

## **ACTION NOTES FROM STAR CHAMBER HELD ON 24 OCTOBER 2007**

**PRESENT:** Councillors R Mace (Chair), E Archer, J Barry, A Bryning, J Gilbert  
M Cullinan, P Loker, R Muckle, N Muschamp, J Barlow

### **1 APOLOGIES**

John Donnellon, Nadine Muschamp

### **2 NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The record of the last meeting was noted.

### **3 NEIGHBOURHOOD TASK FORCE – BASE BUDGET REVIEW AND VFM ASSESSMENT**

Options for savings were discussed in relation to manpower and delivery of the work programme. Further work was requested on the impact on the work programme of reductions to manpower and also opportunities in respect of external funding.

### **4 OPTIONS FOR SAVINGS**

Arts Development – a further report to Star Chamber was requested regarding manpower involved in Arts Development and Festivals.

Sports Development – past reports to Cabinet on the Review of Cultural Services were re-distributed for information. Options on the range of activities would be considered at future meeting together with the options paper on Community Pools.

### **5 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DIRECTORATE**

#### **BASE BUDGET REVIEW AND VALUE FOR MONEY ASSESSMENT**

##### **Legal and HR Services**

Legal – it was noted that a cross-Lancashire exercise was underway to research opportunities for shared services but this is not a short term option for this budget exercise.

Licensing – It was noted that this was largely required to break even and not operate at a profit but that it did benefit from a shared service with South Lakes District Council.

HR – There might be opportunity for medium term reductions in manpower as key projects are completed. Progress on Fair Pay was noted plus the need to complete the exercise by April 2008.

A report on officer training recently considered by Management Team would be made available to the Panel.

The request for information on Member Training at a previous meeting was repeated.

It was noted that improvements already made to recruitment and selection procedures had already saved £50K/pa.

##### **Democratic Services**

Electoral Registration/Elections Management – a potential growth item to comply with the Electoral Admin. Act would be considered as part of the budget process.

The cost of parish by-elections to be added to the options list of provisional savings but it was noted that the cost of parish elections would be further considered as part of the wider review of special expenses; and that the establishment of additional town councils would have a budgetary cost.

Electoral Registration – information about 2008 national targets was requested.

Democratic - A report back to Star Chamber was requested on potential savings from limiting the time of all meetings to 2 hours; reducing the number of meetings; and dealing with questions for council electronically. It was noted that any constitutional amendments should be dealt with by Audit Committee.

It was noted that with immediate effect blank pages were to be omitted from Agenda producing a saving of £800/pa.

Civic and Ceremonial – further information about costs and income was requested.

**6 STAR CHAMBER TIMETABLE**

It was agreed that Star Chamber meetings would be re-instated on 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> November in the absence of the Leader, and would be chaired by Cllr Gilbert.

**7 CABINET REPORT REQUESTS**

All requests for reports should go to the December Cabinet, i.e. The Dome, Lancaster Market and Cultural Trust Options.

**8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

7 November 2007: Base Budget Review and VFM Assessments – Finance and Performance Directorate.

**RCM/JEB/25 October 2007**