

CABINET

Wednesday, 19th October, 2011

Present:- Councillor Stephen Sweeney – in the Chair

Councillors Studd, J Bannister, N Jones and M Reddish

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Cabinet held on 7th September be approved as a correct record.

2. WORK OF THE NEW VIC THEATRE

The Committee welcomed Fiona Wallace from the New Vic Theatre and Members were asked to note the initial steps taken regarding the development of a Partnership Agreement with the North Staffs Theatre Trust in respect of funding for the New Vic Theatre from the Borough Council.

Miss Wallace explained that the New Vic had been the first purpose built theatre in the round in Europe and that in the previous year over 20,000 young people had attended the Christmas show which had been rated as one of the top 5 in the country along side other high profile organisations such as the Royal Shakespeare Company.

It was stated that one priority of the theatre was to raise the aspirations of all young people, particularly those from disadvantaged groups. A year long programme of Borderlines projects had been delivered with partners such as The Domestic Violence Unit, the Police and the Young Offenders Teams.

Members discussed the information attached at Appendix B to the report which detailed The New Vic and the Council's 2009 Sustainable Community Strategy. Attempts had been made to remove the economic burden of visiting the theatre through the introduction free tickets for those under 16 years of age and a £1 entrance fee for those on benefits and ACE free theatre initiate for those under 26. The theatre also worked with every secondary school in the Borough and approximately half of the primary schools. Drama was also being used as a teaching tool for the sciences.

It was also stated that the work of the New Vic Theatre was bringing over 1 million pounds of investment to the Borough including grants from the Arts Council and that it was generating approximately 11.6 million pounds for the local economy.

3. CORPORATE PLAN - 2012-13 TO 2014-15

Members considered the Corporate Plan 2012/13 to 2014/15. The Corporate Plan underpinned the whole planning structure of the Authority and informed how the Authority should act as the major driver behind nay budget proposals, longer-term strategic plans and the service planning process.

RESOLVED: That the adoption of the Corporate Plan be approved for 2012/13 to 2014/15.

4. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2012/13 TO 2016/17

Members received a report providing the background on the financial strategy for the Council over the next five years in the light of the national and local financial situation and taking into account the Council's priorities.

One of the main unknowns facing the plan at the moment was the uncertainty surrounding business rates but details regarding these were still unavailable from Central Government. Paragraph 2.6 of the report highlighted some specific areas that had been looked at in the budget service review, the areas included the management of vacant posts, modernisation and transformation of the Council and Joint working with other local authorities; all of these areas along with others were continuously monitored in order to detect any areas where savings could be made. Page 6 of the MTFS drew Members attention to the fact that in February 2011, Full Council had agreed the capital investment plan which provided for £21,638,800 of investment over a 2 year period in projects across all of the Council's priority areas. Page 10 of the strategy highlighted where the Council would have shortfalls over the next 5 years and a strategy had been developed to deal with these and would be considered by Cabinet in January before being presented to Full Council for approval. Encouraging feedback had also been received from the Audit Commission which deemed the Council to be well placed to face any current and upcoming financial difficulties.

The MTFS would be considered by the Transformation and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its next meeting on 2nd November 2011.

Members thanks the Executive Director (Resources and Support Services) and his team for the hard and impressive work being undertaken in such difficult financial times.

RESOLVED: (a) That the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2012/13 to 2016/17 be approved.

(b) That the report be referred to the Transformation and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee for comment.

5. APPLICATIONS FOR DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF

A report was presented regarding the granting of discretionary Rate Relief in accordance with powers under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

It was highlighted that the report contained only the new organisations applying for rate relief.

RESOLVED: That in accordance with Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, discretionary rate relief be granted in respect of the organisations and premises detailed in Appendix A to the report.

6. SITE ALLOCATIONS AND POLICIES DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT - SCOPE OF CONTENTS AND DRAFT TIMETABLE

Members received a report requesting agreement to a revised timetable for the Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document.

The preparation of the Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan document was included in the Council's approved Local Development Scheme and was a high priority in the Local Development Framework.

Newcastle Borough Council had already adopted a Core Spatial Strategy with Stoke on Trent City Council in November 2009 and the Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document was the next stage following this and would help to direct where future housing, retail, leisure facilities and employment would be located. There would be public consultation regarding the plan at every possible level and in a variety of ways to ensure that as many interested parties were involved as possible. It was stated that this approach had been endorsed by the planning committee at its last meeting.

RESOLVED: (a) That Cabinet agree to proceed with the preparation of the Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan in accordance with the draft timetable set out in the report.

(b) That a further report be submitted to a subsequent meeting on an issues paper together with further details of the consultation arrangements for the Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan.

7. HIGH VALUE HOUSING - NSRP STUDY FINDINGS

Members received a report presenting the findings of the RENEW North Staffordshire Regeneration partnership (NSRP) 'Executive Housing Market' study. The study would help to inform both the development of the Council's Asset Management Strategy and the formulation of planning policy, to be set out in the Local Development Framework.

RESOLVED: (a) That the RENEW NSRP Executive Housing Market Report be taken into account in any update of the Council's Asset Management Strategy, so that action can be taken to intervene in the 'Executive' housing market, if considered appropriate and necessary and that a further report be submitted for approval if this is deemed to be the case.

(b) That the RENEW NSRP Executive Housing Market Report be noted as a technical background document to inform the formulation of planning policies through the Local Development Framework

(c) That the recommendation of the Strategic Planning Committee that it's preferred option for the delivery of high value housing be through the Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan be endorsed.

8. A NEW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR THE BOROUGH

A report was received to allow Members to consider the first draft of a new Economic Development Strategy for the Borough.

Members thanks the Economic development and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee for its comments regarding the draft Strategy which had been incorporated into the report. All and any feedback regarding the draft report was

welcome and it was highlighted that the Strategy was intended to be a public document for use by people and businesses coming into the Borough.

RESOLVED: (a) That the Draft Economic Development Strategy, subject to modifications suggested by Cabinet and Scrutiny, be used as a basis for consulting with partner organisations, the local business community, LAPs and the Economic Development strand of the Newcastle Partnership.

(b) That any comments be received be reported back to Cabinet for consideration.

9. **RENEW NORTH STAFFS HOUSING MARKET RENEWAL PATH FINDER 2003-2011**

A report was received informing Members of the conclusion of the Renew Housing Market Renew (HMR) Pathfinder initiative 2003-2011 and its achievements within the Borough.

Members considered that there had been some great achievements in the Borough thanks to the initiative such the development on Lower Mile House Lane and agreed that the project had been cut down in its prime. Other ways were now being considered to continue the good work and areas such as Galleys Bank where there had been serious issues with absentee landlords were prime candidates for development.

RESOLVED: (a) That the Renew HMR Pathfinder Programme 2003-2011 and its achievements in Newcastle be noted.

(b) That the Council continues to work with both funding and delivery partners to optimise the prospects of further development/initiatives being implemented that are consistent with the objectives of the Renew Programme.

10. **DISPOSAL OF KNUTTON RECREATION CENTRE**

A report was submitted regarding the outcome of the call-in regarding the disposal of Knutton Recreation Centre and the response to this from Cabinet.

It was stated that the main emphasis regarding the future of the site and the new facilities and developments planned had to be on public consultation and that this had been happening throughout the project and would continue to happen through to its conclusion.

RESOLVED: (a) That the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee be received and that the Committee be thanked for its views.

(b) That Members reaffirm the Cabinet decision made on 15th June 2011 with the additional recommendations as follows:

- That the Council commits to undertaking a public consultation process supported by any preferred purchaser prior to the submission of any planning application for development of the subject land.
- That any marketing particulars clarify:
 - The Council's expectation of compliance with the current policy regarding the provision of affordable housing and;
 - The potential for inclusion of a convenience store.

- That the outcome of any public consultation process be reported back to Cabinet as part of any final report to dispose of the subject land.

11. RYECROFT CAR PARK

Members received a report seeking authority to introduce an off street parking order on the Ryecroft Car Park. The Portfolio Holder clarified that the parking would be limited to the ground floor levels and that any suggestions regarding paying on exit were currently not economically viable.

RESOLVED: (a) That the introduction of an off-street parking order on the Ryecroft Car Park.

(b) That charges be approved as detailed in the report.

(c) That the portfolio holder be authorised to confirm the order in due course.

12. PRIMARY AUTHORITY SCHEME

Members were asked to consider a report regarding options for Newcastle under Lyme to form a partnership between the local authority and a business to provide environmental health regulatory advice and support by assessing both the benefits and implications of such an initiative.

Members considered that it would be vitally important that there be a sound business case before any such scheme was entered into and took into account the fact that any such scheme would be undertaken on a cost recovery basis. Comments regarding the proposals had been received by the Cleaner Greener Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee which included concerns regarding resources. It was stated that any additional resources would have to be met by the business as part of the cost recovery contract.

RESOLVED: (a) That Cabinet agrees to pursue and enter into Primary Authority partnerships with businesses within the Borough provided that there is a business case to do so

And if agreed, that the Cabinet delegates authority to the Head of Environmental Health Services (supported by the Head of Business Improvement & Partnerships), in consultation with Portfolio Holder to:

- (i) Explore opportunities for Primary Authority partnerships with businesses within the Borough
- (ii) Explore opportunities for partnerships with other regulatory organisations to jointly enter into Primary Authority agreements
- (iii) Explore pilot work areas to expand the principles of Primary Authority with the LBRO
- (iv) Enter into Primary Authority relationships on behalf of the Council for the purpose of the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008 (RES Act)
- (v) Develop a process to implement the decision taken by Cabinet in line with existing legislation, regulation and good practice.

13. REPLACEMENT ROAD SWEEPING VEHICLE

A report was received seeking Authority to replace a road sweeping vehicle which had reached the end of its serviceable life span and which was now uneconomical to maintain. The authority would be subject to approval of funding by Full Council.

RESOLVED: (a) That subject to Council approval the funding, the Executive Director, Operational Services be authorised to seek tenders for a replacement road sweeping vehicle and, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Health and Recycling, accept the lowest suitable tender received.

14. IMPROVING ICT ACCESS FOR MEMBERS

Members received a report responding to the recommendations of the Transformation and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the provisions of ICT for Elected Members and to update Cabinet on ICT provisions put in place since February and to put forward further recommendations.

RESOLVED:

(a) That the use of allocated Newcastle email addresses for members Newcastle caseload becomes adopted practice.

(b) That Members be encouraged to use their dedicated website as their main source of information.

(c) That the current practice of printing emails for members should stop as soon as possible.

(d) That the ICT Access for Members Protocol be approved in its entirety.

(e) That the Members Allowance Scheme be reviewed by the Independent Remuneration Panel with regard to ICT provision.

(f) That the means of access to relevant council systems be reviewed and developed in line with advances in technology.

(g) That printed agendas continue to be distributed to members for the Committees on which they sit.

15. CEMETERIES MEMORIAL SAFETY PROGRAMME 2011-15

Cabinet received a report informing it of guidance on the Management of Memorials issued by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM). The report sought to compare the Council's current procedure for the management of memorials with the ICCM guidance. It was requested that Cabinet agree to endorse the Council's current procedure for the management of memorials and continue to apply it to the forthcoming approved five year programme of memorial inspection and testing in the Borough Council's cemeteries.

RESOLVED: (a) That the ICCM guidance on the Management of Memorials be noted.

(b) That the Council's current procedure for the management of memorials be endorsed and applied to the forthcoming approved five year programme of memorial inspection and testing in the Borough Council's cemeteries.

16. DEVELOPMENT PLAN - LOCALITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP (LAP) REVIEW

Cabinet received a report introducing the Locality Action Partnership Development Plan which it had requested at its last meeting on 7 September 2011. The development plan built on the work undertaken as part of the transformation program, previous reports and the Locality Action Partnership Review recommendations submitted to Executive Management and Cabinet.

RESOLVED: (a) That Cabinet notes the contents of the report and the contents of the development plan.

(b) That Cabinet notes the suggested changes to the development plan from the meeting of Informal Cabinet on 28 September 2011 – to remove action 30 relating to Community Infrastructure Levy.

(c) That Cabinet agrees to the actions and milestones contained in the development plan which may impact on their portfolio areas.

(d) That Cabinet supports the development plan being presented to the wider Newcastle Partnership

17. STATEMENT OF INTENT - VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR

A report was submitted seeking support for a statement of intent that outlined the Council's ongoing commitment to the voluntary and community sector.

RESOLVED: (a) That the report be noted

(b) That Cabinet endorse the proposals contained in the report.

18. JUBILEE 2 UPDATE

Cabinet received a report containing information about progress relating to the Jubilee 2 since its last meeting. It was stated that the project was now 75% complete, on budget and on time.

RESOLVED: (a) That the progress in delivery of the 'Jubilee 2' is noted.

(b) That Cabinet endorse the recommendation that Officers in Consultation with the Cabinet member for Culture and Active Communities and the Cabinet Member for Resources and Efficiency enter into contract with a facilities management company for the maintenance of the mechanical and electrical plant at Jubilee 2.

19. URGENT BUSINESS

20. EXCLUSION RESOLUTION

COUNCILLOR STEPHEN SWEENEY
Chair