
**EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE
CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
HELD ON 13 AUGUST 2003**

CROS.93/03

**GENERAL FUND PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2002/03 –
CARRY FORWARD AND BID REQUESTS**

Councillors Dodd, E Mallinson, J Mallinson and Styth, having declared personal interests, remained in the meeting and took part in the Committee's deliberations.

The Head of Finance submitted Report FS.28/03 summarising those 2002/03 carry forward requests and additional bids as previously considered by the Executive on 7 July 2003 and which had not been approved at that meeting.

Carry forward requests totalled £1,010,629 (Category B) and £226,790 (Category C) and were all non-recurring requests to be funded from budgets approved in 2002/03 and had no impact of an ongoing nature.

There was one bid for a non-recurring item of £15,000 in respect of an IT Business System for the Member and Employee Services Business Unit. This could be financed from the surplus generated in 2002/03 and there were no financial implications of an ongoing nature.

In addition, there were recurring bids totalling £242,300 which could be financed through a virement from additional recurring income to a maximum of £200,000 identified in 2003/04, achieved as a result of improved debt recovery procedures for Housing Benefit overpayments. However, if all recurring bids were approved there would be a deficit of £42,300 requiring supplementary funding. Also, funding would not be available for other budget priorities or deficits identified during the budget process.

A number of individual reports giving details of the background to the various carry forward and bid requests were also submitted, together with the decisions of the Executive which had considered this matter on 4 August 2003.

The Committee noted that these matters, including those seeking redirection of resources, had not originally been planned to come to Overview and Scrutiny and asked the Head of Finance to ensure that such reports were directed to this Committee as a matter of course in the future.

The Committee then considered in detail the individual reports as follows:-

(a) Property Services

The Head of Property Services submitted Report PS.7/03 seeking a carry forward of existing salary underspends, which totalled £70,000 for the Unit in 2002/03, and a priority call on the proposed new recruitment and retention fund in order to regrade existing staff and vacant posts in the Property Services Business Unit.

The carry forward request had been supported by the Executive.

Members noted the particular difficulties being experienced in recruiting and retaining Officers in the Property Services Business Unit in the light of competition, not only from other Local Authorities, but also the private sector.

RESOLVED – That the recommendations in the report be supported.

(b) Legal and Democratic Services

A report from the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (LDS.44/03) was submitted containing details of committed expenditure and carry forward items requested in respect of the Legal and Democratic Services Business Unit.

The carry forward requests had been supported by the Executive.

RESOLVED – That the carry forward requests be supported.

(c) Revenues and Benefits Services

The Head of Revenues and Benefits Services submitted Report RB.12/03 detailing carry forward requests in respect of committed expenditure (Category B) and uncommitted expenditure (Category C).

In supporting these carry forward requests, Members particularly wished for action to be taken as soon as possible to provide air conditioning to improve airflow to the Benefits Office. This had been included as a Category C carry forward request.

The Head of Commercial and Technical Services reported that there was an ongoing review of Civic Centre accommodation, and that it may be prudent to await the outcome of his review before air conditioning was provided. He undertook to investigate a temporary solution.

The carry forward requests had been supported by the Executive.

RESOLVED – (1) That the carry forward requests be supported.

(2) That the Head of Commercial and Technical Services be requested to submit a report to City Council with regard to the carry forward of £17,500 to improve air flow to

the Benefits Office outlining health and safety and risk management issues for staff arising from current working conditions and how these may be overcome as quickly as possible.

(d) Environmental Protection Services

The Head of Environmental Protection Services submitted Report EPS.49/03 which identified items of committed and uncommitted expenditure, together with carry forward requests and a recurring funding bid (£30,000) in respect of staffing and an operational budget to support the continued delivery of the Council's retained housing functions.

The carry forward requests and the recurring funding bid had been supported by the Executive.

Referring to the recurring bid of £30,000 to enable the continued delivery of the Council's retained housing functions, a Member expressed dissatisfaction that this funding requirement had not been addressed at the time of transfer of the housing stock to Carlisle Housing Association. Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee had commented on some impacts caused by lack of adequate resources.

Members also noted that there was currently no budget for the provision of litter bins. The Head of Environmental Protection Services reported that a bid for funding in 2003/04 for the provision of litter bins would be considered by the Executive as part of the budget process.

RESOLVED – That the carry forward requests and recurring funding bid be supported.

(e) Commercial and Technical Services

The Head of Commercial and Technical Services submitted Report CTS.19/03 summarising carry forward requests in respect of budgets within the Commercial and Technical Services Business Unit.

The carry forward requests had been supported by the Executive.

RESOLVED – That the carry forward requests be supported.

(f) Financial Services

The Head of Finance submitted Report FS.27/03 giving details of carry forward requests in respect of the Financial Services Business Unit.

The carry forward requests had been supported by the Executive.

RESOLVED – (1) That the carry forward requests, which all related to issues which the Committee had previously commented upon, be supported.

(2) That this Committee considers that priority should be given to setting up the necessary procedures for making bids against the Risk Management budget.

(g) Member Support and Employee Services

The Head of Member Support and Employee Services submitted Report MS.10/03 which detailed carry forward and recurring bid requests in respect of the Member Support and Employee Services Business Unit.

Whilst the Executive on 4 August 2003 had approved the carry forward requests, the recurring bid requests detailed below had not been approved :

Admin Support to the Member Services & Employee Services Business Unit	£ 20,000
IT Trainer/Consultant	£ 36,000
Recruitment and Retention Fund	£ 50,000
Human Resources Development	£ 50,000

M Mooney, Executive Director, reported that the Executive had decided that the recurring bids should be considered as part of any further bid for resources arising from the outcome of the Investors in People review and the Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

With regard to recruitment and retention, the Executive had asked that any Business Unit Head, in conjunction with the Head of Member and Employee Services, should bring a report to the Executive, if necessary, on any specific case where difficulties were being experienced with recruitment and retention.

With regard to the request for £20,000 recurring funding for administrative support to the Member Support and Employee Services Business Unit, a Member considered that this highlighted the failure to properly identify support costs when the new Business Units were set up.

Members considered that there were real problems within the City Council with recruitment and retention and that the use of Consultants and temporary Agency staff to support the normal work of Officers was both costly and unsatisfactory. Members were disappointed that there were no Executive Members present to explain the Executive's position.

Members considered that the introduction of a Recruitment and Retention Fund should be supported.

Members were also unable to understand how the Executive had supported the Head of Property Services' request for funding to address a recruitment and retention issue, part of which was from a first call on the Recruitment and Retention Fund, given that this Fund had not been approved by the Executive.

RESOLVED - (1) That the carry forward requests and the recurring bid requests be supported.

(2) That the Executive be requested to clarify for the City Council on 9 September 2003 the position with regard to funding to address recruitment and retention issues in the Property Services Business Unit, given that approval had not been given to one of the sources of funding.

(h) Culture Leisure and Sport Services

The Head of Culture, Leisure and Support Services submitted Report CLS.54/03 providing information on the carry forward items requested in respect of Culture Leisure and Sport Services.

The carry forward requests had been supported by the Executive.

RESOLVED – That the carry forward requests be supported.

(i) Economic and Community Development Business Unit

The Head of Economic and Community Development submitted Report ECD.20/03 setting out the carry forward request in respect of Economic and Community Development Services.

The carry forward requests had been supported by the Executive.

RESOLVED – That the carry forward requests be supported.

(j) Planning Services Business Unit

The Head of Planning Services submitted Report P.33/03 summarising the 2002/03 carry forward requests in respect of the Planning Services Business Unit.

The carry forward requests had been supported by the Executive.

RESOLVED – That the carry forward requests be supported.

(k) Customer and Information Services Business Unit

The Head of Customer and Information Services submitted Report CIS.03/04/02 detailing the carry forward requests in respect of the Customer and Information Services Business Unit.

The carry forward requests had been supported by the Executive.

RESOLVED – That the carry forward requests be supported.

(l) Strategic and Performance Services Business Unit

The Head of Strategic and Performance Services submitted a Report identifying items of committed and uncommitted expenditure, and seeking Members consideration of carry forward and a recurring funding bid (£16,300) for administrative support for the Strategy and Performance Business Unit.

The Executive had supported the carry forward requests but not the recurring funding bid for £16,300 for administrative support for this Unit.

Members noted with concern that the recurring bid for administrative support for this Business Unit was required as a result of an oversight when the Business Unit was set up, but recognised that it was important that all Business Units were properly staffed.

Members noted that two Officers in the Policy and Performance Team would require maternity cover in the current financial year, and that funding for such cover must be found from within existing Business Unit budgets. The Committee considered that funding for maternity cover should be from a centrally held budget, and asked the Head of Member and Employee Services to investigate this as a corporate issue.

With regard to democratic engagement issues, Members noted that the Corporate Plan committed the City Council to piloting a citizenship pack for schools and that, as no funding had been earmarked, the project had not been progressed. Members were disappointed that funding had not been put in place for these packs to be produced.

RESOLVED – That the carry forward requests and bid for recurring funding be supported.

(m) Administrative Support for Executive Directors

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive submitted Report CE.14/03 seeking the appointment of two Personal Assistants for the Executive Directors to enable them to carry out their role with maximum efficiency. This would be funded through the allocation of £40,000 per year from recurring underspends. The report also sought virement for temporary cover and set up costs in the sum of £49,700 as a Category B carry forward request.

Members considered that these posts should have been included in the structure of the organisation when the Organisational Review was being undertaken.

Members sought clarification that if these posts were approved, that the outcome of the Organisational Review would continue to be revenue neutral as was reported at the time.

The proposal and funding arrangements had been supported by the Executive.

RESOLVED – 1. That the request for funding for the appointment of two Personal Assistants for the Executive Directors be supported.

2. That clarification be sought from the Executive that if these posts were approved, that the outcome of the Organisational Review would continue to be revenue neutral as was reported at the time.