

At a meeting of the CABINET held in the CIVIC CENTRE (COMMITTEE ROOM NO. 1) on WEDNESDAY, 11TH MARCH, 2009 at 2.00 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor P. Watson in the Chair

Councillors Allan, Anderson, Blackburn, Charlton, Rolph, P. Smith, Speding, Timmins and Trueman.

Part I

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 11th February, 2009, Part I (copy circulated) were submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Receipt of Declarations of Interest

The following Councillors declared personal interests in the undermentioned reports as Members of the various bodies indicated:-

Item 7 – Tyne and Wear Economic Development Joint Committee	Councillors P. Watson and Anderson	Members of the Tyne and Wear Economic Development Joint Committee
	Councillor Allan	Substitute Member of the Tyne and Wear Economic Development Joint Committee

Item 8 – Hetton Town Council – Charter Status	Councillors Anderson and Blackburn	Members of Hetton Town Council
Item 11 – School Admissions Arrangement – September 2010	Councillor Allan	Governor of Hasting Hill Primary, Thorney Close Primary, Sandhill View School
	Councillor Anderson	Governor of Hetton-le-Hole Nursery, Hetton Primary
	Councillor Blackburn	Governor of Easington Lane Primary, Hetton Lyons Primary and Hetton Lyons Nursery
	Councillor Charlton	Governor of Hylton Red House Academy
	Councillor Rolph	Governor of Houghton Kepier School and Newbottle Primary School
	Councillor P. Smith	Governor of St. Leonard's RC Aided Primary and Plains Farm Primary
	Councillor Speding	Governor of Barnwell Primary
	Councillor Trueman	Governor of Blackfell Primary and Columbia Grange
Item 13 – Waste Disposal Contracts	Councillors Rolph and Blackburn	Members of South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership Joint Executive Committee
	Councillor Anderson	Substitute Member of South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership Joint Executive Committee

Item 14 – Merger of Tyne and Wear Archives and Tyne and Wear Museums Services

Councillor Rolph

Member of Tyne and Wear Archives Joint Committee and Substitute Member of Tyne and Wear Museums Joint Committee

Councillor Speding

Member of Tyne and Wear Archives Joint Committee and Tyne and Wear Museums Joint Committee

Councillor Tate (who was an Observer at the meeting) declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 24, “Provision of Home Care Evening Service – Changes in Contractual Arrangements” as Chair of Hetton Home Care Services Voluntary Management Committee and withdrew from the meeting during consideration of the report.

Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

Report of the Meeting of the Personnel Committee, Part I

The report of the meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 26th February, 2009, Part I (copy circulated) was submitted and consideration was given thereto.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

2. RESOLVED that the report of the meeting held on 26th February, 2009, Part I be noted.

Annual Residents’ Survey 2008 – Findings

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to present findings from the 2008 Annual Residents’ Survey.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Andy Byrom of Ipsos MORI made a presentation outlining the main outcomes of the survey and identifying trends in key areas. He reported that the survey had consisted of face to face interviews with 1,260 residents and a booster survey was undertaken with minority ethnic residents across the City between August and November, 2008. The issues central to the survey were:-

- Sunderland as a place to live;
- satisfaction with service provision;
- recycling;
- contact with Council staff;
- the image of the Council;
- communications and information;
- voluntary work;
- healthy living;
- housing;
- help and support needs; and
- new media access.

In relation to Sunderland as a place to live, satisfaction levels remained high. West Sunderland and Washington residents were the most satisfied and Coalfield residents were the least satisfied. In general, feelings of safety had increased to 81% since the previous year. There were significant rises in satisfaction in respect of public transport and cycle routes.

The City's residents were more positive about new building and redevelopment, plans for City Centre regeneration and cleanliness of the City Centre this year. The highest ratings were for shopping facilities, signposting and having things to do in the evening. Perceptions of safety in the City Centre were broadly in line with the 2007 findings, with residents feeling safe during the daytime (84%) and less safe after dark (41% feel unsafe). However, the proportion feeling unsafe after dark had fallen by 5 percentage points since last year and minority ethnic residents continued to feel less safe than average walking alone in the City Centre at night.

Overall attitudes to the City Council were in line with 2007 with 63% satisfied and 19% dissatisfied. There had been an encouraging shift in Council image indicators, building on improvements seen between 2006 and 2007, for example for value for money, listening to views of local people, keeping promises, learning from mistakes, Council staff treating people well and remote and impersonal.

Satisfaction with overall quality of Council services was in line with 2007 which consolidated improvements seen in last year's survey. A number of services had satisfaction ratings of more than 80%, for example, education, street scene, culture and leisure, social services and administration services. Improvements had been seen for facilities for young people, grass cutting of open spaces, street lighting and refuse collection remained a real organisational strength. It was highlighted that satisfaction ratings had fallen for household waste/reception centres and supermarket recycling centres but overall ratings for recycling were still good.

There had been a marked improvement in a proportion of people who felt well informed about the services and benefits the Council provided, 55% informed, 40% not, which reflected 2005 levels. Residents found the Sunderland Echo to be their most preferred source of information and two in three had seen either Sunrise or Switched On or both (65%). Readers' views of Sunrise remained as positive as ever, with increases in proportion saying it was very informative and good quality.

Turning to Customer Care, 45% of residents had contacted the Council in the last couple of years and views of staff were largely positive, particularly in relation to helpfulness, and heading in the right direction. The majority were satisfied with handling (69%) and outcome (60%) of enquiries.

The survey findings highlighted that over one in four residents overall had given unpaid help in the last year. This had been most commonly by raising money or taking part in sponsored events and a similar proportion had taken part in formal volunteering work.

Around one in eight respondents required some help or support with day-to-day tasks due to a long-term illness, health problem or disability. This included help with cleaning, housework, shopping and assistance with mobility around the home. However, much of this was done informally, by friends and relatives.

One in six of these residents said that they would not know who to contact in the event of needing further help.

Half of all residents had some stated problem with their accommodation with one in four having concerns about repairs/improvements and one in five about heating expenses.

In summary, the overall picture was one of consolidation and building upon strong foundations. Some real improvements had been made in perceptions of the City Council and in communications especially in relation to value for money and consultation and these were critical for maintaining and building upon positive impressions of the Authority overall.

Councillor Anderson was surprised that satisfaction levels for public transport had improved as this had been a major issue for the outlying areas of the City where services were not so regular. Mr. Byrom advised that there would be scope to investigate these findings in next year's survey.

Cabinet Members having thanked Mr. Byrom for his presentation and welcomed the findings of the survey, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Councillor Call for Action – Guidance

The Chief Executive and the City Solicitor submitted a joint report (copy circulated) to provide information and draft guidance about new powers for Councillors designed to help them solve problems in their wards which had now been implemented by the Government. The new powers were known as the 'Councillor Call for Action' (CCfA). The report also highlighted how improvements promoted through the emerging Community Leadership Programme would support the Council in approaching CCfA in the most constructive and effective manner.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Allan reported that the guidance needed to be considered in the context of other initiatives and existing mechanisms such as:-

- The emerging Community Leadership Programme which contained proposals to enhance and enrich the Council's Scrutiny and Area Committee functions and to intensify their focus upon the improvement of service quality,
- The Council's Complaints procedure,
- The Annual Work Programme for Review Committees, and
- Petitions.

Cabinet Members having been advised that a series of workshops to provide training would be held over the next few months, it was:-

4. RESOLVED that the Council's response to the legislative requirement to make provision for a CCfA be approved and:-

- (i) the amendment to the Constitution as set out in Paragraph 8.2 of the report be endorsed for submission to Council,
- (ii) the draft guidance attached as Appendices 1-3 be endorsed,
- (iii) the draft guidance be referred to all the Review Committees for further comment, and

- (iv) Members workshops be held to provide training to Members and to receive further comments before the draft guidance is finalised for inclusion in the Overview and Scrutiny handbook.

Tyne and Wear Economic Development Joint Committee

The Chief Executive and the City Solicitor submitted a joint report (copy circulated) on a proposal to extend the existing Joint Committee arrangements for promoting economic development across Tyne and Wear.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Charlton having reported that the existing arrangement had proved successful in promoting the joint economic development interests of the participating authorities and should continue to be supported, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that the existing Agreement between the Councils of Sunderland, Newcastle upon Tyne, Gateshead, North Tyneside and South Tyneside which established the Tyne and Wear Economic Development Joint Committee, and ensure the provision of a joint economic development service be extended for a further period of five years.

Hetton Town Council – Request for a Town Council Charter

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) on a request to enter into a Local Council Charter for Hetton Town Council.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Cabinet Members were advised that a request had been received from the Leader of Hetton Town Council, for the Council to consider entering into a formal Charter with Hetton Town Council. The Town Council was at present undergoing all the work to gain a Quality Council Chartermark and had carried out a full public consultation to produce a Parish (Town) Plan.

Particular attention was drawn to paragraph 3.1 of the draft Charter attached to the report which set out the proposed Governance arrangements and the other arrangements to ensure effective engagement and liaison between the City Council and the Town Council via the Coalfields Area Committee. Accordingly, a report on the matter was to be considered by the Coalfields Area Committee at its meeting on 12th March and the views of the Committee would be reported to Council at its meeting on 25th March.

Councillor Anderson reported that the Government was keen for Parish and Town Councils to take up the challenge as benefits included improving relations between tiers of government, facilitating communication, and promoting partnership working. She added that the Town Council's role could be increasingly important in the current climate of increased neighbourhood empowerment, as Town and Parish Councils could have a significant role in delivering this agenda.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

6. RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council to approve and adopt a Town Council Charter for Hetton Town Council.

Comprehensive Performance Assessment – Use of Resources – Auditors Judgement 2007/2008

The City Treasurer submitted a report (copy circulated) on the outcome of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment – Use of Resources – Auditors Judgement 2007/2008.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Allan was pleased to report that the Council had maintained and strengthened its level 4 assessment (performing strongly). The report stated that the Council's performance demonstrated commitment to delivering value for money and to using resources effectively. Scores had improved over the 2006/2007 assessment with four out of five themes now scored at level four overall. This reflected the significant efforts made across the Council to drive improvement in managing the Council's financial resources. Areas for improvement had already been identified and actions to facilitate their improvement were being addressed.

Councillor Allan having congratulated the hard work of all the Cabinet Members, the Members and the Officers of the Council for their input which had made this award possible, it was:-

7. RESOLVED that the outcome of the Auditors Comprehensive Performance Assessment – Use of Resources – Auditors Judgement 2007/2008 be noted and referred to the Policy and Co-ordination Review Committee and then to Council for consideration.

Capping Fees for Personal Community Development Learning Programme (PCDL)

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copy circulated) following the introduction of a fees policy to support the delivery of Personal Community Development Learning (PCDL) programmes at the meeting in December, to consider recommendations for capping the amount of fees that any one individual would be expected to pay during an academic year.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Smith highlighted that it was not expected that learners would pay the full £108 at the beginning of the academic year but as they participate they had the option to pay for each course weekly, monthly or termly. She added that the Policy and arrangements for capping the amount of fees that any one learner would be expected to pay in any one academic year, would be reviewed during 2010/11 to coincide with the demise of the LSC.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

8. RESOLVED that those learners receiving a 50% concession receive up to a maximum of three free courses in any one academic year once they have paid for six courses at a total cost of £108, subject to the availability of funding.

School Admission Arrangements – September 2010

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copy circulated) outlining the school admission arrangements for September 2010.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Smith reported that the admission arrangements were co-ordinated with Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools, Academies and neighbouring Local Authorities. She added that there might be changes to PANs as a result of consultation with governing bodies and the city-wide school place planning review, but this would not change the admission arrangements or criteria and therefore would not impact on the submission of the arrangements to the DCSF.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

9. RESOLVED that approve given to:-
- (i) the admission policy and procedures,
 - (ii) the details of the over-subscription criteria, and
 - (iii) the published admission numbers (PAN).

Machinery of Government

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copy circulated) on developments that had taken place in preparation for the changes to Machinery of Government since the initial report to Cabinet on this issue in December 2008.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Smith having reported that the Machinery of Government changes required Local Authorities to prepare for the transfer of statutory responsibility from the Learning Skills Council in 2010 by responding to the published guidance and managing the transition process in localities, it was:-

10. RESOLVED that the sub-regional response to the Stage 2 Guidance (Annex 1) and the approach to the transition undertaken locally be noted.

Wastes Disposal Contracts

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) requesting approval, pending the making of alternative arrangements, to the extension of existing wastes management contracts to 31st March, 2010.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Rolph reported that following a tendering exercise in 2004 contracts were awarded to a number of contractors for packages or types of wastes for an initial period of three years commencing 1st April, 2005. The contracts provided the Council with the option to extend the arrangements by two further periods of one year.

Councillor Rolph advised that this was the second one year extension and that it was required to ensure continuity of the refuse collection and street cleaning services whilst the South Tyne-Wear Waste Management Partnership progressed the procurement exercises, it was:-

11. RESOLVED that the existing wastes management contracts be extended to 31st March, 2010.

Merger of Tyne and Wear Archives and Tyne and Wear Museums Services

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to advise and provide an update on the recent reports that had been considered by the Tyne and Wear Leadership Group to formally merge Tyne and Wear Museums and Tyne and Wear Archives Services.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Speding highlighted that following a request from the Tyne and Wear Chief Executives, a Working Group of Officers from Tyne and Wear Archives Service and Tyne and Wear Museums and their lead Authorities, Gateshead Council and Newcastle City Council, considered the potential for closer working between the two services. Following an internal study it was recommended that the two services should merge from April 2009.

Councillor Speding having drawn attention to the proposed representation on the new Joint Committee and consideration having been given to the proposals, it was:-

12. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the merger of Tyne and Wear Archives and Tyne and Wear Museums Services into the Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums Service be approved, and
- (ii) the following three Members and their three substitutes be nominated to serve on the new Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums Joint Committee, as the service is to be constituted from 1st April, 2009 and the new merger will continue to be an executive joint committee:-

Members:-

Councillors Bell
Rolph
Speding

Substitutes:-

Councillors M. Smith
Stephenson
Whalen

Public Art Procurement

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) on procurement issues specific to the commissioning of major pieces of public art, and to seek agreement to a continuation of the existing model for the procurement of public art by the Council over the next two years.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Speding requested that approval be given to the continuation of the existing procurement model for public art commissions estimated to be over the tender limit of £75,000 up to £250,000 for the period 2009/2010 and 2010/2011. He advised that this procurement model had been working successfully for the past 2 years and it had facilitated the progression of the current and forthcoming programme of public art commissions. He added that by continuing with this procurement model further commissions could be procured with minimal delays.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

13. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted and the continuation of the existing procurement model for public art commissions estimated to be over the tender limit of £75,000 and up to £250,000 be approved for the period 2009/2010 and 2010/2011.

Land at the Former Belford House, Belford Close, Ashbrooke, Sunderland

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) on the current position in respect of a previously accepted offer for the disposal of the Council's freehold interest in the site of the former Belford House, Belford Close, Ashbrooke, Sunderland.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Allan reminded Cabinet Members that at its meeting in June 2007 it had been agreed to dispose of the Council's freehold interest in the site of the former Belford House, subject to the developer obtaining planning permission and completing the necessary legal agreements. He added that progress was made with the developer in moving these matters forward and a contract had been offered by the Council, however it became clear in the autumn of last year that the developer was unable to progress his proposal.

Councillor Allan reported that despite repeated requests the developer had not been able to confirm his offer and had consequently been informed that Cabinet would be recommended to rescind its original decision. He therefore proposed that given the lack of progress by the developer that the Council withdraws from the transaction and that the site be retained until such time as the market improves.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

14. RESOLVED that the previous decision to dispose of the Council's freehold interest in the site of the former Belford House, Belford Close, Ashbrooke, Sunderland be rescinded.

Sunderland Strategic Transport Corridor – New Wear Bridge – Use of a Consultant to provide Highway Design Services

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek approval to commission a consultant to provide highway design services for the new Wear bridge project of the Sunderland Strategic Transport Corridor.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Blackburn highlighted that there was a significant amount of roadworks which tied the bridge into the existing highway network. He reported that preliminary design work had been completed and would be used to progress statutory processes associated with the scheme. He added that for the project to stay on programme it was now necessary to begin the development of the detailed highway design and as the value of the commission would exceed £100,000, Cabinet approval to use the consultant was therefore required.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

15. RESOLVED that approval be given to the commissioning of a consultant to provide highway design services for the new Wear bridge project of the Sunderland Strategic Transport Corridor.

Newbottle Village Conservation Area: Character Appraisal and Management Strategy

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) on the outcome of consultations on the draft 'Newbottle Village Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy' (CAMS) and to seek approval to adopt the revised document as formal Planning Guidance.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Blackburn reported that in helping to safeguard the City's heritage, this Appraisal and Strategy satisfied the Council's various conservation obligations and duties. The document, adopted as Planning Guidance would also help to satisfy the Council's performance requirements for the current financial year. He reminded Cabinet Members that similar reports had been presented for several other CAMS over the last few years, all of which were subsequently adopted by Cabinet. The Newbottle Village document followed the same format as the previous ones and was the eighth in a series of such documents being prepared for the City's 14 Conservation Areas.

Councillor Blackburn highlighted that the document had been subject to public consultation and had been modified in light of the responses received. It was evident from consultation that there was a great deal of interest and support for the conservation area and as a result, modifications to the document had been of a generally minor nature. He added that in conclusion, the document, once adopted, would strengthen Council policy for the Conservation Area, help to protect its best features and provide a basis for its enhancement.

Councillor Rolph welcomed the report and the valuable consultations which had been undertaken to preserve the history and character of the area. She looked forward to the remaining six Conservation Areas being reported to Cabinet.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

16. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the outcome of consultations on the draft 'Newbottle Village Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy be noted, and
- (ii) the revised Character Appraisal and Management Strategy be adopted as Planning Guidance.

City of Sunderland Local Development Framework: Amendments to Local Development Scheme

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek approval to amendments to the Local Development Scheme (LDS) which provided a programme for the preparation of the City's Local Development Framework (LDF).

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Blackburn reported that the Council was preparing a Local Development Framework (LDF) which would set out policies for the use of land in the City for the next 15 years. He added that the LDF would be made up of a number of separate planning documents including a Core Strategy which set the strategic planning policy for the City, an Allocations document which detailed sites for housing, employment and transport, and an Area Action Plan for Hetton Downs. A set of detailed supplementary planning documents was also proposed. He advised that to co-ordinate the preparation of these documents the Council had to prepare a programme which set out how they would be brought forward and this was the Local Development Scheme.

Cabinet Members were advised that the LDS would set out "milestones" in the LDF preparation process and would be used to measure the Council's performance for Housing and Planning Delivery Grant purposes, among other things. Councillor Blackburn added that the current LDS was approved in March 2007 and it had become necessary to revise that document due to recent changes in the regulations, and to amend the programme in the light of experience to date and to take into account ongoing discussions with Government Office for the North East. He highlighted that the proposed LDS which was set out in Annex 1 of the report provided a robust programme for delivering the City's Local Development Framework.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

17. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the proposed amendments to the Local Development Scheme (LDS) be approved,

- (ii) Officers be authorised to forward the LDS to the Government Office for the North East (GO-NE) for consideration,
- (iii) authority be delegated to the Director of Development and Regeneration to agree any minor amendments to the LDS in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation, and
- (iv) the revised LDS be effective from 1st May, 2009 provided that no direction or notice is received from GO-NE on behalf of the Secretary of State.

Confirmation of Making of Article 4(2) Direction: St. Michael's Conservation Area

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek approval to confirm the making of an Article 4(2) Direction covering six properties in St. Michael's Conservation Area, Houghton.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Blackburn highlighted that Article 4(2) Directions could be imposed by local planning authorities in Conservation Areas to protect unlisted, yet important dwellings, from undesirable alterations which could otherwise be carried out without Planning Permission through householders exercising their Permitted Development Rights. He added that an Article 4(2) Direction was provisionally put in place on the 13th October, 2008 for six months and it had effectively brought certain types of minor development within the scope of planning control.

Councillor Blackburn reported that residents affected by the Direction were notified of its making by the serving of a letter by hand on the day it came into effect and the making of the Direction was also advertised in the Sunderland Echo. He added that residents were formally consulted for their views on the Direction via a questionnaire and given 28 days to make representations. Of the 6 questionnaires sent out, 2 responses were received. Of these, one respondent, who actually owned 2 of the houses, was in favour of the Direction and the level of additional protection it had introduced, and one was opposed to it. The respondent objected on the grounds that they felt they had not been properly consulted. However, the Council had in fact exceeded the minimum statutory consultation requirements for the Direction and the objection was not therefore considered a relevant consideration.

Cabinet Members were advised that the responses had been taken into account and in view of the general support from residents' approval to confirm the making of the Direction was sought and must be made within six months of its making, that was by 9th April, 2009, or it would lapse.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

18. RESOLVED that confirmation be given for the making of an Article 4(2) Direction covering six properties in St. Michael's Conservation Area, Houghton.

Sunderland City Council Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) 2009-2024

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) on the preparation and outcome of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) for the City and to seek its approval for its use in developing the Local Development Framework.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Blackburn highlighted that all Local Planning Authorities must produce a SHLAA which identified specific, deliverable housing sites for the first five years of a development plan and also years 6-10 and ideally years 11-15. He explained that the primary role of the Assessment was to inform the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) and that the Assessment was not a policy document as it would fall to the LDF to determine which specific sites were to be allocated. He reported that partnership approach was taken to the production of the Assessment, with the other Tyne and Wear Authorities, to ensure consistency across the sub-region.

Councillor Blackburn reminded Cabinet Members that Sunderland's housing requirements for the period 2009 to 2024 was 16,415 net additional dwellings. He advised that a range of sites were considered for assessment, including sites with planning permission and sites in the saved Unitary Development Plan (UDP). Sites were also put forward by developers and landowners and in total 315 sites were assessed. He added that the results indicated that the City has land for a potential 17,250 dwellings, of which 74% are on brownfield land.

Councillor Blackburn having reported that the Assessment had identified more land than required for years 1-5, and this would ensure the City had a rolling supply of deliverable housing land, with the most suitable sites being delivered through LDF policies, it was:-

19. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment be approved and endorsed;
- (ii) authority be delegated to the Director of Development and Regeneration, in consultation with the portfolio holder for Planning and Transportation to finalise the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment report, including where necessary, any required non-substantive amendments; and

- (iii) officers be authorised to make appropriate arrangements for submitting the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment report to Government Office for the North East acting on behalf of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

Sunderland Home Improvement Agency (HIA) – Procurement of Straight and Curved Tracked Stairlifts

The Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek approval to procure contracts for straight and curved tracked stairlifts.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Cabinet Members were advised that the contract awards would ensure that efficiencies could continue to be achieved with timescales being kept to a minimum for the customer as a result of having the contracts in place rather than on a job by job basis and unit costs being kept to a minimum through economies of scale. It having been noted that these efficiencies had been demonstrated over the last two years, for the duration of the previous contacts, it was:-

20. RESOLVED that approval be given to the placing of an advert in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) inviting tenders from potential contractors to deliver the service in accordance with the Council's Procurement Procedure Rules.

Independent Futures – Award of Contract for Domiciliary Support Service to Adults with Learning Disabilities

The Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services submitted a report (copy circulated) on a decision to award a contract for domiciliary support service to Adults with Learning Disabilities, as a matter of urgency for Sunderland Health, Housing and Adult Services pursuant to Paragraph 5.4(g) of the Sunderland's Procurement Procedure Rules.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Timmins reported that the Department of Health had set very tight timescales for the completion of the transfer of resources and responsibility, by 31st March, 2009 and in view of the timescales and the very specialist nature of the support service required which was not available elsewhere currently within the City the normal tendering options would not be possible.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

21. RESOLVED that the decision made to award a contract to Sunderland Home Care Associates for domiciliary support service to Adults with Learning Disabilities, and the circumstances that gave rise to the use of the urgency powers as set out in Paragraph 5.4(g) of the Council's Procurement Procedure Rules, be noted.

Provision of Home Care Evening Service – Changes in Contractual Arrangements

The Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services submitted a report (copy circulated) on the Directorate's plan to commission additional Evening Home Care Services (8 pm – 11 pm) for existing service users, in order that more people were supported to live independently in their own homes, by a service that enabled greater flexibility around the times individuals were assisted to bed whilst ensuring continuity of care.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Timmins reported that it was proposed that an exception was used to ensure that existing contracted providers were able to provide the evening service and at the same time providing continuity of service to service users. This would ensure the sustainability of a comprehensive home care service and provide continuity of service providers for individuals who receive home care services.

Councillor Anderson commended the proposals which had been developed on consultation with the Health and Well-Being Review Committee and she paid tribute to the Chairman, Councillor N. Wright and the Committee for the improvements which assisted the City's most vulnerable people.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

22. RESOLVED that approval be given for the use of an exception under Part 4, Section 7, 5.1 of the Procurement Procedure Rules, which states "no exception from any of these Procedure Rules shall be made unless listed in paragraph 5.4 and approved in accordance with paragraph 5.2 or specifically authorised by Cabinet" and due to the need to ensure continuity of care to service users presently receiving home care service from existing home care contracted providers, to an exception to the tender process under Part 4, Section 5.4(f) "provision of personal social services including contracts for the provision of residential care and community support packages which form an alternative to residential care" on the basis that only the current providers will be approached to undertake an evening service which will operate from 1st April 2009 to 31st April 2010.

Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006

At the instance of the Chairman, it was:-

23. RESOLVED that in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 the public be excluded during consideration of the remaining business as it was considered to involve a likely disclosure of information relating to any individual, which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual, the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) or to consultations or negotiations in connection with labour relations matters arising between the Authority and employees of the Authority (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4).

(Signed) P. WATSON,
Chairman.

Note:-

The above minutes comprise only those relating to items during which the meeting was open to the public.

Additional minutes in respect of other items are included in Part II.