

COUNCIL MEETING – 13 DECEMBER 2005

PART 1

To deal with written questions and to receive recommendations to the Council from the Executive.

1. JOINT RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COUNCILLORS MRS BRADLEY, GARNER AND HALL – LEISURE ARTS AND CULTURE, HOUSING SERVICES AND RESOURCES

Capital Programme Update 2005/06

Over recent months reports have been submitted to the appropriate Review Panels regarding some expected changes to the Capital Programme of the Council. The Executive has considered a report which consolidated these variations. Changes to the Capital Programme are being sought for the following schemes:-

- Additional funding for the indoor tennis centre extension of £60,000
- Virement of £44,000 from “Grants to Parish Play Areas” budget towards health and safety improvements in TDBC play areas within parishes
- Virement of a total of £28,000 from the Depot Improvements budget to DDA works and to the DLO reserve
- Reductions to the Housing capital programme and an additional RCCO from the HRA working balance (plus associated General Fund revenue costs) to meet a shortfall in Right to Buy capital receipts. This followed the submission of reports to both the Review Board and the Housing Review Panel.

It is RECOMMENDED that the proposed changes to the Capital Programme be supported and the following be agreed.

- (i) Additional funding for the indoor tennis centre extension of £60,000
- (ii) Virement of £44,000 from the “Grants to Parish Play Areas” budget towards health and safety improvements in TDBC play areas within parishes
- (iii) Virement of a total of £28,000 from the Depot Improvements budget to DDA works and to the DLO reserve
- (iv) Reductions to the Housing Capital programme as outlined in the report (A summary of the revised Housing Capital Programme is attached as Appendix A).
- (v) A Supplementary Estimate from the HRA Working Balance of £500,000
- (vi) A Supplementary Estimate from General Fund reserves of £60,000 to meet the additional debt costs that would result from a switch of supported borrowing approvals from the HRA to the General Fund

COUNCILLORS MRS BRADLEY, GARNER AND HALL

2. COUNCILLOR HALL - RESOURCES

(a) Acceptance of a Tender for Revenues and Benefits Software

At its meeting on 21 September 2005 the Executive considered details of the outcome of the procurement exercise undertaken to buy a new suite of Revenues and Benefits software to replace the present in-house systems.

The tender has been awarded but it is necessary to vire £56,000 from Housing Benefit Admin to Revenue contribution to Capital in order to meet the expected shortfall in Capital funding.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that £56,000 be vired from Housing Benefit admin to Revenue Contribution to Capital.

(b) The Local Government Pay and Workforce Strategy

In March 2004 a three-year pay settlement was agreed for Local Government. As part of the settlement both employers and the Trade Unions 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 has been developed and Local Authorities are expected to implement this by the end of the three-year period.

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

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

It is 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.

(c) Council Tax Section 13A Reduction Procedure

The Local Government Act 2003 has introduced various changes to the Council Tax legislation. One of these changes added a new Section "13A Billing Authority's power to reduce the amount of tax payable" to the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

The new powers allow the Billing Authority to reduce the Council Tax payable either for specific classes of cases or for individual cases. The Billing Authority has the power to either reduce or cancel the amount of Council Tax payable.

The new legislation is designed to allow Billing Authorities to create local discounts or exemptions in order to cater for local circumstances. The disadvantage of this change however is that the cost of awarding any such reduction has to be wholly funded by the Billing Authority. No provision is made for the other precepting Authorities to contribute.

This means that the financial implications of any decision to create a class of reduction has to be considered in detail before any such reduction is created. It is anticipated therefore that such reductions will only be awarded in exceptional cases.

The Executive consider that the following procedure should be adopted to deal with such applications on a consistent basis:

(a) Procedure for creating and determining applications for specific classes of reduction

The power to consider and decline applications for the creation of specific classes of reduction should be delegated to the Section 151 Officer and the relevant portfolio holder for Revenues.

Where both the Section 151 Officer and the relevant portfolio holder for Revenues decide that consideration should be given to creating a specific class of reduction a recommendation should be made to the Executive. The Executive should have the delegated power to create, amend or cancel any specific class of reduction.

Once a specific class of reduction has been agreed by the Executive individual applications in respect of that class are to be considered by the Revenues unit. The Revenues unit should have the delegated power to determine individual applications within an agreed class of reduction.

(b) Procedure for determining individual one-off applications for reductions

The power to determine individual one-off applications (ie all applications other than those to create a specific class of reduction or for a reduction under a specific class) should be delegated to the Section 151 Officer.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that the procedure and delegation of powers as outlined above be agreed when considering applications for Section 13A reductions

COUNCILLOR HALL

3. COUNCILLORS HALL AND EDWARDS – RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Fees and Charges

The Executive will consider recommendations regarding fees and charges at its meeting on 7 December 2005. Details will be circulated as soon as possible after the meeting of recommended fees and charges in respect of:

- Land Charges
- Licensing
- Cemeteries and Crematorium

COUNCILLORS HALL AND EDWARDS

REVISIONS TO HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2005/06

SCHEME	ORIGINAL BUDGET 2004/05	REVISIONS TO BUDGET		REVISED BUDGET 2005/06	ACTUAL YEAR TO DATE & COMMITTED
		SLIPPAGE 2004/05	REDUCTIONS 2005/06		
HRA					
LOFT CONVERSIONS	90,000.00		(40,000.00)	50,000.00	41,241.01
ENERGY EFFICIENCY/INSULATION					2,088.99
PRIORSWOOD PLACE SHOPPING CENTRE					(3,415.51)
ELDERLY PERSONS CLUBROOM	35,000.00		(20,000.00)	15,000.00	(1,065.50)
STOCK CONDITION SURVEY	80,000.00			80,000.00	142,838.00
MISCELLANEOUS	87,000.00		(40,000.00)	47,000.00	37,560.98
AIDS & ADAPTATIONS	264,800.00		(65,000.00)	199,800.00	111,071.90
COMMUNAL TV AERIALS	30,000.00		(20,000.00)	10,000.00	1,650.00
KITCHEN/BATHROOM REFURBISHMENTS	3,568,000.00	286,719.00		3,854,719.00	2,420,855.46
SHELTERED WARDENS	90,000.00		(25,000.00)	65,000.00	47,603.38
ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY MEASURES	65,000.00		(45,000.00)	20,000.00	10,302.04
PIPER SYSTEMS	45,000.00			45,000.00	24,396.16
TENANT IMPROVEMENTS	5,000.00			5,000.00	561.32
TENANTS INCENTIVE SCHEME	250,000.00		(8,500.00)	241,500.00	241,500.00
HOUSING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM	300,000.00		(200,000.00)	100,000.00	310.00
DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS	200,000.00			200,000.00	77,510.38
REDUCTION IN FEES INCLUDED ABOVE			(20,000.00)	(20,000.00)	
	5,109,800.00	286,719.00	(483,500.00)	4,913,019.00	3,155,008.61
NON-HRA					
PRIVATE SECTOR RENEWAL SCHEMES	118,000.00			118,000.00	69,162.22
RENOVATION GRANTS	880,000.00	90,000.00	(290,000.00)	680,000.00	457,014.37
HOUSING ASSOCIATION GRANTS	850,000.00	(99,000.00)		751,000.00	361,584.00
	6,957,800.00	277,719.00	(773,500.00)	6,462,019.00	4,042,769.20

LATEST ESTIMATE	
FUNDING	
MAJOR REPAIRS ALLOWANCE	3,427,317.00
CONTRIBUTION FROM HRA 04/05	59,340.00
CONTRIBUTION FROM HRA 05/06	700,000.00
RIGHT TO BUY SALES 04/05	289,952.00
RIGHT TO BUY SALES 05/06	387,249.00
SCA FOR DFSGS	174,000.00
APPROVED BORROWING	869,799.00
SHIP FUNDING	118,000.00
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	6,025,657.00
ADDITIONAL RCCO	500,000.00
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	6,525,657.00
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LESS REVISED BUDGET	(6,462,019.00)
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SURPLUS	63,638.00