

My Ref: GS/SH

Councillor Stephen Sweeney  
Leader of the Opposition  
Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council  
Civic Offices  
Merrial Street  
Newcastle-under-Lyme  
ST5 2AG

25<sup>th</sup> February 2014

Dear Councillor Sweeney

Re: Asset Management Strategy

It has been clear from the comments that you and your group have made regarding the Asset Management Strategy that your group is not opposed, in principle, to the idea of selling council owned assets to generate capital receipts for future investment.

My administration has been clear in our political decisions that, even in the face of severe Government cuts, we wish to invest in the Borough and ensure that our community assets, our council buildings, our fleet and vehicles and our investment in affordable and social housing is all sustainable.

When the Asset Management Strategy was discussed at the call-in held on the 6th February 2014, your group proposed that a cross-party group consider preparing a new list of potential disposal sites, including those originally considered under the former 'Newcastle Development Programme'.

Your group has argued that the decision by my cabinet to remove the Newcastle Development Programme sites from consideration, as promised in our manifesto, has put unfair pressure on remaining council assets and therefore a fresh start was required.

While this aim is understandable, it appears to be at odds with the public campaigns being led by your party and supported by members of your group who are seeking exemption for sites that are currently under consideration.

Given this confusion and your group's clear objection to the sites currently listed for consideration, I have made arrangements for you and your group to meet with Neale Clifton in order for you to draw up your own proposals on which sites should be considered for disposal in order to meet our capital future requirements.

I will also be placing an item of the April Cabinet agenda to allow you or your nominated representative to present your proposals of which sites which you would consider to be more appropriate for disposal.

Alternatively, I have also made arrangements for you to meet with Kelvin Turner to propose alternative ways of financing the future capital demands, including determining which services you would cut in order to facilitate the immense costs associated with borrowing sufficient capital to meet need.

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I make this offer in good faith and look forward to seeing your alternative proposals on the 2nd April 2014.

Regards

Councillor Gareth Snell  
Leader, Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council

cc: Mr John Sellgren, Chief Executive  
Mr Neale Clifton  
Mr Kelvin Turner