



## EXECUTIVE

**5.30 p.m. – 8.05 p.m.**

**18 February 2009**

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

Also present: Councillors A Little, Lubbock, Ramsay and Stephenson

### 1. MINUTES

**RESOLVED** to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2009.

### 2. QUARTER THREE PERFORMANCE MONITORING (2008/09)

The Director of Transformation presented the report and together with the Deputy Chief Executive answered members' questions. Members were advised that benchmarking the Steria contract remained in the red as no partner had been had been secured to undertake the contract and also the Asset Management Strategy. Benefit claimants from deprived areas were up by 31.1%. Which demonstrated the economic downturn. An extra £130, 000 would be given by the Department of Works and Pension to recruit additional staff.

In reply to a question from Councillor Lubbock the Chair confirmed that the Memorial Garden still remained a top priority.

In reply to a question Councillor Arthur said that condition of stock, the need to bring void property up to standard and the condition of properties left by tenants had resulted in a longer turnaround time of void properties.

Councillor Brociek-Couton said as part of the new telephony improvement plan there would be a facility which provided customers with a queue message advising them of where they were in the queue. She thanked the Head of Customer Contact and her team for their exceptional work monitoring incoming calls.

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

### 3. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2008/2009

The Head of Finance presented the report. Members were advised that there would be an overspend of £1,700,000, because of the additional cost of concessionary bus

fares, loss of investment interest, and a fall in Land Charges income and Planning Application fees. A further report would be brought to Executive in March.

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

#### **4. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the report and the Head of Finance said starting 1 April 2009 the Council's accounts were clean, proper and complete.

The Chair said it was good to know there were some reserves to lead the Council and the City through the recession and he thanked the Head of Finance and his team for their work.

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

#### **5. SERVICE PLANS 2009/2010**

The Head of Transformation presented the report.

**RESOLVED** to approve the draft service plans, subject to any amendments required as a result of the budget process, and that any such amendments are made in consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s).

#### **6. BUDGET 2009/10 GENERAL FUND**

The Head of Finance presented the report. Members were advised of the following typographical errors and amendments in the report:-

- General Fund Budget Strategy, third paragraph delete £3,900,000,000 and replace with £3,900,000;
- Table in paragraph 13, final row, delete Budget 2008.09 and replace with Budget 2009/10;
- Table in paragraph 14, top row, delete 2008/2009 and replace with 2009/10;
- Annex 4, Community Services, last line delete 'cross recharging to service for Parking Services' and replace with 'Recharge Community Engagement services to HRA'.

In reply to questions Councillor Waters said the budget consultation process would continue to be refined and developed.

The Head of Finance confirmed LEGL and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund would remain unchanged.

**RESOLVED** to make the following recommendations to Council on 24 February 2009:

- (1) that Council increases Council Tax by 3.9%
- (2) the Council's Budgetary requirement be set at £24,764,600

- (3) authorises the Chief Executive Officer to transfer from the General Fund during the 2009/10 financial year an amount up to £600,000 to meet the costs of funding the Council's transformation and efficiency programme (£400,000) and the General Fund element of the re-provision of the CityCare contract (£200,000); and a further £600,000 to be identified within the Council's reserves to fund the next stages of the transformation and efficiency programme;
- (4) that the prudent level of reserves for the Council be set at £4,541,800 in accordance with the recommendation of the Head of Finance;
- (5) authorises the Head of Finance in consultation with Portfolio Holder for Resources and Governance, to transfer such sums as are deemed necessary from the element of the General Fund Reserve identified as contingency in annex 5.

## **7. CAPITAL STRATEGY**

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the report.

**RESOLVED** to recommend that the Council to adopt the Capital Strategy.

## **8. NON HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2009/2010**

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the report.

**RESOLVED** to recommend that Council:-

- (1) notes the forecast position on the Non Housing Capital Programme for 2008/09 as set in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (2) approves the following increase in expenditure of £4k for Norwich Airport Health and Safety Works (demolition of H Block)
- (3) notes the resources and investment plans for the Non Housing Capital Plan as detailed in the report;
- (4) approves the following discretionary S106 expenditure provisions, and delegate to the Capital Programmes Board the approval of detailed proposals in the form of Project Mandates when requirements have been fully worked up in conjunction with Members and other stakeholders:

### **Play and Open Space provisions**

- (a) Bowers Avenue play area: increase in costs of new footpath £10,000;
- (b) St James Hollow Skate park; improvements to access and Natural area £4,061;
- (c) Stylman Road Play Area: natural play area £40,000;
- (d) The Runnell: upgrade equipment £30,000;
- (e) Thurlby Road Play Area; refurbishment £20,000;
- (f) Jay Gardens: refurbishment £15,000;

- (g) Waldegrave/Clover Hill: new toddler area(s) £48,233;
- (h) Ranworth Road play area: reallocation of £30,000 previously approved for Gypsy Close to rebuild part of play area in partnership with Future projects;
- (i) Wensum View and St Bartholomew's play areas: reallocation of £35,000 previously approved for West End park and Sector 9 for junior play;
- (j) Wensum Community Centre/Sector 9 Improvements: new play and recreation area, in partnership with Lovell £45,000, plus work to improve other sites in locality;
- (k) Belvoir Street: multi use games area and toddler improvements £60,000;
- (l) King Street/Castle Gardens: teenage open space/piazza £68,000;
- (m) Argyle Street: improvements to boundary £10,000;
- (n) Marion Road: rebuild play area £70,000;
- (o) Hamlet centre: new supervised high dependency disabled children's play area in partnership with the Hamlet Centre, subject to appropriate safeguards regarding access and financial risk being in place £40,000;

#### Transportation provision

- (p) Hurricane Way: installation of Bus Lane £50,000;
- (q) Thorpe Road Harvey Lane junction: improvements to pedestrian routes £1,057;
- (r) Bowers Avenue junction with Lefroy Road: installation of new bus shelter £2,805;
- (s) Maidstone Road/Greyfriars Road: highway improvements £20,988;
- (t) Whitefriars development: improved pedestrian access £32,000.

## **9. COUNCIL RENTS AND OTHER HOUSING CHARGES FOR 2009/2010**

Councillor Arthur introduced the report and advised members that a commitment had been made to work with tenants and advise them how to access benefits.

**RESOLVED** to recommend to Council to:-

- (1) set an average rent increase of 6.41%, being £3.75 per week for Housing Revenue Account (HRA) dwellings, and a corresponding average rent increase of £4.34 for General Fund dwellings;
- (2) set service charges for district heating, premises management, sheltered housing and good neighbour services at levels designed to recover costs;
- (3) agree that the setting of the exact charges be delegated to the Director of Regeneration and Development, in consultation with the Portfolio holder, when the budgets are finalised and consultation concluded;

- (4) to implement an increase of 6.41% in respect of garage and parking bay rents in line with that recommended for dwelling rents.

## **10. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2009/2010**

Councillor Arthur introduced the report.

### **RESOLVED to:-**

- (1) recommend Council to approve the Housing Revenue Account budgets for 2009/10, as shown in Appendices 1 and 2, or as amended;
- (2) recommend Council to approve the minimum level of HRA Balances as £2.5m as advised by the Chief Financial Officer and as shown in Appendix 3;
- (3) note the closure of the Repairs Holding Account and the transfer of the balance on the Repairs Holding Account into the Housing Revenue Account Balance.

## **11. HOUSING CAPITAL PLAN 2009/2013 AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2009/2010**

Councillor Arthur introduced the report.

### **RESOLVED to:-**

- (1) recommend the Housing Capital Plan 2009-2013 to the Council for approval;
- (2) approve the Housing Capital Programme 2009/10 as set out in the report;
- (3) approve new Capital Allowances of £3.713m and note the extinguishing of £3.991m of Capital Allowances as set out in the report.

## **12. EARLHAM SCHOOL – CONSULTATION ON CLOSURE AND RE-OPENING AS AN ACADEMY**

The Director of Transformation presented the report and circulated Norfolk County Council's timetable for the proposed closure of Earlham High School. He explained this was only the first stage of consultation and there would be further consultation opportunities.

Councillor Sands welcomed the opportunity to increase aspirations and achievements of the students, which would reinforce significant needs in the City, through an academy. She said was keen to support the 'Campus Norwich' approach and supported the proposal for an academy, which would see schools in the city share training and good practices.

Councillor Stephenson outlined some of the issues raised at Scrutiny Committee on 12 February 2009. She said the Committee had been unable to get full answers to

some of their questions and there were some differences of opinion by the Committee.

During discussion Councillor Waters said there was a need to reserve the Council's position to reflect the fact that some members were robustly happy to work through the process, whilst others were more sceptical. He said there still questions to be asked around the process. Councillor Bremner however, fully supported an academy and said that aspirations of the public in reaction to the academy had been immense. A survey carried out in his ward indicated 75% in favour and only 10% against an academy.

Councillor Sands thanked the Transformation team for their tremendous work.

Councillor Morpew moved and Councillor Sands seconded to the closure in principle of Earlham High School.

**RESOLVED** with 7 members voting in favour and 1 member against to:-

- (1) agree to the closure in principle on the basis of the information available so far and recommend future proposals be taken forward in the 'Campus Norwich' framework to allow any new proposal including an academy be developed taking account of the issues raised at Scrutiny Committee and the views of parents, stakeholders and the community in order to help shape the future provision in that area of the city schools;
- (2) delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to finalise a response by the revised deadline of 20 February 2009.

### **13. FUTURE REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS OF THE LEGI PROGRAMME TO EXECUTIVE**

The Head of Economic Development presented the report and updated members on the achievements of this programme.

The Chair said the Government were pleased how Norwich were spending the funding working and supporting people setting up businesses.

Councillor Morrey thanked the Head of Economic Development and her team for how they had run the LEGI programme.

**RESOLVED** to confirm that the Norwich LEGI Programme is an important programme for the residents and businesses of Norwich in a period of recession and as such ask for receive regular six monthly reports on progress.

### **14. JOINT CORE STRATEGY**

(The Chair agreed to take this item as urgent business to allow a tight consultation deadline be met.)

The Head of Planning and Regeneration Services presented the report.

Councillor Morrey made reference to the concerns of the Local Development Framework Working Party.

Councillor Stephenson raised concerns at the scale of the development and if it takes place should not take up more land than need to. The housing should be built as condense as possible.

Councillor Lubbock was assured that her concerns that the Long Stratton by pass was fully funded by the proposed development at Long Stratton would be passed to the Greater Norwich Development Partnership.

**RESOLVED** to delegate authority to the Director Regeneration and Development, in consultation with the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development, to endorse changes to the favoured option of the Joint Core Strategy and other consequential changes to public consultation documents following the meeting of the Greater Norwich Development Partnership meeting on 19 February 2009.

CHAIR