



EXECUTIVE

5:00 – 5:45pm

30 June 2010

Present: Councillors Morphey (Chair), Morrey (Vice-Chair), Blakeway, Bremner, Brociek-Coulton, Sands and Waters

Also Present: Councillors Stephenson and Watkins

Apologies: Councillor Arthur

1. MEETING THE FINANCIAL CHALLENGE – CONSULTATION ON A BLUEPRINT FOR A LEAN CITY COUNCIL

The Deputy Chief Executive introduced the report and commented, in particular, on the reasons for the required efficiency savings needed to balance the city council's medium term financial strategy and the proposed "target operating model" on which, staff, trade unions and elected members would be consulted.

Councillor Waters, Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Governance, commented on the implications for the City Council's services as a result of the effects of the recession and the anticipated funding reductions on local government imposed by the Coalition Government. The proposed "target operating model" referred, in particular, to the need to examine joint working arrangements with partners and the need for the Council services to become more efficient with less resource. He also commented on the restricted timescales for consultation and implementation of the savings proposed.

In response to a question from Councillor Stephenson, the Director of Transformation gave details of the programme of consultation on the proposals which would include negotiations with Unison and cascade briefings for managers and staff. The Chair referred to the need to make all staff aware of the scale of the financial problems facing the Council and the need for the considerable service and structural changes which would be required.

In response to further questions, the Director of Transformation said that the "target operating model" had been first developed by consultants as part of the Council's preparation for Unitary status. The terms of reference had subsequently been amended to develop a model for a lean District Council and had been further refined in view of the difficult financial climate which the Council faced.

During further discussion, Councillor Sands asked whether the procedures for managing the service and structural changes would be based on those put in place for the previous round of efficiency savings. The Deputy Chief Executive said that the established procedures would be used as a basis for managing the structural changes proposed but the cost reductions would require more fundamental changes to the Council's services and would require savings affecting some front facing services in addition to back office and support service functions.

RESOLVED to –

- (1) note the estimated significant reduction in public sector funding, and the predicted implications for the Council's medium financial strategy as outlined in the report;
- (2) endorse the draft "target operating model" for a lean Norwich City Council, as set out in Appendix A to the report, and agree that it be published for consultation with staff, trade unions and elected members;
- (3) note that work is underway to develop a range of potential areas for general fund efficiency and cost reductions; and
- (4) agree the outline timetable for the development of efficiency and savings proposals and consultation as set out in Appendix B to the report.

2. CONSULTATION ON EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services presented the report and answered questions.

Discussion ensued during which Councillor Waters, Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Governance, expressed concern that the City Council's current executive arrangements would not be an option available for consultation under the legislation. Councillor Blakeway also expressed concern about the diminishing role of elected members which would result from the revised governance arrangements and said that the role of the Scrutiny function was not clear within the proposals. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services explained that the existing scrutiny arrangements would continue within whichever model the Council adopted. He also said that the Council would be in breach of its statutory duties if it did not proceed to adopt one of the proposed models set out in the amended legislation.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services said that most authorities had adopted the Leader and Cabinet Executive model as the preferred option but he acknowledged that members may wish to lobby for the retention of the existing model. Councillor Waters commented that as the Coalition Government would be allowing Councils to return to the committee system he hoped that they would acknowledge the desirability of retaining a wider range of options for executive arrangements including the option currently preferred by this Authority.

RESOLVED to recommend the Council to:

- (a) adopt the Leader and Cabinet Executive model for consultation with the public through a newspaper advertisement, article in The Citizen and through the Council's website;
- (b) agree the timetable for consultation as detailed in the Appendix 2 of the report; and
- (c) lobby the Government to introduce amendments to the legislation to allow for other models of Executive arrangements including that currently adopted by the Council.

3. SCHEME OF DELEGATIONS AND PROPER OFFICERS

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services presented the report and added that the revised scheme of delegations and proper officers would be recommended to the meeting of the Council on 20 July 2010 and not 30 March as stated in the report.

RESOLVED to –

- (1) recommend Council to approve and adopt the revised scheme of delegation to officers and the statutory and proper officer appointments at its meeting on 20 July 2010; and
- (2) ask the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to amend the constitution accordingly.

4. JOINT CORE STRATEGY FOR BROADLAND, NORWICH AND SOUTH NORFOLK – PROGRESS TOWARDS EXAMINATION AND ADVERTISEMENT OF POTENTIAL CHANGES

RESOLVED, having considered the report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration, to delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration and Development, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable City Development, to agree the detail of the potential changes to the Joint Core Strategy to be published by the Greater Norwich Development Partnership for public consultation over the summer.

5. DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT – WORKS REQUIRED AT OFF-STREET CAR PARKS

RESOLVED, having considered the report of the Assistant Director – City Development, to

- (1) approve the allocation of funds to carry out adaptations and essential maintenance and repairs to the Council's income generating public off-street car parks as set out in Appendix A to the report for the current financial year and to note the proposals for 2011/12 and 2012/13 financial years; and

- (2) delegate to the Director of Regeneration and Development and the Head of Finance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources and Governance, authority to determine the arrangements for funding the expenditure proposed for 2010/11.

6. GRANT REQUEST FROM NORWICH HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST

RESOLVED, having considered the report of the Assistant Director – City Development, to approve the allocation of £20,000 as a grant from the Non-Housing Repairs and Maintenance budget to the Norwich Historic Churches Trust in 2011/12.

7. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of item 8 below because it would disclose information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) as in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

***8. LAND DISPOSAL FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

RESOLVED, having considered the report of the Head of Neighbourhoods and Strategic Housing, to utilise the general consent under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 1988 for the Disposal of Land to registered providers for affordable housing and agree the disposal of the five sites set out in the report in order to enable the provision of 23 new affordable homes.

CHAIR