

PROPOSED MERGER OF POLICY & STRATEGY AND FINANCE & SUPPORT PORTFOLIOS

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Panel will be aware that Cllr Colin Wise has resigned his position as Finance & Support Portfolio Holder. The Leader of the Council proposes not to fill this position but to merge the work of the Finance & Support portfolio with that of his own portfolio for Policy & Strategy.
- 1.2 The Council's constitution provides that the Council must agree the number and content of portfolios. At present there are eight – the specific service responsibilities assigned to the Finance & Support and Policy & Strategy portfolios are attached at Appendix 1. The Leader makes appointments to each portfolio. The constitution also provides that the Council must agree any changes to the constitution, after taking into account a recommendation from the Cabinet and the views of any Review Panel or Committee affected by the amendment.

2. ISSUES FOR THE PANEL

- 2.1 The Corporate Overview Panel has particular responsibility for the overview and scrutiny functions relating to both the Policy & Strategy and Finance & Support portfolios. The Panel's responsibilities would not alter as a result of the proposal. The effect would be that it would have responsibility for the overview and scrutiny functions for one, rather than two, portfolio holders.
- 2.2 The Panel is asked to express its views on the proposed merger of the two portfolios, for consideration by the Cabinet on 5 April and the Council on 24 April.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. Merger of the two portfolios would mean a saving of the Finance & Support Portfolio Holder's special responsibility allowance which, with effect from 1 April 2006, will be £8,648 per year. There are also likely to be savings in travel allowances as there are a number of meetings and briefings currently attended by both the Finance & Support portfolio and the Leader. These savings are not likely to be significant.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5. COMMENTS FROM CORPORATE OVERVIEW PANEL

The Panel supported the merger of the two Portfolios.

6. RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 The Cabinet is asked to express a view on the proposed merger of the Finance & Support and Policy & Strategy Portfolios.

Further information:

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Background Papers:

Published documents

APPENDIX 1

PORTFOLIO HOLDER – POLICY AND STRATEGY (LEADER)

SPECIFIC SERVICES RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Corporate and Community Plans
 - i. Ensuring plans are prepared, published, implemented and reviewed involving partners and other stakeholders as appropriate;
 - ii. Keeping under regular review the processes adopted to achieve the above.

2. Best Value
 - i. Implementation, monitoring and development of a corporate approach to fundamental service reviews;
 - ii. Identification of the programme of service related and cross cutting reviews;
 - iii. Implementation, monitoring and review of an ongoing programme of continuous improvement across all the Council's services;
 - iv. Ensuring the Council's Best Value Performance Plan is published in accordance with statute.

3. Political and Management Structures
 - i. Adoption and review of the Constitution;
 - ii. Implementation of changes of Officer structures to provide adequate support to all Members of the Council.

4. Financial Strategy
 - i. Determine the Council's overall financial strategy and budget targets.
 - ii. Ensure effective internal audit arrangements are maintained.

5. Public Relations
 - i. Building relationships with other organisations;
 - ii. Regularly reviewing the corporate communications strategy;
 - iii. Ensuring effective internal communication.

6. Human Resources Strategy
 - i. Ensuring compliance with all employment legislation (except health and safety legislation);
 - ii. Leading negotiations on revisions to pay and other employee terms and conditions;
 - iii. Monitoring performance indicators and trends relating to employment (which comprises pay and reward; recruitment; employee relations and communications; organisational development; training and development; health and absence; safety; and equal opportunities).

7. Other Corporate Matters
Any other matters of a corporate nature.

PORTFOLIO HOLDER – FINANCE AND SUPPORT

SPECIFIC SERVICES RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Information and Communications Technology
 - i. Electronic Governance
 - ii. ICT Security Policy
 - iii. Evaluation of ICT initiatives
 - iv. Maintenance of ICT infrastructure

2. Asset Management - Land and Buildings
Strategy for:-
 - Acquisition
 - Disposal
 - Ownership
 - Management
 - Insurance and Risk Management

3. Commercial Services
 - i. Reviewing business opportunities;
 - ii. Determining tender strategies;
 - iii. Performance monitoring of business viability.

4. Capital and Revenue Budgets
 - i. Ensuring the adoption of financial strategies for the short, medium and long term financial health of the Authority;
 - ii. Making proposals for the overall level of the Council's expenditure and income;
 - iii. Implementing financial monitoring and forecasting;
 - iv. Ensuring compliance with the Council's approved budgets;

5. Council Tax and Benefits (incl. Housing)

6. Service Specific Grants (including Citizens' Advice Bureaux and Community First)

7. National Non-Domestic Rates and Discretionary Non-domestic rate relief

To determine the criteria to be applied in respect of applications for discretionary non-domestic rate relief and to determine any applications for such rate relief.

8. Central Support Services including
 - i. Accountancy
 - ii. Information Services
 - iii. Exchequer Functions (Payroll, Payments, Cashiers, Debtors)
 - iv. Legal and Democratic Services
 - v. Chief Executive's Administration

9. Employee and Civic Catering.