

NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE
RESOURCES BOARD**

7 September 2009

Present: Councillor Smith in the Chair

Councillors Bowden, N Dirveiks, Forwood, Johnston, Jenkins, Moore, Smitten and Winter.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lea, Fowler, Payne and Y Stanley.

Councillors M Moss and Phillips were also in attendance.

27 Declarations of Personal or Prejudicial Interests

Any personal interests arising from the membership of various Parish Councils of Councillors Smitten (Polesworth) and Moore (Baddesley Ensor) were deemed to be declared at the meeting.

28 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of the Board held on 1 June and 6 July 2009, copies having previously been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

29 Corporate Counter Fraud Update

The Director of Resources provided the Board with an update on the progress of the Council's Corporate Counter Fraud activity against that outlined in the current Council Policy and Strategy.

Resolved:

That the report be noted and a 30 minute training session to raise awareness among Members be arranged prior to a future Board meeting.

30 Progress Report on Achievement of Corporate Plan and Performance Indicator Targets April 2009 – June 2009

The Chief Executive and Director of Resources informed Members of the actual performance and achievement against the Corporate Plan and Performance Indicator targets relevant to the Resources Board for the first quarter April 2009 to June 2009.

Resolved:

That the actual performance and achievement against the Corporate Plan and Performance Indicator targets relevant to the Resources Board for the first quarter April 2009 to June 2009 be noted.

31 **Local Government Pension Scheme**

The Director of Resources outlined details of a consultation paper issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) relating to the Local Government Pension Scheme. Members were invited to endorse a proposed response.

Resolved:

That the proposed response to the consultation paper, attached as Appendix B to the report of the Director of Resources, be endorsed.

32 **Consultation on Reforming Council Housing Finance**

The Director of Resources outlined details of a consultation paper produced by the Government on reforming Council Housing finance.

Resolved:

a That the proposals for reforming Council Housing Finance be noted; and

b That the Board's comments be included in a response to the consultation paper, when it is submitted to the Board for approval at its meeting on 26 October 2009.

33 **Diversion of Footpaths Application Charge**

The Head of Development Control sought approval for the introduction of a fee to be submitted with applications made to the Council under Planning legislation for the diversion of public footpaths.

Resolved:

That the fee, set out in the report of the Head of Development Control, in connection with applications for public footpath diversions or extinguishment of such paths, be agreed.

34 **Building Council Properties**

Following the Resources Board's decision at its meeting on 6 July 2009, to bid for Social Housing Grant to build Council properties, the Assistant Director (Housing) updated Members on the progress made to bring forward potential sites for development.

Resolved:

a That the decision of the Assistant Director (Housing) in consultation with the Chairman of the Resources Board to apply for planning permission for small housing developments on the garage sites at Sycamore Crescent – Arley, Eastlang Road – Fillongley, Bromage Avenue – Kingsbury and George Road – Water Orton, as identified in the appendices attached to the report, be ratified;

- b That the financial implications of the Council building its own properties, as set out in Section 6 of the report of the Assistant Director (Housing) be noted;**
- c That Waterloo Housing Association be engaged as a development agent to work with the Council both prior to and after the bid to the Homes and Communities Agency for Social Housing Grant; and**
- d That the decision of the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Chairman of Resources Board, to approve a budget of £40,000 to cover the costs of the project to date be ratified.**

35 Employing Apprentices in the Housing Division

The Assistant Director (Housing) outlined an opportunity to employ two apprentices in the Housing Division and sought the Board's approval to the apprenticeship scheme.

Resolved:

That the Housing Division employs two apprentices from September 2009 as outlined in the report of the Assistant Director (Housing).

36 Treasury Policy Statement and Out-turn for Quarter 1 2009/10

The Director of Resources detailed the performance of the treasury management function for the first quarter of 2009/10.

Resolved:

- a That the performance of the treasury management function for quarter 1 be noted;**
- b That the benchmarking of current practices be agreed;**
- c That the changes in working practices and Strategy be agreed;**
- d That the changes to the Council's authorised lending list be agreed; and**
- e That a half day training session for Members be arranged on treasury management.**

37 Members' Surgeries

The Assistant Director (Finance and Human Resources) detailed alternative options for advertising Members' surgeries.

Resolved:

- a That the advertising of Members' surgeries in the local press is stopped;**

- b That Members' surgeries continue to be advertised on the Council's website; and**
- c That information relating to Members' surgeries be included in an edition of North Talk.**

38 Provision of Public Toilets in Polesworth

The Assistant Director (Streetscape) updated Members on the current position with regards to provision of public toilets in Polesworth.

Resolved:

- a That the actions and initiatives that have been pursued since the closure of the existing public conveniences be noted;**
- b That the initiative to incorporate a toilet for public use in Polesworth Memorial Hall which had proved unsuccessful be noted; and**
- c That further investigations be carried out on the feasibility of a Community Toilet Scheme being established in Polesworth.**

39 Members' Allowances – Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

The Assistant Director (Finance and Human Resources) gave details of the reassessment by the Independent Remuneration Panel, following the revision of the Scrutiny Boards from two to one Board, and the responsibility of the Chairman of the Board.

Resolved:

- a That the Sixth Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel be noted;**
- b That the Chairman of the Scrutiny Board be paid a Special Responsibility Allowance of £4,934 per annum; and**
- c That the Allowance is backdated to the start of the municipal year.**

40 Capital Programme 2009/10 – Period Ending July 2009

The Assistant Director (Finance and Human Resources) updated Members on the progress of the 2009/10 capital programme in terms of both expenditure and outcomes.

Resolved:

That the progress of the 2009/10 capital programme in terms of both expenditure and outcomes be noted.

41 **internal Audit – Performance for First Quarter 2009-10**

The Director of Resources detailed the progress of the Council's Internal Audit function against the agreed plan of work for the First Quarter 2009/10.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

42 **Housing Revenue Account Budgetary Control Report 2009/2010 Period Ended 31 July 2009**

The Assistant Director (Finance and Human Resources) and the Director of Resources reported on the total Housing Revenue Fund revenue expenditure and income for the period from 1 April to 31 July 2009.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

43 **Consolidated Budgetary Control Report 2009/2010 – Period Ended 31 July 2009**

The Assistant Director (Finance and Human Resources) updated the Board on the total Council General Fund revenue expenditure and income for the period from 1 April to 31 July 2009.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

44 **Budgetary Control Report 2009/2010 Period Ended 31 July 2009**

The Assistant Director (Finance and Human Resources) reported on the revenue expenditure and income for the period from 1 April 2009 to 31 July 2009. The 2009/2010 budget and the actual position for the period, compared with the estimate at that date were detailed, together with an estimate of the out-turn position for services reporting to the Board.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

45 **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

Resolved:

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Schedule 12A to the Act.

46 **Staffing Implications from Previous Restructures / Reviews**

The Assistant Director (Information and Procurement Services) reported on the changes introduced as part of the Senior Management restructure effective November 2008 and the Planning Review in June 2009. The changes had impacted on the roles of three members of staff who, as a result of the reviews moved into Central Services. The changes in the roles resulted in the need to update job descriptions and evaluate the new jobs.

Resolved:

That the job evaluations, and subsequent costs, for the posts of System Support Manager, Information Systems Officer and Local Land Charges Officer be agreed.

47 **Review of Administrative Services**

The Assistant Director (Information and Procurement Services) and Project Officer reported on a review covering Central Services, Support to Management Team and administration staff remaining in Print and Procurement, Revenues and Benefits, Housing, HR, Planning and Policy.

Resolved:

That with effect from 14 September 2009:

- a The support for Management Team be agreed;**
- b The post of Central Services Officer be deleted and the post holder redeployed to the vacant post of Secretary to Director (Resources);**
- c A new post of Senior Central Services Officer be created;**
- d The post of Planning Technical Support Officer be deleted and the post holder redeployed to the new post of Senior Central Services Officer;**
- e The 0.4 and 0.6 part time posts from Central Services (1 FTE) be deleted;**
- f The post of Clerical Assistant (Policy) be moved to Central Services;**
- g The 14 hours of work from Revenues and Benefits be absorbed within Central Services from November 2009 and the existing temporary post be deleted;**
- h The Information and Procurement Services Division be renamed to Corporate Services; and**
- i Any other administrative posts be kept under review as staffing changes permit.**

48 **Procurement Process Improvements and Staffing**

The Assistant Director (Information and Procurement Services) proposed a number of improvements to the Council's Procurement processes.

Resolved:

- a **The proposed changes to the grade of the Procurement Officer posts and the responsibilities described within the Job Description appended to the report of the Assistant Director (Information and Procurement Services) be agreed;**
- b **That the proposals for funding the grade change be approved; and**
- c **That the improvements to procurement be agreed.**

49 **Voice Telecommunications Contract Extension**

The Assistant Director (Information and Procurement Services) sought approval for the extension of the contract with Global Crossing for the provision of telephone lines and call charges for twelve months.

Resolved:

That the twelve month extension to the telephony contract with Global Crossing be approved.

50 **The Arcade, Atherstone**

The Assistant Director (Streetscape) provided background information on The Arcade, Atherstone and Members were invited to consider further actions.

Resolved:

- a **The contents of the report be noted; and**
- b **That a further report be brought back to the Board setting out options for the future of The Arcade, Atherstone following completion of market testing.**

51 **Irrecoverable Housing and Local Taxation Debts**

The Assistant Director (Revenues and Benefits) detailed the amounts recommended for write-off, in accordance with the write-off policy agreed by the former Finance Sub-Committee in September 2000.

Resolved:

- a **That the write-off of 4 balances over £1,250 totalling £13,716.34 in respect of unpaid Non Domestic Rates be approved;**

- b** That the write-off of 2 balances over £1,250 totalling £3,779.45 in respect of unreclaimed overpaid Housing Benefit be approved;
- c** That the write-off of 1 balance over £1,250 totalling £1,503.08 in respect of former tenant rent arrears be approved;
- d** That the write-off of 24 balances under £1,250 totalling £6,520.09 in respect of unpaid Council Tax be noted;
- e** That the write-off of 13 balances under £1,250 totalling £3,110.51 in respect of unpaid Non Domestic Rates be noted;
- f** That the write-off of 53 balances under £1,250 totalling £7,820.89 in respect of unreclaimed Housing Benefit Overpayments be noted;
- g** That the write-off of 35 balances under £1,250 totalling £1,839.11 in respect of former tenant rent arrears be noted;
- h** That the write off of 1 balance under £1,250 totalling £4.82 in respect of mortgage arrears be noted;
- i** That the write-back of 9 balances totalling £3,666.59 in respect of overpaid Council Tax be noted;
- j** That the write-back of 7 balances totalling £10,623.20 in respect of overpaid Non Domestic Rates be noted; and
- k** That the write-back of 6 balances totalling £55.42 in respect of mortgage credits.

L Smith
Chairman