

**CABINET MEETING – 13 MARCH 2013**  
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I**

**Title of Report:**

MINUTES, PART I

**Author(s):**

Head of Law and Governance

**Purpose of Report:**

Presents the minutes of the last meeting held on 13 February 2013 Part I.

**Action Required:**

To confirm the minutes as a correct record.



**At a meeting of the CABINET held in the CIVIC CENTRE (COMMITTEE ROOM NO. 1) on Wednesday 13 February 2013 at 2.00pm.**

**Present:-**

Councillor H. Trueman in the Chair

Councillors Blackburn, Gofton, Kelly, G. Miller, P. Smith and Speding.

**Also present:-**

Councillors Bonallie, Errington, Francis, Oliver, Tate, Wood and N. Wright.

**Part I**

**Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 16 January 2013 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**

There were no declarations of interest.

**Apologies for Absence**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor P. Watson.

## **Scrutiny Committee – Policy Review Final Reports**

The Scrutiny Committee, the Deputy Chief Executive and the Executive Director for Children's Services submitted a joint report (copy circulated) to set out the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee following its scrutiny policy reviews into Reducing Re-offending; the Tell Us Once for Bereavement Service and Improvement, Admissions and Planning : Implementation of the Education Act 2011.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Tate, reminded Members that at the start of the year the Council reviewed and streamlined the structure of scrutiny by introducing a single Scrutiny Committee supported by six Scrutiny Panels. He advised that each of the Scrutiny Panels was Chaired by a Member of the Scrutiny Committee which has helped the Scrutiny Committee to focus on the issues of key importance for the Council while retaining the ability to help inform the development of Council policy through its Panels.

Councillor Tate explained that this report included the outcome and recommendations of three of the policy reviews undertaken by the Panels so far and a further 3 reviews would be brought forward to Cabinet the following month. He introduced the three Lead Members who led on the reviews to introduce their reports.

The Lead Member for the Children's Services Scrutiny Panel, Councillor Francis, reported that the aim of the Panel had been to look at some of the key implications raised by the Education Act 2011 in relation to school improvement and school place planning. He advised that the review recommendations would be the responsibility of the Children's Services Directorate and the action plan would monitor progress on the recommendations.

Cabinet Members were advised that the Review had sought evidence from a variety of stakeholders which had proved extremely beneficial in developing recommendations and their views were reflected in the report. From this evidence gathering, and more, the Panel formulated a number of conclusions and three recommendations.

Councillor Francis thanked the Panel Members who had taken part in the review and hoped that the Cabinet would agree with the Panel's findings and endorse this piece of work.

In response, Councillor Smith, thanked Councillor Francis and his Scrutiny Panel for the work which they had undertaken on the 'Implications of the Education Act 2011' on school improvement, school place planning and admissions.

Councillor Smith reported that the Education Act 2011 was a fundamental piece of legislation which had and would continue to make significant changes to the educational landscape and schools in Sunderland. She advised that the scrutiny panel review had concentrated on the changing role of the Local Authority in relation to school improvement, the statutory responsibilities for school place planning and in admissions policy and procedures, as more schools become academies. The review also looked at the requirement for local authorities to promote educational excellence by facilitating good school to school networks for school improvement.

Councillor Smith informed Cabinet Members that the review had come at a very opportune time and would support the Directorate's thinking in terms of the implications of the recent legislation and in shaping the new relationships with schools. She added that the recommendations were also welcomed in helping the Council to further improve the way it worked with schools and act as champion for children, young people and their families.

Councillor Smith reported that she, as Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, and officers had contributed to the action plan which set out actions in response to the recommendations and work had already begun on those actions.

Councillor Tate then introduced the Lead Member of the Responsive Services and Customer Care Scrutiny Panel, Councillor Errington, to present the findings of the Policy review into "Reducing Re-offending in the City."

Councillor Errington highlighted that the Scrutiny Panel had looked at some of the measures in place to reduce re-offending. He explained that the review had included seeking evidence from a variety of stakeholders which had been invaluable in enabling recommendations to be developed. He added that the review recommendations would be the joint responsibility of the Office of the Chief Executive and the Health, Housing and Adult Services Directorate and the action plan would enable progress to be monitored.

Councillor Errington thanked the Cabinet for considering the review and hope it would agree with the findings and recommendations. He also thanked the Panel Members, officers and those the stakeholders involved for making it such an interesting and worthwhile review.

Councillor Tate also reported that as part of the review, an agreement had been made with the Sunderland Armed Forces Network (SAFN) and the Regional Scrutiny Committee to put measures in place to support personnel coming out of the services and to facilitate information sharing on the needs of veterans.

Cabinet Members congratulated the work of the Panel and the recommendations proposed to highlight the Council's commitment to reducing re-offending with a range of services and initiatives in place and local joint working.

Councillor Tate then introduced Councillor Bonallie, the Lead Member for the City Services Scrutiny Panel to present the findings and recommendations of his Panel into the operation of the Tell Us Once for Bereavement Service in Sunderland.

Councillor Bonallie reported that the Tell Us Once for Bereavement Service had only been in operation for a little over a year therefore it was felt that it would be useful to see how it was progressing and whether there were any lessons to be learnt. He highlighted that during the course of the review, the Panel had spoken with the officers involved in introducing and operating the service and also gathered information on the views of those people using the service in order to get some feedback.

Councillor Bonallie advised Cabinet Members that this had also involved speaking to staff at Moorside who were responsible to taking client calls. He explained that he had sat in with staff answering calls and was most impressed with their professional approach. He added that all the members on the Panel were most impressed by the way the new service was operating and the enthusiasm and commitment shown by the Council's staff.

Councillor Bonallie reported that the Panel's recommendations focused on developing the profile and marketing of the service. He also referred to the potential for the lessons learnt to be adopted by other services the Council provided.

In conclusion, Councillor Bonallie thanked the members of the Panel, officers and partner organisations for their involvement in the review and their vital contribution.

Cabinet Members commended the work of the Panel and anticipated that the recommendations would drive the standard of service up to make even further improvements.

Following conclusion of the presentations, the Chairman, on behalf of the Cabinet, expressed thanks for the work of the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, the Lead Members and their Review Panels for their invaluable contribution to improving services in the Council.

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

2. RESOLVED that the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee and the proposed Action Plans for their implementation be approved.

### **Transition of Public Health to the Council**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek agreement to the transition arrangements for those elements of the public health system which were transferring into the local authority's responsibility at midnight on the 31 March 2013 and to delegate the final arrangements to the Assistant Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and Portfolio Holder during the remainder of February and March 2013.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Kelly in highlighting the report advised that as community leaders in Sunderland the Council wanted to help local people achieve the best life chances and to improve local peoples' health and wellbeing was part of this approach. He reported that the transition of public health back to the Council provided a great opportunity to strengthen this approach and to bring in new perspectives about how inequalities in Sunderland could be reduced.

Cabinet Members were reminded that public health was returning to the Council from the start of April 2013 and this report provided an overview of functions and working relationships that were proposed in this move.

Councillor Kelly reported that the Council had continued to work closely with public health to ensure a seamless transfer in April 2013. There was a good record of joint working to build upon, and by integrating public health into the Council; a better impact could be achieved on people's health through wider determinants such as early intervention, education, transport housing, social care and planning. He added that this would also build on the close working already existing between the Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group to help ensure close links with the NHS were retained.

Councillor Kelly referred to paragraph 10.3 of the report and clarified that the Director of HR&OD had been consulted on reports with employee implications including the TUPE-like transfer of staff from the Primary Care Trust to the Council rather than a TUPE process. He assured Cabinet Members that there was very little difference in the approach.

Councillor Kelly welcomed that public health was coming back to the Council and the great opportunities that the Council to think more creatively about how health inequalities could be reduced and improve local people's well being, especially with such challenging times ahead.

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

3. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the transition arrangements for public health into the local authority be agreed,
- (ii) approval be given to the delegation of final arrangements to the Assistant Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and Portfolio Holder during the remainder of February and March 2013, and
- (iii) it be noted that the Director of HR&OD has been consulted on reports with employee implications including the TUPE-like transfer of staff from the Primary Care Trust to the Council.

## **North East Local Transport Body Assurance Framework**

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to advise that the Department for Transport (DfT) intended to devolve funding for Local Major Transport Schemes to Local Transport Bodies from 2015 and as part of the devolution process the DfT required each Local Transport Body to produce and submit an Assurance Framework by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2013.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Blackburn reported that agreement was sought for the Council to become a member of the North East Local Transport Body (“NELTB”) and to approve the Assurance Framework for the NELTB for submission to the DfT by the end of February. He explained that Local Transport Bodies were new groupings of local authorities based on LEP boundaries, which were being created to allow the DfT to devolve funding for Local Major Transport Schemes and initially this was for funding for major schemes in the 2015 - 2019 period.

Cabinet Members were advised that the main functions of the Local Transport Bodies would be to decide which major schemes should be prioritised within their geographic area, to review and approve individual business cases for those schemes, and to ensure effective delivery of the programme.

Councillor Blackburn highlighted that the North East Local Transport Body would cover the geographic area of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership with proposed full membership comprising the Councils of County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland and Sunderland and the Tyne and Wear Integrated Transport Authority. He added that this report sought confirmation of the Council’s membership of this Local Transport Body.

Councillor Blackburn also reported that as part of the devolution process, the DfT required each Local Transport Body to put an Assurance Framework in place which was intended to provide appropriate safeguards for the use of public funds, ensure that the Local Transport Body was fit for purpose and the necessary arrangements were in place to ensure value for money and sound decision making.

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

#### **4. RESOLVED that:-**

- (i) approval be given for Sunderland City Council to be a member of the North East Local Transport Body (“NELTB”);
- (ii) approval be given, in principle, to the draft Assurance Framework for the NELTB (a copy of the current version was appended to the report) and authority be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to agree the finalised Assurance Framework for the NELTB, so that it can then be submitted to the Department for Transport;



- (iii) authority be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive and the Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services to conclude all documentation and enter into legal agreements with the NELTB and its accountable body to cover all requirements of the Assurance Framework; and
- (iv) the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and the Portfolio Holder, be authorised to agree and submit local transport scheme proposals to the NELTB pursuant to the new arrangements.

### **Sunderland Business Improvement District (BID)**

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide an update on the progress of the proposed Sunderland Business Improvement District (BID) and to seek agreement on an allocation of funding to enable the further development of the proposal.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chairman in highlighting the report explained that a Business Improvement District was a defined area within which businesses paid an additional tax or fee to fund improvements within the BID boundary. He reported that BID's required a Company to be established and to be run by the business community to address business community priorities and to identify where to invest in specific projects and additional services which were over and above the core responsibilities of the Local Authority.

The Chairman advised that the Sunderland Business Group was in the process of working up proposals to establish a BID which would cover the City Centre in Sunderland. He reported that Sunderland Business Ltd had been formed as the company to see through the proposal and to run the BID if a yes vote was secured and the Council's Business Investment Team had been working with the company, offering advice and support.

Cabinet Members were advised that the report recommended that the Council offered further assistance through a financial contribution of £40,000 to support marketing, business engagement business plan production. In addition the approval of the funding would allow the formal regulatory process of notifying the Secretary of State of the intention to ballot businesses to begin. There would be a 12 week activity period following this and ballot papers would be issued June 2013 with the result announced 28 days later.

The Chairman reported that BID delivery should commence within 2 months of an approval being granted.

Cabinet Members having welcomed this private sector-led initiative, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) approval be given to a grant of £40,000 funding to support the development of the proposed Sunderland BID to be met from existing economic development budgets,
- (ii) approval be given for the estimated costs of £20,000 in respect of the ballot to be met from the Council's general contingency fund, and
- iii) a further report be submitted to Cabinet in due course in respect of the detailed proposals for the Sunderland BID.

### **Collection Fund 2012/2013**

The Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services submitted a report (copy circulated) on the estimated balance on the Collection Fund for 2012/2013 and the amounts available to the Council and its major precepting authorities for use in setting Council Tax levels for 2013/2014.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Speding reported that, legally, an exercise must be carried out on the 15 January of each year to determine the estimated balance on the Collection Fund. He advised that where a surplus was projected on the Collection Fund, the Council had a legal requirement to return those surpluses to the Council and its Precepting Bodies so that they could be taken into account in calculating the Council Tax for the following year.

The attention of Cabinet Members was drawn to paragraph 5.3 of the report that it was estimated that there would be a projected surplus on the Collection Fund as at 31 March 2013 and that £566,124 would be used in 2013/2014. Accordingly, of this sum £500,000 was available to the Council to take into account when determining the Council Tax for 2013/2014. Councillor Speding was pleased to report that this was a very positive position and reflected the continued excellent performance of the Council in terms of Council Tax collection despite the increasingly difficult environment.

Councillor Speding also advised that there was a legal requirement that the Council must notify its Precepting Bodies of their share of the surplus to be used within 7 working days from the calculation date (15 January) and these amounts were detailed at paragraph 5.3 of the report. He assured Cabinet Members that this requirement had already been actioned.

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

6. RESOLVED that the overall positive position in relation to the Collection Fund for 2012/2013, and the surplus of £500,000 which will be taken into account when setting the Council Tax level for the Council for 2013/2014 be noted.

## **Capital Programme 2013/2014 and Treasury Management Policy and Strategy 2013/2014, including Prudential Indicators for 2013/2014 to 2015/2016.**

The Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide an update on the level of capital resources and commitments for the forthcoming financial year and to seek a recommendation to Council to the overall Capital Programme 2013/2014 and the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy (including both borrowing and investment strategies) for 2013/2014 and to approve the Prudential Indicators for 2013/2014 to 2015/2016.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Speding explained that this was quite a detailed and technical report mainly due to the complex nature of capital finance and the legal requirements involved. He referred to the Capital Programme for 2013/2014 which totalled over £110 million and explained that this was made up of new starts of £25.8 million and commitments relating to continuing schemes of £85.1 million. He highlighted that the Council was continuing to make a major commitment to regeneration of the area in 2013/14 and this was a positive and substantial capital programme despite ongoing reductions in grants.

Councillor Speding reported that it was testament to the Council's vision for the city and careful consideration of its resources that it could propose such a capital programme for future years, especially at a time when funding from the government had been cut across all service areas. The Council continued to support projects that benefited the most needy and had ensured that grants allocated to Children's Services, Transport, and Health and Housing Services were earmarked for priorities within these services. The approach would enable programmes such as disabled facilities grants and school modernisation, for example, to progress.

Councillor Speding then drew attention to the significant resources which had been earmarked to support key projects that would continue the Council's drive to support the economic regeneration of the City and would help to stimulate economic growth and improve job prospects for its residents. He reported that this included significant expansion of commercial opportunities at the Port of Sunderland, major transport infrastructure investment including the physical construction of the new Wear crossing which was planned to commence and which would help create thousands of new jobs throughout the region, as well as investment in service and community infrastructure.

Turning to the technical aspects of the report, Councillor Speding highlighted that the Prudential Indicators were in accordance with the Prudential Code of Practice which were set annually and monitored regularly to ensure that the Council's capital plans were affordable, sustainable and prudent.

Finally, Councillor Speding requested the Cabinet to reaffirm its Treasury Management Policy statement. He reported that the Council was not proposing any major changes to the overall Treasury Management Strategy in 2013/2014 which would, in these times of economic uncertainty, maintain the careful and prudent low risk approach adopted by the Council in previous years. The Strategy complied fully with the Treasury Management Code of Practice and observed best practice.

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

7. RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council to approve the:-
  - (i) proposed Capital Programme for 2013/2014,
  - (ii) the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2013/2014 (including specifically the Annual Borrowing and Investment Strategies),
  - (iii) the Prudential Indicators for 2013/2014 to 2015/2016, and
  - (iv) the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement for 2013/2014.

### **Revenue Budget and Proposed Council Tax for 2013/2014 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2013/2014 to 2015/2016**

The Chief Executive and the Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services submitted a joint report (copy circulated) on:-

- the overall revenue budget position for 2013/2014;
- the projected balances position as at 31st March, 2013 and 31st March, 2014 and to advise on their level;
- a risk analysis of the Revenue Budget 2013/2014;
- a summary of the emerging medium term financial position facing the Council from 2014/2015 to 2015/2016;
- any views received from the North East Chamber of Commerce and Trade Unions.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Speding in highlighting the report referred to the notes of the budget consultation meetings held with the trade unions and Tyne and Wear Chamber of Commerce concerning the proposals for the budget and Appendix D, the Council tax determination report for 2013/2014 which had been tabled at the meeting.

Councillor Speding reported that this was, once again, a very difficult budget. He explained that the Council was again faced with significant Government grant reductions and cost pressures resulting in a savings requirement of £37million for 2013/2014. He added that this came on top of almost £100million of reductions which had been required in the previous three years and clearly this compounded impact was now making the protection of front line services increasingly difficult particularly given the outlook over the next three years and beyond.

Councillor Speding advised that Cabinet colleagues had of course worked in a positive and constructive way to identify proposals to address this very difficult and challenging position and in order to address the overall reductions required, savings had been identified as follows:

- £14million of savings coming from Directorate Improvement Plans;
- £7million of savings coming from the continued review of Strategic and Shared Services;
- £5million would be made available from the cessation of SWITCH and an updated approach to workforce planning;
- £3million could be met by utilising corporate resources including New Homes Bonus Grant and other savings
- £2million of savings would arise from the integration of public health arrangements with a further £1million savings from integrated working within children's, families, adults and Health;
- £0.5million of savings would be delivered through reviewing commissioning arrangements with the voluntary sector.

Councillor Speding reported that after taking account of these savings it was also proposed that £4.5m of one off funding was temporarily applied to enable phasing of proposals, which would be replaced with additional savings in 2014/2015.

Cabinet Members were advised that the proposals represented a robust approach to ensure a balanced budget whilst trying as far as possible to protect frontline services. Also it had been ensured that the Council maintained its financial resilience as part of its approach to setting the 2013/14 budget.

Councillor Speding believed that these proposals represented the most appropriate balance taking all factors into account.

Councillor Speding then drew the attention of Cabinet Members to Appendix D tabled separately at the meeting, which highlighted that the Council was proposing a council tax freeze. He reported that the Council was still awaiting confirmation of the precept proposals from the Police and Crime Commissioner and Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority and these might require an amendment to the final proposal to Cabinet in due course. He added that again by proposing a Council Tax freeze, the Council was recognising the harsh economic climate and the challenges facing the residents of the city and this Council would continue to do everything it could to try to mitigate the impact of these external challenges.

In conclusion, Councillor Speding reported that the Council was aware the future outlook was one of further Government funding reductions over the medium term and accordingly, and in accordance with best practice, a medium-term approach to financial planning had been adopted in order to ensure that next year's budget was as sustainable as possible. He drew attention to the medium term strategy set out at Appendix E which represented an important planning tool. He added that further work was ongoing in relation to 2014/15 and 2015/16 and further updates would be provided to Cabinet in due course and the MTFs would be refined and updated in parallel as this work progressed.

Councillor Speding then invited Cabinet Members to comment in relation to their own particular areas of responsibility.

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

8. RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council to:-

- (i) approve the proposed Revenue Budget for 2013/2014 set out at Appendix I;
- (ii) note the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2013/2014 to 2015/2016 as set out in Appendix E,
- (iii) note that the proposed Council Tax Requirement for the Council for 2013/2014 for its own purposes is £76,012,920 (excluding Parish precepts) and represents a freeze to Council Tax for 2013/2014,
- (iv) note that at its meeting on 30th January 2013 the Council approved the following amounts for the year 2013/2014 in accordance with the amended regulations made under Section 31B(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (the 'Act'):
  - a) £64,094 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with the above regulation of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 as amended by Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2012, as its Council Tax Base for the year (Item T).
  - b) £ 3,122 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with the Regulations, as the amount of it's Council Tax Base for the year for dwellings in the area of the Parish of Hetton Town Council.

- (v) that the Council Tax Leaflet be made available via the Council's website rather than enclosed with Council Tax bills which reflects a relaxation of the rules and that due to timings the final document be delegated to and finalised by the Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Secretary.
- (vi) that the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2013/2014 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended:
- |    |              |   |
|----|--------------|---|
| a) | £694,729,777 | being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.  |
| b) | £618,675,928 | being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act.   |
| c) | £76,053,849  | being the amount by which the aggregate at (vi) (a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3 (vi) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act, as its Council Tax Requirement for the year including Parish precepts (Item R in the formula in Section 31A(4) of the Act)                                       |
| d) | £1,186.5986  | being the amount at (vi) (c) above (Item R) all divided by Item T ((iv) (a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B (1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).  |
| e) | £40,929      | being the precept notified by Hetton Town Council as a special item under Section 34 (1) of the Act.  |
| f) | £1,185.9600  | being the amount at (vi) (d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (vi) (e) above by the Item T ((iv) (a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34 (2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates. |

- g) £1,199.0699 being the amount given by adding to the amount at (vi) (f) above the amount (vi) (e) divided by the amount at (iv) (b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 34 (3) of the Act as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in the area of the Parish of Hetton Town Council.

h)

Valuation Bands	Parts of the Council's Area	
	Hetton Town Council	All other parts of the Council's Area
A	£ 799.38	£ 790.64
B	£ 932.61	£ 922.41
C	£ 1,065.84	£ 1,054.19
D	£ 1,199.07	£ 1,185.96
E	£ 1,465.53	£ 1,449.51
F	£ 1,731.99	£ 1,713.05
G	£ 1,998.45	£ 1,976.60
H	£ 2,398.14	£ 2,371.92

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at (vi) (f) and (vi) (g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5 (1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36 (1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

- (vii) that it be noted that for the year 2013/2014, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria have supplied their best estimate of their proposed precepts, which have still to be approved by their respective Authorities. Consequently, the following amounts for both the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria represent the provisional precepts for 2013/2014, which may be issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings as follows:



Valuation Bands	Precepting Authority	
	Northumbria Police Authority	Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue Authority
A	£ 57.74	£ 48.77
B	£ 67.36	£ 56.90
C	£ 76.99	£ 65.03
D	£ 86.61	£ 73.16
E	£105.86	£ 89.42
F	£125.10	£105.68
G	£144.35	£121.93
H	£173.22	£146.32

- (viii) that having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (vi) (h) and (vii) above but not having received confirmation of the precept in paragraph (vii), the Council, in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, estimate the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2013/2014 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below at this point in time. The exact levels will only become known once formal notification of the precepts from the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria are received.

Valuation Bands	Parts of the Council's Area	
	Hetton Town Council	All other parts of the Council's Area
A	£ 905.89	£ 897.15
B	£ 1,056.87	£ 1,046.67
C	£ 1,207.86	£ 1,196.21
D	£ 1,358.84	£ 1,345.73
E	£ 1,660.81	£ 1,644.79
F	£ 1,962.77	£ 1,943.83
G	£ 2,264.73	£ 2,242.88
H	£ 2,717.68	£ 2,691.46

To note that under Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, that the Authority's relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2013/2014 is not excessive in accordance with the principles determined under Section 52ZC(1) of the Act.

(i.e. the proposed Council Tax freeze for 2013/14 means that the Council does not need to hold a referendum on its proposed council tax. The regulations set out in Section 52ZC of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires all billing authorities (councils and precept authorities (i.e. Fire and Police authorities)) to hold a referendum on their proposed level of basic Council Tax each year if they exceed government guidelines set out annually.

For 2013/14 the guideline increase for the council was 2.0%.

As the council is proposing a Council Tax freeze for 2013/14 then the above regulations have no impact for 2013/14).

- (ix) note the views expressed by the North East Chamber of Commerce and Trade Unions at Appendix C.

### **Local Welfare Provision – Crisis Support and Community Care Support**

The Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide an overview of Government proposals to transfer funding for welfare provision to local authorities through the introduction of the Local Welfare Provision Scheme, to outline the proposed services to be provided by Sunderland City Council (Crisis Support and Community Care Support) and to seek approval for implementation of the scheme, that is to come into effect from 1 April 2013.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Speding highlighted that the Welfare Reform Act legislated for the biggest change to the welfare system in decades and included the abolition of two elements of the Social Fund which was currently administered by DWP. He reported that from April 2013, funding for these two elements of the social fund, namely crisis loans and community care grants, would be transferred to Local Authorities.

Councillor Speding drew attention to the proposals outlined in the report for the administration and delivery of these two services locally within Sunderland including an overview, eligibility criteria to be applied, the financial and budgetary arrangements and the delivery options proposed. In particular he referred to the detail of the proposed local scheme for crisis support at Appendix A and for Community Care Support at Appendix B.

Cabinet Members were advised that the City Council would oversee and co-ordinate the new schemes which would be delivered locally with support from a network of partners, making the most of capacity within and across communities. They were assured that appropriate consultation had been undertaken and completed and a summary of feedback received was presented at Appendix C of the report.

Councillor Speding outlined that overall, comments had been largely positive with support for a community based approach as well as acknowledgement that the schemes would develop over time. He reported that given the adverse impact of Welfare Reform on the City and those most vulnerable, the Council remained concerned about the pressures there were likely to be in these and other service areas. He added that in this context, implementation of the new schemes would be kept under review.

Cabinet Members were advised that the report detailed that the scheme would be administered by the Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services. Councillor Speding therefore requested for clarification, that it be proposed that Cabinet should formally authorise the Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services to administer the scheme and determine applications.

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

9. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the feedback received during the consultation period from the public, including representatives/representative groups of, voluntary organisations and community groups be noted,
- (ii) the Local Welfare Provision Scheme, developed locally as two separate services called Crisis Support and Community Care Support, be approved as outlined in the report, and
- (iii) the Scheme be published on the Council's website and in any additional manner determined by the Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Secretary.

### **Future Library Services**

The Executive Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide an overview of library services in Sunderland and feedback from the recent engagement exercise together with outlining the new Vision for Future Library Services based on the engagement and to propose the approach for consultation to inform the future service offer.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Kelly stressed that the proposed a new vision for the future was that the Library Service become a beacon of excellence in the community for reading, learning and information and that it was not just about making efficiencies. He explained that it was the aim that Library Services would support the development of confident individuals and communities who could realise their full potential and contribute to the broader vision of the city. He reported that implementing the new vision would mean services were taken to communities; in particular, those that needed the most support to engender reading and learning. He clarified that this would include targeting families and children to enable them to access high quality learning environments through reading material, training and education opportunities.

Councillor Kelly reported that the service model would provide for a number of static libraries or “Library Hubs”, some of which would provide a range of co-located services. These “Hubs” would support community outreach programmes, other local service provision and provide an extended offer over the current arrangements with for example extended opening hours. He advised that this new operating model would contribute to increased use of Library services across all sectors of the community and result in a range of positive outcomes including:

- Supporting improvements in literacy levels
- Supporting improvements in digital and information literacy
- Improving social confidence and skills
- Supporting improvements in employability skills
- Encouraging informal/formal learning

Councillor Kelly therefore requested Cabinet to agree the vision, the proposed service model and to a two stage detailed consultation process which would provide for every resident and stakeholder in the service to influence the future arrangements.

The Chairman reported that the use of libraries had changed over the years and more people were using e-readers. He added that it was appropriate to review the vision for libraries in the future and to look at smarter ways of the service being provided.

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

10. REOLVED that:-

- (i) the information with regard to the current Library service be noted,
- (ii) the proposed new Vision and approach to develop a new and modern future Library service be adopted, and
- (iii) a two stage consultation approach be implemented with residents – including children and young people, users and non-users, staff, partners, voluntary and community groups and Members to inform the future service design.

### **Sunderland Home Improvement Agency (HIA) – Procurement of a Handypersons and Minor Alterations (HPMA) Service**

The Executive Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek approval to procure a HPMA Service for a period of 36 months with an option to extend for a further period of 12 months, at the sole discretion of Sunderland City Council, at an estimated cost of £198,500 per annum. The Home Improvement Agency (HIA) would act as the ‘hub’ for the service and would directly manage the service provider.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Miller reported that the current contract had been in place since March 2009 with a locally based social enterprise called Sunderland Community Furniture Service (SCFS). He explained that the two services (handypersons and minor alterations) had merged under the contract in 2009 and this had allowed a degree of flexibility so that resources had been shifted to meet demand where appropriate. He added that statutory timescales for the delivery of minor adaptations had been consistently achieved and SCFS had also engaged in additional areas of the work as a by product of the contract such as winter warmth initiatives and falls prevention projects.

Cabinet Members having been advised that the current contract ended on 31 March 2013 and it was anticipated that the new contract could be in place by 1 April 2013, it was:-

11. RESOLVED that approval be given to the procurement of a HMPA service for a period of 36 months with an option to extend for a further period of 12 months, at the sole discretion of Sunderland City Council.

#### **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) (Paragraph 3 of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972). The public interest in maintaining this exemption 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.

