

**COMMERCIAL & HUMAN RESOURCES  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

9 November 2004  
4.30pm – 7.48pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors Adigun-Harris (Chair), Armstrong, Barrett-Payton, Bradnack, Ellis-Miller, Hyman, Reid and Taylor (Vice Chair).

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor Liddle, Executive Councillor for Commercial & Human Resources

**FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**

Councillor Taylor in the Chair

04/CHR/45 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Special Meeting held on 24 June 2004 were signed as a correct record by the Chair.

Those for the meeting held on 6 July 2004 were amended (amendments struck through/highlighted in bold) at minute number 04/CHR/42 as follows: "Councillor Bradnack welcomed the sentiments of the amended recommendations. ~~He thought that it was not sensible to charge a low rent and~~ **He mentioned** that the APU drama department was going to expand greatly and the venue was very nearby."

They were then signed as a correct record by the Chair.

04/CHR/46 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Hughes and apologies for lateness from Councillor Adigun-Harris.

04CHR/47 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Taylor declared a personal interest in minute number 04/CHR/65 as she knew one of the organisations mentioned. She stayed in the room but did not vote.

04/CHR/48 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No members of the public wished to address the Scrutiny Committee.

04/CHR/49 **SERVICE PERFORMANCE REVIEWS and General Fund Revised Revenue & Capital Budgets 2004-05** (see also Record of Decision 04/CHR/28)

The Accountant introduced the report and highlighted the changes (marked with an asterisk in appendix B of the report) in the revised budget that required approval. He

also drew members' attention to the Committee Management System bid to be returned the TIF Fund and the delay in the move of the City Services Wood Mill which meant that £36,000 needed to be approved as re-phased capital spending.

The Committee then considered each Performance Review. Questions were asked of the following services as indicated below:

**Democratic Services Performance Review:**

Councillor Bradnack noted that the Electoral Registration response to the Annual Canvass had a target of 97% and achieved 90.2%. He asked if the target was likely to be met in the current year.

The Head of Legal & Democratic Services said that the forecast was that the performance would be better but still not on target. He undertook to let councillors have further information about why the figure was difficult to achieve.

**Property & Building Services Performance Review:**

Councillor Bradnack welcomed the actions taken to maximise the supply of affordable housing in the city by identifying and disposing of surplus sites to Registered Social Landlords for affordable/special needs housing.

Following a question posed by the Executive Councillor, the Committee noted that the Guildhall clocks would be repaired but that, due to their age and the requirement to keep them as part of the listed building furnishings, finding the correct solution was taking longer than anticipated.

**Reception & Office Services Performance Review:**

Councillor Bradnack noted the number of occasions on which targets were not met due to delays and deferrals. He asked whether the service was under-resourced or whether the targets had been too ambitious.

The Head of Reception & Office Services explained that there had been a series of unfortunate and unforeseen circumstances which had led to the delays and deferrals.

**Accountancy & Support Services Performance Review:**

Councillor Bradnack noted the use of the word on-going to describe actions with regard to advising on the procurement of housing maintenance and repair services and the implementation of a Council-wide policy of Strategic Risk Assessment. He said that in his view it was important for the Committee to have an idea how much had been achieved in relation to each action and its target in any given year and asked that officers try and do this.

Councillor Reid drew the Committee's attention to the way that the Actual Net Budget and the Original Budget Net on the left hand columns of Appendix B had been completed for this service which she had found very useful. She asked if all services could complete Appendix B in this way in future years.

The Head of Accountancy & Support Services said this point would be addressed bearing in mind that this would be more possible to do for support services than for direct services.

In reply to a question from Councillor Barrett-Payton, the Head of Accountancy & Support Services outlined all the checks that were in place to ensure that late payments were kept to an absolute minimum.

**City Services External Trading Service Performance Review:**

Councillor Bradnack asked whether there had been any redundancies as a result of the lost contract.

The Director of City Services acknowledged that there had been redundancies but that the people concerned had left voluntarily.

**Human Resources Service Performance Review:**

Councillor Bradnack pointed out that there were figures missing under the Equalities Indicators on page 163.

The Head of Human Resources provided the figures as follows:

- BV11a – top5% earners that are women. 2003/4 actual - 26% against a target of 34%; 2004/5 estimate - 24% against a target of 34%
- BV11b – top5% earners that are from BME communities. 2003/4 actual - 0% against a target of 4.3%; 2004/5 estimate - 0% against a target of 4.3%

Councillor Bradnack said that investment might be needed to ensure that the targets were achieved.

The Executive Councillor affirmed that the Council was committed to achieving the equalities targets.

Councillor Reid asked about the market supplements that were being applied to jobs following the implementation of the Single Status Agreement.

The Head of Human Resources explained that there were skills shortages nationally and locally for Environmental Health officers, Planning officers and legal staff. This, combined with the high cost of living in Cambridge, meant that it had been difficult to recruit in 5 or 6 professional areas without implementing market pay to attract suitable applicants. Career grades in some areas had been reviewed to help with recruitment and retention.

**Revenue Services Performance Review:**

Councillor Bradnack congratulated the Head of Service on the improvement in targets being achieved. However, he asked for more information on those for customer satisfaction which were all below target.

The Head of Revenue Services said that the recent many changes in benefits legislation led to confusion not only for the public but also for staff. The Service was concentrating on how it communicates with the public and he acknowledged that there was still more to be done.

The Committee then considered the recommendations in the budget report.

The Committee agreed (by 6 votes to 0) with the recommendations for the Executive Councillor:

- a) Note performance against the objectives and targets of the services that report to this committee for 2003/04 and the first six months of 2004/05.
- b) Approve, with any amendments, the revised revenue budgets for 2004/05, as shown in Appendix A to this report for submission to Council, including a request to repay to reserves £72,170.
- c) Seek approval from Council to carry forward resources from 2004/5 to 2005/6 to fund rephased capital spending of £36,000 as detailed in Appendix C, subject to the final outturn position.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendations.

Councillor Adigun-Harris in the Chair.

**04/CHR/50 INFORMAL WORKING PARTY TO CONSIDER USES OF THE GUILDHALL GROUND FLOOR** *(see also Record of Decision 04/CHR/29)*

The Committee (by 7 votes to 0) endorsed the setting up of the working party, its terms of reference and its composition (Councillors Barrett-Payton, Bradnack, Durrant, Hipkin, Liddle and Reid).

The Executive Councillor agreed.

**04/CHR/51 OFFICE ACCOMMODATION: ELECTORAL SERVICES AND RECEPTION AND OFFICE SERVICES** *(see also Record of Decision 04/CHR/30)*

The Committee approved the project appraisal (by 7 votes to 0).

The Executive Councillor approved the project appraisal.

**04/CHR/52 INTERNET AND EMAIL ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY** *(see also Record of Decision 04/CHR/31)*

The Committee agreed (by 7 votes to 0) with the recommendations for the Executive Councillor as set out below:

- 2.1 That the Council adopts an approach to internet monitoring based on options b) and d) in section 6.9 of the officer report
- 2.2 That the current Acceptable Use Policy as shown in Appendix A of the officer report is endorsed, subject to adoption of the monitoring approach mentioned above
- 2.3 That the Head of Human Resources be asked to revise and settle the detail of the Acceptable Use Policy to take account of the decision in 2.1 above, and of the comments about the Policy contained in the report, subject to consultation with the Executive Councillor, Chair and spokespersons on the final draft.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendations.

**04/CHR/53 TRADES UNIONS FACILITIES AGREEMENT FOR 2005/6**

*(see also Record of Decision 04/CHR/32)*

The Head of Human Resources reported that, at its meeting on 2 November, the Joint Staff Employer Forum had agreed (unanimously) to the third option under paragraph 9.2 of the officer report - increase the provision to full time for both Trades Unions - and that the Head of Human Resources, in consultation with the Chair and Spokes of the Forum, the Executive Councillor for Commercial & Human Resources and the Chair and Spokes of Commercial & Human Resources Scrutiny Committee would draft wording for conditions to apply to the 3-year agreement. This was tabled at the meeting and moved by Councillor Taylor as an amendment to the recommendation for the Executive Councillor. The amendment read:

“The City Council agrees to facilities arrangements that will allow the two Branch Secretary posts (UNISON and GMB) to become full-time from 1 April 2005 for three years (i.e. until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008). This arrangement is conditional on:

- i. affordability for the Council, i.e. that existing facilities budgets, held by the Head of Human Resources, remain sufficient to cover the employment cost of the two Branch Secretaries or that pressures on Council budgets are such that budget cuts are necessary to a level where the two posts cannot be sustained;
- ii. Trades Union membership levels not falling below 50% of the workforce (for 2003/4 membership was over 70%);
- iii. No significant reduction in size of the Council’s workforce (2004/5 headcount = 1240 employees).

The Head of Human Resources will assess the above factors each year during the budget preparation cycle (i.e. September to November) and will only ask Members to review the three year agreement should any of the above conditions apply.”

Councillor Bradnack said that there had been agreement in principle and that he thought the amendment was not the way forward and that points i and iii were inappropriate.

The Committee agreed (by 6 votes to 0) with the recommendations for the Executive Councillor as above.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendations above.

04/CHR/54 **KEY DECISION PROCUREMENT OF RECRUITMENT ADVERTISING SERVICES** (see also Record of Decision 04/CHR/33)

The Head of Human Resources tabled paper copies of an amended timetable which members had already been sent by email. This is copied below:

Invitation to tender documents agreed by consortium	November 2004
Pre- Information Notice posted	December 2004
OJEC notice to appear	January 2004
Closing date for receipt of tenders	Mid February 2005
Initial evaluation and short listing	End February 2005
Presentation/interviews with bidders	March 2005
Identify preferred bidder/Agree SLA	End March 2005
City Council Executive Councillor/C&HR decision to accept proposed supplier and new contract	April 2005
Issue award of contract	April 2005
Handover between 'existing' and 'new' contractors	April 2005
Start of new contract	1 May 2005

The Committee asked that the following points be borne in mind:

- That there be no loss of the financial advantages of the current arrangement
- That the City Council needed to retain its own identity
- That smaller advertising agencies not be excluded from the tendering process
- That recruitment adverts be put in BME publications

The Committee agreed (by 6 votes to 0) with the recommendations for the Executive Councillor:

To note and endorse the contents of this report, particularly the (revised) timetable and procurement partnership approach to the letting of a new recruitment advertising services.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendations as revised.

04/CHR/55 **DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO APPROVE COUNCIL ENERGY CONTRACTS** *(see also Record of Decision 04/CHR/34)*

The Executive Councillor requested that the existing policy be put in writing with the proportions of energy bought from each of the categories described – “green” and “renewable”.

The Committee agreed (by 5 votes to 0) with the recommendation for the Executive Councillor:

That the approval for renewal of energy contracts in future be delegated to either the Directors of Finance or Central Services or the Head of Property & Building Services on the advice of the Energy Officer.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendation.

04/CHR/56 **KEY DECISION BISHOP’S MILL SLUICE** *(see also Record of Decision 04/CHR/35)*

The Committee discussed the two options in the officer report relating to automation of the sluice - just motorising and automating the existing gates which would not significantly reduce annual expenditure or replacing the existing gates with a new single gated motorised /automated sluice. Whilst costing more initially this would be expected to reduce expenditure by the order of approximately 80% and thus investment in automation of the sluice could pay for itself over approximately 12 years.

The Committee agreed (by 5 votes to 0) with the recommendation for the Executive Councillor to approve the project to replace the existing gates with a new single gated motorised /automated sluice.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendation.

04/CHR/57 **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**Resolved** before considering the appendices of the report to exclude members of the public from the meeting on the grounds that, if they were present, there would be disclosure to them of information defined as exempt from publication by Categories 7 and 9 as defined in the Council’s Constitution part 4B (pages 181-183).

04/CHR/58 **KEY DECISION RENEWAL OF CCTV EQUIPMENT AND ENLARGEMENT OF CCTV CONTROL ROOM** *(see also Record of Decision 04CHR/36)*

The Committee agreed (by 5 votes to 0) with the recommendations for the Executive Councillor:

To approve the project for the enlargement of the CCTV Control Room and a rolling programme of replacement of cameras, recorders and ancillary equipment.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendations.

**04/CHR/59 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

Councillor Bradnack expressed concern at the number of reports that were in the exempt section of the agenda and requested discussion in open forum of item 17 in particular as most of the information in the report was not exempt. As a general principle he proposed that any exempt information be contained in appendices.

The Committee agreed to this principle for future agendas but not on this occasion as the papers had been published as exempt.

**Resolved** to exclude members of the public from the meeting on the grounds that, if they were present, there would be disclosure to them of information defined as exempt from publication by Categories 7 and 9 as defined in the Council's Constitution part 4B (pages 181-183).

**04/CHR/60 KEY DECISION FUTURE OF 9-12 GRAFTON STREET, CAMBRIDGE FOLLOWING ITS PLANNED SURRENDER IN 2005 BY ANGLIA POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY** (*see also Record of Decision 04CHR/37*)

The Committee agreed (by 4 votes to 0) with the recommendations for the Executive Councillor:

- 2.1 That the Head of Property & Building Services be authorised to market 9-12 Grafton Street extending through to Paradise Street on a freehold or long leasehold basis, reporting final terms to the Commercial & Human Resources Executive Councillor, Chair and Spokespersons for Commercial & Human Resources Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.2 That appropriate provision to meet the costs of sale be made from the Property Strategy Fund and that following sale, on receipt of funds, those costs be recovered from the sale proceeds to top up the Property Strategy Fund.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendations.

**04/CHR/61 KEY DECISION DISPOSAL OF LAND AT WHITEHILL ROAD AND THORLEYE ROAD CAMBRIDGE TO FLAGSHIP HOUSING GROUP LIMITED** (*see also Record of Decision 04CHR/38*)

The Committee agreed (by 4 votes to 0) with the recommendations for the Executive Councillor:

To approve the disposal of Site 1, being land adjacent to 81 Whitehill Road and 20 Galfrid Road and Site 2 being land adjacent to 44 Thorley Road and 1 Galfrid Road Cambridge, to Flagship Housing Group Limited on the terms contained in the officer report.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendations.

04/CHR/62 **KEY DECISION DISPOSAL OF LAND AT REAR OF SHOPPING PARADE, BARNWELL ROAD CAMBRIDGE TO FLAGSHIP HOUSING GROUP LIMITED** (*see also Record of Decision 04/CHR/39*)

The Committee agreed (by 4 votes to 0) with the amended recommendations for the Executive Councillor:

To approve the disposal of the land described in this report to the rear of the Council's Barnwell Road shops to Flagship Housing Group Limited on the terms contained in the officer report.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the amended recommendations.

04/CHR/63 **KEY DECISION DISPOSALS OF LAND FORMING PART OF THE ARBURY CAMP DEVELOPMENT, KINGS HEDGES ROAD, CAMBRIDGE** (*see also Record of Decision 04/CHR/40*)

The Committee agreed (by 4 votes to 0) with the recommendations for the Executive Councillor:

- 2.1 To approve the disposal of parcels of land K2 and J2 to the RSL Consortium comprising North British Housing Association and Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association on the terms contained in the officer report.
- 2.2 To approve the disposal of public open space site POS7 to Histon & Impington Parish Council on the terms contained in the officer report.
- 2.3 To approve the disposal of the land identified as the Cambridge Guided Bus Corridor adjacent to site K1, K2 and J2 to Cambridgeshire County Council on the terms contained in the officer report.
- 2.4 To increase the proportion of affordable housing provision on the Council's developable land at Arbury Camp to 50% and approve disposal of such additional allocation to the Arbury Camp RSL consortium on the same terms as 2.1 above.
- 2.5 To condition the disposal of the Council's developable land at Arbury Camp with higher energy efficiency /sustainability targets than required under the S106 agreement and to instruct officers to prepare an acceptable shopping list of alternatives for developers.
- 2.6 To approve the marketing of sites K1 and J1 for private sector residential development in accordance with the S.106 agreement or as amended if

appropriate to reflect the decision in 2.4 above and report terms for later approval by the Executive Councillor following consultation with Chair and Spokespersons.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendations.

04/CHR/64 **DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY A** (see also *Record of Decision 04/CHR/41*)

The Committee agreed (by 4 votes to 0) with the recommendation for the Executive Councillor: the marketing and sale of Property A.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendation.

04/CHR/65 **NNDR [Business Rates] IRRECOVERABLE DEBTS TO BE WRITTEN-OFF** (see also *Record of Decision 04/CHR/42*)

The Committee agreed (by 3 votes to 0) with the recommendation for the Executive Councillor: to write off eight debts.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendation.

04/CHR/66 **GENERAL DEBTS - BAD DEBTS FOR WRITE OFF** (see also *Record of Decision 04/CHR/43*)

The Committee agreed (by 4 votes to 0) with the recommendation for the Executive Councillor: to write off one debt.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendation.

04/CHR/67 **HOUSING & COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT IRRECOVERABLE DEBTS TO BE WRITTEN-OFF** (see also *Record of Decision 04/CHR/44*)

The Committee agreed (by 4 votes to 0) with the recommendation for the Executive Councillor: to write off two debts.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendation.

The meeting ended at 7.48pm.

**Chair**