

CABINET

Wednesday, 7th February, 2018
Time of Commencement: 2.00 pm

Present:- Councillor Simon Tagg – in the Chair

Councillors Holland, Johnson, Northcott, Sweeney and J Waring

Officers Executive Director (Resources and Support Services) - Kelvin Turner, Executive Director Operational Services- David Adams, Executive Director (Regeneration and Development) - Neale Clifton, John Tradewell - Acting Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service and Jayne Briscoe - Democratic Services Officer

1. **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies.

2. **MINUTES**

Resolved That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2018 be agreed as a correct record.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

4. **REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS AND COUNCIL TAX 2018/19**

The Executive Director (Resources and Support Services) submitted the 2018/19 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2018/19 for approval by Cabinet prior to a meeting of full Council on 21 February.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources reported that, following a request made by a member of the Finance, Resources and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee (24/01/2018) a more detailed scrutiny of the costs of replacement waste bins had been carried out and the budget for this item reduced from £150,000 to £100,000. This amount of £50,000 would be included in the Capital Programme.

Resolved (i) That the 2018/19 General Fund Revenue Budget as detailed in this report and in the report to Cabinet dated 17 January 2018 be recommended to Full Council for approval.

Resolved (ii) That the Capital Programme 2018/19 as detailed in the

report to Cabinet dated 17 January 2018, with the exception of reducing the budget for replacement Waste Bins to £100,000 from £150,000, be recommended to Full Council for approval together with the funding of £80k redundancy and associated costs in 2017/18 from the current year's capital programme, funded from capital receipts, as set out in section 5 of this report.

Resolved (iii) That the gratitude of the Cabinet be conveyed to the officers who developed the budget for presentation to Council.

5. **FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT TO END OF QUARTER THREE (OCTOBER - DECEMBER) 2017-18**

The Executive Director (Resources and Support Services) submitted the Financial and Performance Review report – third quarter 2017/18 which described the performance of the Council.

Resolved That members note the contents of the attached report and agree to the recommendation that the Council continues to monitor performance alongside the latest financial information for the same period.

6. **QUESTIONS TO CABINET**

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Service Improvement People and Partnerships circulated at the meeting questions to Cabinet from Councillor Naylor which are set out below together with the response to each issue.

What efforts have been made to keep as much useable office furniture electronic items and good quality sundry items out of skips and into 'destinations' which can benefit from them? (Reference the move to Castle House).

Firstly officers can confirm that no items to date have been skipped (in fact - the items that were put to one side as scrappage - have been sold to a staff member who had placed a bid for them).

The process that has been put in place for re-using items is as follows:-

a) Officers throughout the authority have been contacted to identify their service (business) needs for furniture and supporting equipment. Such items have then been taken to all other offices/sites (e.g. Kidsgrove CSC), subject to availability (noting that some items can only be relocated once the Civic Offices has been vacated). Also some furniture has been used to set up a 'drop in' centre at the depot to support both agile working and business continuity.

b) A number of enquires / requests for items were received from voluntary organisations within the Borough and where we have been able to support such requests items have been dispatched.

c) Next, having gone through steps (a) and (b), other items still regarded as surplus have been sold to staff who have made bids (note that where supplier quotes have been received (e.g. office furniture) any bids have been benchmarked against such to ensure value for money).

d) Commercial buyers have been contacted linked to certain commodities e.g. printing equipment; plotter; inks and cartridges; planning paper; and these have been sold on to the highest bidder.

Quotes have been received for some furniture items – although not yet sold. That said there is very little interest in office chairs and officers are seeking an alternative outlet(s) for these items. Three organisations have been contacted regarding the Council's Chamber furniture, however due to the bespoke nature of this furniture there is no clear interest in purchasing this.

In addition specialist companies have been contacted reference the number of used safes the Council has and there has been no interest in purchasing these (albeit 3 very small safes have been sold onto officers in the same way as furniture items). To minimise/negate Council costs two self-storage operations were contacted and one has a genuine interest in taking the safes at no cost.

There are certain items that will require disposal which may incur costs to the authority e.g. fridges/freezers (albeit there may be an interest from 'Furniture Mine' to take some of these items; this would of course be at their own risk if the Council were to approve such). With regard to fire extinguishers officers will look to minimise the cost of disposal to the Council by utilising some to replace older units in other Council premises whilst some extinguishers will also be set aside to support future officer training.

e) Officers are in the process of setting up an "EBay" account to test the market before selling certain very bespoke or specialist Council assets.

f) Finally officers are in the process of critically assessing the disposal of electronic items where these can be disposed of at the buyer's own risk. There may be a consideration to sell such equipment (e.g. disposal of the Council's (old) plotter was sold for spare parts as this was not in working order and this being clearly communicated to the buyer prior to payment and subsequent collection). It should however be stated that to minimise any risks to the authority on the sale of such equipment officers would look to dispose of certain/such equipment in compliance with the WEEE Directives (The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive).

What exactly has happened/is happening to Council owned items which were in display cabinets by the Council Chamber and in the Mayor's Parlour?

Officer response:

Officers facilitated the contacting of any former Mayors/organisations/family representatives that had donated items in display cabinets and in the Mayor's Parlour e.g. Reginald Mitchell Primary School had donated something and it was returned to them and; some military regalia has been placed with the RAF.

Secondly a number of historic items inclusive of mayoral items have been placed in storage at the Museum. The following figures illustrate how the museum collection has grown as a result of the move to Castle House. The recent intakes from the Civic Offices and library means there are about 6,718 extra items that have been taken into the collection, which previously contained around 28,000 items. The extra accessions are summarised in the tables below:

Items from NULBC	
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Accession number	Number of items	Item types	Storage arrangement
Nm.2016.666	280	Slides and negatives	Archive Storage
Nm.2016.677	478	Slides and negatives	Archive Storage
Nm.2017.26	3	Burgess Books	Archive Storage
Nm.2017.45	48	Council minute books	Archive Storage
Nm.2017.63	12	Clearance area books	Archive Storage
Nm.2017.93	113	Documents	Archive Storage
Nm.2017.134	36	Large maps	Archive Storage – selected ones digitised
Nm.2017.178 & 218	113	Mayors Parlour objects, documents, artworks, photographs	Temporary Storage in existing stores
Not yet processed	60	Abstract of accounts	Collections area
Not yet processed	50	Large maps	Collections area
Not yet processed	750	Aerial photographs	Staff Office
Total	1794		

Selected pieces from the Mayor's Parlour could go on display but this has a cost implication as some of the significant mayoral pieces would require secure display cases.

The museum has also taken in collections from Newcastle Library as they will not have space for them at Castle House as summarised in the table below.

Items from Newcastle Library			
Accession number	Number of items	Item types	Storage arrangement
	1	Municipal Hall Clock	Installed on 2 nd March
Nm.2017.124	161	Prints, books and documents	Archive storage
Nm.2017.141	25	Council minute books	Archive storage
Nm.2017.157	306	Documents	Archive storage
Nm.2017.158	222	Newspapers	Archive storage
Not yet	150	Maps and flat documents	Collections area

processed			
Not yet processed	60	Glass negatives	Picture Store
Not yet processed	4000	Photographs	Picture Store
Total	4924		

In cases where there was no interest from any source or perceived historic relevance for items, staff bids for six items have subsequently been paid for and collected.

As the landowner of Keele Golf Course will the Council be able to benefit from any subsidy schemes (specifically to promote environmental improvement and stewardship in the countryside) which Central Government may seek to instigate to replace current Common Agricultural Policies of the EU?

Officer response:

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is a means of promoting food production across the EU by guaranteeing prices for farmers to grow crops (a secondary objective might have been also to strengthen the rural economy and to reduce rural depopulation as we saw in places like Sicily, southern Iberia and Ireland in the 1950s). We are coming out of the EU (and therefore the CAP); as officers we don't know what future UK Governments will choose to do regarding farmers' subsidies and set aside, so it will depend on their economic, agricultural and environmental priorities.

The EU also has 'set aside' policies which encourage farmers to keep marginal areas out of agricultural production to encourage flora, fauna and eco-systems to thrive undisturbed (e.g. wetland, scrub and woodland).

The former Keele Golf Course isn't farmland so officers consider that it isn't covered by EU schemes which encourage farmers to set aside farmland for ecological or wildlife purposes. But there's nothing to stop a future UK Government from doing so.

In the event that the former Keele Golf Course were to be taken out of the Green Belt and planning permission granted for its development for housing, it would be quite appropriate for the Borough Council (as local planning authority, regardless of land ownership) to require the developer(s) to design and create a form of development which sets aside areas of woodland, wetland and other areas of wildlife or ecological value to be retained, together with future management arrangements to be put in place to ensure that they are sustained in perpetuity.

Resolved

That the responses to the questions raised by Councillor Naylor be noted.

7. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Business.

COUNCILLOR SIMON TAGG
Chair

Meeting concluded at 2.20 pm