

CABINET

Wednesday, 25th March, 2015

Present:- Councillor Mike Stubbs – in the Chair

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

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Kearon.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

Resolved: That the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as a correct record.

4. PETITION FROM RESIDENTS REGARDING LAND AT THE BUTTS

A report was submitted to inform Cabinet of the decision taken at the meeting of Full Council on 25th February 2015 in relation to a petition regarding Land at the Butts and matters relating to the Joint Local Plan and the Green Spaces Strategy.

Resolved:

a) That Cabinet note the decision made by Full Council at the meeting held on Wednesday 25th February 2015.

b) That Cabinet resolve to ask officers to review the matters raised by the petition and to bring a report for consideration at a future meeting.

c) That the petition organiser be kept informed about the process to be undertaken.

5. ESTABLISHMENT OF A CABINET PANEL - CAPITAL

A report was submitted requesting Cabinet to establish a cross-party Cabinet Panel to make recommendations to Cabinet to consider the spending priorities of the council's capital programme and to review asset disposals required to meet future capital expenditure commitments.

Resolved:

(a) That a Capital Programme Cabinet Panel be established with a membership of five appointed on the basis of political proportionality (Labour 3; Conservative 1; Liberal Democrat 1).

(b) That a portfolio holder be appointed to chair the panel.

(c) That the Group Leaders be requested to make nominations for membership of the panel from their respective groups in accordance with (a) above.

(d) That the Panel make recommendations to Cabinet in respect of the Council's future capital programme.

(e) That Cllr John Williams be the Chair of the Cabinet Panel

6. ESTABLISHMENT OF A CABINET PANEL - CONCURRENT FUNDING

A report was submitted requesting Cabinet to establish a cross-party Cabinet Panel to make recommendations to Cabinet regarding the concurrent funding paid to Parish Councils under Section 136 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Portfolio holder highlighted the importance of setting up this Panel as soon as possible in order for the 2015/2016 grant to be agreed.

Resolved:

(a) That a cross party Cabinet Panel be established with a membership of five appointed on the basis of political proportionality (Labour 3; Conservative 1; Liberal Democrat 1).

(b) That the portfolio holder for Finance and Resources be appointed to chair the panel.

(c) That the Group Leaders be requested to make nominations for membership of the panel from their respective groups in accordance with (a) above.

(d) That the intention to put in place arrangements for the portfolio holder for Finance and Resources to make decisions in response to recommendations of the cross-party panel be noted.

(e) That it be noted that Part 3 of the council's constitution (Scheme of Delegation) will be amended to show the inclusion of this responsibility in the list of responsibilities for the exercise of Cabinet functions.

7. HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY REVIEW

A report was submitted which presented proposed changes to the Joint Housing Allocations policy. The Review of the Joint Allocations Policy had been completed, having gone through a further 4 week period of consultation which ended on the 2nd March 2015. The report outlined the proposed changes to the policy and sought the approval of the revised Housing Allocations Policy.

Resolved:

That the revised Housing Allocations Policy be agreed.

8. STAFFORDSHIRE COMPACT

A report was considered regarding the Stafford Compact. Newcastle Borough Council was a signatory to the current Staffordshire Compact, which set out the

principles of a good working relationship between the public and voluntary/community sectors.

An updated version of the Staffordshire Compact was drafted by VAST and went out for consultation during autumn 2014.

Newcastle Borough Council had been asked to sign up to the new Compact in advance of it going out to consultation with a view to endorsing the general approach being taken.

Resolved:

That the revised Staffordshire Compact be endorsed

9. FINANCIAL INCLUSION UPDATE

A report was submitted advising members of the extent of financial exclusion and over indebtedness in Newcastle under Lyme and to update members on work being delivered by the Council and its partners contributing to the financial inclusion agenda.

The report sought approval for continuation and further development of work that would tackle both the causes and consequences of financial exclusion and over indebtedness in the Borough.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

- a) Continue to support Officers to represent the Council and contribute to the work of the North Staffordshire Financial Inclusion Group (FIG) in order to ensure that the Borough benefits from the work set out in the FIG action plan.
- b) Endorse Officers in continuing to build on the work already undertaken to address issues faced by some of our most disadvantaged residents and to help to address wider social issues leading to positive outcomes. This focus of this work can be categorised into the following priorities;
 - i. Planning and responding effectively to the challenges of welfare reform;
 - ii. Contributing to and improving financial education
 - iii. Improving the access to financial services and affordable credit
 - iv. Improving the awareness of and access to quality debt advice and the promotion of savings and insurance.

10. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2015 -2018

A report was submitted to seek Cabinet approval for the Communications Strategy which covered the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2018. The document outlined how the Council would use good communications to build a stronger reputation, involve and inform residents, engage effectively with stakeholders and improve customer satisfaction.

Resolved:

That Cabinet approves the Communications Strategy 2015-18.

11. NEWCASTLE PARTNERSHIP - ACCOUNTABLE BODY

Following a report to Cabinet in February 2015, the report presented recommendations for approval to formalise the Borough Council's role as accountable body for the Newcastle Partnership.

This approval would enable the Partnership to progress locality commissioning activity on behalf of public sector partners in the Borough for the period 2015/16 and beyond.

Resolved:

- a) That Cabinet endorse the proposed 'Newcastle Partnership – Locality Commissioning - Roles and Responsibilities' document and accompanying letters of commitment from the County Council to therefore approve the formal appointment of the Borough Council as the accountable body for the Newcastle Partnership for the purposes of locality commissioning and as currently exercised under the Local Government Act (2000) relating to leading the co-ordination of Local Strategic Partnerships activity.
- b) That Cabinet authorise the Chief Executive, on behalf of the Borough Council, to sign the letter dated 27th February 2015 from Staffordshire County Council (SCC) (found at Appendix C), thereby authorising the transfer of up to £141,000 from SCC to the Borough Council for the purposes of locality commissioning and sign the 'Roles and Responsibilities' document at Appendix D.

12. NEWCASTLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: YEAR THREE REVIEW AND YEAR FOUR ACTION PLAN

A report was submitted requesting Cabinet to review progress made in taking forward the Borough's Economic Development Strategy, in particular by reviewing the progress in Year Three and considering the actions proposed in the Year Four Action Plan.

Resolved:

That the review of the Economic Development Strategy Year Three Action Plan be noted and that the Year Four Action Plan be approved following consideration of the Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommendations.

13. LOCALITY ACTION PARTNERSHIPS (LAPS) - FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

A report was submitted that showed progress reports from each of the nine Locality Action Partnerships (LAPs), highlighting their achievements during the last twelve months in relation to the three key strategic themes prioritised by the Borough Council and its partners, namely:

- Health and Well-being
- Economic Development
- Stronger and Safer Communities

The report sought Cabinet approval for the further development and ongoing support to LAPs in the nine localities across the Borough.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

- a) Acknowledges and endorses the progress reports produced by each of the nine Locality Action Partnerships (LAPs), which highlights their achievements during the last twelve months.
- b) Continues to support the work of the LAPs in the nine localities across the Borough and assists in enabling them to continue to contribute to the delivery of the Council's Co-operative Strategy through further development.
- c) Challenges the LAPs to;
 - a. proactively engage and contribute to Regeneration and Economic Development activity with Council Officers;
 - b. continue to share information, disseminate good practice and raise awareness of activity through the LAP Chairs group;
 - c. report further progress and activities back to Cabinet in 12 months to contribute to a further review of Council support.
- d) That a five member cross party Cabinet Panel (3 labour, 1 conservative and 1 liberal democrat) be set up to oversee the development of the LAPs.

14. DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF

A report was submitted requesting Cabinet to consider the granting of Discretionary Rate Relief in accordance with powers under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

Resolved:

That, in accordance with Section 47 of The Local Government Finance Act 1988, Discretionary Rate Relief is either granted or refused as per the recommendations detailed in Appendix A of the report.

15. IRRECOVERABLE ITEMS

A report was submitted requesting Cabinet to consider items deemed irrecoverable. For a variety of reasons, from time to time, it was considered that certain items were unable to be recovered from debtors. When this occurred, it was necessary to write off these balances from the appropriate Council account records.

Resolved:

That the items detailed at Appendix A be considered irrecoverable for the reasons stated and be written off.

16. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

COUNCILLOR MIKE STUBBS
Chair