

CABINET

Wednesday 30 November 2011

Present:- Councillor S Sweeney – in the Chair
Councillors Howells, Jones, Miss Reddish and Studd

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Bannister.

2. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 19 October 2011 were agreed pending the alteration of 'Committee' to 'Cabinet' on page 2 of the agenda.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

4. **KEELE UNIVERSITY PROMOTIONAL SIGNAGE**

The Cabinet welcomed the Vice Chancellor from Keele University, Professor Nick Foskett to the meeting.

Members agreed that it was important to show through the use of signage that Keele was part of the Borough of Newcastle under Lyme thus helping to raise the image of the Borough. Professor Foskett agreed and stated that it would be beneficial for the Council and the University to work more closely together and that he was optimistic regarding the benefits to both organisations. Keele University was one of the largest employers in the Borough with approximately £120 million turnover and it was important that the Council and the University work together to stimulate growth, encourage economic engagement and find ways to offer opportunities for new graduates. It was agreed that Cabinet Members visit the University in the spring.

Resolved: (a) That the request from Keele University to add signage announcing the presence of the University to existing 'Welcome to Newcastle' gateway signs be noted.

(b) That Officers be authorised to take the necessary steps to implement the additional signage.

(c) That Cabinet Members visit the University in the Spring.

5. **FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT TO END OF QUARTER TWO (SEPTEMBER) 2011**

A report was submitted to provide Members with the financial and Performance Review for the 2011/12 second quarter.

There had been very few missed targets and some targets were better than had been expected. Where targets had not been achieved reasons had been

documented. Crime reduction figures were thought to be excellent and it was felt that these would improve even further following the move of the Police into the Civic Offices.

The Council continued to deliver the Partnership Scheme for improvements in Newcastle Town Centre Conservation Area which was thought to be a major asset to the Town and included a key project at Mellards Warehouse that was due for Phase 1 completion by November, Stage 2 would commence in December.

A mystery shopper scheme was due to take place in conjunction with Stafford Borough Council, results from this were expected in December 2011. CST2 on Pg 26 of the agenda had not reached the target but this had been due to vacancies, long term sickness and annual leave commitments. A number of these issues had now been addressed and the September figures showed an improvement.

The review of ICT contracts had now been completed which would result in good savings for the Council. The sickness figures for the last six months were excellent at only 3.46 which were below target and on par with levels in the private sector. The % projected variance against the full year Council budget was 0.3 but £200,000 had been included in the budget to cover this and the variance was still deemed an achievement considering the current financial climate.

ER5 and ER6 on pg 30 of the report showed a negative but these were now back on track and inspections of licensed premises were now being prioritised to ensure the target was achieved In the next quarter.

The number of people accessing leisure and recreational facilities had not reached the target but this was due to the closure to facilities at Knutton recreation centre and it was anticipated that these figures would improve following the opening of Jubilee 2 in January 2012. The Museum was praised for the increase in visitor numbers this year, an increase of 1762.

Resolved: That the contents of the report be noted and that the Council continues to monitor and scrutinise performance alongside finances.

6. AMENDMENT TO THE CORPORATE COMPLAINTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLIMENTS POLICY

Cabinet was requested to approve amendments to the Corporate Complaints Procedure contained within the Corporate Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy from a 3 stage internal process to a 2 stage internal process. The 2 new stages would be as follows:

Stage 1 Review and Process – investigation and response by Officer and Department.

Stage 2 Independent Internal Appeal – investigation by the Customer Relations Officer.

Resolved: That the current internal 3 stage complaints process be reduced to a 2 stage process.

7. NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

A report was submitted regarding the Council's integrated waste management strategy. It was highlighted that the service had won five awards and been recognised nationally for the improvements made to waste collection. As such the report requested that the period of the Council's current Strategy be extended alongside any associated contractual arrangements.

Resolved: (a) That Cabinet note the recent National Waste Review and the current alignment of the Councils Strategy with the outcome of the review.

(b) That the progress of the Strategy to date, including significant increases in the amount of recycling rates and national recognition for the Councils scheme be noted.

(c) That the current Integrated Waste Management Strategy be extended until July 2016.

(d) That the Executive Director of Operational Services be authorised to enter into two year extensions of the existing contracts with the contractors detailed in this report.

(e) That the proposed timescale for a comprehensive review of the Councils Strategy be approved as set out in the report.

(f) That opportunities for further cost savings through existing contracts and joint working be kept under review through the life of the Strategy and review process.

8. ALLOTMENTS SERVICE - REVIEW OF POLICY

Members received a report requesting that a review be undertaken of the Allotments Policy including consideration of options to reduce the current level of subsidy and overall cost of the allotment service provided by the Council.

Resolved: (a) That a review of the Councils Allotments Policy be carried out, including the consideration of options to reduce the cost of the service and progress local management of allotment sites.

(b) That a report on the outcome of the review, including consultation work and a proposed revised charging structure, be brought to a future meeting of the Cabinet.

9. ICT CONTRACT RE-NEGOTIATION

Cabinet received a report advising it of a decision to enter into a re-negotiated contract and to waive Contract Standing Orders under the urgency procedures set out in the Constitution in order to reduce costs.

Resolved: That the information be received.

10. UNITED CHARITIES - APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

Cabinet were requested to appoint a representative to serve on the United Charities for a period of 4 years with effect from 1 December 2011.

Resolved: That Councillor David Clarke be re-appointed.

11. JUBILEE 2 UPDATE

A report was submitted to update the Cabinet regarding progress relating to the Jubilee 2 since the last meeting.

Resolved: (a) That the progress in delivery of the 'Jubilee 2' centre be noted, including the public opening event on 7 January 2012.

(b) That Enger-G be commissioned to undertake the maintenance of the combined heat and power unit installed at the Jubilee 2 centre initially for a 1 year period at a fee of £5,658 without seeking alternative quotations and that the Council's Standing orders and Financial Regulations (as per Section 2a(i) and 2b(vii)) be waived for the reasons identified in section 2.5 of this report.

12. NEWCASTLE TOWN CENTRE CAR PARKS

A report was submitted to inform Cabinet of the results of recent surveys of Borough Council owned public car park usage and to enable consideration of possible alternative uses in the future. It was highlighted that no decisions had yet been made regarding the future of any of the car parks and that the results of a second survey would be awaited.

Resolved: (a) That the report be received.

(b) That officers conduct a further survey in mid 2012 and report back to Cabinet with the findings to enable consideration of any further action.

(c) That the findings be reviewed as part of both the emerging Site Allocations Development Plan Document and the next version of the Asset Management Strategy.

S SWEENEY
Chair