

## **CABINET**

Wednesday, 5th March, 2014

**Present:-** Councillor Gareth Snell – in the Chair

Councillors Mrs Beech, Kearon, Turner, Williams and Mrs Shenton

1. **APOLOGIES**

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

3. **MINUTES**

**Resolved:-** That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 February, 2014 be agreed as a correct record.

4. **KEELE GOLF CENTRE**

Consideration was given to a report on the future use and/or development of the Keele Golf Course. Members were informed that only one complaint had been received with regard to its closure. The buildings had been secured and services had been cut off.

RMW Golf who had been selected to take a 25 year lease of the site were now unable to carry out the project and therefore medium to long term arrangements needed to be sought.

Members examined the long-list options analysis matrix and the areas that had been shortlisted. However, it was important not to rule out other community uses and leisure facilities and not to concentrate on another golfing facility. Further, the interim usage would have to take into consideration any future long term proposals in order not to damage the site to excess.

**Resolved:-**

- a) That officers be authorised to engage with nearby/adjacent land owners with a view to jointly commissioning a comprehensive master-planning exercise, involving Borough Council owned land in the area in order to establish the most appropriate long term use for the Keele Golf Course site.
- b) That officers report back on the outcome of the land owner engagement process and to seek approval for a two stage master planning exercise beginning with a scoping report to identify its physical parameters, with any budgetary approval being sought from Council as necessary.
- c) That officers be authorised to undertake a limited maintenance regime on the basis described in the report until the outcome of the master planning exercise is known.
- d) That officers be authorised to undertake security measures described in the report.
- e) That officers be authorised to see expressions of interest in some form(s) of interim use for a period of up to three years.

- f) That officers keep under review the holding costs attributed to the Keele Golf Course and take all appropriate steps to minimise the same.
- g) That a wider, broader leisure use be kept in mind.

**5. LOCAL PLAN UPDATE**

A report on the proposed Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke on Trent Local Plan Programme was considered by Members. The Plan was in draft form and it was hoped to be signed off and published by the third quarter of 2016.

The list of the eight key stages of the Joint Local Plan were examined and Members were given an update on the formal stance of Stoke on Trent City Council.

A Joint Advisory Group would be created with an equal cross party membership and the relevant officers. Its purpose would be to ensure its delivery rather than the content of the Plan.

Councillor John Williams, portfolio holder for Planning and Assets, stressed that all political parties should be involved in this process with all Members examining the Plan in respect of their Ward. This would help to make the Plan a success for the future of the Borough.

Councillor Terry Turner, portfolio holder for Economic Regeneration, Business and Town Centres, congratulated the officers who had achieved the Local Plan in a short space of time.

**Resolved:-**

- 1) That Cabinet agree to the draft work programme for the production of the joint Local Plan, set out in the report.
- 2) That Cabinet agree to the creation of a Joint Advisory Group to support the delivery of the joint Local Plan and that in the interests of expediency the determination of the membership and terms of reference for the Joint Advisory Group be delegated to the Director of Regeneration and Development in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Assets.
- 3) That Cabinet agree to the preparation of a joint Statement of Community Involvement with Stoke-on-Trent City Council.

**6. RENEWAL OF MICROSOFT SOFTWARE LICENSING**

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval for the renewal of the Microsoft Agreement and Software Assurance contract which is due to expire in May, 2014.

The Microsoft Enterprise Agreement gives the Council the best overall pricing based on the size of the organisation.

**Resolved:-** That the Council renews its Microsoft Enterprise Agreement and Software Assurance for the supply of Microsoft products, licensing and software maintenance for a further three years, through the procurement and appointment of a certified Microsoft Reseller.

**7. CASE MANAGEMENT POLICY FOR COUNCILLORS - UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR & ACTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

A Case Management Policy for Councillors – Unacceptable Behaviour and Actions by Members of the Public was presented to Members. A current Policy, approved in 2013 provided guidance for staff but did not specifically cover Councillors.

The Policy would provide guidance and support on how to deal with members of the public who display unacceptable behaviour and actions.

The document was welcomed by Members and a request was made to include the subject in the New Members Induction Programme.

**Resolved:-** That the Case Management Policy for Councillors be approved.

**8. COMMERCIAL WASTE (KEELE)**

Consideration was given to a report highlighting the opportunity for tendering for a medium sized recycling and waste management contract. It would enable Keele University to be offered a value for money service that fulfils their environmental requirements.

The contract would commence on 1 August, 2014 for a three year period and, subject to satisfactory performance as determined by the University, an option to extend for a further three years.

The success of this tender would assist in the rolling out of a borough-wide trade waste recycling service.

**Resolved:-**

- 1) That the Cabinet agrees with the submission of a tender and authorises Officers to enter into a contract if the Councils bid is successful.
- 2) That subject to the above, Cabinet delegates the authority to finalise the tender for the contract, agree the necessary up front funding requirements and enter into a contract with Keele University to the Executive Director (Operational Service) after consultation with the Executive Director (Resources and Support Services), the Monitoring Officer, Cabinet Portfolio Holder - Finance and

Resources and Cabinet Portfolio Holder - Environment and Recycling.

**9. IRRECOVERABLE ITEMS**

In the absence of Councillor Stubbs, portfolio holder for Finance and Budget Management, the Council's Executive Director for Resources and Support Services, Kelvin Turner introduced a report explaining how there were occasions when, following the issue of accounts for amounts due to the council, it was considered the debt was no longer able to be collected. This could be for a variety of reasons, normally following from the debtor having been subjected to insolvency proceedings or other legal processes in respect of their debts or even the death of a debtor. There was then no further redress to recover the outstanding amounts and it was necessary to write off the outstanding balances from the council's records.

Appendices were submitted setting out collection procedures and a list of recoverable items. It was reported that the appendices contained exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 3 of Schedule 12A of Part I of the Local Government Act 1972, and were therefore not for publication. In the event of the discussion taking a course where it was likely that exempt information would be disclosed, it would be necessary for the Cabinet to exclude the press and public from the meeting.

It was noted that where limited companies which became insolvent, the law allowed those holding directorships and similar positions within them to start up similar businesses almost immediately, unencumbered by the debts of the previous organisation, and this was considered a legal loophole when efforts were made to recover the debts owed by those companies.

**Resolved:-** That the items set out in Appendix B to the report be considered irrecoverable for the reasons stated and be written off.

**10. Disclosure of Exempt Information**

**COUNCILLOR GARETH SNELL**  
**Chair**