
OVERVIEW OF EFFICIENCY AND RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work under my Efficiency and Resources Portfolio :-

- (a) **Procurement Plan – Update** – We have approved a revised Procurement Plan in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules. It has been necessary to revise the Plan from that originally approved in May, 2010, to include a number of new contracts which have subsequently come to light. Of those new Contracts, Cabinet have determined, in accordance with the criteria, which contracts shall be delegated to the Officers and which are deemed to be strategic.
- (b) **Local Land Charges – Income and Fee Variations** – We have been advised of recent developments in relation to the legal position for charging for the local land charges service provided by the Council. The Government wrote to all local authorities, on 27th July, 2010, advising them that the statutory personal search fee of £22 was to be revoked as it believed that the fee was incompatible with the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR), which had come into force on the 1st January, 2010. We were advised to cease charging for the service with immediate effect and to take appropriate steps to notify those who had paid this fee after the 1st January, 2010, with a view to making any potential refunds. There is also a possibility that we will receive claims for the repayment of the discretionary personal search charges which we have been charging since April, 2009. Representations about who should meet the cost of any potential refunds in relation to the statutory fee have been made to the Government by the Local Government Association.

In view of the effect this, we have reviewed the charging structure for full local authority searches and have agreed to substantially reduce the current fees charged for the provision of this service, to make the local authority full search more attractive and to increase our share of the overall market.

- (c) **2A Duke Street** – The Estates and Property Section have been successful in letting 2A Duke Street to the national charity Mind.

I have also continued to have briefing meetings with Lead Officers in the Corporate Services Department.

Councillor Chris McEwan
Cabinet Member with Efficiency and Resources Portfolio