

SOUTH RIBBLE BOROUGH COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING – 18 November 2015
REPORT OF THE CABINET

The Cabinet met on the evening of Wednesday 4 November 2015.

On that occasion the Cabinet considered the matters set out below. Decisions shown in boxed areas are subject to Council confirmation; the reports considered by the Cabinet were available to all members in advance of the Cabinet meeting.

1. Member Development - Out-turn report 2014/15 and draft Plan 2015/16

The Leader of the Council introduced this out-turn report which had previously been presented to the Scrutiny Committee, together with a proposed Action Plan which reflected the training and development needs for the year ahead. She commented that the Member Learning Hour sessions were becoming increasingly important as a means to impart knowledge, especially on important topics like the recent ones on the Combined Authority.

It was decided that that the out-turn report be noted and the proposed Action Plan be adopted.

2. Our People Plan Out-turn 2014/2015 and Draft Our People Plan 2015/2016 (including feedback report on Investors in People)

The Leader of the Council introduced The People Action Plan which was the Council's strategic approach to ensuring that the organisation developed in a planned and efficient way through the effective use of its workforce. The Plan aimed to ensure that we had the right people with the right skills, knowledge, attitudes and commitment to achieve the Council's Corporate Priorities. The Plan provided details of the overall workforce objectives for the period 2015 – 2019 together with details of key targets that were measured and reported either annually or bi-annually.

The Leader referred to the improvement in the number of employees absent from work due to sickness which had been reduced to the lowest ever recorded figure.

Councillor Bennett drew attention to the financial benefits of improving sickness absence records and the well supported and beneficial Health and Wellbeing Day was also commented on.

It was decided that the out-turn report be noted and the proposed Action Plan be adopted.

3. Capita Self-Service Functionality - Online Customer Access To Council Tax, Business Rates and Housing Benefit Details

Councillor Mrs Moon, the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support, introduced this item which sought to implement self-service functionality with the aim of channel shifting customers to online when they engaged with the Revenues and Benefits Service. This channel shift would incorporate back office integration which, in many cases, would reduce double handing of accounts and claims to single or zero handling, whilst improving the customer's experience of dealing with the council as processes would be automated, resulting in a speedier turnaround for enquiries.

Implementation of these services would assist the council in delivering value for money in all aspects of the council's work, through changing processes and delivering exceptional customer service. These changes would also assist the Council in meeting the challenge of Business Transformation, the 'We're Going Digital' vision of service provision within South Ribble and result in a more effective and efficient council.

Councillor Bennett welcomed the proposals which would lead to financial benefits through identified efficiencies.

In response to a question from Councillor Foster, Councillor Moon explained that a waiver to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules was being requested in respect of this procurement as Capita was the only supplier who was able to supply all the modules that were being procured. Some individual modules, such as an online housing benefit claim form could be purchased from a third party supplier, but no suppliers other than Capita supplied all the modules that were required.

The purchase price of the modules from Capita had been reduced significantly due to a number of products being purchased simultaneously and by Purchasing all the modules from Capita would enable the Council to implement the new functionality more quickly without the need to integrate the new third party modules with the Capita Revenues and Benefits system.

It was decided that:

1. The implementation of the Capita self-service functionality and the Capita creditor's modules for use by Revenues and Benefits be approved and authority be granted under Section 3.4 of the Financial Regulations to incur capital expenditure of £89,500 to be drawn from ICT Reserves.
2. The waiver of all relevant Contract Procedure Rules (including paragraph 11.3) to allow for the implementation of the Capita modules be approved.

4. The Externalisation of Print and Post for Revenues and Benefits

Councillor Mrs Moon the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support introduced this report which concerned proposed changes to the processing of outgoing mail in the Revenues and Benefits Service. Implementation of a 'hybrid mail' solution would generate significant savings in the cost of processing and posting outgoing mail as well as eliminating the manual tasks associated with processing mail. This would assist the Council in delivering value for money in all aspects of the Council's work and meeting the challenge of Business Transformation, resulting in a more effective and efficient council.

It was decided that:

1. Cabinet approve participation in the joint procurement of Hybrid Mail Services with Preston City Council and Lancaster City Council which will call off Lot 3 of the Crown Commercial Services Postal Goods and Services contract , framework number RM1063.
2. Authority be delegated to the Director of Business Transformation, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support, to subsequently award this contract following completion of the procurement exercise.

9. The Cabinet Forward Plan

It was decided that the Forward Plan submitted under Section 22 of the Local Government Act 2000 be approved.

I hereby commend the report of the Cabinet to the Council.

COUNCILLOR MRS MARGARET SMITH

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL