

Record of Decision by Executive

Monday, 3 March 2014

Portfolio	Health and Housing
Subject:	Housing Allocations Policy
Report of:	Director of Community
Strategy/Policy:	Housing Strategy
Corporate Objectives:	A Balanced Housing Market

Purpose:

This report seeks the Executive's approval to implement amendments to the Housing Allocations Policy.

The Council's new Housing Allocations Policy went live on 1st May 2013.

The Member Officer Working Group which had overseen the development of this policy was reconvened in October 2013 to evaluate the impact of the new policy and consider the need for any changes.

The findings and proposed changes were reported to the Health and Housing Policy Development and Review Panel in November 2013, prior to being issued for public consultation.

This report summarises the findings of the Member Officer Working Group, and considers the issues raised through the formal consultation.

Options Considered:

The comments of the depute were taken into account in determining this item.

At the invitation of the Executive Leader, Councillor P J Davies addressed the Executive on this item.

Following a debate on the item, it was proposed that the Housing Allocations Policy be amended to ensure that current tenants be treated in the same way as new and existing applicants for housing.

As recommendation.

Decision:

RESOLVED that the Executive approves the amendments to the Housing Allocations Policy, as appended to the report, for implementation from 1 April 2014, subject to the further amendment of the policy to ensure that couples currently living in Fareham Borough Council bedsit accommodation being allowed to remain on the housing waiting list and considered to be in housing need; and that the policy be reviewed in six months.

Reason:

To ensure that the Housing Allocations Policy reflects changes introduced through Statutory Guidance and rationalises the Housing Waiting List by removing applications that have no prospect of being successful for an offer of accommodation.

Confirmed as a true record:

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Portfolio	Leisure and Community
Subject:	Westbury Manor Museum - Hampshire Solent Cultural Trust Proposals
Report of:	Director of Community
Strategy/Policy:	Community Portfolio
Corporate Objectives:	Strong and Inclusive Communities

Purpose:

To consider the proposals from Hampshire County Council to transfer the management of Westbury Manor Museum to the newly established Hampshire Solent Cultural Trust.

Hampshire County Council, Southampton City Council and Winchester City Council came together in January 2011 to investigate the opportunity for integrating their arts, museums and heritage services.

The proposal going forward is that Hampshire County Council and Winchester City Council come together to create a Hampshire Solent Cultural Trust with the capacity to champion a bold vision and facilitate wider partnership working, while playing its part by delivering quality arts and museum services on behalf of Hampshire and Winchester residents.

There are implications for the Westbury Manor Museum under the new arrangements. Hampshire County Council is seeking agreement from Fareham Borough Council to enter into a 3 year funding agreement and lease for the Westbury Manor Museum. The details of these and other proposed changes are

detailed in the report.

A further proposed outcome is for Hampshire County Council and Fareham Borough Council to develop a long term strategic vision for the integration of cultural facilities in the Borough of Fareham.

Options Considered:

As recommendation.

Decision:

That the Executive approves:

- a) a three year funding agreement between Fareham Borough Council and Hampshire County Council for the provision of the museum service in Westbury Manor from 1 April 2014;
- b) a 10% reduction in the Councils current level of financial contribution to the cost of the service which will result in a payment of £64,530 per annum for the duration of the three year agreement;
- c) that the Council continues loaning the bier hand cart to Hampshire County Council from the formation date of the Trust for not less than 25 years duration so that Hampshire County Council may, in turn, loan this item to the Trust; and
- d) that Hampshire County Council and Fareham Borough Council develop a strategic vision for the integration of cultural facilities in the Borough of Fareham.

Reason:

To agree the proposed arrangements for the provision and management of the museum service at Westbury Manor Museum under the newly formed Hampshire Solent Cultural Trust.

Confirmed as a true record:

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Monday, 3 March 2014

Portfolio

Executive Leader

Subject:	Community Action Fareham Service Level Agreement
Report of:	Director of Community
Strategy/Policy:	Community Engagement Strategy
Corporate Objectives:	Strong and Inclusive Communities

Purpose:

To seek approval to extend the service level agreement (SLA) for a further period of 12 months.

Community Action Fareham (CAF) is the local Council for Voluntary Services (CVS). CAF offers support to a range of community organisations providing services and activities to meet the needs of local residents.

The current Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Community Action Fareham expires on 31 March 2014, having been renewed on a six-monthly basis since September 2013.

This report proposes extending the SLA for a period of 12 months (1 April 2014 – 31 March 2015) as well as a number of measures to define and strengthen the operation of Community Action Fareham.

Options Considered:

The comments of the depute were taken into account in determining this item. As recommendation.

Decision:

RESOLVED that the Executive agrees to:

- a) extend the existing SLA for a further period of twelve months, until 31 March 2015;
- b) a reduction of 2% in the Council's grant to CAF, in line with the reduction implemented by Hampshire County Council;
- c) ring-fence £10,000 of the grant funding for the establishment of an Enabling Fund to respond to emerging community need; and
- d) delegate authority to the Executive Member for Leisure & Community to approve the award of the enabling funding for any initiative brought forward by CAF.

Reason:

Fareham Borough Council recognises the value in supporting and assisting the network of local community and voluntary organisations which exist across the Borough to support local activity. In the current financial climate, the proposals outlined in this report seek to allow support to CAF to continue, enabling them to assist the local community effectively, whilst still being responsive to emerging themes and local need.

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Portfolio	Policy & Resources
Subject:	Business Rate Relief
Report of:	Director of Finance & Resources
Strategy/Policy:	
Corporate Objectives:	

Purpose:

To consider changes to the Council's Business Rate Discretionary Relief Policy.

The Government has introduced a number of measures to assist businesses with the cost of Business Rates.

The measures are designed as a temporary incentive to be delivered via the Council's discretionary relief powers, under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

The Council already has an established policy for granting discretionary rate relief, but the changes requested by Government, will fall outside this policy. This report seeks to vary the local policy in order to incorporate the proposed changes.

The Government will fully reimburse local authorities for the local share of the discretionary relief granted, using a grant under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003.

Options Considered:

As recommendation.

Decision:

RESOLVED that the Executive agrees:

- (a) to vary the Charitable Relief Policy to allow relief to be granted in the specific circumstances detailed in the report; and
- (b) to delegate the award of the discretionary relief, as detailed in the report, to officers in accordance with relevant guidance issued by Government.

Reason:

To offer financial assistance to retail type businesses and to help stimulate the construction of commercial premises.

Confirmed as a true record:

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Portfolio	Policy & Resources
Subject:	Efficiency Savings
Report of:	Chief Executive Officer
Strategy/Policy:	
Corporate Objectives:	

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to outline a number of efficiency savings to be captured during the 2014/15 financial year, enabling the Council to achieve a balanced budget for the following year.

The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy sets out the broad principles on which the management of the Council's finances are based and provides background information regarding the level of resources, the revenue budget and capital programme.

When considering the strategy in October 2013, the Executive recognised a £800,000 gap in the Council's budget for 2015/16 and requested the Chief Executive Officer to prepare and bring forward a range of options to close the budget gap.

Such options have been considered and developed using the following four-part model:-

- *Procurement* - delivering cost savings through improved procurement;
- *Proceeds* - identifying opportunities to maximise income returns;
- *People* - reducing overheads and back office costs; and
- *Priorities* - re-focussing resources on priority services.

This review, to date, has given rise to £777,000 of efficiency proposals which will be taken

forward over the course of the next financial year in readiness for the 2015/16 budget cycle.

As part of this process, a review of the Council's employee structure has been undertaken. As a result of the review it is proposed to delete 7 posts from the establishment, of which 3 are vacant, resulting in annual savings of £391,000 from 2015/16 onwards. These posts would be deleted during 2014 in order that the severance costs of the proposals can largely be contained within the existing establishment budget.

Options Considered:

As recommendation.

Decision:

RESOLVES that the Executive:

- (a) notes the proposed reductions in the staffing establishment, as set out in the report;
- (b) agrees the proposal to meet redundancy costs from existing establishment budgets;
- (c) agrees the savings under the headings "procurement" and "proceeds"; and
- (d) agrees that the confidential Appendix A be no longer treated as exempt information and be open for public inspection.

Reason:

To achieve the necessary savings in the 2014/15 financial year to deliver a balanced budget for the following year and meet the Council's corporate priority to minimise council tax increases.

Confirmed as a true record:

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Monday, 3 March 2014

Portfolio

Public Protection

Subject:

Development of Environmental Health Partnership

Report of:

Director of Regulatory & Democratic Services

Strategy/Policy:

**Corporate
Objectives:**

Purpose:

This report provides members with an update on the work that has been undertaken between Fareham and Gosport Council's in the development of an Environmental Health Partnership and to make recommendations for the formation of a formal partnership where Fareham would be the employing authority of all the staff involved.

At the meeting of the Executive on 10 January 2011 and 4 April 2011 members requested that officers investigate the feasibility of a shared Environmental Health Partnership with Gosport Borough Council. This approach builds on the existing successful partnership working that already exists between the two councils reflected in the very successful Fareham and Gosport Building Control Partnership as well as the Fareham and Gosport CCTV Partnership. Both of these partnerships deliver efficiencies and savings to both councils in the way the service is operated and delivered.

Following the meeting on 4 April 2011 a formal agreement was made with Gosport Borough Council for a shared Head of Environmental Health and both Councils delegated powers to the other to undertake environmental health functions within their respective administrative areas.

Since the Executive meeting Fareham's Head of Environmental Health has been undertaking the role of the shared Head of Environmental Health where each Council meets half the costs. During this time work has been undertaken to identify opportunities to bring the services closer together with the objective of establishing an Environmental Health Partnership to deliver an environmental health service across both boroughs with the benefits that are highlighted in this report.

Options Considered:

As recommendation.

Decision:

RESOLVED that the Executive, subject to a favourable decision by Gosport Borough Council, agrees to:

- a) enter into an agreement with Gosport Borough Council for the delivery of environmental health functions as set out in this report;
- b) agree to the transfer of Gosport's environmental health staff to Fareham under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) Regulations;
- c) deliver the environmental health function to both Councils through the Fareham and Gosport Environmental Health Partnership; and
- d) delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer after consultation with the Executive Leader to enter into such agreements and undertake all ancillary matters as necessary and on such terms as are reasonable.

Reason:

The opportunity to provide a robust and resilient environmental health service at a reduced cost to both Fareham and Gosport Councils.

Confirmed as a true record:

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Monday, 3 March 2014

Portfolio	Policy & Resources
Subject:	Irrecoverable Debts
Report of:	Director of Finance & Resources
Strategy/Policy:	
Corporate Objectives:	

Purpose:

The report proposes the approval of the write off of certain debts.

Appendix A to the report lists the debts that are considered irrecoverable. Every effort has been made to recover the debts and there is no further legal action that can be taken, where it is applicable. Some housing benefit debts may be recommended for write off where it is believed that the debt should not be recovered due to the circumstances applicable to that case.

Glossary of Terms Used

Bankruptcy/Liquidations/Administration

Once a person has been declared bankrupt or a company is in liquidation, legislation prevents the Council from taking any further action to recover the debt. Any debt due to the Council is non-preferential and therefore the likelihood of receiving a dividend is very low.

Ceased Trading or Company Dissolved

This is where a company is no longer trading but the assets of the company (or the individual) are insufficient to justify the cost of placing the company in liquidation. A company which has ceased trading may be dissolved.

No Trace

Every effort has been made to trace the debtor, including the use of tracing agents where it

is effective to do so.

Options Considered:

As recommendation.

Decision:

RESOLVED that the debts listed in Appendix A to the report, be written off as irrecoverable.

Reason:

There is no further legal action that can be taken to collect the debt or that exceptional circumstances apply that justify the non-collection of the debt.

Confirmed as a true record:

Monday, 3 March 2014