

## **TRADING BOARD**

### **22 March 2017**

*Present: -*

Councillor Rosalind Scott (Chairman)  
Councillors Lewis Barber, Kevin Bentley, Robert Davidson, Lesley Scott-Boutell and Martyn Warnes

*Also in attendance:-*

Councillor Smith

#### **152. Minutes**

*RESOLVED* that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

**Councillor Warnes (in respect of his spouse's employment by Colne Housing) declared a non-pecuniary interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5).**

#### **153. Commercial Business Development – Operational Businesses**

The Board received a report from the Commercial Manager and the Commercial Transition Manager providing an update on the operational businesses. Graham Lewis, Commercial Manager, presented the report and provided an update on the services.

It was reported that Helpline had reached an agreement with the North Essex Clinical Commissioning Group and the East of England Ambulance Trust to launch a pilot lifting service and it was anticipated that this service would go live in early April. This was an excellent opportunity for Helpline to try and develop further commercial opportunities. Negotiations were also continuing with Colchester Borough Homes over the terms of the Service Level Agreement, with a view to rationalising the agreement and, where possible, delivering shared services. In response to questions from members of the Board, it was confirmed that Helpline was also in discussions with other Housing Associations, but a number of these already used other national providers.

Members of the Board also explored how Helpline was using new technology and encouraging channel shift. For example there would be some value in Helpline engaging with a partner who could encourage customers to channel shift, or incur a one off cost to get customers online. Whilst the value of such an approach was understood, officers explained that this would be resource intensive and would need further development with partners. There was also some concern about how Helpline could ensure that such arrangements were appropriately managed. Helpline staff continued to look at new technology but many of the new devices coming to market would be difficult for Helpline customers to use as they were not adapted for use by the elderly or those with visual or audio impairments. Helpline's website was reviewed regularly to ensure its accessibility.

In terms of Bereavement Services, a regular meeting with Funeral Directors was being established. This would be chaired by the Portfolio Holder and would provide an opportunity to ensure that Bereavement Services and the Funeral Directors understood each other and worked effectively together.

A brochure promoting Charter Hall events and other ticketed events would be launched shortly. This would be a soft launch initially to gauge reaction but would be followed by a more high profile launch in September. There was still a need to promote events through formats such as brochures and leaflets, alongside digital methods. The service was also looking at joint marketing with the Mercury Theatre as a first step towards greater collaboration with them.

Members of the Board sought further information about the performance of Leisure World. It was confirmed that income had fallen below target due to a shortfall in sales of Lifestyle memberships, following the opening of David Lloyd and some budget gyms. However, customers were now beginning to return and income was now back on target.

In response to queries from the Board as to how commercial ideas were taken forward and the pace at which this happened, Ian Vipond, Strategic Director, Commercial and Place, explained that the proposals for the reorganisation of the structure of the Council including the establishment of a Council owned trading company would put a greater emphasis on a commercial approach in future. The report on the lessons to be learnt from the work to create a shared service for Building Control highlighted the need for leadership from all of the organisations involved and for honesty about long term intentions at an early stage. It was better to start projects on a smaller scale and develop them further as time went on, rather than be too ambitious at the outset. In terms of some of the commercial opportunities that had been highlighted by members of the Board, he did not consider that the conditions were right to develop these proposals further at this stage.

*RESOLVED* that the contents of the report be noted.

## **154 Trading Board Annual Report 2016-17**

The Board received a report setting out the draft Annual Report of the Trading Board for the 2016-17 municipal year.

The Board welcomed the draft Annual Report and suggested couple of minor amendments as follows:-

- Improvements to the layout of the table and charts at page 9;
- Some amendments to the Review of the Strategic Director to take account of the potential implications of the proposals for the restructure of the Council and the creation of commercial company.

The Board considered that the report demonstrated the value of the Board's work and felt that it still had a role to play in the new structure. Councillor Smith, Leader of the Council, was invited to respond and stressed that he appreciated the value of the cross party work that was done by the Trading Board. It was not clear yet exactly how the board of the commercial company would be constituted. The Scrutiny Panel had been asked to look at the governance arrangements in advance of a report being submitted to Cabinet.

The Board stressed that the report should be circulated widely to partners and service users and some of the key messages and figures should be promoted through social media.

*RESOLVED* that:-

- (a) The format and content of the Annual Report for 2016-17 be agreed;
- (b) Authority be delegated to the Chairman and Group Spokespersons to agree the final wording of the Annual Report 2016-17.
- (c) Once finalised, the Annual Report 2016-17 be submitted to Cabinet.

#### **155. Trading Board Work Programme**

The Board received a report from the Assistant Chief Executive setting out the work programme for the Trading Board. Ian Vipond, Strategic Director, Commercial and Place, presented the report to the Board. The proposals for the reorganisation of the structure of the Council had been approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 15 March 2017, and a further report on the structure and governance arrangements of the commercial company would be submitted to Cabinet in June 2017. Until this work was concluded, it was difficult to be too specific about the future work of the Board. The format of the programme had also been amended, as requested by the Board, to present it as a rolling programme.

In discussion, the Board highlighted the valuable work it had done. It worked effectively cross party. It worked in a different way to the board of a commercial company, in that it generated ideas rather than concentrating on operational and governance matters. The Board discussed how it could demonstrate to Cabinet how it could play a valuable role in the new structure and the Chairman invited members of the Board to contact her with their views.

*RESOLVED* that the work programme for the Trading Board be noted.

**The Board resolved under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public from the meeting for the following item as it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.**

#### **156. Minutes – Not for Publication Extract**

*RESOLVED* that the not for publication extract of the minutes of the meeting on 25 January 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

**The Board resolved under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public from the meeting for the following item as it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.**

#### **157. Commercial Business Development – Operational Business Performance and Income report**

This minute is not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, including the authority holding that information.)

#### **158. Rob Hill**

The Commercial Manager reported that the post of Commercial Transition Manager had been made redundant and that Rob Hill would shortly be leaving the Council. The Board expressed its thanks to Rob for his hard work in support of the Board and in developing the commercial services. The Chairman agreed to write to Rob on behalf of the Board to express its sincere thanks and to pass on its best wishes for the future.

*RESOLVED* that the chairman write to Rob Hill on behalf of the Board to express its sincere thanks for his hard work and to pass on its best wishes for the future.