

At a meeting of the CABINET held in the CIVIC CENTRE (COMMITTEE ROOM NO. 1) on Wednesday 16 July 2014 at 2.00pm.

Present:-

Councillor H. Trueman in the Chair

Councillors Gofton, Mordey, G. Miller, P. Smith and Speding

Part I

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 18 June 2014 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

Councillor Speding made an open declaration in respect of Item 9, "Priority Schools Building Programme (PSBP) Two – Proposal for Expressions of Interest" as a Governor of Shiney Row Primary School and withdrew from the meeting prior to consideration of the report.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Kelly and P. Watson.

International Strategy – Annual Report April 2013 to March 2014

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) on an overview of activity undertaken from April 2013 to March 2014 in relation to the city's International Strategy, highlighting the benefits this had generated, and identifying the outline Work Programme for the year 2014/15.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chairman in highlighting the report drew attention to the very full and successful year for the City in pursuing its international aspirations through the implementation of the International Strategy, as detailed in the Annual Report for 2013/14. He explained that the Strategy aimed 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.

Cabinet Members were advised that economic development continued to be the key driver for the City's international engagement. Sunderland currently had 25,000 jobs in 75 internationally-owned companies from 20 different countries. During 2013/14, a total of 22 projects by overseas companies had brought 1,200 new jobs and £30 million of investment to Sunderland.

The Chairman reported that a range of activities were developed during this reporting year with international partnerships in Essen, Saint-Nazaire, Washington DC and Harbin including celebrating the 60th anniversary of the relationship with Saint-Nazaire. He added that the activities included initiatives to help prepare young people for the world of work in today's global economy.

The attention of Cabinet Members was drawn to the work to develop engagement within international partnerships and networks detailed in the Annual Report. Collective work was focussed on three primary areas of activity namely:-

- developing a more co-ordinated approach to work with Africa
- increasing social and cultural volunteering opportunities within the City for international students, and
- exploring opportunities for international students to support businesses to access overseas markets

The Chairman reported that the proposed work programme for 2014/15 focused collective activity on the same key actions to maximise the effectiveness of the Steering Group and the benefits, particularly the economic benefits, that could be generated within the limited resources available.

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

2. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the level and nature of activity developed under the International Strategy during 2013/14 be noted, and
- (ii) the series of actions proposed for 2014/15 be approved.

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 in outlining the report, advised that it was proposed to procure a contract to replace the Council's existing six gritters which, at ten years old or more, were at the end of their working life and were no longer economic to maintain. He reported that as the total value of the proposed procurement was approximately £500,000 the procurement process would be subject to the EU procurement regulations.

Cabinet Members were advised that budget provision had been made in the 2014/15 capital programme for the purchase and no net increase in cost to the Council was anticipated. Delaying the purchase of new vehicles would reduce the efficiency of the winter gritting service and cost more because of the increased maintenance required in respect of the old fleet.

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

3. RESOLVED that approval be given to the procurement of 6 gritting vehicles to replace existing vehicles to maintain the efficiency and effectiveness of the winter maintenance programme.

Procurement of Materials Recovery Facility Contract

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek approval for the Procurement of Materials Recovery Facility Contract.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Mordey highlighted that the report sought to ensure that the Council had the most cost effective and operationally efficient arrangements in place to manage the materials collected in the blue bins. He advised that the current contract for this materials recovery service, which used a facility in Washington, was due to expire in April 2015.

Councillor Mordey reported that following a procurement process undertaken by the South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership earlier this year, the Council had already secured an option to join a contract with Gateshead and South Tyneside Councils, whose previous contracts ran out a year in advance of Sunderland's. He explained that however this option would be more expensive than the Council's current arrangements as the Partnership's facility was in Team Valley and the longer distances that collection vehicles would have to travel would increase staff and transport costs.

Cabinet Members were advised therefore, in order for the Council to secure the best market terms, it was proposed to undergo a procurement exercise for this service. This would include a lot for providing the full materials recovery service at a location in the City, and a lot to provide a transfer station also in the City, but with materials then being transported on to Team Valley to be dealt with under the Partnership contract. The tenders received would be compared with the option available through the Partnership contract, to decide which was the most cost effective and least operationally disruptive solution for the Council.

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

4. RESOLVED that approval be given to the procurement of a Materials Recovery Facility Contract for the City Council and the Deputy Chief Executive be authorised to appoint a supplier that provides the most economically advantageous option and ensure continuous service when the existing contract expires in 2015.

Sunderland Accommodation Assessment for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to detail the outcomes of an assessment which had been undertaken to consider the accommodation needs for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople within the City. The study was undertaken jointly with South Tyneside and would form part of the evidence base for the emerging new Local Plan.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Miller reported that Local Planning Authorities were required to provide an adequate number of pitches for gypsies and travellers and plots for travelling showpeople which addressed the likely permanent and transit accommodation needs of travellers and travelling showpeople in their area over the local plan period. He explained that the Local Plan process must also ensure that appropriate sites were identified to accommodate these requirements.

Cabinet Members were advised that an accommodation assessment was commissioned by the Council in April 2014 from consultants Opinion Research services. In relation to Gypsy and Traveller pitches, the study concluded that Sunderland had no requirement for any permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches up to 2036. However, due to the city frequently encountering unauthorised encampments, there was a clear need for a transit site or a stop-over place, which would need to be at least 10 pitches.

Councillor Miller explained that due to the short period of time for which most unauthorised encampments were in place, a stop-over place would adequately meet needs and be less expensive to maintain than a permanent site. He added that work had been undertaken to identify an appropriate stop-over place/site, which had involved a city-wide search and that further consideration was currently being given to the city-wide list to enable a stop-over place to be identified and a report on this would be presented to the September Cabinet meeting

Cabinet Members were advised that the needs of Travelling Showpeople were different to those of Gypsies and Travellers and the study had concluded that Sunderland had a requirement for 34 plots for Travelling Showpeople until 2036. It also concluded that any future site search for Travelling Showpeople should begin within a broad area in proximity to the existing Travelling Showpeople sites as the evidence indicated that they wished to remain together. Consideration should also be given to safeguarding existing authorised Travelling Showpeople sites, to ensure that existing needs continued to be met.

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

5. RESOLVED that the findings of the accommodation assessment be approved to allow for the needs identified to be planned for through the formal Local Plan process.

National Glass Centre

The Executive Director of People Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide the background to the grant arrangements between the City Council and the National Glass Centre and to seek approval to continue with annual grant funding arrangements. The report also proposed the completion of an options appraisal in relation to the Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art (ACE), in collaboration with Arts Council England and the University of Sunderland.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Kelly highlighted the report and advised that the Arts Council, England (ACE) had indicated that they would support development of an options appraisal, in collaboration with the University, to determine the most appropriate future location and management arrangements for the Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art.

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

6. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) approval be given to the continuation of grant funding (£91,000) to the National Glass Centre, subject to an annual review, and
- (ii) an options appraisal be progressed to determine the most appropriate future arrangements for the Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art.

At this juncture, Councillor Speding withdrew from the meeting in view of his declaration of interest.

Proposed Expression of Interest in Priority Schools Building Programme 2 (PSBP2) and progress update on PSBP1

The Executive Director of People Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to inform of the Government's Priority Schools Building Programme 2 (PSBP2) including the bidding criteria and timescales together with an update on existing PSBP activities and seeking approval for an amendment to the proposed build at Shiney Row Primary School.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Smith reminded Cabinet Members that on 1 May 2014, the Minister of State for Schools announced that there would be a further phase of the Priority Schools Building Programme from 2014. She drew attention to the 5 schools in the first phase of the programme which was being funded by government through PFI or through capital grant. She explained that Phase 2 of the programme would be funded through capital grant only but would again focus on those schools in the worst condition, on the basis of Department for Education (DfE) criteria.

Cabinet Members were advised that the proposed long list of schools for Phase 2 in Sunderland was set out at paragraph 4.1.4 of the report and a delegation was sought to the Children's Services Portfolio Holder and the Executive Director of People Services to determine the shortlist based on the DfE's criteria given that the bids must be submitted by 21st July.

Councillor Smith advised that approval was also sought to the additional capital cost in respect of the proposed increase in size of Shiney Row Primary School which was being rebuilt as part of the Phase 1 programme as a result of planned housing developments and an increased birth rate in the area. The additional cost will be met initially through Basic Need.

Cabinet Members having given consideration to the report, it was:-

7. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) an Expression of Interest be submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) for inclusion in Priority Schools Building Programme 2 (PSBB2);
- (ii) the Executive Director of People Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services be authorised to determine the shortlist of schools to be submitted; and
- (iii) additional capital be allocated from the Children's Capital Programme to expand the build at Shiney Row Primary School (PSBP1) from 1.5 Form Entry (45 places per year group) to 2 Form Entry (60 places per year group).

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

At the instance of the Chairman it was: -

8. 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.

