

CABINET

4 November 2014

PRESENT – Councillor Dixon (in the Chair); Councillors Copeland, C L B Hughes, McEwan, D A Lyonette, A J Scott and Wallis. (7)

APOLOGIES – Councillor Harker.

INVITEES – Councillors Curry, Haszeldine and Mrs Scott. (3)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillors Crichlow, Johnson and Long. (3)

C68. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – In respect of Minute C72(1) below, Councillor Long declared a non-pecuniary interest, as she was a Board Member of Theatre Hullabaloo.

C69. REPRESENTATIONS – In respect of Minute C72(1) and (2) below, a Member in attendance made representations at the meeting in respect of those items.

C70. MINUTES - Submitted - The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Cabinet held on 14 October 2014.

RESOLVED - That the Minutes be confirmed.

REASON - They represent an accurate record of the meeting.

C71. MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET - There were no matters referred back for reconsideration.

C72. ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY – (1) Provision of Culture Review Group – Final Report – The Cabinet Member with the Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio introduced the report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources and the Director of Economic Growth (previously circulated) reporting the final findings of the Provision of Culture Review Group, established by the Place Scrutiny Committee, to understand the issues around the provision of culture in Darlington and to identify potential solutions.

The Chair of the Place Scrutiny Committee addressed Cabinet in respect of the work undertaken by that Scrutiny in relation to the review.

RESOLVED - (a) That the findings of the Provision of Culture Review Group, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.

(b) That the plan of the Place Scrutiny Committee to review the work of Creative Darlington, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.

REASON - To conclude the work undertaken by the Place Scrutiny Committee Review Group.

(2) Markets Review Group – Final Report - The Cabinet Member with the Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio introduced the report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources (previously circulated) reporting the final findings of the Markets Review Group, established by the Place Scrutiny Committee, to ensure promotion of Darlington as a vibrant market town.

The Chair of the Place Scrutiny Committee addressed Cabinet in respect of the work undertaken by that Scrutiny in relation to the review.

Discussion ensued on the flexible use of the Market Hall building; the siting of the outdoor market; the opening times of the market; and on the retail offer within the market.

RESOLVED - (a) That the recommendations of the Place Scrutiny Committee, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the submitted report, be received, and officers be requested to continue to action the recommendations deliverable within existing resources.

(b) That the allocation of funds to refurbish and support the Market Hall, be considered as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan in November 2014,

REASONS - (a) To enable Cabinet to consider Place Scrutiny recommendations.

(b) To enable consideration to be given to allocating funding for the market against other Council priorities.

C73. KEY DECISIONS – (1) GOLD - Growing Older Living in Darlington - The Cabinet Member with Adult Social Care and Housing Portfolio introduced the report of the Director of Commissioning (previously circulated) informing Members of the outcome of the review of support and consultation with older adults, including the review of Growing Older Living in Darlington (GOLD), and other support for older people and requesting that consideration be given to authorising officers to continue to work with GOLD members and the Darlington Citizen’s Advice Bureau (CAB) to enable a ‘business transfer’ of ‘GOLD’ to Darlington CAB when Council funding ends on 31 March 2015, subject to the Darlington CAB being able to secure suitable alternative funding.

RESOLVED - (a) That officers be authorised to continue to work with GOLD members and the Darlington Citizens Advice Bureau to enable the transfer of GOLD to it when Council funding ends on 31 March 2015.

(b) That, should Darlington Citizens Advice Bureau be unsuccessful in securing suitable alternative funding, the GOLD service be terminated as of 31 March 2015, to achieve the budget savings set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan 2012/13.

REASON - To comply with the requirements of the Medium Term Financial Plan 2012/13 to 2015/16.

(2) (URGENT ITEM) Collective Energy Switching - The Cabinet Member with Economy and Regeneration Portfolio introduced the report of the Director of Economic Growth (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to this Council

entering into a contract with iChoosr, through the Local Government Association (LGA) Framework Agreement, to deliver Collective Energy Switching up to 31 March 2017.

Discussion ensued on the take up and promotion of the scheme.

RESOLVED - (a) That the continued delivery of a Collective Energy Switching Scheme for the Borough, as detailed in the submitted report, be approved.

(b) That entry into a contract with iChoosr, via the LGA Framework Agreement to deliver a Collective Energy Switching Scheme up to 31 March 2017, be agreed.

(c) That the direct award of a contract with Darlington Citizens Advice Bureau to facilitate the offline registration element of the next round of the Scheme from 24 November 2014 to 31 March 2015, as detailed in the submitted report, be agreed.

(d) That the facilitation of the offline/paper registration element of the scheme be integrated into future advice arrangements from 1 April 2015 up to 31 March 2017 at the latest, subject to scheme performance and funding.

(e) That Scheme costs for the next Scheme round from 24 November 2014 to 31 March 2015, be met through projected underspend on the Council's energy budget.

(f) That the Borough Solicitor be authorised to complete all the necessary legal agreements and documentation.

REASONS - (a) To enhance the social and economic well-being of the Borough.

(b) To support actions arising from the Council's Housing Strategy, further report on the Home Energy and Conservation Act (March 2013) and Warm Up North programme looking to address fuel poverty in the Borough.

(c) To mitigate against the health impacts of fuel poverty and improve thermal comfort.

(d) To support delivery of the Darlington Partnership's One Darlington and Health and Wellbeing priorities.

(e) To support actions arising from the Economic Strategy – enabling businesses and Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to thrive through minimising operational costs.

(3) Council Tax Support – Scheme Approval - The Cabinet Member with the Efficiency and Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the draft Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme (also previously circulated) for 2015/16.

RESOLVED - That the draft Council Tax Support Scheme for 2015/16, as detailed at Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be recommended to Council for approval.

REASONS - (a) The Council is required to publish a local CTS scheme for 2015/16 by 31 January 2015.

(b) The CTS schemes for 2013/14 and 2014/15 have both been implemented successfully without any major challenges.

(c) The financial position of the Council has not improved and therefore the continued application of a reduced entitlement for working aged people is still appropriate.

C74. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT 2014/15 and 2015/16 - The Cabinet Member with Adult Social Care and Housing Portfolio introduced the report of the Director of Commissioning (previously circulated) advising Members of the capital resources available for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) during 2014/15 and 2015/16 and requesting that consideration be given to releasing and utilising those resources, in accordance with this Council's Disabled Facilities Grant Policy 2014/17.

RESOLVED - That the Disabled Facilities Grant for 2014/15 and 2015/16, as detailed in the submitted report, be agreed and the capital funding released.

REASON - To enable the adaptations which require a Disabled Facilities Grant for 2014/15 and 2015/16 to proceed.

C75. LAND AT FORMER EASTBOURNE SCHOOL – SALE OF ADDITIONAL LAND FOR PHASE I - The Cabinet Member with Economy and Regeneration Portfolio introduced the report of the Director of Economic Growth (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the disposal of an additional area of land at the former Eastbourne School, as shown on the plan attached at Appendix 1 to the submitted report.

RESOLVED - (a) That the land, as identified in paragraph 5 and as shown on the plan appended to the submitted report, be declared surplus to operational requirements and the sale by private treaty to the developer of Phase I, be agreed.

(b) That that Director of Economic Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with the Economy and Regeneration Portfolio, be authorised to agree the specification for access improvements.

REASONS - (a) To enable the developer to meet the Housing and Communities Agency funding criteria, and deliver all of the Affordable Housing within their timetable.

(b) To secure access improvements to the Council's retained land.

C76. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION, ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION AND SUBJECT ACCESS REQUEST ANNUAL REPORTS 2013/14 - The Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) providing Cabinet with the Freedom of Information (FOI), Environmental Information (EIR) and Subject Access (SA) Request Annual Report 2013/14 (all also previously circulated); informing Members of the decisions made in relation to the recommendations as set out in the annual report 2013/14; and the changes to be introduced to the Council's FOI and EIR Request Procedure following the introduction of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

RESOLVED - That the submitted report and the Freedom of Information (FOI), Environmental Information (EIR) and Subject Access (SA) Request Annual Report 2013/14, as appended to the submitted report, be noted.

REASON - To make Cabinet aware of the progress made by the CIG Team in ensuring the Council understands the nature of the requests for information it receives and facilitating the publication of the most frequently requested information in order to increase the efficiency with which the Council is able to deal with such requests.

C77. PROJECT POSITION STATEMENT AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING QUARTER TWO 2014/15 - The Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources and Director of Economic Growth submitted a report (previously circulated) providing a summary of the latest Capital resource and commitment position to inform monitoring of the affordability and funding of the Council's capital programme; an update on the current status of all construction projects currently being undertaken by the Council; and seeking approval to a number of changes to the programme.

RESOLVED - (a) That the status position on construction projects, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.

(b) That the projected capital expenditure and resources, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.

REASONS - (a) To inform Cabinet of the current status of construction projects.

(b) To make Cabinet aware of the latest financial position of the Council.

(c) To maintain effective management of resources.

C78. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2014/15 – QUARTER 2 - The Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) providing an up-to-date forecast of the 2014/15 revenue budget outturn as part of the Council's continuous financial management processes.

RESOLVED - (a) That the forecast revenue outturn for 2014/15 and actions being taken to manage the Council's finances, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.

(b) That the proposed carry forward of resources, as detailed in paragraph 16 of the submitted report, be noted and approved.

(c) That further regular reports be submitted to future meetings of Cabinet to monitor progress and take prompt action if necessary.

REASONS - (a) To continue effective management of resources.

(b) To continue to deliver services to agreed levels.

C79. COMMISSIONING OF SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVING CARE - The Cabinet Member with the Children and Young People Portfolio introduced the report of the Director of Commissioning (previously circulated)

requesting that consideration be given to the procurement of supported accommodation for young people leaving care.

RESOLVED - (a) That the procurement of supported accommodation for young people leaving care, be commissioned.

(b) That the Supported Accommodation Services for Young People Leaving Care be added to the Annual Procurement Plan and it be classified as a non-strategic procurement.

REASONS - (a) To ensure we have a service fit for purpose to manage the transitional needs of Young People leaving care to improve their outcomes.

(b) The designation of contracts as strategic or non strategic is a Cabinet function.

C80. MEMBERSHIP CHANGES - There were no membership changes reported at the meeting.

**DECISIONS DATED –
FRIDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2014**