

**DECISIONS SHOULD NOT BE IMPLEMENTED
BEFORE MONDAY 17 MAY, 2010**

CABINET
4 May 2010

PRESENT - Councillor Williams (in the Chair); Councillors Copeland, Dixon, Hughes, McEwan, D A Lyonette and Wallis. (7)

INVITEES – Councillor I Haszeldine and Mr A MacConachie. (2)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor L Haszeldine.

APOLOGIES – Councillors Harker, AJ Scott, Mrs H Scott and Swainston. (4)

C175. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

C176. REPRESENTATIONS – There were no representations from members of the public made at the meeting.

C177. MINUTES - Submitted - The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of Cabinet held on 30 March 2010.

RESOLVED - That the Minutes be confirmed.

REASON - They represent an accurate record of the meeting.

C178. MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET - There were no matters referred back for reconsideration.

C179. ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY - There were no issues arising from Scrutiny.

C180. KEY DECISIONS - (1) (URGENT ITEM) Impact of Adverse Weather on Highway Network Condition - The Cabinet Member with the Transport Portfolio introduced the report of the Director of Community Services (previously circulated) providing Members with an update on the impact of the adverse weather on the highway network and requesting that consideration be given to a programme of emergency repairs and on the funding options to deliver those repairs.

Particular references were made at the meeting to those areas of the highway that had been affected by the adverse weather but did not appear within the schedule; the definition of a pothole; and to the expectations of the public in respect of the condition of the highway network.

RESOLVED - (a) That the remedial programme of works, as detailed in appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved.

(b) That funding Option 3, as detailed in Appendix 4 of the submitted report, be approved, to finance the remedial programme.

REASONS - (a) The remedial programme is essential to prevent further deterioration of the highway network, higher ongoing sporadic maintenance costs and potential insurance claims.

(b) To address public satisfaction levels with the highway infrastructure as a result of the adverse weather.

(2) (URGENT ITEM) Local Authority New Build Programme 2010/11 - The Cabinet Member with the Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio introduced the report of the Director of Community Services (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to a change in one of the previously agreed sites for new local authority homes and requesting the release of additional funding to support the delivery of 65 new affordable homes in Darlington.

RESOLVED - (a) That the alternative site for eight dwellings at Burnside Road, as detailed in the submitted report, be approved.

(b) That additional resources of £518,483 be released, funded by prudential borrowing of £318,483 and £200,000 from the Housing Capital Programme.

REASONS - (a) Having regard to the design work already undertaken and site footprint arising from that and the specific requirements of affordable housing in terms of location, the site at Burnside Road is the most suitable alternative for the Linden Drive site.

(b) If an alternative site is not identified the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) funding will be lost.

(c) To enable the schemes to be delivered additional funding is required, however, the funding can be accommodated within existing budgets.

(3) Financial Inclusion Strategy - The Cabinet Member with the Economy Portfolio introduced the report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration) (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to a Financial Inclusion Strategy for Darlington, that improves access to financial services for those on a low income, and a funding allocation of £50,000 to support increased access to affordable credit.

RESOLVED - (a) That the Financial Inclusion Strategy and associated Action Plan to implement it, both as appended to the submitted report, be approved.

(b) That £50,000 be allocated to support the Darlington Credit Union to increase the provision of affordable credit.

REASONS - (a) The residents of Darlington have been hit hard by the financial downturn and this is affecting our ability to deliver against narrowing the gap targets. The adoption and implementation of this strategy will have a direct positive impact.

(b) The release of the funding allocation will enable the Credit Union to offer affordable credit to the whole borough and to be able to reach a position of self sustainability.

(4) Annual Procurement Plan - The Cabinet Member with the Efficiency and Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Director of Corporate Services (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the Annual Procurement Plan (also previously circulated).

RESOLVED – That the assessment of strategic and non-strategic contracts, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved and :-

(a) the procurement strategies for those contracts designated as strategic be brought to Cabinet for approval in advance of the tenders being issued and that the contract award decision be made by Cabinet; and

(b) the contract award decisions for the contracts designated as non-strategic be delegated to the appropriate Director as listed in Appendix 1 to the submitted report.

REASONS - (a) The contracts designated strategic are of high value and high significance in respect of the impact on residents, Health and Safety and public safety.

(b) The contracts designated non-strategic are of a lower value and lower significance in respect of the impact on residents and public safety.

C181. AUTHORISATION OF APPROVED MENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONER STATUS 2009/10 - The Cabinet Member with the Adult Services Portfolio introduced the report of the Director of Community Services (previously circulated) advising Members of the officers approved during 2009/10, under delegated powers, as Approved Mental Health Practitioners (formerly approved Social Workers) and authorised to carry out of the role on behalf of this Council.

RESOLVED - (a) That the Approved Mental Health Practitioners, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.

(b) That the scheme of delegation be amended to remove paragraph 12 which requires the reporting of the decisions, in respect of Approved Mental Health Practitioners, to Cabinet.

REASON - In order to maintain sufficient Approved Mental Health Practitioners for the purpose of discharging the functions conferred on the Council by the Mental Health Act 1983 as amended by the Mental Health Act 2007.

C182. MENTAL HEALTH CAPITAL GRANT RELEASE OF FUNDS - The Cabinet Member with the Adult Services Portfolio introduced the report of the Director of Community Services (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the release of capital funds from the Mental Health Capital Grant for the enhancements of specialist service delivery associated with meeting the needs of working age adults and older people with mental illness accessing the services of Age Concern (Older People) and substance misuse services where co-morbidity exists (working age adults).

RESOLVED - (a) That £39,432 of capital, be released, for the Age Concern initiative.

(b) That £25,000 be released for the dual diagnosis capital proposal.

REASONS - (a) Increased opportunities for vulnerable groups.

(b) Increased improved outcomes for older people and those who are caught up in substance misuse cycles.

(c) Promotion of the health and wellbeing agenda.

(d) A reduction in suicides and substance misuse related crime in the Borough.

C183. SUPPORT TO COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS - REVIEW - The Leader introduced the report of the Assistant Chief Executive (previously circulated) presenting to Members the findings of the review of the Council's support to Community Partnerships.

RESOLVED - (a) That support to Community Partnerships be built upon agreements that are focused on outcomes and informed by ward level data and shared local priorities.

(b) That the Assistant Chief Executive be authorised to conduct further consultation with existing Partnerships to finalise the arrangements, including the timetable.

(c) That appropriate training, mentoring and support arrangements be put in place for those partnerships, volunteers and staff that are affected by the changes.

REASONS - (a) An outcomes-based approach to supporting Community Partnerships provides a framework for taking more relevant, timely and focused interventions and is the right tool to use during a time of very pressurised Council resources.

(b) It is not appropriate to set detailed delivery arrangements for a diverse range of partnerships centrally: bespoke consultation is needed to frame a process of change for each Community Partnership.

(c) Bespoke training, mentoring and support arrangements will be an important aspect of ensuring the success of a new approach.

C184. EMPLOYEE TRAVEL PLAN - The Cabinet Member with the Transport Portfolio introduced the report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration) and the Director of Corporate Services (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the Employee Travel Plan (also previously circulated).

RESOLVED - That the Employee Travel Plan, as appended to the submitted report, be approved.

REASON - To ensure that the Employee Travel Plan promotes travel choice for all staff members.

C185. WRITE OFF OF FORMER HOUSING TENANT ARREARS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2009/10 - The Cabinet Member with the Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio introduced the report of the Director of Community Services (previously circulated) providing Members with an update on the current position in respect of former housing tenant arrears and seeking approval to write-off debts of £146,795.

RESOLVED - That £146,795 of former housing tenant arrears be written off subject to steps for recovery being taken, wherever possible, if and when contact is made.

REASON - Regular arrangements for writing off debts are in accordance with Audit Commission best practice for good financial management.

C186. XENTRALL SHARED SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT - The Cabinet Member with the Efficiency and Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Director of Corporate Services (previously circulated) presenting to Members the second Xentrall Shared Services Annual Report.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

REASON – To allow Members to receive information about the progress of this innovative partnership.

C187. MEMBERSHIP CHANGES - There were no membership changes reported at the meeting.

C188. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC - RESOLVED - That, pursuant to Sections 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the ensuing item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in exclusion paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act.

C189. SCHEDULE OF TRANSACTIONS (EXCLUSION PARAGRAPH NO. 3) - The Cabinet Member with the Efficiency and Resources Portfolio introduced the report and schedule of the Direction of Corporate Services (both previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the schedule and seeking approval of the terms negotiated.

RESOLVED - That the schedule, as appended to the submitted report, be approved and the transactions be completed on the terms and conditions detailed therein.

REASON - The terms negotiated require approval by Cabinet before binding itself contractually to a transaction.

**DECISIONS DATED -
FRIDAY, 7TH MAY, 2010**