

59. DEPOT FACILITIES & FLEET OPERATIONS

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support & ICT Services presented a report regarding the current position of the Council's Depot Facilities and Fleet Operations. The Cabinet were reminded that it had made an in principle decision to close the Fleet Operations section in January 2005, due to the declining number of fleet vehicles and corresponding increasing internal recharges. An Internal Audit report in December 2006 had also questioned the long-term financial viability of the section, despite increasing income from external Ministry of Transport (MOT) inspection work.

The Portfolio Holder stated that there was a clear need to review the future of all three of the Council's depots to ensure that the operational needs of the Council were met whilst also achieving best value if any assets were disposed of. Planning permission had already been obtained for the Langston Road site and negotiations had begun with Waltham Abbey Town Council over the future of the Town Mead Depot. The number of external MOT inspections performed by the Fleet Operations section had continued to increase significantly, which reduced the internal recharges for the maintenance of fleet vehicles. In addition, a tender exercise for the future maintenance of the fleet vehicles would have to be undertaken prior to the closure of Fleet Operations. As a result, Officers felt that there would be no benefit in closing Fleet Operations prior to the review of the Council's depots, and a further detailed report on the current financial situation of Fleet Operations should be submitted for the consideration of the Cabinet.

Decision:

- (1) That, in accordance with the Corporate Objectives for 2008/09, the outcome of a strategic review of the Council's depot facilities be awaited before implementing the previous in principle decision to close Fleet Operations, subject to recommendation (2) below.
- (2) That a detailed report on the current financial situation of Fleet Operations be submitted to Cabinet in advance of the report dealing with the strategic review of the depots.

Reasons for Decision:

To ensure that the Cabinet had fully appraised the strategic value of all three depot sites to enable it to make informed decisions as to their future, consistent with the corporate objectives the Council had set for 2008/09 in the Best Value Performance Plan and the Council's Asset Management Plan concerning the use of resources.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

To consider each depot in isolation. However this would not necessarily lead to the best overall solution for the Council and therefore might not reflect best value or most effective use of resources.

