and approval by Cabinet. The assessment was a statutory requirement of the CPA 2005 process, and necessitated the final self-assessment document being submitted to the Audit Commission by the end of September 2005. The Strategic Policy Officer explained that the self-assessment provided an overview of the Council's costs and performance in

2004/05 compared to the other 15 Councils in the CIPFA family comparator group. In that regard, Cabinet were referred to Appendix 3 of the report in respect of which the Strategic Policy Officer and Chief Executive explained the care needed in making direct comparisons with all of the Councils in the family group for certain of those core services. The exercise concluded by the Strategic Policy Officer had indicated that the Council's current value for money arrangements were "adequate" and the report, therefore, suggested measures for improving these arrangements over the next twelve months to "good".

The report had also been considered by the Council Resources Overview and Scrutiny Commission at its meeting held on 19 September 2005 and the Chair, Councillor Jones, attended the Cabinet meeting and submitted a summary of the Commission's comments arising from that meeting. Councillor Jones advised that the assessment also provided a framework for identifying future issues on which the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions could examine and comment upon. In thanking Councillor Jones for the work of his Commission, the Leader advised that he would take those views into account when finalising, in conjunction with the Strategic Policy Officer, the initial draft self-assessment document.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY):

That (1) the Value for Money Self-Assessment initial draft be approved, subject to those minor amendments to be made by the Leader in conjunction with the Strategic Policy Officer and the final self-assessment document be submitted to the Audit Commission by 30 September 2005; and

(2) the Council Resources Overview and Scrutiny Commission be thanked for its contribution to this work.

Reason for making decision:

To provide Cabinet with an opportunity to agree and amend the initial findings of the Council's VFM Self-Assessment for approval prior to its submission to the Audit Commission by the statutory deadline.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

None.

(6.25 pm – 6.35 pm)

(D)