

Extract from the minutes of Cabinet

Tuesday, 16th November, 2010

6.00 - 6.42 pm

Attendees	
Councillors:	Colin Hay (Cabinet Member Corporate Services), Steve Jordan (Leader of the Council), Andrew McKinlay (Cabinet Member Sport and Culture), John Rawson (Cabinet Member Built Environment), Klara Sudbury (Cabinet Member Housing and Safety), John Webster (Cabinet Member Finance and Community Development) and Roger Whyborn (Cabinet Member Sustainability)

Minutes

1. **STRATEGIC COMMISSIONING**

The Leader invited the Chief Executive to introduce his report. The Leader explained that the report had been prepared for the Staff and Support Services Committee and was due to go to Council in December for a final decision. In view of the importance of the issue he had requested that it was considered by Cabinet to enable them to give their opinion.

The Chief Executive explained how Strategic Commissioning provided a pragmatic response to meet the challenges both nationally and locally. These included the Government initiatives regarding the Big Society and Community Based Budgeting as well as budgetary pressures at a local level, including the need to review discretionary services. The council had already had some good success in joining up with others to deliver shared services and this formed a good basis for Strategic Commissioning going forward.

His report outlined how Strategic Commissioning would provide a framework for future strategy, based on what would work, and how it would provide better outcomes to local people. The new structure would enable strategic choices to be made over the next few years. Strong political leadership would be very important, as would effective scrutiny so it was essential to get members fully engaged. He was aware that some members objected to the title of 'Strategic Commissioning' and in response he would encourage them to understand the process rather than the name.

He was aware that several members had expressed concern about the organisation's ability to cope with the reduced capacity if the senior management structure was reduced too quickly. To address this concern, he referred to the amendment which had been circulated at the start of the meeting. This recommended that a one-off resource of £80,000 would be made available to fill any capacity gaps. This sum had originally been allocated to the sourcing strategy work streams but had not been spent.

In response to a question from a member, the Chief Executive explained how the council would cope if residents had opposing views regarding how services should be delivered. He suggested that in this situation it would be necessary to

take a step back and first clarify the objectives before trying to bring agencies together to reach a common understanding.

Several members of Cabinet spoke on the proposals and covered the following points.

- A member commended Strategic Commissioning as a systematic approach to determine how services should be delivered and achieved cost savings at the same time. This made good sense regardless of the budget situation.
- Member input would be key, particularly in helping to provide the public view on service delivery.
- The additional funding would provide extra capacity and give the project the best possible start.
- Strategic Commissioning was a difficult concept to sell and this could be facilitated by giving examples where options for service delivery had been considered recently, e.g. café provision in the parks.
- It would be important to emphasise that Strategic Commissioning was not another word for privatisation and there were no assumed outcomes. The approach would allow service requirements to be analysed and decisions made on how best to satisfy those requirements in the current economic climate. High-quality services would be maintained.
- The decision to set up a new resources division was welcomed and would provide significant savings and more cost-effective management.
- It was acknowledged that some Members were not happy with the term “strategic commissioning” and it was important that they understood the process. When a service was being reviewed, clearly the Cabinet Member would have a role but it was important that the involvement of other members in the process was clearly defined.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. The Chief Executive’s proposals for a Strategic Commissioning Council and supporting new Council structure as set out in this report and in Appendices A and B be endorsed**
- 2. It be recommended that Council approves the Chief Executive’s proposals for a Strategic Commissioning Council and supporting new Council structure as set out in this report and in Appendices A and B**
- 3. It be recommended that Council set aside a 'one off' resource of £80,000, funded from a vehement of the streams, to support the significant business change required during 2011/12 in order to deliver some of the councils key projects including GO. unspent allocation to fund sourcing strategy work**