

**Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources)**  
**held at 2.00 pm on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2013**

Present:

Cabinet Members: Councillor Gannon (Chair)

Other Members: Councillors Sawdon

Employees (by Directorate):

Customer & Workforce Services: S. Iannantuoni, L. Knight, S. Lal

Finance & Legal Services: P. Mudhar, J. Murphy

**Public business**

9. **Minutes ([Minutes](#))**

The minutes of the meeting of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2013 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

10. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

11. **Access to Payday Loan Websites ([Report](#))**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Chief Executive, which set out proposals for steps to be taken to prevent access to payday loan websites from Council owned PC's.

There had been significant recent media coverage regarding payday loan companies, with the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) nationally describing the payday loan industry as 'out of control' following claims of irresponsible lending and harassment.

Some councils had begun to take action against payday lenders by blocking access to online payday loan companies from public computers in its libraries. The software that manages access to the internet through these PC's would enable the Council to filter access to specified websites, typically because they contain illegal, obscene or pornographic material. This software would also enable the Council to block access to payday loan websites.

It was proposed that access to the websites of the top 50 payday lenders identified in the OFT's Compliance Review would be blocked using the software and that the policy be applied to PC's for public use in all Council buildings wherever practically possible, as well as PC's used by Council employees.

**RESOLVED that after due consideration of the report and the matters raised**

at the meeting, the Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources) instructs officers to put measures in place to :

- (1) Prevent direct access to payday loans websites on all Council owned computers available to the public.
- (2) Ensure that information is available to residents on alternatives to using payday loans websites.

12. **Review A61 ‘Commercialisation and Income Maximisation – Proposed Revisions to the Charging Policy’ ([Report](#))**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Finance and Legal Services, which sought approval to changes to the existing Charging Policy, which was approved by the Cabinet on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2009, based on the work undertaken as part of the Commercialisation and Income Maximisation Review. There were minor changes to reflect new legislation and to allow fees and charges to be subsequently set by relevant sections of the Council to enable the recovery of full costs and charges at a minimum of the average benchmarked figures comparable to neighbouring authorities.

The Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) considered the report at their meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2013 and a briefing note detailing their recommendations was tabled at the meeting. In particular, it recommended that the Cabinet Members receive an annual report on fees and charges in their area, along with proposed increases, decreases or maintained fees amounts. This report should contain the reasons behind these proposals.

**RESOLVED that after due consideration of the report and the matters raised at the meeting, the Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources):**

- (1) Approves the minor amendments to the existing Charging Policy as identified in italics in Appendix 1 to the report.
- (2) Agree that Cabinet Members receive an annual report on fees and charges in their area, along with proposed increases, decreases or maintained fees amounts. This report should contain the reasons behind these proposals.

13. **Apprenticeship Strategy 2011-14 Update ([Report](#))**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Customer and Workforce Services, which provided an update on the progress on the Apprenticeship Strategy 2011-14.

In late 2011, the Council launched its first Apprenticeship Strategy. The Strategy was designed to ensure that Managers were aware of the Council’s approach to apprenticeships, their role in supporting the Strategy and the valuable contribution that apprentices can make to organisational performance. The Council set a clear target of having 120 apprentices by March 2014 and over the last 18 months, the Council has made great progress in working towards that target, by appointing 86 apprentices across the authority, and also to fulfilling the wider objectives set out

in the Strategy.

**RESOLVED that after due consideration of the report and the matters raised at the meeting, the Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources) endorses the progress of the Strategy.**

14. **12 Month Cumulative Sickness Absence 2012/2013 ([Report](#))**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Customer and Workforce Services, which provided an update on the levels of sickness absence from the year 2012/13 and the actions being taken to manage absence and promote health at work across the City Council.

The report indicated that the annual FTE average days lost outturn for 2012/13 was 9.53 days for all employees against a target of 8.50, with all employees except teachers at 10.20 against a target of 9.13, and with teachers at 7.21 against a target of 6.30. The indicative annual cost of sickness for 2012/13 based on the outturn figures was £13.5m. The report provided a breakdown of the reasons for sickness and the days lost per incident, along with comparator information with other local authorities. The action taken to address the sickness levels across the authority also set out within the report.

In considering the report, it was requested that details of the number of FTE employees in each Directorate be provided in future reports.

**RESOLVED that after due consideration of the report and the matters raised at the meeting, the Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources) note the report providing sickness absence data for the 12 month period of 2012/13 and accept the actions taken to monitor and manage sickness.**

15. **Outstanding Issues**

There were no outstanding issues to report.

16. **Any Other Public Business**

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at: 2.30 pm)