

## Executive - 22 June 2005

Present: Councillor Williams (Chairman)  
Councillors Bishop, Mrs Bradley, Cavill, Edwards, Garner, Hall, Leighton and Mrs Lewin-Harris

Officers: Mrs P James (Chief Executive), Ms S Adam (Strategic Director), Ms J Wishlade (Strategic Director), Mr B Cleere (Head of Policy and Performance), Mrs E Collacott (Principal Accountant), Mr S Murphy (Principal Accountant) and Mr G P Dyke (Member Services Manager)

Also Present: Councillors Clark, Henley, Hindley and Phillips.

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm.)

### 64. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 24 May 2005 were taken as read and were signed.

### 65. Public Question Time

Councillor Henley, as a member of the public, asked the following questions:

- (a) Could the mobile CCTV currently being trialled at the Wellington Sports Centre be tried elsewhere as well, particularly at the rear of the South Street Baptist Church?

Councillor Mrs Lewin-Harris replied that the CCTV equipment would be trialled at the Sports Centre. A protocol, which would determine how to prioritise the use of the CCTV camera, would come before the Community Leadership Review Panel and the advice of the Police would be sought.

- (b) With regard to the proposed development at Cades Farm it was noted that the developers had indicated that they were likely to offer free bus passes to residents of the new development. Could this offer be extended to the existing residents of the adjoining Priory area?

Councillor Bishop drew attention to the requirements of the Section 106 Agreement for this development and explained that planning gain could only be obtained as a direct result of any development. It would be difficult to argue that the existing residents would need to be provided with free bus passes as a direct result of the proposed development. Some of the funds would, however, be available for use in the wider area of Wellington.

Councillor Williams added that he would shortly be attending a meeting of the Wellington East Residents Association to discuss use of the developers' contribution.

- (c) Could regular updates be provided on the progress of the proposed skating rink, particularly in relation to possible sponsorship?

Councillor Cavill undertook to arrange for regular updates to be provided by the Town Centre Manager.

66. Draft Corporate Strategy and Performance Plan 2005-2008

Reported that the Council were required to produce an annual Performance Plan, which identified its priorities for improvement, how weaknesses would be addressed and gave details of its performance indicator results and targets.

Government guidance reaffirmed that Performance Plans should be the focus of authorities improvement planning by articulating priorities for improving, including how weaknesses would be addressed, opportunities exploited and better outcomes delivered for local people. It should set targets for improved future performance.

By combining the Corporate Strategy and Performance Plan, duplication was reduced and a more comprehensive document produced, which gives a much clearer understanding of the Council. The Plan showed the Council's:

- Overall aim.
- Background to Corporate Themes and four Top Priorities.
- Achievements during the last 12 months.
- Plans for the next three years.
- Improvement priorities and how we are addressing weaknesses.
- Performance summaries and targets for improved future performance.
- Details of performance against statutory and local performance indicators.

The Review Board had considered the Plan at its meeting on 9 June 2005 and recommended that it be approved.

RESOLVED that Council be recommended to agree the draft Corporate Strategy and Performance Plan 2005-2008.

67. Performance Monitoring Outturn Report on 2004/07 Strategy, 2004/05 Financial Outturn and 2004/05 Performance Indicators

Submitted report previously circulated which gave an update on the outturn position of the Authority on revenue and capital for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and trading services for 2004/05, and progress against 2004/07 Corporate Strategy and 2004/05 Performance Indicator targets.

In respect of budget monitoring, the General Fund revenue outturn showed an underspend of £163,000 when compared with the current budget. The General Fund Capital Programme expenditure for the year amounted to £2,766,945, the total budget for the year was £5,521,632. Therefore, the majority of this underspend would be slipped to the 2005/06 year. The revised budget for 2005/06 to 2007/08 would therefore be £11,323,117. The amount of unallocated capital resources now totalled £1.2m.

The Housing Revenue Account draft outturn showed a working balance carried forward into 2005/06 of £2,285,641, which was £375,732 more than predicted in the Q3 budget monitoring report.

Housing Revenue Account capital expenditure amounted to £5,568,182 against a current budget of £5,854,911. This underspend would be slipped to the 2005/06 financial year. It was noted that the figures remained subject to external audit.

The objectives of the Council together with the key actions to obtain them, were listed within the current Corporate Strategy 2004/07 and Performance Plan 2004/05, which had been agreed by the Executive at its meeting on 23 June 2004. Progress for the year (April 2004 to March 2005), against the 20 objectives was good. Full details were reported but it had been identified that 90% of Corporate Strategy Objectives were on course and 60% of Performance Indicators were on target.

The Council, together with all Somerset Districts, were contributing to a Local Public Service Agreement between the Government and Somerset County Council. The agreement was to achieve greater performance improvement than that which would normally be expected in certain Government determined functions. The report pointed out that, to-date, the Council were performing ahead overall against these targets.

RESOLVED that:

1. the draft outturn positions on Revenue and Capital for both the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Prudential Indicators for 2004/05 be noted;
2. the creation of an RCCO for Internal Recharges charged to capital projects of £82,406 be agreed;
3. the performance against targets for both the Corporate Strategy and the Performance Plan for 2004/05 be noted.

68. Treasury Management Outturn 2004/05 and Update

Submitted report which gave an update on the outturn position for treasury management activities for 2004/05, and the current position to date for the financial year 2005/06 on treasury management issues.

It was noted that external debt was marginally increased over the year to take advantage of cost reductions. The base rate remained level at 4.75% following a 0.25% increase in August 2004. It was anticipated that future trends would follow a downward trend. Investment Income was up on the previous year by £930,000 compared to £634,000, with the General Fund share also up by £235,000 to £705,000. Cash flow surpluses had remained largely static with no change expected in the short to medium term.

RESOLVED that the Treasury Management Outturn for 2004/05 and the position to-date for 2005/06 be noted.

69. Joint Venture Arrangements for Corporate Services - Outline Business Case

Further to Minute 58/2005, submitted report which provided an update on the work carried out since 24 May 2005 on the future direction of the Council in respect of customer access to services and service improvement and Corporate Services (including Revenues and Housing Benefits).

The Executive had previously considered a report that outlined the need for the Council to consider the future direction of customer access to services and corporate support services. It was agreed that the Council should explore the potential for a joint venture partnering arrangement with County Council and a private sector partner for reconfiguring the way the Council provided its customer services and corporate support services.

It was emphasised that the key drivers behind this report stemmed from the need for the Council to improve and develop its customer access strategy and to take action to rationalise its corporate support services before the implications of the Gershon review dictated that rationalisation for it.

Since the last report, significant progress had been made to further progress the work of the proposed joint venture arrangement.

- (i) An Outline Business Case has been developed, details of which had been submitted.
- (ii) A dedicated Project Team had been established and was currently working on the refinement of the Outline Business Case - aiming to present a fully researched and defined Business Case to the Executive later in the year. This included an in depth analysis of services provided and related costs, and a scoping exercise to determine which services should be included in such an arrangement.
- (ii) Governance and Project Management arrangements for progressing the work had been agreed with the County Council.
- (iv) Initial consultation had taken place with Unison and Staff Side representatives about the potential progression of the project.
- (v) Work had begun on developing an internal communications strategy and action plan.
- (vi) The project has been assessed by an independent review team on its readiness to achieve its proposed timetable.

RESOLVED that:

1. the Outline Business Case for the potential Joint Venture arrangement as submitted be noted;

2. the potential of a Joint Venture arrangement with the County Council continued to be explored;
3. further consideration be given at the next meeting of the Executive to a more detailed business case for the Joint Venture together with the Council's Customer Access Strategy.
4. A Members' Steering Group be formed comprising seven Councillors (4 Conservative, 2 Liberal Democrat, 1 either Independent or Labour).

70. Integrated Working for Waste Management

Submitted report previously circulated, which updated members on the activities of the Council as a member of the Somerset Waste Partnership to progress more formal integrated methods of delivering the services which managed municipal waste. The report gave details of the progress which had been made to-date together with a timetable for future action. The core elements of this project, which had been developed in more detail following the decision made by the Executive at its meeting in January, were:

- (a) The formation of a single Somerset Waste Board that had executive responsibility for all waste collection, disposal, and recycling services provided by all of the Somerset Councils;
- (b) The establishment of a single client function of officers, responsible to the Board for delivery and management of the services; and
- (c) The tendering and management of contracts to provide the waste services.

Work had commenced in the following three main areas:

1. Constitutional arrangements.
2. Management arrangements.
3. Procurement Strategy.

The report also contained a timetable for future action.

This matter had also been considered by the Health and Leisure Review Panel at its meeting on 16 June 2005 and details of its recommendations were reported.

RESOLVED that the recommendations of the Health and Leisure Review Panel be agreed and:

1. the timetable for project delivery be agreed;
2. the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services be authorised to lead the negotiations to develop the project on behalf of the Council through the

Somerset Waste Partnership and the Strategic Director (Joy Wishlade) be authorised to lead the development of the project;

3. the adequate resource of Officer and Member time required to deliver the project be noted and approved.

71. Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved that the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting for the items numbered 9 and 10 on the Agenda because of the likelihood that exempt information would be disclosed relating to Clauses 9 and 7 respectively of Schedule 12(a) of the Local Government Act 1972.

72. Proposed Acquisition of Land at Bishops Hull

Submitted report, previously circulated, together with a detailed capital project report which gave details of two areas of land which, in the future, might become available to the Council.

It was felt that the possible opportunity to acquire all or part of this land presented a major strategic benefit to the Council in the longer term. Details of the likely cost of the land were submitted.

RESOLVED that Council be recommended that:

1. negotiations continue with a view to the Council purchasing either or both of these areas of land;
2. the leader of the Council, together with the appropriate Portfolio Holder be authorised to agree terms in consultation with the Chief Valuer.

73. Review of Taunton Deane Plant Nursery

Reported that a review of the Taunton Deane Nursery had been undertaken in order to inform a decision about its future. The current operation was described including the current community benefits it brought and three options had been identified for the future. Details of the advantages and disadvantages/risks were submitted for each of the options.

A financial model had then been run on the most favourable options to assess their commercial viability. Having considered all the options, it was felt that Option 3 should be followed.

This matter had been considered by the Health and Leisure Review Panel at its meeting on 16 June 2005 and details of its recommendations were submitted.

RESOLVED that Option 3, full details of which were included in the report, be implemented subject to a full business plan and an appraisal of the options for partnership being undertaken.

(The meeting ended at 8.20 pm.)

(No members of the press were present.)