

## **ASSET POLICY COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, 9th December, 2015

**Present:-** John Sellgren – in the Chair  
Councillors Huckfield, Loades, Reddish, Shenton, Sweeney, Turner and Williams

### **1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR.**

The Committee agreed that Mr Ronald Dougan, one of the independent members would be asked to consider chairing the Committee in the future and that the Chief Executive take the Chair for this meeting.

### **2. CONFIRMATION OF THE INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE.**

Members considered that the current independent member on the Audit and Risk Committee may be appropriate to support this Committee. It was however thought that there could be a conflict of interest should the Keele Master Plan need to be considered by the Committee.

It was though that it would be desirable to appointment someone who knew the local housing market. Officers stated that this knowledge base would be covered by the appointment of Cushman and Wakefield as an independent valuation consultant.

Members requested that the two independent members who sat on the Governance Committee also be approached.

### **3. ARRANGEMENT FOR SUBSTITUTION.**

Each group had nominated substitutes and it as agreed that substitutions be permitted on the day of the meeting.

The named substitutes were:

Cllr Sweeney  
Cllr Holland  
Cllr Braithwaite  
Cllr Proctor.

Some concern was expressed regarding portfolio holders sitting on the Committee. Officers considered this and stated that as per the Member Code of Conduct, any Member with an interest should declare that interest at the start of the meeting and the appropriate course of action taken.

The report from this Committee would be considered by Full Council in January before being considered by Cabinet and as such the presence of Portfolio Holders on the Committee was not considered to be an issue in this instance as the report would be endorsed by all Councillors.

**4. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORK PROGRAMME.**

The following additional terms of reference were put forward for consideration:

1. That the Committee obtain independent advice on the saleable value of sites given the current market conditions.
2. That the Committee immediately draw up a list of non-contentious sites, prepare planning applications for them and prepare for disposal.
3. That any actions take into consideration the Government Safeguarding direction and the impact of the HS2 route.

A query was raised as to whether there was a plan of all the land the Council currently owned as the remit of the Committee covered all land in Council ownership.

Some Members considered that such a list should be modified to only include only land that was saleable in a reasonable timescale.

Officers stated that there was an Asset Management Strategy in existence already that included a list of sites that had been through due process and that it would be most helpful to consider and make a decision on this list in the first instance. Should all sites be included then there may be pieces of land with other policy constraints attached.

The Committee agreed that a full list of Council owned land and assets, the designation of those lands and assets and a copy of the map showing them be provided for the next meeting.

Members queried whether the list would include estimates of the value of the land and assets. Officers stated that this may not be particularly beneficial given the constraints on some sites and that some of the values would be nominal (based upon existing use).

It was agreed that the Committee needed to look at all pieces of land in order to ascertain what was required in the short term to enable the Council to recognise its capital receipts prior to consideration of more long term requirements.

Members considered whether local knowledge and local councillors could also be brought to the Committee when specific sites were being considered.

**Resolved:**

- a) That the additional terms of reference be agreed;
- b) That a map showing all Council owned land, the designation of the land and where possible the land values be provided for the next meeting of the Committee.

**5. COMMISSIONING OF INDEPENDENT ANALYSIS.**

The Committee considered a letter regarding the appointment of a valuation consultant. The work would include a freehold valuation for 25 parcels of land.

The Committee agreed that the word 'optimum' be removed from the letters so that the work requested the 'realistic' value of the land.

Concerns were raised that the three quotes listed in the letter were very far apart. Officers agreed to provide information to Members as why this was the case, outside of the meeting.

**6. NON-CONTROVERSIAL SITES.**

A list of proposed non-controversial sites was distributed to the Committee for consideration.

**Resolved:**

- a) That the Block One Sites be agreed as non-controversial and that the Council proceed with the various actions as previously planned and approved; Former Maxims, Lower Street, Gloucester Road, Kidsgrove and Former St Giles and St Georges School, Barracks Road.
- b) That the Block Two Sites be agreed as non-controversial and that the Council proceed with the various actions as previously planned and approved; Knype Way, Bradwell and Deans Lane, Red Street.
- c) That the Committee recognise as controversial the sites listed in Block Three; Land at Eccleshall Road, Loggerheads.
- d) That the Committee recognise as controversial the sites listed in Block Four; Sandy Lane, May Bank; Land at St Edmunds Avenue, Porthill; Stafford Avenue, Clayton; Whitfield Avenue, Westlands and Land at Hillport Avenue, Porthill.
- e) A request to Cabinet that the planning application in respect of land at Eccleshall Road, Loggerheads be withdrawn and no further work be undertaken on any of the sites in blocks 3 and 4 whilst the Committee progress its work and that an update be provided to the next meeting.

**7. DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS.**

Wednesday 16 <sup>th</sup> December	10.00 to 13.00	RR6
Wednesday 6 <sup>th</sup> January	10.00 to 16.00	CR1
Wednesday 13 <sup>th</sup> January	10.00 to 13.00	CR2

**Chair**