

PROPOSED FINANCE & EFFICIENCY PORTFOLIO**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Cabinet will recall that, following the resignation of Cllr Colin Wise from his position as portfolio holder for Finance & Support, the Council on 24 April 2006 agreed that the responsibilities attached to that portfolio be amalgamated with those of the Leader of the Council, into a renamed Policy & Resources Portfolio.
- 1.2 The Leader of the Council now recommends the establishment of a new "Finance & Efficiency" portfolio, with changes to the Policy & Resources portfolio. This report sets out the proposals.

2. PROCEDURAL ISSUES

- 2.1 The Council's constitution provides that the Council must agree the number and content of portfolios. At present there are seven – the proposal for the new Finance & Efficiency Portfolio will bring the total to eight. 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 change.
- 2.2 The Corporate Overview Panel has particular responsibility for the overview and scrutiny functions relating to the Policy & Resources Portfolio, and would have the overview and scrutiny functions for the proposed content of the Finance & Efficiency portfolio. The Panel's responsibilities would not alter as a result of the proposals – the effect would be that it would have responsibility for the overview and scrutiny functions of two portfolio holders, rather than one.
- 2.3 There has not been an opportunity to seek the formal views of the Corporate Overview Panel, but the Chairman's comments have been obtained. He has no objection to the proposals which, in the main, revert to the arrangements previously in place. It is open to members of the Corporate Overview Panel, if they so wish, to express their views to the Cabinet. There will also be an opportunity for Panel members and others to put forward views at the Council meeting on 18 September when the Cabinet's recommendation will be before the Council.

3. PROPOSALS FOR NEW PORTFOLIO AND AMENDMENTS TO POLICY & RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

- 3.1 The proposed specific service responsibilities of the Finance & Efficiency Portfolio are attached at Appendix 1. These are similar to those of the previous Finance & Support Portfolio, but the opportunity has been taken to

emphasise the efficiency and value for money aspects of the Council's operations.

- 3.2 The proposed amended specific service responsibilities of the Policy & Resources Portfolio are attached at Appendix 2.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The creation of a new portfolio will involve the payment of an additional special responsibility allowance, which for the remainder of the 2006/07 financial year will amount to approximately £4,324. There will also be additional travel costs but these are not likely to be significant. It is hoped that the total additional expenditure could be contained within the overall members' budget.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

6. RECOMMENDATION

That it be recommended to the Council that: –

- (a) a new Finance & Efficiency Portfolio be established, with the specific service responsibilities set out in Appendix 1;
- (b) the revised specific service responsibilities of the Policy & Resources Portfolio, set out in Appendix 2, be approved;
- (c) the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make the necessary consequential amendments to the Constitution arising from recommendations in (a) and (b) above.

Further information:

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Background Papers:

Published documents

APPENDIX 1

PROPOSALS FOR NEW FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY PORTFOLIO

1. Value for Money
Identification of the efficiency programme of service related and cross-cutting reviews
2. Information and Communications Technology
 - i. Electronic Governance
 - ii. ICT Security Policy
 - iii. Evaluation of ICT initiatives
 - iv. Maintenance of ICT infrastructure
3. Asset Management - Land and Buildings Strategy for:-
Acquisition
Disposal
Ownership
Management & development
Insurance and operational 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. advising on the adoption of financial strategies for the short, medium and long term financial health of the authority;
 - ii. advising on 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. 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.
7. 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
8. Employee and Civic Catering.

APPENDIX 2

PROPOSALS FOR AMENDED POLICY & RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

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. Performance Management
 - i. Implementation, monitoring and development of a corporate approach to performance management;
 - ii. Implementation, monitoring and review of an ongoing programme of continuous improvement across all the Council's services;
 - iii. Ensuring the Council's 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 make proposals for the overall level of the Council's expenditure and income;
 - ii. Ensure effective internal audit arrangements are maintained.
5. Risk Management
Determine the Council's overall risk management strategy
6. Communications
 - i. Building relationships with other organisations;
 - ii. Regularly reviewing the corporate communications strategy;
 - iii. Ensuring effective internal communication.
7. 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).
8. Service Specific Grants
9. Other Corporate Matters
Any other matters of a corporate nature.