

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

Present:-

Councillor P. Watson in the Chair

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

Part I

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 14th January, 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(ii) – Capital Programme 2009/2010 including Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management Strategy	Councillors P. Watson and Anderson	Director – Tyne and Wear Development Company Limited
	Councillor Anderson	Governor – Hetton Primary School, South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership Executive Board - Substitute
	Councillor Allan	Alternate Director – Tyne and Wear Development Company Limited

Councillor Blackburn	Nexus/Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Authority, Governor – Hetton Lyons Primary School, South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership Executive Board, Street Lighting and Highway Signs PFI
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Councillor Charlton	Governor – Hylton Red House School, City Hospitals Trust
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Councillor Rolph	Governor – Houghton Kepier School, South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership Executive Board, Tyne and Wear Museums Joint Committee (Substitute)
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Councillor P. Smith	Early Years and Childcare Strategic Partnership
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Councillor Speding	Football Foundation, Tyne and Wear Museums Joint Committee, Empire Theatre
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Item 7(iii) – Revenue
Budget and Proposed
Council Tax 2009/2010

Chapter 1

Councillors P. Watson and Anderson	Director – Tyne and Wear Development Company Limited
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Councillor Allan	Tyne and Wear Anti Fascist Association, Alternate Director – Tyne and Wear Development Company Limited
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Chapter 3

Councillors Allan, Anderson, Charlton, Rolph, P. Smith and Trueman	Local Government Pension Scheme
Councillors P. Watson, Anderson, Allan and Charlton (Substitute)	Local Government Association
Councillors P. Watson and Allan	North East Regional Employers' Organisation
Councillors P. Watson and Anderson	North East Assembly
Councillors P. Watson, Anderson, Allan, Charlton and Trueman	Association of North East Councils
Councillor Blackburn	National Association of Councillors
Councillor P. Watson	Lessee of Social Club and recipient of trade refuse collection service

Chapter 4

Councillor P. Smith	Derwent Hill Advisory Group, Early Years and Childcare Strategic Partnership
Councillor P. Watson	Learning Skills Council

Chapter 5

Councillor Charlton	City Hospitals Trust
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Chapter 6

Councillor P. Watson	Sunderland ARC
Councillor Blackburn	Street Lighting and Highway Signs PFI

Chapter 8

Councillor Anderson	South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership Executive Board (Substitute)
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Councillors Blackburn and Rolph	South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership Executive Board
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Chapter 9

Councillor Rolph	Tyne and Wear Archives, Tyne and Wear Museums – Substitute
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Councillor Speding	Empire Theatre, Tyne and Wear Museums, Beamish Museum, Tyne and Wear Archives, Northern Arts
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Item 7(iii) – Revenue Budget and Proposed Council Tax 2009/2010 – Addendum Report

Councillors Anderson and Blackburn

Members of Hetton Town Council

Councillor Blackburn

Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Authority

Councillor P. Watson

Alternate Director – Newcastle International Airport and Director – Newcastle International Airport Local Authority Holding Company

Item 10 – International Strategy – Annual Report 2008

Councillors P. Watson and Charlton

Sunnyside Partnership

Item 12 – 0-7 Partnership Pilot Evaluation

Councillor P. Smith

Early Years and Childcare Strategic Partnership

Item 15 – School Place Planning

Councillor Anderson

Governor, Hetton Primary School

	Councillor Blackburn	Governor, Hetton Lyons and Easington Lane Primary Schools and friends/family connected to local school
	Councillor Rolph	Governor, Newbottle Primary School
Item 16 – Sport England Funding – Active Project	Councillor Speding	Sport England
Item 21 – Review of Penalty Charge Band associated with Civil Parking Enforcement	Councillor Blackburn	Joint Committee of the National Parking Adjudication Service

Councillor Anderson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 15, “School Place Planning” as she had a relative that attended Hetton Primary School and withdrew from the meeting during consideration of the item.

Apologies for Absence

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

Reports of the Meetings of the Personnel Committee, Part I

The report of the meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 29th January, together with an addendum including the report of the meeting held on 9th February, 2009, Part I (copies circulated) were submitted and consideration was given thereto.

(For copy report and addendum – see original minutes).

2. RESOLVED that the reports of the meetings held on 29th January and 9th February, 2009, Part I be noted.

Final Revenue Support Grant Settlement for 2009/2010 and Provisional Revenue Support Grant Settlement for 2010/2011

The City Treasurer submitted a report (copy circulated) advising of the Final Revenue Support Grant Settlement for 2009/2010 and the Provisional Revenue Support Grant Settlement for 2010/2011.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Allan having advised that the final settlement had been in accordance with the Government's three year settlement announced on 26th November, 2008, representing a 2.16% increase on the previous year, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Collection Fund 2008/2009

The City Treasurer submitted a report (copy circulated) on the estimated balance on the Collection Fund for 2008/2009 and the amounts available to the Council and its major precepting authorities for use in setting Council Tax levels for 2009/2010.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Allan having reported that on the basis of current collections and the recovery of Council Tax arrears, it was estimated that the surplus on the Collection Fund as at 31st March, 2009 would be £563,131.

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

4. RESOLVED that the position in relation to the Collection Fund for 2008/2009 be noted and the surplus of £500,000 be taken into account when setting the Council Tax level for the Council for 2009/2010.

Corporate Improvement Plan 2009/2010 to 2011/2012

(i) Service and Financial Plans 2009/2010

The Chief Executive and the City Treasurer submitted a joint report (copy circulated) on the Corporate Improvement Plan 2009/2010 to 2011/2012 which set out the background and specific proposals in relation to the revenue budget and capital programme elements of the Corporate Improvement Plan and were the subject of separate reports.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Allan reported that the report contained details of the Corporate Improvement Plan 2009/2010 for the Cabinet's consideration and reference to full Council. He explained that the Corporate Improvement Plan was the service and financial planning statement of the Council, detailing how Council services were being improved, and how improving services would contribute to the achievement of the City's Strategic Priorities.

Councillor Allan advised that the CIP collated information, the challenges the Council faced and how it would respond to these challenges through its policies, service plans and budget allocations. It also formed the basis of the Council's performance management arrangements by reporting on performance during 2008/2009 and establishing performance targets for 2009/2010. He added that in covering these areas, the Corporate Improvement Plan demonstrated how the Council's policies, services and activities would contribute towards achieving improvements in the quality of life for all residents of the City.

Cabinet Members noted that as part of the process of preparing the Corporate Improvement Plan, all Portfolio Holders had been briefed on and had approved the details of their Portfolios and their Key Actions for Portfolio Improvement.

Councillor Allan acknowledged that the Audit Commission had rated the Council's CIP highly in the Council's inspection regime and contributed towards enabling the Council to maximise its Use of Resources rating.

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

5. RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council to approve the contents of the Corporate Improvement Plan 2009/2010 to 2011/2012.

Corporate Improvement Plan 2009/2010

(ii) Capital Programme 2009/2010 including Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management Strategy

The Chief Executive and the City Treasurer submitted a joint report (copy circulated) which sought to recommend to Council the overall Capital Programme 2009/2010, the prudential indicators, and the Annual Treasury Management Strategy for 2009/2010.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

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

6. RESOLVED that:-

(a) it be recommended to Council to approve:

- (i) the proposed Capital Programme for 2009/2010;
- (ii) the prudential indicators;
- (iii) the Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Statement;
- (iv) the Annual Treasury Management Strategy including specifically the Annual Borrowing and Investment Strategies.

(b) the Treasury Management Policy be noted.

Corporate Improvement Plan 2009/2010

(iii) Revenue Budget and Proposed Council Tax for 2009/2010

The Chief Executive and City Treasurer submitted a joint report together with an addendum thereto (copy circulated) on the Revenue Budget 2009/2010 which set out the overall revenue budget position for 2009/2010 as detailed in the Corporate Improvement Plan; the projected balances position as at 31st March, 2009 and 31st March, 2010 and advice on their level; a risk analysis of the Revenue Budget 2009/2010; a summary of the emerging medium term financial position facing the Council from 2010/2011 to 2012/2013; views received from the North East Chamber of Commerce and Trade Unions and the proposed Council Tax for 2009/2010.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Allan highlighted that the report represented an excellent package of proposals for investment and efficiency savings following a robust consultation process. Key areas for investment included services for the elderly and infirm to enable them to live independently, youth initiatives, community safety and measures to address the economic downturn.

Councillor Allan drew attention to the addendum which outlined a proposed Council Tax increase of 2.9% from the previous year, allowing the Council to retain its status as having the lowest Council Tax in Tyne and Wear and the region.

Cabinet Members commended the report, the City Treasurer and the Resources Portfolio Holder for their prudent management of the Council's budget and providing excellent value for money whilst still improving Council Services.

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

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

- (i) recommend to Council the proposed Revenue Budget for 2009/2010;
- (ii) it be noted that at its meeting on 28th January, 2009 the Council approved the following amounts for the year 2008/2009 in accordance with regulations made under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:
 - (a) £80,089 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as its Council Tax for the year;
 - (b) £4,032 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amount of its Council Tax Base for the year for dwellings in the area of the Parish of Hetton Town Council.
- (iii) the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2009/2010 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992:
 - (a) £743,867,051 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32 (2) (a) to (e) of the Act.
 - (b) £494,816,231 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32 (3) (a) to (c) of the Act.

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| (c) | £249,050,820 | being the amount by which the aggregate at (iii) (a) above, exceeds the aggregate at (iii) (b) above calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 32 (4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year. |
| (d) | £155,143,066 | being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its General Fund in respect of redistributed Non-Domestic Rates, Revenue Support Grant, Additional Grant and Community Charge surplus, pursuant to the Collection Fund (Community Charges) Directions under Section 98 (4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 made on 7 th February 1994, and the amount of the sum which the Council has estimated will be transferred from its Collection Fund to its General Fund in accordance with Section 97 (3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (Council Tax Surplus). |
| (e) | £1,172.5425 | being the amount at (iii) (c) above less the amount at (iii) (d) above, all divided by the amount at (ii) (a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 33 (1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year. |
| (f) | £51,455 | being the precept notified by Hetton Town Council and a special item under Section 34 (1) of the Act. |
| (g) | £1,171.9000 | being the amount at (iii) (e) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (iii) (f) above by the amount at (ii) (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 special item relates. |
| (h) | £1,184.6617 | being the amount given by adding to the amount at (iii) (g) above the amount (iii) (f) divided by the amount at (ii) (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. |

(i) Parts of the Council's Area

Valuation Bands	Hetton Town Council	All other parts of the Council's Area
A	£ 789.77	£ 781.27
B	£ 921.40	£ 911.48
C	£1,053.03	£1,041.69
D	£1,184.66	£1,171.90
E	£1,447.92	£1,432.32
F	£1,711.18	£1,692.74
G	£1,974.43	£1,953.17
H	£2,369.32	£2,343.80

Being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at (iii) (g) and (iii) (h) 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.

- (iv) it be noted for the year 2009/2010, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority and Northumbria Police Authority 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 Northumbria Police Authority represent the provisional precepts for 2009/2010, 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:-

Precepting Authority

Valuation Bands	Northumbria Police Authority	Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority
A	£ 54.21	£ 48.33
B	£ 63.25	£ 56.39
C	£ 72.28	£ 64.44
D	£ 81.32	£ 72.50
E	£ 99.39	£ 88.61
F	£117.46	£104.72
G	£135.53	£120.83
H	£162.64	£145.00

- (v) having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (iii) (i) and (iv) above but not having received confirmation of the precept in paragraph 4, 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 2009/2010 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 Northumbria Police Authority are received.

Parts of the Council's Area

Valuation Bands	Hetton Town Council	All other parts of the Council's Area
A	£ 892.31	£ 883.81
B	£1,041.04	£1,031.12
C	£1,189.75	£1,178.41
D	£1,338.48	£1,325.72
E	£1,635.92	£1,620.32
F	£1,933.36	£1,914.92
G	£2,230.79	£2,209.53
H	£2,676.96	£2,651.44

- (vi) the views of the North East Chamber of Commerce be submitted to Council.

Corporate Improvement Plan 2009/2010

(iv) Draft Council Tax Leaflet 2009/2010

The Chief Executive and the City Treasurer submitted a joint report (copy circulated) submitting for consideration the draft Council Tax Leaflet for 2009/2010.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Cabinet Members having been advised that the final version of the Council Tax Leaflet would be circulated with Council Tax Bills, it was:-

8. RESOLVED that the draft Council Tax Leaflet be noted, and, subject to the inclusion of financial and other information, once the Revenue Budget has been set, the Council be recommended to approve it.

Responding to the Global Economic Downturn

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to set out some of the key existing and planned services and activities that were designed to sustain the local economy and support businesses and local residents who suffered hardship as a consequence of the worsening economic conditions.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chairman highlighted the report and advised that the measures detailed in the report would provide the basis on which the Council would make a measured and considered response to the impact of the economic downturn on local businesses and people. He drew attention to the Action Plan appended to the report which detailed measures to support local businesses, improve employability of the citizens, assist people with financial problems and stimulate regeneration.

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

9. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the report be received and noted, and
- (ii) the proposals, set out in the Action Plan attached as Appendix 2, be approved.

Local Area Agreement Annual Review Process 2008/09

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide an outline of the Local Agreement (LAA) Review process for 2008/09.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chairman, in highlighting the report, reminded Cabinet Members that the LAA was subject to an annual review and to regularly report on the Council's performance against its local area targets. He added that this first review also included a number of targets that were not set in the initial negotiations therefore a 'refresh' of the Agreement had been undertaken.

The Chairman having advised that with the worsening economic climate some of the targets were subject to negotiation and further revisions might be necessary, it was:-

10. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the new and revised Local Area Agreement targets as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved, and
- (ii) the Council Leader and Chief Executive be authorised, in discussion with the Chair of the Sunderland Partnership, to approve targets for the remaining indicators including the Place Survey related indicators.

International Strategy – Annual Report 2008

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide an overview of activity undertaken during 2008 in relation to the City's International Strategy, highlighting the benefits this had generated, and identifying an outline Work Programme for 2009.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chairman reported that this was the second annual report and the overall aim of the Strategy was to ensure the City's international engagement supported the Sunderland Partnership in achieving its vision for Sunderland, maximising the opportunities and benefits for the City and its residents. He added that the Strategy included a Framework for International Engagement to guide the ongoing development of international activity, setting out the key areas of activity which would be undertaken, guiding principles within which it would be developed, and criteria for establishing international partnerships.

The Chairman drew attention to key areas of focus in the report which included continued work under the Friendship Agreement with Washington DC, activities with the Football Club, University and School partnerships, further co-operation with China and links with Ireland, Essen and St. Nazaire.

Councillor Allan referred to this recent visit to Washington DC to observe the Presidential election and advised that Sunderland had been recognised as a vital and progressive City and held in high regard.

Cabinet Members having commended the continued vital work of the Strategy and its importance to the local economy, it was:-

11. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the level and nature of activity developed under the International Strategy during 2008 be noted, and
- (ii) the proposed work programme for 2009 be endorsed.

Building Schools for the Future (BSF): Submission of Stage 4 Final Business Case (FBC) for St. Robert of Newminster Voluntary Aided RC Secondary School

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copy circulated) on the content of the Stage 4 Final Business Case (FBC) which was to be submitted to Partnerships for Schools (PfS) and Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) for approval. This would enable the sixth and final BSF Wave 1 project at St. Robert of Newminster School, to proceed to contract signature with Balfour Beatty Construction Northern Limited (BBCNL), anticipated on 20th February, 2009. The report also outlined the current affordability position on the BSF Wave 1 project.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Smith reminded Cabinet Members of the earlier issues that had been encountered in relation to the St. Robert of Newminster scheme and the measures taken to resolve them. She advised that submission of the Stage 4 FBC was an essential step in the procurement process and required approval from PfS and the DCSF in order to draw down the BSF funding and to award the contracts to begin work on site.

Cabinet Members were advised that the scheme would include a new Learning Resource Centre, a rainwater harvesting system, refurbished P.E. areas and an upgrade to the ICT infrastructure.

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

12. RESOLVED that the content of the Stage 4 FBC for St. Robert of Newminster School and the current affordability position on the BSF Wave 1 project be noted and endorsed.

0-7 Partnership Pilot Evaluation

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which sought approval to tender for a research consultant to evaluate and report findings from the 0-7 Partnership Pilot in Sunderland.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Smith reported that the 0-7 Partnership Pilot scheme and funding had been awarded to the Council by the DCSF. The focus of the Pilot was to raise the quality of provision and the relationship with parents and to improve outcomes for children. She advised that the funding available for the whole Pilot was £900,000 over three years to March, 2011 to develop and test working practices and to inform future service planning, both locally and nationally.

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

13. RESOLVED that the tender to secure a research consultant to evaluate the 0-7 Partnership Pilot work in Sunderland be approved.

Local Authority Home to School Transport Policy

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copy circulated) on the recent review of the Home to School Transport Policy and to seek approval for the revised policy.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Smith outlined the current provision under the Home to School Transport Policy and following the Education and Inspections Act 2006 the right to this Service had been extended to include children entitled to free school meals or whose parents were in receipt of maximum working Tax Credits.

Cabinet Members were advised that the opportunity had been taken to re-write the Policy and the appeals procedure in order to make it easier to understand and clearly set out the behavioural expectations of the children using the Service.

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

14. RESOLVED that the new Local Authority Home to School Transport Policy which had been amended to reflect the changes in entitlement set out in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 be approved and be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains appropriate.

Annual Performance Assessment of Children's Services

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which set out a summary of the outcomes of the Annual Performance Assessment of Children's Services in November 2008 and presented the post inspection Action Plan.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Smith reported that the final inspection had awarded an overall judgement of 3 which demonstrated a consolidation of improvement across Children's Services. She added that the letter also highlighted 22 major strengths and 10 areas for improvement which had been developed into an Action Plan to address the areas of weakness.

Cabinet Members having congratulated the Director and her Department on the award, it was:-

15. RESOLVED that the Annual Performance Assessment judgement on Children's Services be received and noted.

At this juncture, Councillor Anderson, as she had declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the following item, withdrew from the meeting.

School Place Planning for the Future

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide feedback on responses to the Stage 3 consultation on School Place Planning held in October/November 2008 and to set out an options appraisal for each of the options for schools involved in the Stage 3 consultation and proposals for schools involved in the Stage 3 consultation, based on the options appraisal and to seek approval to consult upon those proposals as Stage 4 consultation.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Smith updated Cabinet Members on the Stage 3 consultation meetings and reported that the School Place Planning exercise would move to the final stage and the reduction in surplus places in the City would begin to be implemented.

The Chairman reiterated that no final decision had been made and there was still an opportunity to influence proposals during the Stage 4 consultation process.

Cabinet Members having been mindful of the Council's duty to ensure that there should be not more than 10% surplus school places across the City assured that the process would be handled as sensitively as possible.

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

16. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the feedback on responses to the Stage 3 consultation on School Place Planning be noted;
- (ii) the options appraisal for each of the options for schools involved in the Stage 3 consultation be noted; and
- (iii) the Stage 4 consultation process upon those proposals be approved as set out in paragraph 4.5 of the report for schools involved in the Stage 3 consultation, based on the options appraisal.

Sport England Funding – Active Project

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to advise that the Council had been successful in attracting £326,425 from Sport England to improve adult participation levels in sport and physical activity across the City.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Speding having advised that the proposal presented an opportunity to make a step change and the three year funded programme would present an opportunity to increase participation in sport and physical activity, it was:-

17. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the content of the report be received and noted, and
- (ii) the acceptance of a Sport England grant to deliver a three year Active Project (2009-2011), which targets increased adult participation in sport and physical activity be endorsed.

Allocations Scheme – Extra Care Housing

The Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which proposed a change to the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme to cover extra care housing schemes.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Trueman reminded Cabinet Members that extra care housing was now being developed within the City to provide a new form of supported housing for older people. He reported that the current Allocations Scheme did not cover the provision of extra care housing and as the new scheme at Silksworth was due to complete in March 2009, and subsequent schemes at Washington, Hetton and Houghton to follow, it was necessary to make changes to the Allocations Scheme to reflect this.

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

18. RESOLVED that approval be given to add the criteria set out in sections 5.2 to 5.5 of the report to the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme.

Housing Standards and Neighbourhood Relations: Proposed Housing Renewal Enforcement Policy

The Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services submitted a report (copy circulated) on the statutory requirement to produce and publish a service specific enforcement policy and to seek approval for the proposed housing renewal enforcement policy which would act to serve statutory, strategic and operational aims.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Trueman highlighted that the introduction of the Housing Act 2004 provided a series of substantial new enforcement powers, many of which came into force from 2006 and there was now a requirement to publish a separate and specific policy for Housing Renewal Enforcement.

Councillor Trueman reported that the Policy had been developed to maintain good standards of housing to enable it to protect individuals, families and the community as a whole.

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

19. RESOLVED that the draft Housing Renewal Enforcement Policy be referred to Council for approval and adoption with immediate effect.

Supporting People – Steady State Contracts 2009 – 2011

The Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide an update on the 2006 – 2009 Supporting People review and the letting of the Supporting People Steady State Contracts for the period 2009 - 2011.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Trueman reported that approval was sought for the extension of Supporting People Contracts with current providers without tendering existing services. In order to continue to deliver services without disruptive change to support arrangements for service users who held tenancies within these schemes and an outcome of the review process had given the opportunity to rebase the contracts at a saving of approximately £1.5m over the next two years. He added that the decision would create a stable and coherent provision in the current economic climate for the providers, employees and service users without the need for disruption or uncertainty.

Cabinet Members were advised that the proposal would also allow the Council to enhance and build on the current outcome based arrangements, in order to meet the requirements of the Local Area Agreement through the delivery of Service User Outcomes. Granting the exemption from the tender process would also help ensure the Council could deliver Objective 3 of the Housing Strategy through existing service providers.

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

20. RESOLVED that the extension of the Supporting People contracts at the identified cost levels for the period April 2009 – March 2011 be approved.

Port of Sunderland – Procurement of Fork Lift Trucks

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek approval for him to commission a procurement exercise to secure the replacement of the fleet of fork lift trucks at the Port of Sunderland.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Blackburn reported that the arrangement for the hire of the existing fleet of fork lift trucks at the Port of Sunderland had been reviewed, and a fresh procurement exercise was necessary. He added that trucks were now required to provide greater handling capacity as a result of new contracts at the Port and it was therefore considered that the fleet be replaced so that customer expectations were met, and operational effectiveness was maintained. He advised that it was not possible at this stage to decide whether it was in the Council's best interests to acquire or to hire trucks, and it was therefore proposed to undertake a market assessment of each option, and to procure a fleet of trucks accordingly.

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

21. RESOLVED that appropriate Officers be authorised to procure a replacement fleet of fork lift trucks for the Port of Sunderland.

Review of the Penalty Charge Band Associated with Civil Parking Enforcement

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek agreement to a proposal to revise the penalty charge band associated with Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE).

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Blackburn reported that since April last year penalty charges associated with Civil Parking Enforcement had been categorised into a higher or lower level of charge depending on the seriousness of the contravention. There were two bands of charges that Local Authorities could choose from. Band 1 was £60 or £40 and Band 2 £70 or £50. Currently Sunderland was operating under Band 1.

Councillor Blackburn drew attention to paragraph 4.3 of the report which indicated that there were 5 other Authorities throughout England and Wales operating Band 1. He added that further research showed that actually only two Authorities were recorded as operating under this band and all the Council's neighbouring Authorities operated under Band 2.

Cabinet Members were advised that introducing Band 2 charges would provide consistency by reflecting the penalty charge band of other neighbouring Authorities in accordance with the recommendations of the Department for Transport's operational guidance and would help to make the service more financially sustainable. A change to Band 2 charges was also recommended by RTA Associates in connection with the recent review of Civil Parking Enforcement in the City for these reasons. It was anticipated that Band 2 charges would have a positive effect on the degree of compliance with parking and waiting restrictions.

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

22. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Band 2 level of penalty charge be adopted, and
- (ii) the Director of Development and Regeneration and the City Solicitor be authorised to take all necessary action to implement the new penalty charges.

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.