

**TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**RECORD OF DECISIONS**

(in terms of Access to Information Rule 18)

**CABINET**

**Thursday 24 April 2008**

**Present: Councillor Roy Bullock (Chairman)  
Councillors Paul Barrington-King, Len Horwood, Mrs Catherine Mayhew,  
James Scholes and Mrs Elizabeth Thomas**

**Officers in Attendance:** Kathy Alcock, Housing Policy and Initiatives Officer; Robert Cottrill, Director of Planning and Development; Sean Clark, Head of Financial and Property Services; Helen Clarke, Housing Needs Manager; David Crosby, Head of Housing Services; Nazeya Hussain, Head of Community and Corporate Planning; Wendy Newton-May, Senior Committee Administrator; Richard Powell, Director of Services to the Community; Diane Talbot, Communications Manager; Neil Weeks, Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer; Sheila Wheeler, Chief Executive; and Angela Woodhouse, Overview and Scrutiny Partnership Manager.

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

CAB186/07 No apologies for absence were received.

**DECLARATIONS OF PREJUDICIAL INTEREST**

CAB187/07 No declarations of interest were made.

**APPROVAL OF CABINET MINUTES DATED 27 MARCH 2008**

CAB188/07 The Minutes of the Cabinet dated 27 March 2008 were considered and were confirmed as a correct record.

**CABINET DECISIONS**

**DECISION NO.CAB189/07**

**NON-EXEMPT**

**PORTFOLIO:**

**HOUSING AND COMMUNITY ACCESS**

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER:**

**Councillor Mrs Mayhew**

**TITLE OF REPORT :**

**A New Logo and Visual Identity for Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (080424/CAB013)**

**PRIORITIES:**

**All**

**DISCUSSION:**

At the meeting a representative from DTW Vavasour, the consultants appointed to work with the Council to produce a new logo and visual identity, provided Cabinet with a presentation of their design. It was noted that a Design Panel, consisting of both Members and officers, had been established to ensure that the consultants were delivering the requirements set out in the brief, and to make the final decision on which of the logo suggestions would be recommended to Cabinet as the Council's new logo.

The Communications Manager advised that the consultants would now work with officers to develop a comprehensive corporate style guide to ensure its consistent application. Its implementation would be phased in over the next five years as materials needed updating or replacing.

It was agreed by the majority that the new logo was dynamic and encapsulating, whilst also being contemporary and classic.

Members were informed that there was no centralised point for the procurement of design and print, and the current logo had been allowed to be used in ways that breach the agreed corporate style. It was noted that the Corporate Services Select Committee had undertaken a review of printing to identify areas for development within the Corporate Printing Strategy and it was suggested that the Communications Manager work with the Select Committee on a proposal to centralise all print and design procurement and make recommendations on procedural improvement to Cabinet in June.

Members expressed their thanks to the consultant, Mr Treacher, and to the Communications Manager and her team for all their effort and hard work in achieving a new logo for the Council. It was suggested that implementation of the new logo should commence at the start of the new municipal year.

**DECISION MADE:**

- (1) That the logo presented to the Cabinet at the meeting be adopted as the new logo for Tunbridge Wells Borough Council;
- (2) That a corporate style guide be produced with the consultants that will ensure a consistent visual style across all services;
- (3) That the colour of street furniture and the use of the new corporate colour be addressed through the emerging public realm strategy;
- (4) That the Communications Manager, in consultation with the Director of Change and Business Support and the Corporate Services Select Committee develop proposals for centralising the print and design across the organisation; and
- (5) That the Communications Manager develop a strategy for the launch of the new logo at Annual Council on 20 May 2008.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

To ensure consistent branding of all services provided for and in partnership with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

**Contact Officer: Diane Talbot, Press and Public Relations Manager**  
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**CONSIDERATION OF REPORT FROM CORPORATE SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE DATED 4 MARCH 2008 – DRAFT COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**

CAB190/07 At its meeting on 4 March 2008, the Corporate Services Select Committee had discussed the draft Communications Plan and had recommended that it be adopted by Cabinet.

**RESOLVED –**

- (1) That the Select Committee be thanked for their report; and
- (2) That the Select Committee's recommendation to adopt the Communications Plan be agreed.

**CONSIDERATION OF REPORT FROM CORPORATE SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE DATED 4 MARCH 2008 – QUARTER THREE FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT**

CAB191/07 At its meeting on 4 March 2008, the Corporate Services Select Committee had discussed the Quarter Three Financial Monitoring Report and had recommended the following to Cabinet:

'To ensure that Heads of Service report back to the Head of Financial and Property Services on any actions that can be put in place to minimise the forecasted overspends in their budget.'

**RESOLVED –**

- (1) That the Select Committee be thanked for their report; and
- (2) That the Select Committee's recommendation be agreed.

**CONSIDERATION OF REPORT FROM CORPORATE SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE DATED 4 MARCH 2008 – QUARTER THREE PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT**

CAB192/07 At its meeting on 4 March 2008, the Corporate Services Select Committee had discussed the Quarter Three Performance Monitoring Report and had recommended the following to Cabinet:

- (1) That Cabinet prioritise which areas need to have the strongest levels of performance in 2008/09; and
- (2) That performance be reported by exception.

Members considered these recommendations and disagreed that performance should be reported by exception. It was felt that, as the Cabinet was responsible for operational matters, it should have full reports presented to it in order for it to make informed decisions. In addition, it was noted that the Audit Committee was also presented with full details of performance monitoring because it was responsible for governance matters.

**RESOLVED -**

- (1) That the Select Committee be thanked for their report; and
- (2) That the Select Committee be advised that the Cabinet does not consider that the reporting mechanism with regard to Quarter Three Performance Monitoring needs to be altered at this stage.

**CONSIDERATION OF REPORT FROM CORPORATE SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE DATED 1 APRIL 2008 – COMMUNITY CALL FOR ACTION**

CAB193/07 At its meeting on 1 April 2008, the Corporate Services Select Committee had discussed the pilot that had taken place from November 2007 to March 2008 regarding the Community Call for Action (CCfA). It was noted that four Councillor Calls for Action had been brought to the Overview and Scrutiny team and all were on-going. The report to the Select Committee had advised that the Overview and Scrutiny Partnership Manager had met with the Department of Communities and Local Government, and fed back the results of the pilot to help structure the guidance for the programme. She expressed concern over funding for officer support, with the current guidance placing the resource from within Overview and Scrutiny. She was advised that the anticipated rollout across the country in April was being postponed and would be unlikely to commence before 2009.

The Select Committee had recommended the following to Cabinet:

‘That the pilot be continued until further notice and be developed to greater success.’

Cabinet was advised that this would include an investigation into how the effectiveness of the pilot could be increased, further detailed analysis of the support required for Members and Scrutiny to deal with CCfAs, the impact on resources internally and for partner agencies, the challenges for two-tier areas in terms of implementation and timescales for resolution and whether there was any need for any amendment of existing structures/ partnership arrangements.

**RESOLVED -**

- (1) That the Select Committee be thanked for their report; and
- (2) That the Select Committee’s recommendation be agreed.

**CONSIDERATION OF REPORT FROM CORPORATE SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE DATED 1 APRIL 2008 – DRAFT CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY**

CAB194/07 At its meeting on 1 April 2008, the Corporate Services Select Committee had discussed the draft Customer Access Strategy and had agreed with the Head of Customer Access and Business Transformation to revise section 8 of the Strategy: 'Communicating with Our Customers'. The Select Committee recommended the following to Cabinet:

- (1) That following revision, Cabinet be recommended to adopt the Customer Access Strategy; and
- (2) That Cabinet be recommended to allow consultation to commence through the Consultation and Engagement Strategy.

**RESOLVED –**

- (1) That the Select Committee be thanked for their report; and
- (2) That the Select Committee's recommendations be agreed.

**CONSIDERATION OF REPORT FROM LOCAL ECONOMY AND HOUSING SELECT COMMITTEE DATED 13 MARCH 2008 – PLANNING AUDIT COMMISSION ACTION PLAN**

CAB195/07 At its meeting on 13 March 2008, the Local Economy and Housing Select Committee had discussed the Audit Commission's Action Plan, produced following the Trevor Roberts Associates' review into the Development Control Service in 2005. The Head of Planning Services and the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development attended that meeting and answered questions of the Select Committee's Members. The Committee noted that the Portfolio Holder for Planning Services was also the Council's Change Champion, and it was hoped that several more Change Champions would be appointed. The Select Committee congratulated the Planning and Development officers for the excellent progress made on the Audit Commission report and recommended the following to Cabinet:

'That Cabinet request the Director of Planning and Development to present a report on the role and appointment of Change Champions to a Select Committee meeting next year.'

**RESOLVED –**

- (1) That the Select Committee be thanked for their report; and
- (2) That the Select Committee's recommendation be agreed.

**CABINET DECISIONS**

**DECISION NO.CAB196/07**

**NON-EXEMPT**

**PORTFOLIO:**

<b>CORPORATE SERVICES</b>
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**PORTFOLIO HOLDER:****Councillor Horwood****TITLE OF REPORT :****Forward Plan (080424/CAB007)****PRIORITIES:****Delivering high quality services to our customers****DECISION MADE:**

That the Forward Plan be approved, subject to the following addition:

Cabinet - 12 June 2008 – Household Waste and Recycling Collection and Street Cleansing Contracts – Procurement Update

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

To comply with Access to Information Procedure Rule 14.

**Contact Officer: Wendy Newton-May, Senior Committee Administrator**  
**Tel: 01892 554007 or e-mail: wendy.newton-may@tunbridgewells.gov.uk**

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**DECISION NO.CAB197/07****NON-EXEMPT****PORTFOLIO:****LEADER****PORTFOLIO HOLDER:****Councillor Bullock****TITLE OF REPORT :****Sustainable Community Strategy 2006-2011: Annual Review Report (Jan-Dec 2007) (080424/CAB008)****PRIORITIES:****All****DISCUSSION:**

The Cabinet was briefed on the progress made during the past twelve months towards meeting the priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy, set out within the action plan for the next five years.

Members noted that there were 152 actions within the action plan, which were the responsibility of both internal services and partner agencies. To date 58% of actions were on target; a further 22% had made some progress.

Appendix A of the report provided Members with further detail on the performance of each theme and individual actions.

**DISCUSSION CONT:**

Members were informed of one action that was currently showing red, having made no progress, namely Action 2.6 of theme 5, 'submit revised kickstart bid for route 281.' It was noted that improvements had been made to this bus route without the need for the additional funding and any future improvements would be incorporated into the Quality Bus Partnership. It was agreed that this action should now be removed from the Action Plan.

The Head of Community and Corporate Planning advised that there was a 6% improvement from that recorded in June 2007. In addition, she mentioned that a range of new drivers had emerged which needed to be considered as the Council moved towards delivering the Strategy over the remaining next three years. Given the new drivers and partnerships being developed, Members agreed that it was important that the Strategy was embedded and delivered within this wider context, particularly with the forthcoming Kent Agreement Two.

**DECISION MADE:**

- (1) That the progress made in the first twelve months of the Sustainable Community Strategy be noted;
- (2) That the Sustainable Community Strategy Action Plan monitoring be subsumed into the Local Action Plan for the Kent Agreement, which will underpin the new Local Strategic Partnership arrangements;
- (3) That Action 2.6 of theme 5 be deleted from the Action Plan; and
- (4) That the Sustainable Community Strategy be updated in the light of the Kent Agreement Two and the Local Strategic Partnership (Tunbridge Wells Together).

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

Given the new drivers and partnerships being developed, it is important that the Sustainable Community Strategy is embedded and delivered within this wider context particularly with the forthcoming Kent Agreement Two.

**Contact Officer: Holly Goring, Research and Information Officer**  
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**DECISION NO.CAB198/07**

**NON-EXEMPT**

**JOINT PORTFOLIO:**

**ENVIRONMENT AND STREETSCENE**

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER:**

**Councillor Barrington-King**

**TITLE OF REPORT:**

**Household Waste and Recycling Collection and Street  
Cleansing Contracts – Procurement Update (080424/CAB009)**

**PRIORITIES:**

**A2 – Caring for our environment  
A4 – Developing stronger and safer communities  
A5 – Developing high quality services to our customers  
A7 – Ensuring that we are well managed, pro-active and  
deliver value for money services**

**DISCUSSION:**

The Director of Services to the Community updated the Cabinet on the process of letting the new household waste and recycling collection and street cleansing contracts.

Members were advised that the existing contracts with Veolia had been extended within the existing budget framework to provide continuity of service to 29 March 2009, and to allow the evaluation of opportunities to procure services in different ways.

It was noted that the Environment, Safer and Stronger Communities Select Committee had been undertaking its own review of waste and recycling, the outcomes of which would be taken into account in defining the service to be provided for the future.

The report advised Members of the timetable that the Council would operate in issuing tender documents. The tender documents would consist of two essential elements, the first of which comprised the terms and conditions of the contracts. The Council was currently in the process of formulating the tender documents in conjunction with colleagues from SECE and other authorities, in order to achieve a standardised approach for the greater efficiency of the market. Members were informed that the second element of the tender was the service specification. The proposed approach to be adopted was a menu of service possibilities in order for the Council to review the costs associated with a variety of types and levels of service provision and performance.

The Director of Services to the Community advised that a further update report would be provided to Members at the next Cabinet meeting with a view to ensuring that the proposed service options developed for inclusion in the tender documents were in accordance with Cabinet's views.

**DECISION MADE:**

- (1) That the timetable for the delivery of new contracts for the household waste and recycling collection and street cleansing services be noted;
- (2) That the continuing discussions that are proceeding with key partners including Kent County Council and SECE be noted;
- (3) That the adoption of a menu approach to the specification, to enable the costed evaluation of a range of service options prior to final selection of the service to be delivered be endorsed; and
- (4) That a further report be submitted to the next Cabinet meeting addressing, amongst other matters, the question of an in-house service submission.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

To ensure Members are fully briefed and up to date on the progress of letting the new household waste and recycling collection and street cleansing contracts.

**Contact Officer: Richard Powell, Director of Services to the Community**  
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**DECISION NO.CAB199/07****NON-EXEMPT****PORTFOLIO:****HOUSING AND COMMUNITY ACCESS****PORTFOLIO HOLDER:****Councillor Mrs Mayhew****TITLE OF REPORT:**

**Private Sector Renewal – Outcome of Regional Housing Board Funding Bid and Housing Renewal Assistance Policy**  
**(080424/CAB010)**

**PRIORITIES:**

**A2. Caring for our environment**  
**A3. Having housing suitable for local people**  
**A4. Developing safer and stronger communities**  
**A5. Delivering high quality services to our customers**  
**A6. Improving customer service and satisfaction**  
**A7. Ensuring that we are well managed, proactive and deliver value for money services**

**DISCUSSION:**

The Head of Housing Services provided Members with an update on the outcome of the Council's bid with neighbouring local authorities for housing renewal funding from the South East Regional Housing Board and sought approval for consultation purposes of the Council's draft revised Housing Renewal Assistance Policy.

Members were advised that confirmation had now been received from the Regional Housing Board that Ministers had approved funding of £9,768,000 to be allocated to the eight local authorities in North and West Kent (including Tunbridge Wells BC). This was slightly more than the indicative funding allocation.

Although the report stated that the Council's anticipated share of the allocated funding for North and West Kent was at least £1,505,705 compared to an average allocation of £1,221,000 per authority within the Partnership, a verbal update was given at the meeting that this was now likely to be £1,552,000. In addition, the Council had committed a further £200,000 of its own resources for private sector renewal activity in 2008/09 under its capital programme and had agreed indicative allocations of £200,000 per annum in 2009/10 and 2010/11.

Appendix 2 to the report detailed the Housing Renewal activities to be delivered in 2008-11 and the proposed Housing Renewal funding programme for 2008-11 was attached at Appendix 3 to the report (although it was noted that the allocation of funding for each activity was indicative only and may be subject to change according to demand). The key new initiatives were set out in the report for Members' information.

The Head of Housing Services advised that the draft Housing Renewal Assistance Policy, reproduced for Members at Appendix 1 to the report, had been considered by the Local Economy and Housing Select Committee at its meeting on 10 April 2008 and its comments had been circulated to the Cabinet as an urgent item (080429/CAB015). The recommendations made by the Select Committee were as follows:

- (1) That the Housing Service is congratulated on its successful bid to the South East Regional Housing Board;
- (2) That it be noted by Cabinet that four recommendations made by the working group have been agreed by the Housing Service and, where appropriate, included in the report; and
- (3) That Cabinet approves the draft Housing Renewal Assistance Policy for consultation.

The Cabinet thanked the Select Committee for its comments.

**DISCUSSION CONT:**

Concern was expressed regarding the issue of optimising value for money of housing grants and it was agreed that Management Board should be asked to consider this and ensure that the grant funds were spent effectively.

The Head of Financial and Property Services gave reassurance that the Capital Programme presented to Cabinet incorporated housing grants, demonstrating that this was being monitored.

**DECISION MADE:**

- (1) That the draft revised Housing Renewal Assistance Policy be approved for consultation purposes;
- (2) That any comments or suggestions received via the consultation be considered and where necessary amendments made to the Policy before a final version is presented to the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Community Access for approval; and
- (3) That Management Board be asked to examine the Value for Money aspects of the Policy and report back to a future Cabinet meeting.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

To enable the Council to adopt a revised Housing Renewal Assistance Policy to enable the additional funding for housing renewal received from the Regional Housing Board to be utilised to assist in the improvement and delivery of decent homes within the private housing sector and energy efficiency measures through partnership working.

**Contact Officer: Janice Greenwood, Principal Environmental Health Officer**  
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**DECISION NO.CAB200/07****NON-EXEMPT****PORTFOLIO:****HOUSING AND COMMUNITY ACCESS****PORTFOLIO HOLDER:****Councillor Mrs Mayhew****TITLE OF REPORT:****Draft Housing Allocation Policy (080424/CAB011)****PRIORITIES:****A3 – Having housing suitable for local people**

**DISCUSSION:**

Members were advised that, since the adoption of the Council's current Allocation of Accommodation Scheme in 2003, there had been a number of changes to legislation and alterations in the way housing services were delivered to ensure a greater emphasis on prevention of homelessness and reduction in the number of households in temporary accommodation.

In addition, it was noted that the Government had set a target for all local housing authorities to adopt a Choice-based Lettings (CBL) Scheme by 2010.

The revised Housing Allocation Policy was set out for Members' information at Appendix 2 to the report. It was noted that the main areas of change would be: the assessment of housing need, which would be by way of a 'banding' system as opposed to the current points-based system; homeless households bidding for properties; and greater regard to local lettings policies and the Kent Sustainable Communities Protocol.

The Local Economy and Housing Select Committee had considered the draft Policy at its meeting on 10 April 2008 and its response was sent out to Members as an urgent item (080429/CAB016). The Cabinet considered the Select Committee's considerations and its following recommendation:

'The Committee notes that the banding system in the Draft Housing Allocation Policy recognises that local people should be a priority. Cabinet is recommended to approve the draft Housing Allocation Policy for consultation.'

Cabinet thanked the Select Committee for its report, but was concerned that the statement made could raise customers' expectations.

**DECISION MADE:**

- (1) That the draft revised Housing Allocation Policy be approved for consultation purposes with stakeholders and customers; and
- (2) That any comments or suggestions received via the consultation be considered and where necessary amendments made to the Policy before a final version is presented to the Local Economy & Housing Select Committee for comments and to Cabinet for adoption.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

To ensure that the Council:

- meets its statutory duties to have and publish an allocation scheme offering people choice of accommodation;
- meets the Government target to have a Choice-based Lettings Scheme implemented by 2010; and
- has allowed stakeholders and customers to be consulted on the new Policy.

Contact Officer: Helen Clarke, Housing Needs Manager  
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DECISION NO.CAB201/07

NON-EXEMPT

PORTFOLIO:

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY ACCESS

PORTFOLIO HOLDER:

Councillor Mrs Mayhew

TITLE OF REPORT:

Promoting Health and Well-being (080424/CAB012)

PRIORITIES:

A3 – Having housing suitable for local people  
A4 – Developing safer and stronger communities

DISCUSSION:

The Director of Services to the Community presented a report advising Members of an overview of work undertaken to date by the Council to improve the health and well-being of the Council's communities. It was noted that significant external funding had been secured to further develop a range of projects aimed at improving the health and well-being of the communities, particular those living in the priority neighbourhoods.

Members were advised that a Health Action Plan would be produced to draw together all of the Council's services, activities and partnership working that directly contribute to the promotion of health and well-being. The Plan would be informed by the outcome of the work the Council was currently taking forward with the IDeA and partners to define best practice, and would include consultation with the wider community.

DECISION MADE:

- (1) That the work undertaken to date by the Council to improve the health and well-being of our communities be noted;
- (2) That the future direction for further work to improve the health and well-being of our communities, as set out in the report, be endorsed particularly that:
  - (a) The Council's future activities particularly incorporate a focus on the priority neighbourhoods and the needs of children and young people and older people in those areas;
  - (b) Further consideration be given to the mortality data for Frittenden and Sissinghurst ward and the issue of access to services in rural areas;

- (c) a Health Action Plan be produced to draw together all of the Council's Services, activities and partnership working that directly contribute to improving health and well-being;
- (d) subject to consideration by the LSP, a representative from West Kent Primary Care Trust be invited to chair the new Tunbridge Wells Local Strategic Partnership Health & Older People Sub-group;
- (e) subject to consideration by the LSP, the Council is represented on the Health & Older People LSP Sub-group by the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Community Access and the Lead Member as observer/substitute, supported by the Healthier Communities Co-ordinator and other officers as required; and
- (f) a review of resources directed to improving health and well-being be undertaken as part of the budget-setting process for 2009/10, in the context of the emerging Health Action Plan.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

To enable the Council to set the future direction for further work to improve the health and well-being of our communities.

**Contact Officer: Richard Powell, Director of Services to the Community**  
**Tel: 01892 526121 or e-mail: richard.powell@tunbridgewells.gov.uk**

**EXEMPT ITEM****LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, SECTION 100A (4)**

**RESOLVED** – It was proposed and seconded that, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the item of business referred to below on the grounds that it may involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of the Schedule 12A of the Act namely: -

**DECISION NO. CAB202/07** Paragraph (4) - Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office-holders under, the authority.

**DECISION NO. CAB202/07****EXEMPT****PORTFOLIO:****CORPORATE SERVICES****PORTFOLIO HOLDER:****Councillor Horwood**

**TITLE OF REPORT:**

**Review of Staff Policies and Rewards (080424/CAB014)**

**PRIORITIES:**

**The report supports a number of Council priorities and, in particular, the Council's supporting customer service commitments including: 'Delivering high quality services to our customers', 'Improving customer service and satisfaction' and 'Ensuring that we are well managed, proactive and deliver value for money services'.**

**DISCUSSION:**

Following a major review of the Council's employment policies and procedures as part of its 'Fit for Our Future' initiative, the Director of Change and Business Support submitted a report which addressed a number of key areas and set out proposals for revised employment policies in the areas of:

- Market Supplement Allowances;
- Protection of Earnings;
- Acting-Up and Honoraria payments;
- Lease Car/Cash Allowances; and
- Overtime and Working Arrangement Allowances.

Members were advised of the results of an Equal Pay Audit that was undertaken by an independent HR consultant in 2007, and they considered the recommendations that were set out in the report. In addition, recruitment/retention issues and staff benefits were also examined and a number of benefits were proposed; these were set out in the report for Members' information.

It was noted that no additional costs would be incurred through the introduction of the staff benefit proposals, as costs would be met entirely from budgets already set aside for the 2008/09 staff pay award and from savings brought about from the introduction of the revised policies.

However, if the national pay award were agreed at a level that would not allow sufficient flexibility for the introduction of the full set of proposed benefits, then a further report would be brought back to Cabinet suggesting the removal of some proposals so that it could be met from within existing budgets.

It was noted that the General Purposes Committee considered this report at its meeting on 9 April 2008 and fully supported the proposals, which would ensure that the Council was fully compliant with the recommendations arising from the Equal Pay Audit. It was also agreed that the additional proposals mentioned in the report would ensure that the Council was consistent with best practice in its policies and procedures and that they were subject to regular review. It was noted that the proposals in relation to staff benefits had been tailored to ensure that they offset any perceived 'loss' associated with the revisions to the various policies and procedures and that they made the Council an employer of choice.

**DECISION MADE:**

- (1) That the new/revised policies, procedures and staff benefits, as detailed in the report, be implemented, following satisfactory consultation with staff and Unison, in June 2008; and
- (2) That the staff benefits, as detailed in the report, be implemented following consultation, subject to costs being met from the existing employee budgets.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

To ensure that the Council was fully compliant with the recommendations arising from the Equal Pay Audit.

**Contact Officer: Laurie Harrison, HR Officer**

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(NOTE: The meeting closed at 4.15pm)