

## **ASSET POLICY COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, 13th January, 2016

**Present:-** David Adams – in the Chair

Councillors Beech, Huckfield, Loades, Reddish, Shenton, Tagg and Turner

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Cllr John Williams.

Cllr Beech was present as a substitute for Cllr Williams.

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The following amendments were requested in relation to the minutes:

- a) That sites be referred to by name rather than number.
- b) That the document tabled by Cllr Huckfield be published with the site values removed.
- c) That the vote taken in relation to the tabled motion be recorded as a named vote.
- d) That the site listing be published with the values put into bands rather than being individual site specific valuations.
- e) That the presentation by Cushman and Wakefield be published as a confidential appendix.
- f) That the column on the site schedule relating to adverse community views be removed.

**Resolved:** That the amendments to the minutes be agreed.

### **4. REVIEW OF THE DRAFT ASSET MANAGEMENT POLICY**

Officers confirmed that the tabled report was intended to form the basis of the report that would be presented to Full Council on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2016.

Members considered whether it was necessary to exclude the public from the meeting but agreed that this would only be required should specific confidential information need to be referred to and discussed.

Members considered the title of the report and agreed to amend it to take account of the fact that it would be dealing with the capital programme funding delivery plan and the strategic framework for the disposal of surplus assets.

It was noted that information had been added under section 4 in relation to the possibility of prudential borrowing and that discussions relating to capital investment were also reflected in the draft report.

Members requesting that wording be added under section 5 (1) to show that the Council also owned land that was used as public amenity space and that the term 'leisure facilities' replace swimming pool under (3).

It was suggested that the Council should reconsider its current approach to community consultation; possible by the setting up of a working group. This was based on concerns that the Council was not currently convincing residents of the required outcomes in relation to the disposal of assets.

Concerns were raised that such a review would hold up any asset disposals and the timing of receipts. Officers stated that there was already a consultation and communications policy within the current Asset Management Strategy and that a way forward would be for officers to work with members regarding this rather than starting from scratch. Ward Councillors were already notified of any proposals two weeks before any action was taken which allowed Cllrs to liaise with residents and organise public meetings if appropriate.

Some Members voiced concerns that in reality the consultation process would start as soon as the sites listed in the motion agreed at the previous meeting were published. It was however confirmed that the current Asset Management Strategy already listed sites in a similar way.

Members stated any information published would need to be written in such a way as to make clear to the public the reasons behind it and the actual purpose of the document thus allowing ward Cllrs to begin informal discussions with their constituents should they wish to do so. Members also considered that it would be beneficial to include information regarding possible community concessions.

The recommendation was made that the current 2 week period within which ward Cllrs were made aware of asset disposal proposals be extended to 3 weeks and that ward Cllrs also be invited in to meet with Officers (it was confirmed that letters sent to ward Cllrs already made this offer).

Members considered section 6 of the draft report and expressed some concerns that the motion agreed at the last meeting had listed the sites by year and had mentioned other development which did not appear to be in the draft report.

Officers agreed that the split over the years could be represented in the final report and that the other sites were referred to on page 7 of the draft report.

The Committee considered part B of section 5 regarding sites in the Newcastle-West/Keele area.

Officers confirmed that a master planning exercise was already underway and asked whether the Committee wanted to exclude all non-former Keele Golf Course sites from the exercise. It was stated that the motion agreed at the last meeting had only referred to the former Keele Golf Course and that all other Council-owned land in that area was expected to fall under section C of that motion.

**Resolved:**

- a. Those officers consult with local members about any proposed sales in accordance with the Council's current consultation procedure in the Asset Management Strategy but to extend this for a further week.

- b. That Members be urged to use the additional time to determine the most appropriate consultation approach with their constituents.
- c. That officers prepare a communications strategy to explain the rationale underpinning the land disposal programme and to explain the process for local representations being taken into account in any disposal
- d. That wording be included under point 2 on page 8 regarding the fact that some land could be for community use.
- e. That the paragraph beginning “Regarding the case” on page 9 incorporates a sentence regarding viability issues when assessing some sites.
- f. That alphabetical lettering is incorporated for each conclusion after “Accordingly” (page 9).
- g. That “the majority of Committee members” is used rather than “the Committee members” where appropriate.
- h. That the Second list of sites to be split into the target years for disposal.
- i. That a sentence regarding responses from community consultation be included.
- j. That no more than 3 of the larger sites be agreed for disposal at any one time.
- k. That the Majority of Committee members consider the former Keele Golf Course is surplus and should be identified for disposal as a matter of principle, subject to addressing its Planning status.
- l. That the final report, including the amendments agreed, be recommended for approval to the Special Council meeting on 27 January 2016.

5. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

**DAVID ADAMS**  
Chair