

CABINET

Wednesday, 19th September, 2012

Present:- Cllr Snell – in the Chair

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

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

2. MINUTES

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 18 July 2012 be approved as a correct record.

3. FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT TO THE END OF QUARTER ONE (JUNE) 2012

Consideration was given to a report providing a detailed up-date on the Council's performance during the first quarter of 2012/13 by presenting data in a financial context and focusing on key performance indicators.

A summary of the overall position with regard to the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme was set out in the report and the Portfolio Holder explained that the adverse variance of £19,000 in the Revenue Budget was largely due to a fall in income from litter fines, burials and cremations and from Jubilee 2.

Although some positive performance was in evidence across a range of services Members were reminded that the results later in the year could be different with some services having seasonal factors. The proportion of indicators which had met their targets, based on available data, was 85%.

It was indicated that the Capital Programme would require regular monitoring to identify any projects that were falling behind their planned completion dates.

Members felt that some consideration should be given to the preparation of an Action Plan to address falling attendancies at The Borough Museum and Art Gallery and other recreational and leisure facilities in the Borough.

In conclusion it was indicated that with regard to the Council's frozen investment in Heritable Bank, the amount repaid to date amounted to £1,869,521 (74% of the total that was frozen). The Administrators currently predicted that at least 90% of the £2,500,000 originally invested would be re-paid.

Resolved: (a) That Members note the contents of the report and recommend that the Council continues to monitor and scrutinise performance alongside finances.

(b) That Members note that the appendix to the report is an interim performance report that is to be further developed as detailed in the Performance

Management Framework Review and that the intention is to report performance information in a new format as the work is progressed in each subsequent year.

4. NEWCASTLE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAN 2013/14-2015/16

Consideration was given to a report recommending adoption of the Council Plan for 2013/14 to 2015/16.

It was explained that the Council Plan underpinned the entire planning structure of the authority and informed the organisation by acting as the major driver behind any budget proposals, longer term strategic plans and the service planning process.

Resolved:(a) That Members note the report and the draft copy of the Council Plan for 2013/14 to 2015/16 as set out on the appendix to the report.

(b) That Members approve the adoption of the Council Plan for 2013/14 to 2015/16.

(c) That Members note that the monitoring section of the plan is being progressed via senior officer workshops in order to determine the relevant measures/indicators in order to monitor improvement against the priorities and outcomes being developed as part of the Council Plan (Option A as set out in the report).

5. BUDGET PREPARATION, SCRUTINY AND CONSULTATION PROCESS 2013/14

Consideration was given to a report setting out the process whereby the 2013/14 budget was to be prepared, scrutinised and approved.

Resolved: That Cabinet approve the budget preparation, scrutiny and approval process as set out in the Appendix to the Officer's report.

6. DEVELOPING A KIDSGROVE TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIP

Consideration was given to a report outlining proposals for continuing support for town centre development, specifically highlighting ways in which support could be maximised in Kidsgrove by the development of a Kidsgrove Town centre Partnership to further engage with and support local businesses in that area in a similar way to the partnership arrangement now in place for Newcastle Town Centre.

Resolved: That the officers be authorised to proceed with the process of establishing a Kidsgrove Town Centre Partnership based around a Community Interest Company Model (or similar entity), including the appointment of Directors, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Town Centres.

7. PROPOSED DECLARATION OF BATHPOOL PARK AS A LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

A report was considered recommending that Bathpool Park be declared as a Local Nature Reserve in accordance with Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

The Council currently worked with Newcastle Countryside Project to manage and promote the site and the Project had prepared a management plan for the site details of which were set out in the officer's report.

Natural England supported the management plan and also to the park be declared as a Local Nature Reserve.

The process to be followed leading to declaration of the site was set out in the officer's report and it was felt that the action now proposed would demonstrate the Council's commitment to nature conservation, increase public awareness of the natural environment and secure the long term future of it's wildlife habitat and natural features. The proposal was also in line with the Urban Staffs Green Space Strategy Action Plan.

Resolved:(a) That Bathpool Park be formally declared as a Local Nature Reserve under the provisions of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

(b) That appreciation for the work carried out by the Friends of Bathpool Park and the Council's officers be recorded.

8. PROPOSALS FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT AND DISPOSAL OF THE FORMER KNOTTON RECREATION CENTRE

A report was submitted seeking views on the preferred way forward for the disposal and redevelopment of the Knutton Recreation Centre and adjoining land.

Members were advised about the appropriateness of reviewing the development and investment options for sites in Borough and County Council ownership in the centre of Knutton Village with a view to securing a more comprehensive regeneration scheme, in the light of the County Council's proposal to provide a new Enterprise Centre in High Street.

Also, the Borough Council was to undertake a comprehensive review of community centres which may have implications for the Knutton community and additionally, it was necessary to give consideration to the likely financial implications of this matter in the context of known/emerging capital programme commitments.

In giving its broad support to the County Council's proposals with regard to the replacement Enterprise Centre Cabinet agreed that this should be dependant upon the occupants of the existing units being similarly supportive.

Resolved: (a) That the officers be authorised to proceed with the process of disposing of the former Knutton Recreation Centre and adjoining land through a joint disposal process (comprising land owned by both the Borough and County Councils) facilitated by a thorough public consultation process as described in the report.

(b) That Staffordshire County Council be advised that this Council's support of the process detailed in resolution (a) above is subject to the proposals for

a new Enterprise Centre elsewhere in the Knutton area being acceptable to the tenants of the existing Enterprise Centre in High Street.

9. LOCALISED COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT - CONSULTATION

Consideration was given to a report recommending approval, for consultation purposes, the draft Newcastle-under-Lyme Council Tax Support Scheme that had been drawn up in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Finance Bill that was currently making its way through Parliament.

The Bill made provision for the localisation of council tax support by imposing a duty on billing authorities to make a localised council tax reduction scheme by January 2013 and to consult with major precepting authorities and other such persons likely to have an interest in the scheme.

Resolved: (a) That the draft Newcastle-under-Lyme Council Tax Support Scheme be approved for consultation purposes.

(b) That the Executive Director – Resources and Support Services be authorised to initiate the statutory consultation process.

10. BOROUGH HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY

Consideration was given to a report advising of changes within the National Health Service and on the development of a Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the Borough that was currently being drawn up to support the Staffordshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Board.

The report identified areas of health inequalities within the Borough that would provide the impetus to address the various issues.

Resolved:(a) That the key messages in the report be accepted as important evidence against which the Borough's Health and Wellbeing Strategy will be developed.

(b) That a further report on progress made in the development of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the Borough be submitted to a future meeting of Cabinet for consideration.

11. WESTLANDS SPORTS GROUND PAVILION

Approval was sought to the replacement of the bowls pavilion at Westlands Sports Ground as set in the officer's report.

Resolved: (a) That Cabinet approve in principle the replacement of the bowls pavilion at Westlands Sports Ground.

(b) That the officers be authorised to provide project management support to Westlands Bowling Club to facilitate the replacement of the bowls pavilion.

(c) That the officers be authorised to draw up an appropriate agreement with Westlands Bowling Club for project delivery and funding.

(d) That a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Cabinet seeking approval of the final detailed scheme.

12. SUPPLY OF SPRING AND SUMMER BEDDING PLANTS AND WEED CONTROL CONTRACTS

Consideration was given to a report outlining the position with regard to the existing contracts for the supply of spring and summer bedding plants and weed control and options for the future procurement of the contracts to March and November respectively through a competitive tendering process.

For the reasons outlined in the officer's report it was also proposed to undertake an appropriate procurement exercise for the supply of replacement bedding plants for summer 2013 and 2014 only to take account of that part of the existing contract that was not now to be completed by the original contractor, Stoke-on-Trent City Council.

In addition to the above tendering procedure it was simultaneously proposed to explore the feasibility of weed control work being undertaken by the Council's Streetscene Business Unit and, if it proved beneficial, to set up the necessary arrangement to implement the work starting in April 2013.

Resolved: (a) That Cabinet authorises the Head of Operations to seek tenders for the supply of spring and summer bedding plants for a 5-year period commencing in December 2013, and following consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to accept the most economically advantageous tender within the existing budget provision.

(b) That Cabinet authorises the Head of Operations to undertake an appropriate procurement exercise for the supply of summer bedding plants for summer 2013 and spring 2014 only, following the decision of the current contractor who will be unable to meet the Council's requirement for the period.

(c) That Cabinet authorises the Head of Operations to seek tenders for the Weed Control Contract for a 5-year period commencing April 2013 and, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to accept the most economically advantageous tender within the existing budget provision.

(d) That simultaneously to (c) above, the Head of Operations explore the possibility of delivering the Weed Control Work using the Council's Streetscene Business Unit and, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder, set up necessary arrangements to implement the work if cost effective to do so.

(e) That if the action outlined in resolution (d) above proves to be the best option for the Council, the procurement exercise for the Weed Control Contract set out in resolution (c) above be cancelled.

(f) That in the circumstances that the contractor currently having the contract for summer bedding plants is closing down its operation, the officers be authorised to take appropriate action to recover any outstanding monies relating to the remaining period of the contract from them.

(g) That the Officers be asked to draw up options for the engagement of community groups/schools in smaller planting schemes at suitable locations across the Borough.

13. PROCUREMENT OF THE REPORTER

A report was submitted detailing the outcome of the procurement process for the distribution and printing of The Reporter.

Resolved: (a) That Cabinet notes the outcome of The Reporter procurement process.

(b) That Cabinet endorses the proposals to run a second procurement process to appoint a company to carry out The Reporter print contract and for the outcome of that process to be reported back to Cabinet.

(c) That Cabinet authorises the Portfolio Holder for Communications, Transformation and Partnerships to consider with the Head of Communications appropriate measures in response to proposals from the Transformation and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

14. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business

Chair