

**DECISIONS SHOULD NOT BE IMPLEMENTED BEFORE
TUESDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2013**

CABINET

13 November 2013

PRESENT - Councillor Dixon (in the Chair); Councillors Copeland, Harker, C L B Hughes, D A Lyonette, McEwan, A J Scott and Wallis. (8)

INVITEES – Councillors Curry and Mrs H Scott. (2)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – The Mayor, Councillor Johnson; Councillors Crudass, Donghue, Francis, Harman, Johnson, Knowles, Long, Macnab, EA Richmond and S Richmond. (11)

C83. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

C84. REPRESENTATIONS – In respect of Minutes C74(1) and (2), representations were made by members of the public in attendance at the meeting.

C74. KEY DECISIONS - (1) Medium Term Financial Plan 2014/15 to 2019/20 - The Leader introduced the report of the Director of People (previously circulated) proposing a Medium Term Financial Plan for 2014/15 to 2019/20 for consultation, including setting a budget for 2014/15 (also previously circulated).

The submitted report recommended that the Council should focus its planning and resources in three key areas that offer the best prospects of the Council being in a position to continue to serve the public well into the long term, namely:- building strong communities; spending every public service pound well into the long term; and growing the economy.

Cabinet Members outlined their portfolios at the meeting and the proposals identified within their specific portfolios to reduce the Council's spending.

Concern was expressed at the meeting to the amount of savings required from the Adult Social Care budget and the impact those savings would have on the most vulnerable people in Darlington. Particular reference was made to whether the provision of services for the visually impaired at Vane House would be affected by the budget proposals.

Following the presentation by the Cabinet Member with the Economy and Environment Portfolio, a number of concerns and questions were raised, namely:- the support available for older people to gain employment; the number of vacant shops within the Town Centre; the implications for the Talking Newspaper should Debenhams develop the current Northern Echo building; the amount included in the Council's budget for Tourism; the possibility of relocating the market stalls back to the market square; and the cost to the Council of relocating the Department for Education to the Town Centre.

Following the presentation by the Cabinet Member with the Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio, a number of concerns and questions were raised, namely:- the amount of subsidy paid by the Council to the Dolphin Centre; the possibility of making businesses take more responsibility for litter around their premises; how the Council intended to encourage residents to collect litter; whether the Arts would receive any further cuts; whether 'The Bridge' would be affected by the budget proposals; and on the future of the Railway Museum.

A number of queries were raised in relation to revisions to the refuse/recycling service including the type of plastics that could be recycled; the extra separation that would be required to be undertaken by residents; how the revised service would work; the possibility of including a free collection for bulky waste; the potential of increased fly tipping should the revised weekly refuse/recycling collection service be introduced; and the cost of fly tipping to the Council.

A representative of Unison addressed Cabinet and stated that a significant number of jobs had been lost to the economy in recent years due to the budget cuts and that the Council's reduced workforce were not able to provide the same level of service. It was felt by Unison that although volunteers provided a valuable service they were no substitute for paid services and consideration needed to be given to what would happen should they decided to stop providing that service and that some services could not be provided purely by volunteers. The Council's survival depended on the town's economy and heritage.

The Leader, Cabinet Members and Chief Officers Executive responded thereon to the issues, questions and concerns raised by the members of public in attendance at the meeting.

RESOLVED - (a) That the Medium Term Financial Plan, as set out in Appendix 11 of the submitted report, be approved for consultation, including :-

- (i) a 2% Council Tax increase for 2014/15 and subsequent years;
- (ii) spending reduction proposals and plans totalling £13.802m by 2016/17;
- (iii) use of £8.9m of revenue balances to fund revenue expenditure; and
- (iv) additional resources for shop mobility services of £3,000 and £16,000 in 2014/15 and 2015/16 respectively.

(b) That the results of consultation be presented to a special meeting of Cabinet scheduled to be held in February 2014 prior to a final Medium Term Financial Plan being recommended to Council, for approval.

REASON - (a) To propose a Medium Term Financial Plan for consultation.

(b) To enable final recommendations to be made in light of consultation.

(2) Revised Weekly Refuse/Recycling Collection - The Cabinet Member with Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio introduced the report of the Director of Place

(previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the options available for the introduction of a revised weekly refuse/recycling collection service.

RESOLVED - (a) That consultation commence on introducing an alternative weekly collection scheme, as detailed in paragraph 41 of the submission report.

(b) That Option 3 be the preferred option for the majority of properties across the Borough.

(c) That a further report be submitted to Cabinet in January 2014, detailing the final scheme and outcome of consultation.

(d) That the procurement of the wheeled bins and boxes and the procurement of the new recycling vehicles be designated as non-strategic.

REASONS - (a) To enable the introduction of a revised weekly refuse/recycling collection service, subject Members approval in January 2014.

(b) To achieve savings to the Medium Term Financial Plan as soon as possible.

(c) The designation of contracts as strategic or non-strategic is a Cabinet function, early consideration of the procurement route will enable preparatory work to be undertaken to enable the scheme to move forward, should Cabinet subsequently give approval.

**DECISIONS DATED –
MONDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2013**