

CABINET

Wednesday, 2nd April, 2014

Present:- Councillor Gareth Snell – in the Chair

Councillors Kearon, Turner, Stubbs, Williams and Mrs Shenton

Also in attendance: Mrs Amanda Lloyd – Staffordshire County Council (for item 4 only).

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs Beech

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Mrs Elizabeth Shenton declared an interest – Chair to Newcastle-under-Lyme Sports Council

3. **MINUTES**

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

4. **BETTER CARE FUND**

Consideration was given to a report on the Better Care Fund. The fund is being created from a number of different existing budgets (and from April 2015 will include the Disabled Facilities Grant) aims to provide people with better integrated care and support in Staffordshire.

Mrs Amanda Lloyd from Staffordshire County Council was in attendance and briefed Members on its purpose and basic principles.

The Better Care Fund Staffordshire was a national requirement, pooling funds between the County Council and Clinical Commissioning Groups (amongst other organisations).

Concerns were raised regarding the number of versions of the document that had been brought before the Cabinet and that, as a live document, further versions could emerge prior to the Friday evening deadline (for submission). The version being considered was version 13 which was circulated at the meeting.

This later version reflected changes such as more support for the frail elderly, a shortfall in the funding for the Social Care Fund and a major change in the National Conditions section of the report entitled 'protecting Social Care Services', (which clarified the position of the need to protect the Better Care Fund). In addition, the section on Risk had been enhanced.

Appendix B of the report showed outcomes, finance and metrics giving targets which were hopefully achievable, according to Mrs Lloyd.

A colleague of Mrs Lloyd's, Mr Hugh Evans had been developing the Stoke on Trent's Better Care Fund and had been working closely with Mrs Lloyd to ensure that the two documents were aligned. Mr Evans attended this Council's Transformation and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 March, 2014.

The Leader stated that he would welcome the Borough Council's involvement in the whole work programme, if possible and not just involvement in the supporting people in their own homes sector. There was a need to subscribe to this in order to move forward. The process was going to happen and the Leader stated that he was comfortable to say that he was happy to go along with the document in principle but requested that he be kept fully up to date with the changes made before the Friday deadline.

Resolved:-

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (ii) That the draft Better Care Fund Plan submission up to the end of 2015/16, whilst reserving the right to review this endorsement at the end of 2015/16, pending a wholesale review of Disabled Facilities Grant funding to the Borough Council after 2015/16, be endorsed.
- (iii) That authority be delegated to the Leader of the Council to agree and sign off the Better Care Fund submission on behalf of the Council subject to the Leader receiving tracked-changes documents of amendments as soon as they become available.

5. ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY - CONSERVATIVE LAND SALE PROPOSALS

Councillor Sweeney had been invited to the meeting to address the Cabinet on his Group's position regarding the Asset Management Strategy. It was confirmed that Councillor Sweeney had requested Councillor Loades to speak on this item.

There was no documentation to circulate to Members at this time. An overview had been put together but had not been agreed by the Conservative Group.

Councillor Loades had concerns on the evidence base in relation to the Strategy and also the assets suggested for disposal. He had requested, at an Economic Development Scrutiny meeting, the setting up of a task and finish group to ensure that all areas had been fully researched.

Concerns were also raised regarding the consultation process as it was felt that this had been poor.

Due to a perceived lack of evidence supporting the disposal of brown-field sites, the Conservative Group felt that they could not put together their own Asset

Management Strategy. The green-field sites which had been proposed would always prove difficult to dispose of.

A request was made to exclude the public and press as Councillor Loades wished to discuss the estimated valuations of particular sites.

Resolved:- That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following information because it is likely that there will be disclosure of exempt information as defined in 7a in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972.

The meeting then went into Closed Session

The Conservative Group understood the need for the disposal of assets but the figures were grossly overvalued and proof was required that the proposed sites were the correct ones to sell. More time was needed for consultation.

Councillor Loades thanked the Executive Director (Regeneration and Development) for the information which had been supplied.

Resolved:- That the meeting be re-opened.

The meeting then went back into Open Session and the press and public in attendance re-joined the meeting.

Councillor Loades expressed concern that the values attributed to the assets may not be correct and therefore the revenue may not be as much as expected which could result in the Council disposing of the wrong assets.

It was stated that at present, the Council's portfolio of available brown-field stock was nil. There were no sites that were available / developable.

The Council's Head of Communications advised Members that the consultation process had included using social media, local media and a consultation framework was put in place. In addition, discussions had been held with the Council's Property Manager, Councillors and residents.

Resolved:- That the information be received and the comments noted.

6. DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF

Consideration was given to a report regarding the granting of Discretionary Rate Relief for charitable and not for profit organisations occupying business premises within the borough where it is deemed appropriate.

Resolved:- That, in accordance with Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, Discretionary Rate Relief is granted or refused in respect of the organisations and premises indicated in the report.

7. NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME SPORTS COUNCIL - GRANT AID 2014/15

Consideration was given to a report regarding the awarding of a grant to the Newcastle-under-Lyme Sports Council for 2014/15.

The Sports Council was an outside body and it was felt that its governance arrangements needed to be looked at for its future operation, particularly to ensure that the process of administering grants was efficient.

In addition, it needed to be ascertained as to whether the Sports Council was the best method to provide grants to individuals and groups.

Members agreed that it was a worthwhile cause and that confidence grew in the youngsters who benefited from support.

The Sports Persons Evening was mentioned which recognised sporting achievements of the Borough's up and coming athletes.

- Resolved:-**
- (i) That a grant of £19,000 be awarded to the Newcastle –under-Lyme Sports Council, by the Cabinet, to support the contribution it makes to sport in the borough
 - (ii) The Cabinet requests that the Sports Council undertake a review of its governance arrangements and makes recommendations on alternative approaches which could reduce the cost of administering the allocation of grants.
 - (iii) The Cabinet requests that this review also considers the mechanism by which those elected Members nominated to serve on the Sports Council provide stewardship of monies allocated by the Borough Council in accordance with the Council's Constitutional provisions.
 - (iv) The Cabinet requests that the Sports Council come forward with proposals within the next three months.

8. SHORT TERM HIRE OF REFUSE COLLECTION VEHICLES

Consideration was given to a report on the need for the short term hire of vehicles across the Council Fleet and to agree the approval and award process for tendering.

Members were advised that the revenue budget was in place to meet the requirements as set out in the agenda.

- Resolved:-**
- (i) That it be agreed that officers proceed with the tendering process.
 - (ii) That, subject to the above, the Cabinet delegates the authority to award the contract to

the Executive Director (Operational Services) after consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder – Environment and Recycling.

9. REVIEW OF ALLOTMENT SERVICE

Members considered a report regarding the outcome of the work of the Active and Cohesive Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with regard to the Allotments Policy.

The Cabinet expressed their thanks to Councillors' Cairns and Bailey and all of the other Members who had been involved in the process.

Councillor Bailey thanked the Cabinet for their comments and support.

Resolved:-

- (i) That the report be received
- (ii) That the findings of the Active and Cohesive Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee be endorsed by the Cabinet and that the draft Allotments Policy be approved for consultation.
- (iii) That a report be brought to a future meeting of the Cabinet detailing the outcome of the consultation on the draft Allotments Strategy and recommending that the Strategy is formally adopted, subject to any changes arising from the consultation responses.

10. CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT REVIEW INITIAL RESPONSE

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval for the proposal for on street Civil Parking Enforcement within the Borough to continue to be operated on behalf of Staffordshire County Council.

All Councils have been given twelve months notice of a comprehensive review going ahead.

Resolved:-

- (i) That the report be received
- (ii) That, the proposal to continue to undertake on street Civil Parking Enforcement on behalf of the county council under the terms contained within the report, be approved.
- (iii) That a report be brought to the July Cabinet meeting regarding the mixed arrangements for Civil Parking Enforcement across the County.

11. PROPOSAL FOR SELECTIVE LICENSING

Members considered a report outlining the Councils proposal for Selective Licensing to address areas of low demand and anti – social behaviour.

Members' attention was drawn to the Galleys Bank estate in Kidsgrove. The condition of the properties ranges from very good to poor. There are properties that people have bought and maintain well and those belonging to absentee landlords.

The Council has had a voluntary scheme in place for some time but landlords did not take it up.

Selective Licensing would protect those on the estate who look after their property and surroundings.

The scheme will mean that all landlords have to register and pay a fee, If the fee is not paid then they cannot be a landlord. In addition, landlords would have to take steps to avoid anti-social behaviour. Finally, they would have to carry out repairs and give their contact details.

The License fee would pay for the administration of the scheme.

The Council's Chief Executive expressed his thanks to Councillor Mrs Astle for her assistance in arranging a tour of the estate for officers and Members.

Resolved:- That officers be authorised to take the necessary steps to prepare a Business Case for the introduction of a Selective Licensing scheme with a detailed report setting out the scheme proposal to be prepared for a future Cabinet,

COUNCILLOR GARETH SNELL
Chair