



DECISIONS

Committee:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	Monday, 18 December 2006

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This document lists the decisions that have been taken by the Cabinet held on Monday, 18 December 2006, which require publication in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000. The list specifies those decisions, which are eligible for call-in and the date by which they must be called-in. The wording used does not necessarily reflect the actual wording that will appear in the minutes.

If you have any queries about any matters referred to in this decision sheet please contact:

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Call –in procedure

If you wish to call-in any of the decisions taken at this meeting you should complete the call-in form and return it to the proper officer before the expiry of five working days following the publication date. You should include reference to the Item title. Further background to decisions can be found by viewing the agenda document for this meeting at: www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/local_democracy

Agenda item:

7. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT CABINET COMMITTEE

Decision:

(7.1) Minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2006

**(a) Internal Audit – Monitoring Report June/September 2006
and Work Programme October/December 2006**

- (1) That the reports issued and significant findings between July and September 2006 be noted;
- (2) That the Audit follow-up status report be noted;
- (3) That the Work Plan for October to December 2006 be noted;
and

(4) That the 2006/07 Audit Plan status report be noted;

(b) Audit and Governance Committee – Proposal and Draft Constitution

(5) That a report be submitted to the Council proposing the establishment of an Audit and Governance Committee based upon the model described in the report and appendix, subject to members of the new Committee not also being members of the Cabinet, any Cabinet Committee or any Panel appointed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with responsibility for reviewing the Council's finances or financial procedures; and

(c) Fees and Charges – 2007/08

(6) That a general 3.5% increase in fees and charges for 2007/08 be agreed;

(7) That, in order to generate an additional £90,000 in revenue, the following car parking charges be agreed:

(a) for short-stay, combined and on-street car parks:

(i) the fee for up to 30 minutes remain at 10p;

(ii) the fee for up to one hour be increased from 60p to 65p;

and

(iii) the fee for up to two hours be increased from £1.20 to £1.30;

(b) in addition for short-stay car parks:

(i) the fee for up to three hours be increased from £2.50 to £2.60; and

(ii) the fee for over three hours be increased from £8.00 to £9.00;

(c) in addition for combined and long-stay car parks:

(i) the fee for up to two hours be increased from £1.20 to £1.30; and

(ii) the fee for over two hours be increased from £2.50 to £2.60; and

(8) That the increased car parking charges be applied from 1 April 2007.

(7.2) Minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2006

(a) Draft General Fund Budget Summary (including CSB and DDF lists)

(9) That the following previously agreed budget guidelines be confirmed:

(a) the ceiling for CSB net expenditure be no more than £17million, including net growth;

(b) balances continue to be aligned to the Council's net budget requirement and be allowed to fall no lower than 25% of the net budget requirement;

(c) the District Council Tax be increased by no more than the rate of increase in the Retail Price Index, currently 3.5%;

(10) That the following be agreed in relation to CSB growth items for 2007/08:

(a) Customer Services Transformation Programme - £99,000 – deleted;

(b) Emergency Planning Officer - £19,000 – deleted;

(c) Elections – additional costs of new arrangements - £14,000 – delete as being met from existing capital provision;

(d) Elections – running costs for new signature comparison software - £3,000 – included in the draft list of CSB growth items;

(e) Electoral registration - £6,000 – supplementary estimate to be sought for 2006/07 and carried forward;

(f) Routine Building Maintenance Programme - £4,000 – included in the draft list of CSB growth items;

(g) Audit and Governance Committee – £4,000 – running costs, included in the draft list of CSB growth items, but increased costs to be absorbed within existing budgets;

(h) Councillors legal expenses cover - £2,000 – deleted;

(i) Environmental Health Practitioner - £41,000 – included in the draft list of CSB growth items;

(j) Elections management software - £3,000 – deleted, duplication of (d) above; and

(k) Finders Fee Scheme - £5,000 – included in draft list of CSB growth items;

(11) That the following be agreed in relation to DDF growth items for 2007/08:

(a) Customer Services Transformation Programme - £442,000 – deleted;

- (b) Comfort Cooling - £100,000 – deleted;
- (c) Civic Offices Maintenance - £23,000 – included in draft list of DDF growth items;
- (d) Upgrade to Estates Management System - £8,000 – to receive further consideration;
- (e) Audit and Governance Committee member training - £2,000 – to receive further consideration; and
- (f) Consultancy Private Sector Assistance Policy - £10,000 – included in draft list of DDF growth items;

(12) That the following be agreed in relation to Capital growth items for 2007/08:

- (a) Civic Offices Maintenance - £56,000 – included in draft list of Capital growth items;
- (b) Printing Plate Maker - £35,000 – deleted; and
- (c) Solar Water Heating - £42,000 – deleted; and

(13) That, as part of the budget setting process, meetings be held between the Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services Portfolio Holder, the Leader of the Council and Heads of Service to review further the amended list of CSB growth items and existing CSB expenditure in order to secure a reduction in the total CSB net expenditure for 2007/08 to no more than £17million and further review the list of DDF items.

8. CIVIC CEREMONIAL REVIEW

Decision:

That the following recommendations of the Civic Ceremonial Review Subgroup of the Constitutional Affairs Standing Scrutiny Panel be adopted:

- (a) That the following revenue CSB growth bids for 2007/08 be made subject to consideration of the Council's budgets later in the municipal year:
 - (i) An increase of £2,500 per annum in the budget provision for hiring of civic transport (Vehicle Leasing budget) for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council; and
 - (ii) An additional sum of £5,000 (including on-costs) to provide one further day of officer support per week to the Chairman of Council;
- (b) That, with effect from the 2007/08 municipal year, £2,500 be

retained by the Council out of the Chairman's Allowance and transferred to the Councils existing budget for Civic Hospitality;

(c) That the new Safe Custody Guidelines for the Civic Regalia be adopted and issued each year to the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council and their spouses/partners;

(d) That the current policy for awards based upon length of service or positions held by Councillors be discontinued and replaced by the following revised awards policy:

(i) Those serving as a Councillor for ten years or more – a presentation gift to the value of £50;

(ii) Those serving as a Councillor for fifteen years or more – a presentation gift to the value of £75; and

(iii) Those serving as a Councillor for twenty years or more – a presentation gift to the value of £100; and

(e) That a range of gifts be selected by the Head of Research and Democratic Services from time to time in consultation with the Chairman of the Council.

9. XPRESS ELECTIONS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM - POSTAL VOTE PERSONAL IDENTIFIERS

Decision:

(1) That approval be given to the purchase of the Postal Vote Personal Identifiers upgrade to the Xpress Electoral Register and Election Management IT system;

(2) That approval be given under Contract Standing Order C1(4) to the waiving of Contract Standing Order C4(2) which requires two quotations to be obtained for a contract of this value on the grounds that Xpress is the currently contracted supplier of the elections software and there would be no genuine competition;

(3) That the capital cost of the software upgrade (£11,400) and provision of two scanners (£4,000) be funded from the General Information Technology Fund allocation for software upgrades for the current financial year; and

(4) That the revenue costs of the software upgrade and the two scanners (£2,500 per annum) be funded by means of a CSB growth bid for 2007/8.

10. COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT - IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Decision:

(1) That those actions contained within the Council's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) Improvement Plan that have been achieved, be formally signed-off as having been completed;

(2) That those outstanding service related actions within the CPA Improvement Plan be transferred to the Best Value Performance Plan, the relevant Business Plan, or identified for action by the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s) for completion; and

(3) That, with effect from January 2007, progress towards the achievement of those outstanding corporate actions within the CPA Improvement Plan be monitored on a quarterly basis by the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel.

11. CODE OF CONDUCT - LEGAL EXPENSES COVER FOR COUNCILLORS

Decision:

That the provision of legal expenses cover for Councillors who are the subject of complaints regarding alleged breaches of the Council's Code of Conduct provided by Zurich Municipal be deferred pending a further report clarifying:

- (a) the date on which the timescale for claims commences;
- (b) how and when costs might be recovered and from whom;
- (c) whether the insurers are prepared to grant additional cover to avoid the recovery of costs; and
- (d) the exclusion from the policy of any questions relating to written or verbal remarks against the Councillors concerned.

12. REVIEW OF THE HOUSING ALLOCATIONS SCHEME

Decision:

That, following detailed consideration by the Housing Scrutiny Panel, and consultations with the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation, Parish and Town Councils and Registered Social Landlord Partners, the proposed changes to the Housing Allocations Scheme be agreed as follows:-

- (a) The changes to the general information on the Allocations Scheme as set out at Appendix 1 to these minutes, to take effect from 1 April 2007;
- (b) The changes to the Allocations Scheme in respect of the priority bandings, as set out in Appendix 2 to these minutes, to take effect from 1 April 2007;

(c) The changes to the general information on the Allocations Scheme, which are needed to meet the requirements of the Choice Based Lettings Scheme, as set out in Appendix 3 of these minutes, to take effect from its implementation;

(d) The changes to the Allocations Scheme in respect of the priority bandings, which are needed to meet the requirements of the Choice Based Lettings Scheme, as set out in Appendix 4 of these minutes, to take effect from the implementation date of the Choice Based Lettings Scheme; and

(e) That, six months after the implementation of the Choice Based Lettings Scheme, the Allocations Scheme be reviewed by the Cabinet.

13. PLANNED BUILDING MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME - NON HRA OPERATIONAL BUILDINGS

Decision:

(1) That, with an estimated cost of £118,000, the 2007/2008 programme of works be approved, representing year 1 of the 2007/12 five-year Planned Maintenance Programme for the Council's non-Housing Revenue Account operational and commercial/industrial property assets; and

(2) That, a CSB growth bid in the sum of £4,000 be made for 2007/08 with any further expenditure subject to savings identified in negotiations with Heads of Service.

14. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY

Decision:

(1) That the Private Sector Housing and the Empty Property Strategies be adopted but their full implementation be delayed pending:

(a) a review of available resources; and

(b) the views of the Housing Scrutiny Panel on the detailed Housing Assistance policy;

(2) That to facilitate a move away from grant aided assistance towards a system of loans or equity management for the repair and improvement of private sector dwellings, a DDF growth bid in the sum of £10,000 be made for 2007/08 for the appointment of a specialist consultant to prepare a revised private sector housing assistance policy;

(3) That in order to utilise the additional Go-East funding for Decent Homes the following forms of financial assistance, as set out in the Private Sector Housing Strategy, be implemented:

- (a) Decent Homes Assistance to replace the existing Renovation Grant;
- (b) Small Works Assistance to replace the existing Homes Repair Assistance; and
- (c) Thermal Comfort Grants;
- (4) That the capital allocation for mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants be retained at £500,000 per annum;
- (5) That a CSB growth bid in the sum of £5,000 be made for 2007/08 to fund the empty homes 'Finders Fee Scheme'; and
- (6) That, in order to implement the interim grants regime and the Empty Property Strategy, the establishment be increased by 1 FTE Environmental Health Practitioner at a cost of £41,314 per annum and that a CSB growth bid for 2007/8 be made.

15. EVALUATION OF RECRUITMENT & RETENTION AND MANAGING ABSENCE STRATEGIES

Decision:

- (1) That the progress made with the implementation of the Council's Recruitment and Retention Strategy and Managing Absence Strategy be noted;
- (2) That, in terms of future Human Resources activity and focus, the current recruitment and retention initiatives be continued but that attention be refocused on the Council's increasing sickness absence levels;
- (3) That, in the light of the success of the scheme and the age discrimination legislation now in force, the provision of health checks to staff at or over the age of 40 be extended to all staff at a cost of approximately £5,000 per year from the Recruitment and Retention Budget;
- (4) That, as a means of improving sickness levels across the Council and supporting employees with ill health, £35,000 be allocated from the Recruitment and Retention Budget for the employment of an Human Resources Officer on a one year fixed-term contract to work with managers on the management of individual absence cases;
- (5) That the estimated £50,000 DDF/CSB savings from the Recruitment and Retention Budget for 2006/07 be noted; and
- (6) That, subject to a future report, a proportion of the unspent Recruitment and Retention Budget be diverted to the further development of the Council's Managing Absence Policy including initiatives such as employee health and well-being.

16. CONCESSIONARY FARES

Decision:

(1) That the Council's continued participation in both the Essex Countywide and the Transport for London schemes in 2007/08 be agreed;

(2) That the Head of Finance be given delegated authority to agree the final scheme documents, and the Constitution be amended accordingly; and

(3) That, in view of the latest projections for 2006/07, a revenue DDF saving in the sum of £100,000 and a revenue CSB saving in the sum of £100,000 be noted.

17. ENERGY COSTS AND ENERGY REDUCTION PROPOSAL

Decision:

(1) That the anticipated increase in energy costs be noted;

(2) That, in order to meet the anticipated increase in gas costs, a revenue CSB growth bid in the sum of £59,000 and Housing Revenue Account CSB growth bid in the sum of £139,000 be made for 2007/08;

(3) That, in order to meet the anticipated increase in energy costs for the current financial year, a revenue CSB Supplementary Estimate in the sum of £12,000 and a Housing Revenue Account CSB Supplementary Estimate in the sum of £67,000 be recommended to the Council for approval.

18. LEISURE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT

Decision:

(1) That, in compliance with European Union regulations, the action taken to advertise the Award of the Council's Leisure Management Contract in the European Journal be noted; and

(2) That, in accordance with the District Auditors recommendations, Contract Standing Order C(19) be waived with respect to the Leisure Management Contract.

19. CORPORATE PHOTOCOPIER CONTRACT

Decision:

(1) That, in accordance with Contract Standing Order C1(4), approval be given to waive contract standing orders in relation to the normal procedure for inviting tenders for a contract with a value

exceeding £50,000.

(2) That, following a competitive quotation process, a contract be awarded to NRG Gestetner Ltd in the estimated sum of £53,628 for the provision of a corporate photocopier contract for a three year period from 1 March 2007, representing a CSB saving of £5,243.

20. ACCEPTANCE OF TENDER - 48-49 JUBILEE COURT, WALTHAM ABBEY

Decision:

That, subject to tender analysis and being the lowest tender received, Titan Refurbishments Limited be awarded the contract for the conversion of the two former 3-bedroom Scheme Manager's houses into 4 self contained one bedroom sheltered flats at Jubilee Court in Waltham Abbey in the sum of £118,476.

21. WASTE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT - APPOINTMENT OF INDECON

Decision:

(1) That, in order to assist the Council with contract modelling and the production of the contract specification, Indecon Limited be appointed as specialist contractors; and

(2) That, in order to appoint Indecon Limited, the requirement of Contract Standing Order C4 (2) to seek a minimum of three quotations be waived.

22. BUDGET PROVISION 2007/08 - EPPING FOREST CARELINE

Decision:

(1) That a one-off sum of £56,000 be included in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2007/2008 for:

- (a) the replacement of dispersed alarm equipment; and
- (b) the calls recording facility within the Careline Control Centre;

(2) That, in order to fund purchases of replacement dispersed alarm systems in the future, an additional provision of £14,000 per annum be included in the budget from 2008/2009; and

(3) That, in order for the Council to continue to receive the benefits of having a sole supplier for the Careline equipment:

- (a) Contract Standing Order C6 be waived; and
- (b) negotiations take place in accordance with Contract Standing Order C10.

23. BROADWAY TOWN CENTRE ENHANCEMENT

Decision:

- (1) That the projected estimated overspend on the Broadway Town Centre Enhancement Scheme be noted;
- (2) That in order to save an estimated £228,500, the scope of the scheme be reduced by the removal of the following options:
 - (a) the additional granite paving; and
 - (b) the central wind vane feature;
- (3) That the Capital Contingency Fund be utilised to fund any remaining capital shortfall; and
- (4) That a report be made to the Council accordingly.

24. NEW PARKING ENFORCEMENT CONTRACT

Decision:

- (1) That the British Parking Association contract be used as the basis for the new contract;
- (2) That the contract assessment be undertaken on the basis of 40% price and 60% quality;
- (3) That Essex County Council be approached with a view to them enabling this Council to commission remedial works on yellow lines and associated signage;
- (4) That the outcome of the consultation exercise be noted and the specification be drawn so as to include reference to the key findings;
- (5) That a requirement for the provision of a 'Parking Shop' be included in the contract specification; and
- (6) That, in accordance with the Traffic Management Act 2004, the process for dealing with initial challenges to penalty charge notices be undertaken by the Council and that the establishment be increased by one full time equivalent post to resource this change.

25. CORPORATE PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2007-2009

Decision:

That the Corporate Procurement Strategy for the period 2007-09 be agreed.

