

The City of Edinburgh Council – Finance and Resources Committee 30 August 2011

☒ The Finance and Resources Committee meet on Tuesday 30 August 2011 at 10a.m. The full agenda is shown below. It is very lengthy and we do not propose to narrate all items here, but we will be at the meeting and will report to you on the proceedings afterwards.

Item 4 on the agenda is the report by the Acting Director of Finance on services to keep older people and adults with physical disabilities at home. The report which accompanies this item recommends the appointment of 18 care providers. The cost to the council over the next three years is just under £50m. The new Framework comes after a re-launching of the Care at Home project after consultation with service users and carers to see how the service could be improved. One way in which the council wanted to improve the service was by installing an electronic monitoring system, something which the report claims will allow them to pay for what they actually get. So presumably this is a kind of clocking on an off device?

Item 5 is the so-called Smart City initiative dealing with Workstyle Transformation and High Speed Broadband. If the council is allowed to implement Workstyle Transformation then it would be able to draw down funds from the BT Efficiency Fund. This initiative has been under scrutiny since 7 June 2011 and is designed to enable a modern and efficient approach to working. In short this is all about using modern technology to do the work and communicate with co-workers and customers. The consultation showed that there were almost 6000 employees working from a variety of properties. The changes would allow hot-desking or even in some cases home-working. It is hoped

that £18.9m would be released from the council spend by the cash savings which will result from what is called 'property rationalisation' and which presumably means sales as well as less money spent on upkeep of property. As well as this computers will be renewed or replaced by laptops in many cases, all based on Windows 7.

And (hurray!) there is some mention in this report that it might be possible to introduce wifi for Council laptop users and visitors to the council offices at Waverley Court and the City Chambers. It would certainly be of huge benefit to us to have wifi in the City Chambers, but of course it may not be us or other members of the press that the wifi is targeted at.

And the good news is that the additional costs of supporting the ICT infrastructure should be met by the property savings. As well as this the council hope to cut carbon emissions by cutting the need for some buildings and also cutting business mileage by video conferencing.

Item 9 deals with the Framework Agreement for Edinburgh Snow & Ice Maintenance 2011-12. This confirms that there is a list of 5 contractors and the work will be given to the one quoting the lowest price. But in the event of severe weather conditions it will be necessary to contact the one who quoted the second lowest price and so on. This should allow a saving of about 20% according to the report, and is worth £3.6m in total.

Item 18 reports on the state of the council's revenues and comfortingly estimates that the department will break even for 2011-12, although there are still some risks, and there is apparently no contingency or rainy day fund to cover any of those risks occurring. The report states that the approved net budget for the year is £12.7m by which we presume they mean the reserves which Council Leader, Jenny Dawe, referred to at the council meeting on Thursday.

Item 32 confirms that a tenant has been found for the [cottage](#)

[at Royal Terrace Gardens](#) on London Road. Mr Edward Murray wants to turn it into a cafe/restaurant and will install a wood-burning stove as a central feature. The committee is asked to grant him a lease.

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