

## **CABINET**

Wednesday, 7th September, 2011

**Present:-** Councillor Stephen Sweeney – in the Chair  
Councillors Studd, J Bannister, A Howells and N Jones

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Cllr Reddish.

### **2. MINUTES**

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Cabinet held on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2011 be approved as a correct record pending the addition of the following wording in relation to the Newcastle under Lyme Equestrian Strategy:

That it be added to the background section of the report:

'it is also important to engage with other user groups including walkers and cyclists to promote co-operation and prevent conflict.'

### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **4. FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT TO END OF QUARTER ONE (JUNE) 2011**

A report was submitted providing Members with the Financial and Performance Review for the 2011/12 First Quarter.

It was stated that the majority of targets were being met and that there was a positive trend throughout the report. There was also positive news with regards to Heritable Bank and it was stated that at least 90% of the Council's investment would be returned.

In February 2011 the Council had approved a General Fund Revenue Budget of £15,258,700. The overall position at 30 June showed an adverse variance of £48,000. This was predominately due to sources of income such as land charges, planning fees and car park fees yielding less than what would have previously been expected. Due to anticipated economic problems however an allowance of £200,000 had been included in the budget to cover shortfalls.

The provisional outturn for 2010/11 showed an adverse variance of £87,000 mainly due to the current economic situation. This outturn figure had been minimised due to the addition of £200,000 in the 2010/11 budget.

The Capital Programme contained a number of large value schemes such as the former Sainsbury's site, the Health and Wellbeing centre and Silverdale Community Centre facilities where expenditure was not expected to be incurred until later in the year. Therefore only £1,565,200 was expected to be spent by 30<sup>th</sup> June.

The Portfolio Holder for Customer Services highlighted the fact that the Council's Customer Services Department had achieved a national excellence award and that improvements were continuing to be made. The % of requests solved at first point of contact was up on the quarter 1 target and was already higher than when the excellence award had been achieved.

It was stated that Sections RP3 to RP5 in the Dashboard Indicators report were very high targets to meet but that the only slippage had occurred due to the undertaking of necessary site visits.

ER2 in the Appendix showed that 52.6% of household waste was now sent for reuse, recycling and composting, this compared to just 16% seven years ago. It was also stated that the North Staffs warm Zone had recently won an award for its achievement.

The increase in the number of people visiting the museum was highlighted in CA2. This increase was largely attributable to the work of the staff at the museum and their encouragement of children to visit the museum. It was however thought that even more improvements could be made at the museum through the use of more scientific and interactive exhibitions and activities.

The overall trend in relation to crime was down in the Borough and throughout Staffordshire. It was hoped that this downturn would be helped further by greater partnership working with the police due to that fact that they would soon be moving into the Civic Offices. By sharing resources such as accommodation it was hoped that the police would be able to free up other resources to enable a greater police presence on the streets. It was stated that members of the public would benefit from being made more aware of the work of Locality Action Partnerships (LAPs) as crime figures were regularly brought to LAP meetings.

**Resolved:** - That the report be noted and that the Council continue to monitor and scrutinise performance alongside financial information.

## **5. LOCALITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP (LAP) REVIEW**

A report was submitted containing information and proposals relating to the Newcastle Partnership and Borough Council review of Locality Action Partnerships (LAPs). The review was part of the wider Borough Council transformation project and aimed to further develop Locality Action Partnerships and to firmly establish them as a structure to the emerging localism agenda.

**Resolved:** - (a) That the contents of the report and the full Newcastle Partnership Locality Action Partnership Review Report be noted.

(b) That the recommendations of the full report and the proposals contained in the covering report be agreed **subject to an ongoing review of partnerships with the aim of promoting locality working.**

(c) That Cabinet Members identify opportunities within their portfolio areas for links to be made with Locality Action Partnerships.

- (d) That Cabinet suggest proposals or recommendations relating to strengthening the role of the elected member.
- (e) That the comments made by the Active and Cohesive Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2011 be noted and the actions followed up as required.
- (f) That an action plan be produced to implement the proposals in the full report and covering report.

## **6. TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE**

Members received a report updating them on the various elements of the Newcastle under Lyme Transformation Programme.

There were three change and transformation programmes ongoing within the Council:-

- Transformation Programme (TP)
- The Way We Work Programme (TWWW)
- The Business of the Council (TBC)

The TP included areas such as Customer Relationship Management in which the Council was working closely with the County Council and other partners to improve the it's picture of the people within the Borough and thus manage its facilities better to fit this picture.

Areas under TWWW programme included the introduction of the Modern.gov Committee Management System. This system was now live and being used to publish all agendas and minutes for Committee business.

- Resolved:** -
- (a) That the report be noted
  - (b) That Cabinet receive further updates in its role as a key element of the Council's Strategic Programme Board, alongside the Executive Management Team.
  - (c) That Cabinet suggest items for further inclusion in the change programmes as set out in the report in terms of project areas for further examination.
  - (d) That Cabinet instruct the Head of Business Improvement and Partnerships, as the Programmes Manager to continue to provide these updates as the officer responsible corporately for programme and project management for the Council and also instruct the Head of Business Improvement and Partnerships to make any necessary updates as outlined in the previous recommendation.

## **7. JUBILEE 2 UPDATE**

A report was received containing information regarding progress of the development of the Jubilee 2 Centre since the last meeting of the Cabinet.

The capital build phase of Jubilee 2 was now 75% complete and the programme of completion remained in line with the Council's aspirations of opening the new centre to the general public in January 2012.

It was also confirmed that a decision had now been made regarding the operator for the cafeteria and vending machines for the centre, the selection criteria had been based on the Most Economically Advantageous Tender (M.E.A.T) and the winning tender had scored highest in both the quality and price elements.

- Resolved:** - (a) That the progress in delivery of the Jubilee 2 be noted.  
(b) That the Council enter into a contract with the preferred Cafeteria operator for the Jubilee 2.  
(c) That the Council enter into a contract with Staffordshire County Council to procure the Section 278 Highways Works in relation to the Jubilee 2 development in accordance with the project plan.

**8. JUBILEE 2 HEALTH AND WELLBEING CENTRE FEES AND CHARGES**

A report was submitted detailing the proposed fees and charges and car parking arrangements for the new Jubilee 2 Health and Wellbeing Centre. The figures had been devised to try and provide the best value for money for those people visiting the centre.

- Resolved:** - (a) That the fees and charges and car parking arrangements for Jubilee 2 be approved

**9. FUTURE MANAGEMENT OPTIONS FOR LEISURE SERVICES**

Members received a report updating them on the work of the Leisure Trust Steering Group. Members agreed that it would be a good idea to use a leisure trust to run the Council's leisure facilities but that for the time being it might be wise to take note of how this was being done in other Councils and learn from this first.

- Resolved:** - (a) That the work of the Leisure Trust Working Groups be noted and that in view of the uncertain business case and financial implications not to progress at this point in time.  
(b) To receive a further report once the financial implications of the business case are clearer.

**10. BATESWOOD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE - MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The report was submitted highlighting a petition presented to a ward member on behalf of local residents requesting that the Council allow angling on the pool at Bateswood Local Nature Reserve, Halmer End. The report asked Members to consider undertaking a consultation exercise on the principle of including additional site based recreational activities with the review and update of the Management Plan for Bateswood. Members were further asked to consider adopting ethical fishing guidelines for use on Borough Council controlled fishing areas.

If a consultation exercise was to go ahead it was highlighted by members that it would need to take into account all users of the land and investigate all possible conflicts that could arise.

- Resolved:** - (a) That the petition be received  
(b) That the principle of allowing angling and additional bridal route provision in Bateswood Local Nature Reserve be subject to consultation with local residents and appropriate

- stakeholders and appropriate agreements to manage angling on the pool and equestrian access to the site be prepared.
- (c) That a further report on the outcome of the consultation be brought back to an appropriate Cabinet meeting for consideration and that the consultation take into account all users of the land and all the possible conflicts that could arise.
  - (d) That the draft "Ethical Fishing Guidelines" which have been proposed in relation to the pool at Bateswood and other angling facilities in the Council's control be approved for consultation with appropriate stakeholders.

#### **11. GRANTS REVIEW AND THIRD SECTOR COMMISSIONING**

A report was submitted to update Members on progress with the grants review and the revised third sector commissioning framework.

The Council provided funding from its own budgets, for the voluntary and community sector, both through commissioning and grants; a review of processes to try and improve efficiency for the Council, whilst providing support to voluntary and community groups had now been undertaken.

- Resolved:** -
- (a) That the initial recommendations of the grants review be noted.
  - (b) That comments be provided on the initial recommendations of the grants review.
  - (c) That the revised third sector commissioning framework be noted.
  - (d) That the revised third sector commissioning framework be agreed
  - (e) That the recommendation of the Active and Cohesive Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee not to accept the offer from The Staffordshire Community Foundation to manage the Council's grants be supported.
  - (f) That a detailed report be requested regarding the work of the New Vic Theatre.

#### **12. ROUGH SLEEPER'S OUTREACH SERVICE**

A report was received requesting Cabinet's support for the re-provision of the Rough Sleeper's Outreach Services from April 2012 and to reserve future years third sector commissioning funding for a three year period.

For the past few years Stoke on Trent City Council and the Borough Council and separately commissioned a Rough Sleeper's Outreach programme. Both authorities' contracts were due to end in March 2012 thus creating an opportunity to jointly commission a single service.

- Resolved:-**
- (a) That a future service be jointly commissioned with Stoke on Trent City Council to combine both Councils' resources and to develop a service which meeting the need of both authority areas whilst maximising efficiencies.

#### **13. CABINET RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY TASK GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS**

A report was submitted to enable Cabinet members to consider and respond to the report and recommendations of the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group that was set up

to review plans for the disposal and development of surplus Council-owned land (seven particular sites).

In the majority of areas the report was completely accepted by the Cabinet and where this was not the case it was principally due to the fact that that Cabinet had no authority to permit its capacity as established by the 2000 Act to be trammelled.

**Resolved:** - (a) That the Newcastle Development Programme (NDP) Scrutiny Task and Finish Group, and all those involved in supporting the review process, be thanked for their report and recommendations in respect of this matter.

(b) That it be confirmed that no further decision be taken at this stage regarding disposal of the seven NDP sites.

(c) That the appropriateness of development, in land-use planning terms, of the seven NDP sites along with all other surplus non-operational land belonging to the Council, be reviewed as part of the forthcoming Site Allocations Development Plan Document process.

(d) That future versions of the Council's Asset Management Strategy incorporate an annual planned disposals programme, as appropriate, supported by the three important qualifications set out in the Report:-

(i) That this programme is accompanied by appropriate site specific technical information ;

(ii) That a clear process be established for effective community and stakeholder consultation along with a summary report of the outcome of public consultation and any related public consultation activities regarding individual sites and;

(iii) That clear evidence be provided of the proposal's alignment with the Council's financial capital planning process.

(e) That officers be instructed to undertake an annual review of the progress made with implementation of the North Staffs Green Spaces Strategy and the associated action plan to ensure that objective are being met.

(f) That members note the information regarding the Council's transformation programme which, through its associated sub-programme plan, 'The Way We Work' and the associated emerging programme 'The Business of the Council' is concerned with the organisational structure of the Council to promote greater efficiency in the way the Council operates as well as ensuring greater accessibility for all to decision making processes.

(g) That further member training be provided, as appropriate, so that members have a fuller understanding both of Asset Management and strategic policy making.

#### **14. ASSET DISPOSAL OF LAND AT DRAYTON ROAD**

Members received a report seeking authority for the freehold sale of 0.297 hectare (0.73 acres) of Borough Council owned land situated off Market Drayton Road,

Loggerheads to facilitate the development of a community fire station as part of the Staffordshire-wide improvement programme of such facilities.

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Services needed to provide a new fire station and this land had been identified as the most suitable development site in the area to meet operational requirements. Borough Council officers are satisfied that the disposal of this land is in the public interest and that market value will be obtained.

**Resolved:** - (a) That approval be given for the release of the property which is required by Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority for the construction of a new community fire station subject to the granting of planning permission.

(b) That the provisionally agreed sale terms be agreed.

15. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

**COUNCILLOR STEPHEN SWEENEY**  
**Chair**