

CABINET

Wednesday 20 June 2012

Present:- Councillor G Snell – in the Chair

Councillors Mrs Bates, Mrs Beech Boden, Kearon, Stubbs and Williams

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2012 be agreed as a correct record.

3. REPLACEMENT FINANCIAL SYSTEM

A report was submitted to obtain approval to invite tenders for the replacement of the Council's financial accounting and management system. The current system had been in place since 2003 and was no longer supported by the software supplier. It was also desired to benefit from enhancements now available and to consider options for integration with other Council ICT systems. Seeking tenders would also provide reassurance that the Council was obtaining value for money in the provision of its financial system.

The Portfolio holder highlighted that the money required for the project was already in the existing budget and that this money would now be better spent to provide a better service for the Council.

Members expressed concerned regarding the fact that the current system would be difficult to restore in the event of a disaster due to its age and underlying technology. The question was raised as to whether any of the Councils other software systems would also suffer backup problems should there be a disaster. Officers agreed to feed back this information to the Chair who would communicate it to Cabinet Members.

Resolved: (a) That tenders be sought for a replacement financial system, within a guideline budget of £188,750

(b) That officers be authorised to invite tenders for a replacement system, via an appropriate framework agreement, including the current supplier in the process, and, following evaluation, to award the contract.

(c) That the cost be financed from the ICT Development Fund and existing revenue budget provision, as outlined in the report.

4. REVIEW OF COMMUNITY CENTRE PROVISION

Cabinet received a report seeking authority to commence a review of Community Centres provided by the Council and to establish a project group to undertake this work.

There were fifteen Community Centres within the Borough, which were currently operated by local management committees under an informal management agreement. Given the nature of this agreement there were a number of key issues that need to be addressed to ensure the long term sustainability of the Councils Community Centres.

The Portfolio holder highlighted ways in which savings could be made for Community Centres such as the shared acquisition of fuel and supplies and the rolling out of best practice as was currently in place in some community centres. The Chair agreed and stated that it was vital to ensure that money spent by the Council on community centres met the needs of the communities and that both current users and potential users would be included in the consultation process.

Resolved: (a) That Cabinet agree the scope and timeframe for the Community Centre review and the establishment of a project working group.

(b) That Cabinet agree to receive a future report in relation to the modernisation of Community Centre Provision within the Borough.

(c) That Cabinet request the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee form a Working Group or Task and Finish Group to shadow the work of the review group, and as part of its work visit each site, speak with committees, users and make recommendations to the Cabinet of the future of centres.

(d) That an interim report be submitted to Cabinet with the detailed plan of how the review will be conducted, including engagement with management committees and stakeholders, having obtained the Task and Finish Groups views on the plan.

(e) That officers submit regular updates and progress reports to the Task and Finish Group during the review period.

5. PUBLIC SECTOR COMMISSIONING IN PARTNERSHIP - COLLABORATIVE COMMISSIONING

A report was submitted to inform Cabinet of the work and outcomes of the Third Sector Commissioning Framework Project Group, to identify the opportunities (where available) for joining the collaborative approach being adopted as part of the Public Sector Commissioning in Partnership (PSCiP) work, to maximise efficiencies and to jointly commission services with other organisations, ensuring in the process that there is no detrimental effect on the overall service to residents of the Borough in line with service outlines.

The report had been discussed by the Active and Cohesive Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14 June 2012 and the Chair of that Committee raised the following concerns:

- That Newcastle under Lyme and Kidsgrove needed to be protected and that there were concerns that money would be allocated only to known hotspots.
- That if money was centralised at the County Council, the Borough would have no say as to where it would be spent.
- That that it was unknown which organisations would be putting in bids or as to whether these would be for profit or not for profit organisations.

- The majority of other local authorities appeared to be taking a back seat at this stage and that it should be 100% buy in from all.

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Town Centres stated that limitations would be applied through heads of terms and that these would hopefully satisfy the concerns raised. It was also confirmed that the Scrutiny Committee would be consulted further before any final decision was made.

Cabinet thanked the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved: (a) That Cabinet agree in principle that Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council as part of its commissioning process for 'information and advice' and 'infrastructure support' services join the PSCiP programme.

(b) That subject to agreement funding approximate to £163,000 of the possible £248,510 commissioning budget in years 2013/14 and 2014/15 be allocated to the PSCiP programme, this sum being paid to Staffordshire County Council who will commission the delivery of the service for the period highlighted.

(c) That your officers support PSCiP staff in the drafting of service outlines to reflect the needs of residents of the borough in the delivery of an 'information and advice' and 'infrastructure support' service.

(d) That your officers establish and agree as part of the work suitable reporting on outcomes to ensure delivery of a responsive service for residents of the borough.

(e) That in delivering the above objectives opportunities, as part of the aggregation of spend and delivery of a collaborative solution delivers savings for the authority.

6. **OUTCOMES FOLLOWING THE COMMISSIONING PROCESS WITH THE THIRD SECTOR**

A report was submitted regarding the Council's Third Sector Commissioning Framework's process, outcomes to date and future contracting. The Commissioning process with the voluntary/community (third sector) for 2012/13 had now commenced and officers had received submissions from prospective service providers for 5 of the 6 services identified. Expected returns for the sixth service 'Rough Sleepers Outreach Service' being commissioned with the City Council were expected during June 2012.

As the new contracts were due to commence from 1 July 2012 and as Cabinet did not meet again until 18 July 2012 approval was sought to complete the evaluation and award process with the support of the newly formed commissioning board and to finalise contracts. Following completion of the process an information paper informing Cabinet of the successful providers would be produced.

It was confirmed that Elected Members had looked through the bids prior to any decisions being made.

Resolved: (a) That the report be received

(b) That approval be given to finalise and award contracts following appraisal and review of submissions by the Commissioning Board

(c) That a subsequent information report be submitted to Cabinet informing them of the successful providers following completion of the commissioning process.

7. STRATEGIC REVIEW AND CONSOLIDATION OF ICT SYSTEMS

Cabinet received a report requesting approval to invite tenders for the replacement of the Council's financial accounting and management system.

The current system had been in place since 2003 and was no longer supported by the software supplier. It was also desired to benefit from enhancements now available and to consider options for integration with other Council ICT systems. Seeking tenders would provide reassurance that the Council was obtaining value for money in the provision of its financial system.

The Chair drew Members attention to section 8.1 of the report which highlighted the fact that there would be a total saving on software of approximately £100,000 over 5 years. Members congratulated the Head of Service for forward thinking in respect of ICT.

Resolved: That the strategy and course of action, as detailed in the report be agreed.

**G SNELL
Chair**