

Executive –19 October 2005

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

Officers: Mr J J Thornberry (Strategic Director), Mr K Toller (Head of Resources), Mr P Carter (Financial Services Manager), Mr R Willoughby-Foster (Forward Plan Manager), Mr R North (Chief Personnel Officer), Ms A Derry (Employee Development Manager), Mrs R James (Communications Manager) and Mr G P Dyke (Member Services Manager)

Also Present: Councillors Henley and Wedderkopp.

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm.)

99. Apologies

Councillor Edwards, Garner and Hall.

100. Public Question Time

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

- (i) Could he have a written breakdown of offers of sponsorship in connection with the proposed Christmas Ice Rink? Have there been any changes regarding attracting a major sponsor?

Councillor Cavill replied that this scheme was currently without a major sponsor. Discussions had taken place with a major local employer but unfortunately this Company had now dropped out.

- (ii) What was the future of Proms and Pop in the Park?

Councillor Mrs Bradley replied that it would be open to the democratic process in due course.

- (iii) With reference to the purchase of a "Schmidt Swingo" street cleaning machine referred to in Councillor Edward's recent report to Council, why was this not first brought to a Review Panel to explain its advantages?

Councillor Williams explained that this machine had been purchased by the Deane DLO. The Deane DLO had a contract with the Council and it was up to them how they operated it and what equipment they used. The same level of service would be provided at the same cost to the Council.

- (iv) Customers were currently experiencing considerable difficulty in contacting the Council by telephone. How would this problem be dealt with?

It was also interesting to note that the Wellington Community Office were dealing with an increase in personal callers because of the difficulties in contacting the Council by other means.

Councillor Williams replied that although Customer Services was improving, it was still not good enough. Councillors were conscious that the facility needed to be improved further and work was needed to get it right. Despite the problems in the system, productivity of the Customer Services Team was good. The staff were doing well in difficult circumstances and this was an area where the Council should provide support and encouragement.

101. Statement of Community Involvement

Submitted report previously circulated regarding the Second Draft Statement of Community Involvement before a public consultation period took place between 4 November 2005 and 19 December 2005.

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was a Local Development Framework (LDF) document that the Borough Council had to produce. The SCI established the Council's proposals for involving the community in both the preparation of the LDF and the consideration of planning applications. The SCI also explained how the Council would link the LDF with the Community Strategy, an important requirement of the new Planning system.

The First Draft SCI had been prepared in association with the Local Strategic Partnership who had endorsed the document. Consultation had taken place on the First Draft and no objections had been received to the overall strategy. Responses to the First Draft had now been considered by the Strategic Planning Transport and Economic Development Review Panel and the Local Strategic Partnership. The public response to the First Draft and the subsequent consideration of that response had resulted in the production of an improved Second Draft SCI.

RESOLVED that publication of the Second Draft Statement of Community Involvement be agreed for the statutory consultation.

102. Proposed Core Values of Taunton Deane Borough Council

Submitted report previously circulated regarding recommended core values that the Council should adopt.

There was a need for the Council to have agreed and supported values which guided it as to what it stood for and how it operated. Following consultation

inside the organisation, a set of values were proposed together with plans to communicate and bring these to reality.

The current values of the organisation were now out of date and had largely fallen into disuse. It was considered vital to have some underpinning statement that both staff and members believed in and could apply to each other and the customers the Council served. Following consultations with managers and staff, a number of outcomes had been proposed. Details were submitted of the proposed values.

To help the implementation and understanding of these values, a set of behaviours had also been developed. These would help to define behaviour in order to deliver the Council's values in practice and guide it in how staff were recruited and managed. Details were submitted of the behaviours that had been developed by the staff. This related to the type of behaviour that we wanted to see in the staff and also the type of behaviour that we did not want to see.

It was intended to publish the agreed core values in the next issue of the Corporate Strategy and details of an implementation plan was submitted.

This matter had also been considered by the Review Board who had expressed concern regarding the behaviours set out in the report. It was pointed out that the behaviours had been developed by the staff as they were keen that the core values be translated into those which could be clearly identified.

The intention was that the positive behaviours were integrated into the Council's Recruitment Appraisal Training and Development work. In terms of colleagues challenging people who did not strive to live by the agreed values, staff felt that we should be explicit about behaviour that was not acceptable.

RESOLVED that:

1. the core values for the organisation be agreed and
2. the approach, outlined in the report to the description of behaviours that staff wish to adopt, be agreed.

103. The Local Government Pay and Workforce Strategy

Reported that in March 2004 a three-year pay settlement was agreed for Local Government. As part of the settlement both employers and the Trade Unions had agreed that a number of pay and workforce related issues needed to be progressed and that this should be done through a national framework. A National Pay and Workforce Strategy had been developed and Local Authorities were expected to implement this by the end of the three-year period.

Progress had been made on all fronts in particular in workforce planning and leadership development. There was still much work to be done on the pay and grading review and additional resources would be needed to meet the deadline for this exercise.

The National Strategy had identified five priority areas that were critical to developing the Local Government workforce to secure the delivery of better and more efficient customer-focussed public services. Details were submitted of the five priority areas together with the progress that had been made in each of those areas.

It was noted that alternatives were currently being looked at to replace the Council's current job evaluation system with one which met the requirements of this Strategy. Following on from this it would be necessary to plan for a major review of every job in the organisation and re-evaluate them on the new chosen system. This was a very large piece of work that must be finished by March 2007. Further staff resources would be required to achieve this. It was estimated that it would cost in the region of £75,000 which included staff, computer system support and necessary licences.

RESOLVED that:

1. the report be noted and the initiative that help to achieve the Council's obligation within the Pay and Workforce Strategy be supported;
2. Council be recommended that a Supplementary Estimate from the General Fund Reserve of £75,000 for additional resources to implement the new Job Evaluation Scheme be agreed.

(The meeting ended at 7.05pm.)