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THE CABINET

20 July 2011

Present:- Councillor Sweeney in the Chair

Councillors Bannister, Howells, Jones, Reddish and Studd.

1. * **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Cabinet held on 15 June 2011 be approved as a correct record.

2. * **SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2011-2013**

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval to a revised Procurement Strategy and Action Plan in line with the Council's current objectives and priorities and the continued aims and objectives of the National Procurement Strategy for Local Government and to support the identification of ongoing savings.

Resolved:- (a) That the revised Procurement Strategy 2011-2013 be approved.

(b) That the Action Plan (Section 7) of the revised Procurement Strategy 2011-2013 be approved.

(c) That the 'Procurement Reviews and Identification of Ongoing Savings Plans be approved.

3. * **NEWCASTLE TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC REALM SCHEME (299/11)**

Pursuant to the above resolution a report was submitted detailing the results of the public consultation exercise on the above scheme and requesting a response to the representations made.

The proposals would reinforce the performance of the street market in the town centre, address the concerns of daytime traffic in Hassell Street and ensure that replacement 'fit for purpose' market stalls were procured.

Resolved:- (a) That Members approve the scheme in full for implementation including:

- (i) Introduction of a taxi rank and disabled parking and associated works at lower High Street in line with the general layout specified on Staffordshire County Council drawing number CDT6487-LH-R00-05
- (ii) Introduction of a taxi rank, changes to the layout of the disabled parking spaces, loading restrictions and associated works in the Ironmarket in line with the general layout specified on Staffordshire County Council.
- (iii) Revised access arrangements for Friars Street to facilitate 24-hour access to the Friars Street delivery area in line with the general layout

specified on Staffordshire County Council drawing number CDT6487/FS/R00/01.

- (iv) Introduction of new 10ft wide and 15ft deep market stalls into the market area in High Street in the general layout specified in drawing NTCPR/JK1.
- (v) Introduction of new market pitches in that section of Hassell Street between its junction with Market Lane and High Street.

(b) That a decision on the potential merger of the Wednesday and Thursday market be referred back for consideration at a future meeting of Cabinet after a further assessment of the business case has been completed by officers.

(c) That Staffordshire County Council be requested to obtain a price for the implementation of the Friars Street works with a view to the Borough Council contribution to this being funded from the Capital Programme Contingency Reserve.

4. * COLLECTION OF HOUSEHOLD BULKY WASTE

A report was submitted seeking approval to the contracting of the Council's bulky waste collection service to Furniture Mine by way of a contract let by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council in 2010.

The benefits of this proposal were submitted and included the opportunity for joint working and cost saving to the Borough Council.

Resolved:- (a) That the contract for the collection of household bulky waste for Newcastle-under-Lyme be awarded to Furniture Mine by way of the contract already let by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.

(b) That Furniture Mine start operations from 1 October 2011.

5. * CEMETERIES MEMORIAL SAFETY PROGRAMME 2011-2015

A report was submitted informing Members of the completion of the current cemeteries Memorial Safety Programme and seeking approval to a new five-year rolling programme together with the financial implications for the continued inspection and safety of all memorials within the Borough's cemeteries including the new facilities at Newcastle and Audley.

It was indicated that a sum of £70,000 had been included in the General Fund Capital Programme for the previous phase of the programme in 2005 of which £32,000 had been expended.

It was proposed that the underspending of £38,000 would be used to fund the new programme in years 1, 2, 3 and 4 (up to 2014/15) after which it was proposed to allocate a sum of £10,000 for the programme in year 5.

Resolved:- (a) That Cabinet reviews the completed Cemeteries Memorial Inspection and Safety Programme and considers a follow on rolling programme to re-inspect all memorials over a five year period.

(b) That the underspend from the 2005-10 programme be rolled forward to meet the costs of year 1-4 of the new 5 year programme and

that provision of £10,000 be made in the general fund capital programme for year 5 (2015/16).

(c) That long-term provision be made in the General Fund Revenue Programme to meet the cost of the inspection and safety programme from 2016/17 onwards.

6. * **NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME EQUESTRIAN STRATEGY**

A report was submitted seeking approval to the above Strategy and Action Plan and providing an update on the work of the Newcastle-under-Lyme Equestrian Forum. This would provide a framework for the future development of equestrian activities within the Borough.

Resolved:- That the Newcastle-under-Lyme Equestrian Strategy and Officer support to the Equestrian Forum be endorsed.

7. * **LYME VALLEY (NORTH) CYCLE ROUTE LINKS TO SCHOOL BID**

A report was submitted on a proposed project, led by the County Council, to create a cycle route in the Lyme Brook corridor and seeking approval to the scheme where it is located on Borough Council owned land.

It was indicated that the project would encourage walking and cycling in the Borough and would provide links to 3 local schools and increase opportunities for pupils to cycle to school.

Details of the proposed route of the cycleway were considered.

Resolved:- That the proposed scheme be approved.

8. * **JOINT HOUSING ALLOCATIONS REVIEW**

A report was submitted informing Members of a proposal within the Localism Bill to enable local authorities to review their housing allocations policies and outlining an approach to review the Borough's current policy.

It was indicated that the Localism Bill was not likely to gain Royal Assent until late 2011/early 2012 but as it would take more than a year to implement a review in line with the planned 12 month review following its implementation in June 2010.

Resolved:- That the consultation and review of the Joint Housing Allocations Policy be commenced in line with the 12 month review taking into account emerging issues within the Localism Bill.

9. * **AFFORDABLE RENT**

A report was submitted on proposals within the Affordable Housing HCA Framework to enable Registered Providers (developers who registered with the HCA) to either newly build or convert social housing re-lets into Affordable Rent and for Members to consider a proposed approach for consultation.

Details of the issues involved were submitted together with the Council's options in respect of affordable rents.

The preferred option was to allow Registered Providers to build new affordable rent homes and to enable partial conversions of existing social rented properties to affordable rents.

Resolved:- That consultation be commenced on the Council's preferred option as detailed above.

10. * **STRATEGIC TENANCY STRATEGY**

Consideration was given to a report in respect of proposals within the Localism Bill to place a duty on all local authorities to publish a Strategic Tenancy Strategy.

This strategy would set out broad objectives to be taken into consideration by all individual Social Landlords in the area regarding their own policies in the granting and re-issuing of tenancies. The strategy must be published within 12 months of the enactment of the Bill.

Resolved:- That the development and consultation of the Strategic Tenancy Strategy be commenced.

11. * **COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)**

Members were informed that the CIL regime gave powers to local planning authorities to set a local levy which would pay for a wide range of infrastructure works when new development took place.

A Staffordshire CIL group had been established involving all local authorities in the County with a view to sharing knowledge and developing best practice processes particularly in relation to assessing viability and cross boundary infrastructure.

The matter had been considered at a recent meeting of the Planning Committee (Strategic) where it was recommended that the Cabinet resolve to agree to the Council taking the necessary steps to become a charging authority under the CIL Regulations 2010, as amended.

Resolved:- (a) That Cabinet receives the resolutions made by the Council's Planning Committee at its meeting on 19 July 2011.

(b) That approval be given to the Council taking the necessary steps to become a charging authority under the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 as amended in accordance with the timetable set out in this report.

(c) That a further report be submitted for approval once a Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule has been prepared for consultation.

12. * **HIGH SPEED RAIL – CONSULTATION AND POTENTIAL RESPONSE**

A report was submitted on a consultation exercise being undertaken by the Department of Transport on the government's proposals for High Speed Rail 2 and on a response by the Cabinet which was required by 29 July.

It was not yet known whether the Borough was directly affected by the proposals but it was considered appropriate for a response to be made as there were potential sub regional transport and regeneration consequences.

Details of the responses made to date by other local authorities in Staffordshire were submitted.

It was suggested that the economic model that supported the proposal was flawed as the problems of large urban areas such as North Staffordshire were ignored and in addition the service between Stoke-on-Trent and London could be reduced.

It was considered that the views of the County Council should be supported in opposing the HS2 proposals on the grounds that it would potentially harm, the country's economy, the environment and did not have a sound business case.

Resolved:- That the Portfolio holder for Regeneration and Planning be authorised to approve the submission of the Borough Council's former response by the close of the consultation period on 29 July 2011.

13. * **JUBILEE 2 - UPDATE**

A report was submitted updating Members on progress with the provision of the new health and wellbeing facilities.

It was indicated that the work was currently over 70% complete and arrangements would be made for all Members to view the works in progress.

Resolved:- That the progress in the delivery of Jubilee 2 be noted.

14. * **RETENDERING OF UTILITIES CONTRACT**

It was reported that the present utilities contracts for the supply of both gas and electricity were scheduled to expire on 30 September 2011 following completion of the current 3-year contracts.

Details of proposals to procure and source the Council's future gas and electricity supplies were submitted.

Resolved:- That Cabinet agrees to:-

- (i) adopt central government's preferred route to market utilising compliant 'Purchasing Consortia' frameworks;
- (ii) establish and agree a contract period of three years for the Council's utility supply contracts;
- (iii) ratify the decision to appoint Buying Solutions (Government Procurement Service) as the Council's preferred framework provider, thereby authorising them to purchase energy on behalf of the Council as follows:-
 - a spot-purchase arrangement to be effective from the period September 2011 to March 2012 and;

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- purchasing within a framework contract from April 20112 for a period of 3 years, subject to annual review and with provision for a further 1 year extension by agreement between the parties.
- (iv) authorise officers to examine the potential options to achieve further efficiency savings and report back to Members, as appropriate;
- (v) that a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Cabinet on the effective management of the Automatic Meter Readings (AMR)

S J M SWEENEY
Chair