

At a meeting of the CABINET held in the CIVIC CENTRE (COMMITTEE ROOM NO. 1) on WEDNESDAY 11 MARCH 2015 at 2.00 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor P. Watson in the Chair

Councillors Kelly, G. Miller, Mordey, P. Smith, Speding and H. Trueman

Also present:-

Councillor N. Wright

Part I

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 11 and 26 February 2015, Part I (copy circulated) were submitted.

(For copy reports - see original minutes).

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 11 and 26 February 2015 Part I be confirmed and signed as correct records.

Receipt of Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillor Gofton.

Development of a UK City of Culture 2021 Bid

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek approval to progress with the development of Sunderland bid for the UK City of Culture 2021.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Kelly reminded Cabinet Members of the launch of the Sunderland Cultural Strategy by the Sunderland Cultural Partnership in October 2014 which aimed to provide shared goals and a framework for key organisations and individuals to help shape the future cultural landscape for the City. He reported that the Strategy committed to creating a renewed sense of cultural confidence through the delivery of an ambitious but achievable action plan, including the potential to apply for the title of UK City of Culture for 2021.

Councillor Kelly explained that the UK City of Culture programme was developed by the UK Government to build on the success of Liverpool as European Capital of Culture 2008 and the Cultural Olympiad in 2012, by creating a national cultural event spread over a year, focused on a particular city or area. He advised that the benefits of a Sunderland bid could include:

- Acting as catalyst to move the cultural offer forward and be an accelerator for further development and growth across the city,
- Raising Sunderland's national and international profile, and demonstrating the scale of the City's ambition,
- Promoting Sunderland as a visitor destination; driving footfall within the centre and to key destinations across the city,
- Increasing engagement from residents – an improved sense of ownership and pride in the city's offer,
- Connecting young people with culture was proven to raise aspirations and improve life chances, and
- An opportunity to differentiate the city using its creative unique selling points including music, glass, photography and performance.

Cabinet Members were advised that the newly launched Sunderland Cultural Strategy provided a strong basis from which to develop a bid. The Sunderland Cultural Leadership Group reports to the Sunderland Economic Leadership Board which met on 27 January 2015 and recommended that Cabinet should consider bidding for UK City of Culture 2021.

Councillor Kelly reported that a bid for Sunderland to be UK City of Culture would have major economic, social and cultural benefits for the city. He added that even if the bid was not successful there was evidence from other candidate cities in the past that the activity would help to drive forward key outcomes relevant to Sunderland's economic ambitions.

Councillor Smith advised that the bid would provide excellent opportunities and benefits for the City's young people and would drive the City forward. She added that she had visited other cities where this had happened and there had been a real sense of excitement around them. The Chairman agreed and suggested that perhaps the City should bid for the European Capital of Culture for the North East Region to build upon the Tall Ships Races in 2018. Councillor Miller commended the proposals and advised that this demonstrated the aspirations of the Council to want to take the City forward.

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

2. RESOLVED that approval be given to the development of a UK City of Culture bid for Sunderland.

Review of Members' Allowances Scheme by the Independent Remuneration Panel

The Chief Executive and the Head of Law and Governance submitted a report (copy circulated) to consider the outcome of the Independent Remuneration Panel's Review of Members' Allowances and make appropriate recommendations to Council.

(For copy report –see original minutes).

Councillor Trueman reminded Cabinet Members that when the Independent Remuneration Panel undertook its review of the allowances scheme last year, it was agreed that a further review would be carried out in approximately 12 months' time, when the Council's revised executive and committee arrangements had been further embedded. He reported that the Panel had now undertaken that further review and had also considered a number of representations received from members on various aspects of the scheme.

The attention of the Cabinet Members was drawn to the Panel's recommendations set out in section 6 of the Panel's report, which indicated that the Panel was satisfied that the current level of allowances suitably represented the responsibilities carried out by Members. It was therefore proposed that the allowances and associated terms and conditions of the Scheme remain unchanged for the year commencing 1 April 2015.

Councillor Trueman also reported that the Panel had recommended that steps were taken to increase understanding of the roles and achievements of the revised executive and committee arrangements.

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

3. RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council to approve the recommendations of the Remuneration Panel that:-

- (i) the report, including the Council's commitment to further improvement action to reinforce the overall successful implementation of Executive and Committee arrangements and ensure steps are taken to increase understanding of the roles and achievements, be noted, and
- (ii) no change be made to the current level of allowances paid to Members of the Council of the City of Sunderland for 2015 / 2016.

Disposal of land at Crowtree Road, Sunderland

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek approval for the disposal by way of a ground lease of land at Crowtree Road, Sunderland.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Speding in highlighting the report clarified that the proposed disposal of land referred to an area of land, that the Council owned the freehold, up to 0.55 hectares at Crowtree Road. He reported that the demolition and clearance of the leisure centre had created a commercial development site which was of strategic importance for the continued regeneration of the city centre.

Councillor Speding was pleased to report that there had been developer interest in this site and discussions had been on-going between the Council and Pavilion Property Trustees Ltd, the owners of The Bridges Shopping Centre. He explained that Pavillion had proposals for the development of a large retail store and they had now made an initial offer for the site. He added that the details of the scheme were still being developed but he confirmed that the nature of retail development being proposed would be a welcome addition to the City Centre.

Cabinet Members were advised that in order to allow the scheme to be fully developed, Cabinet was requested to agree to a conditional contract for the disposal which would ensure that the scheme progressed to the next stages of full design and planning application. This would include identifying the size of the site and the site boundary and it was envisaged to be no less than half the site in order to facilitate the requirement for a quality development.

Councillor Speding having reported that the disposal of a long leasehold interest for a site, the absolute size of which is still to be determined on a Best Consideration basis, was recommended and this would be supported by external valuation advice.

Cabinet Members having been pleased to see the interest from major retailers wishing to locate in the City Centre, it was:-

4. RESOLVED that approval be given to the disposal by way of a ground lease of up to 0.55 hectares (1.35 acres) of land at Crowtree Road, Sunderland to Pavilion Property Trustees Limited and Pavilion Trustees Limited (“Pavilion”) at a price which is the best consideration reasonably obtainable on terms to be agreed by the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Secretary.

Disposal of land and acquisition of a head lease on land adjacent to Keel Square, Sunderland

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek approval for the disposal of land adjacent to Keel Square, Sunderland by way of a long ground lease and the subsequent acquisition by the Council of an option to acquire a head lease of part of the completed development.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Speding highlighted that this was another report which would bring further investment in the City. He reminded Cabinet Members of the Council's role in developing a new civic square as a high quality addition to the City's public realm. He advised that the council had previously recognised the strategic importance of this site and had acquired the properties Harleys and Baker Street to facilitate future development and further regeneration of the city centre.

Councillor Speding reported that discussions had been on-going between the Council and Cairn Hotel Group (CHG) who were an established hotel operator for a four star hotel development on this prominent and sensitive site. He explained that terms had now been provisionally agreed for the disposal of the site via a ground lease to CHG on a Best Consideration basis. He added that terms had also been provisionally agreed for the Council to acquire a head lease of part of the proposed development which would provide the Council with control over the ground floor uses fronting Keel Square.

Cabinet Members were advised that the disposal would be subject to the prior grant of planning permission and CHG were now in a position to commence the planning process.

Councillor Speding advised that the proposed disposal of a long leasehold interest would be on a Best Consideration basis with an option to acquire a head lease in part of the proposed development.

Councillor Kelly reported that this development by significant hotel chain was excellent news for the City. The Chairman agreed that it was fantastic to see investors competing to locate and invest in the City Centre.

5. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) approval be given to the disposal by way of a ground lease of approximately 0.2 hectares (0.5 acres) of land adjacent to Keel Square, Sunderland to a CHG company (Cairn Hotel Group) at a price which is the best consideration reasonably obtainable;
- (ii) approval be given to the acquisition by the Council of an option to acquire a head lease in the ground floor of the proposed completed development, on terms detailed in part II of this report, and otherwise as agreed by the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Secretary; and
- (iii) the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Secretary be authorised to exercise the option.

Disposal of 50 Fawcett Street, 15-16 John Street, and the upper floors of Cassaton House, Fawcett Street, Sunderland.

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek approval for the disposal of the Council's freehold interest in 50 Fawcett Street, 15-16 John Street, and leasehold interest in the upper floors of Cassaton House, Fawcett Street, Sunderland.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Speding reported that the properties were formally used as operational offices and were now vacant and surplus to requirements. He explained that they had been advertised on the open market and interest had been received from the Minton Group who proposed to convert the properties into student accommodation. He added that terms had provisionally been agreed for a disposal to them at a price that represented Best Consideration.

Cabinet Members having commended another key development which would reinvigorate the City Centre, it was:-

6. RESOLVED that approval be given to the disposal of the Council's freehold interest in 50 Fawcett Street and 15-16 John Street and leasehold interest in upper floors of Cassaton House, Fawcett Street, Sunderland at a price which is the best reasonably obtainable and on terms to be agreed by the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Secretary.

Procurement of Replacement Gritting Vehicles

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek approval for the procurement of six replacement gritting vehicles.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Mordey reported that the proposed procurement of the six replacement gritting vehicles would ensure the on-going efficiency and effectiveness of the winter maintenance programme. He explained that the Streetscene Fleet and Transport Unit operated a planned replacement programme for gritting vehicles ensuring they were updated on a ten year cycle, after which they became uneconomic to maintain and operate.

Cabinet Members were advised that budgetary provision had been made in the Council's capital expenditure programme and no net increase in cost to the Council was anticipated as an equivalent number of older vehicles which were more expensive to maintain would be replaced. The total capital purchase value of the equipment was approximately £540,000 and the tender process was therefore subject to the procurement regulations and procedures of the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU).

7. RESOLVED that approval be given to the procurement of six gritting vehicles to replace existing ones in use to maintain the efficiency and effectiveness of the winter gritting service as part of the planned equipment replacement programme.

Public Health Commissioning Intentions – 2015/16

The Executive Director of People Services and the Assistant Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide an overarching update on commissioning intentions for Public Health services during 2015/16 and seek approval to undertake procurement processes and award contracts as well as extending contracts. The report also highlights an update of the on-going Public Health work streams.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Kelly highlighted that the report aimed to provide a summary of all proposed commissioning activity for Public Health funded services in Sunderland for the 2015/16 period. He advised that it also included planning for the period beyond 2015/16 where necessary, as it would not be possible to complete all necessary procurement exercises within a single year.

Cabinet Members were advised that at present, the Public Health Budget was confirmed to have been allocated for 2015/16 at the same level as 2014/15, however, it had not been published for 2016/17. As a result, where commissioning plans looked to contract arrangements beyond the 2015/16 period, clauses must be included to indicate that future budgets might be subject to change, including a review point six months prior to any anticipated change to enable sufficient notice to providers.

Councillor Kelly reported that there was one major change to Public Health responsibilities during the 2015/16 period; the transfer of responsibility for commissioning Health Visitor services from NHS England to Local Authorities. He advised that this would provide an opportunity to review the overall delivery of Public Health services for children and young people and as a result, a number of services were identified for review in that context.

Councillor Kelly then drew attention to the on-going Public Health work streams in relation to the Integrated Wellness Model which was due to go live on 1 April 2015. He reported that the recommendation was to endorse the forward plan for services commissioned via the Public Health budget to help enable the Council to deliver against the Public Health Outcomes Framework, including a number of mandatory service areas.

8. RESOLVED that approval be given to the commissioning intentions for 2015/17 relating to Public Health contracts as detailed in Appendix A of the report and to authorise the Executive Director of People Services to undertake the necessary procurement processes, award contracts and extend contracts as required.

Procurement of Sunderland Integrated Substance Misuse Service

The Executive Director of People Services and the Assistant Chief Executive submitted a joint report (copy circulated) to provide detail of the forward plan for substance misuse treatment and prevention services and to seek authorisation to commence procurement of core elements of the service.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Kelly highlighted that the report had been compiled following the first meeting of the Substance Misuse Improvement Board on 12 February 2015. He explained that the current contracts for these services were due to expire on 31 July 2015 and would not be extended for a further year as originally considered.

Councillor Kelly reported that the Board had considered key lessons learned from the existing model of services and agreed the main areas that would be required for amendment before re-procuring a future model of services. He advised that although the current contracts would come to an end on 31 July 2015 it was the aim to complete the procurement and mobilisation by 1 August 2015 and if this was not possible it would be completed at the earliest opportunity after that date to enable a safe transition of services.

The attention of Cabinet Members was drawn to the main areas of the service which had been identified as requiring amendment at paragraph 2 of the report.

Councillor Speding proposed that the recommendation be amended to authorise the Director of Public Health in consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holder to appoint the appropriate service provider once the tender evaluation process has been completed.

Cabinet Members commended the report and work being undertaken by the Portfolio Holder and the Board in order to reform the service to be more efficient and effective going forward and to put measures in place to aid the recovery of the service users.

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

9. RESOLVED that approval be given for the procurement of a Sunderland Integrated Substance Misuse Service following relevant revisions to the specifications which incorporate lessons learned and any relevant changes in legislation and guidance, as described in the report and authorise the Director of Public Health in consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holder to appoint the appropriate service provider once the tender evaluation process has been completed.

School Admissions Arrangements from September 2016

The Executive Director of People Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek approval for the proposed maintained school admission arrangements for the academic year September 2016-2017 and to describe proposed amendments to published admission numbers (PANs) for the academic year 2015-2016, where it is necessary to provide additional places.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Smith highlighted that the report requested approval of the school admission arrangements for September 2016 for those schools where the Council was the admissions authority. She explained that as required by the Council's statutory requirements, the proposed admission arrangements had been consulted on and would be published, in line with the School Admissions Code. She advised that to make sure the Council complied with the duty to submit its admissions arrangements to the Secretary of State the Cabinet was requested to approve the following, which were included as appendices to the report:-

- (a) the admission policy and procedures;
- (b) details of the oversubscription criteria; and
- (c) published admission numbers

Cabinet Members were also requested to approve the recommended increase in the Pupil Admission Number at Castletown Primary School from 50 to 60 from September 2015 in order to increase the overall capacity of the school from 350 to 420 and respond to the projected shortfall in primary school places in North Sunderland.

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

10. RESOLVED that approval be given to the following in relation to the 2016-2017 academic year:-

- (i) the admissions policy and procedures associated with the coordinated scheme of admissions. This includes a proposed change to the scheme as described in 5.5 – 5.7 of the report;
- (ii) the criteria that will be applied for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools where oversubscription occurs;
- (iii) the published admission numbers (PANS); and
- (iv) an increase in the Pupil Admission Number at Castletown Primary School in North Sunderland from 50 to 60 from September 2015

Human Resources Committee – 26 February 2015 – Pay Policy Statement 2015-2016

The Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development submitted a report (copy circulated) on the draft Pay Policy Statement 2015-2016, for subsequent adoption by Council and publication by 31 March 2015.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Trueman reported that in February 2012 the Human Resources Committee considered the pay transparency implications of the Localism Act 2011, including the requirement to produce and publish an annual Pay Policy Statement, and reported that this was subsequently agreed by Cabinet and adopted by Council on 28 March 2012. He added that the updated policies for 2013-14 and 2014-15 were then published on the Council's website.

Cabinet Members were advised that the Local Government Transparency Code which came into force on 31st October 2014 under section 2 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980, also required local authorities to publish certain data sets, including senior pay. The Pay Policy now needed to be updated and published for 2015-16 on the Council's website.

Councillor Trueman reported that the Human Resources Committee had considered the content, purpose and implications of the report in February 2015 and formally agreed the draft Pay Policy Statement 2015-16 for recommendation to Cabinet and adoption by Council and publication by 31 March 2015.

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

11. RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council to approve the draft Pay Policy Statement 2015-2016 and its subsequent publication on the Council's website by 31 March 2015.

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

At the instance of the Chairman it was: -

12. 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 the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraph 3). The public interest in maintaining these exemptions outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

(Signed) H. TRUEMAN,
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.

