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**OVERVIEW OF EFFICIENCY AND RESOURCES PORTFOLIO**

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1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work under my Efficiency and Resources Portfolio.

**Regulation of Investigatory Powers**

2. Cabinet has received an update on developments in relation to the use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, which enables Councils to carry out certain types of surveillance activity, as long as specified procedures are followed, and that any information obtained as a result of surveillance activity can be relied upon in Court proceedings provided that the provisions of the Act are complied with.
3. Following the departure from the Authority of the Assistant Chief Executive, Cabinet has approved the appointment of the Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources as the Senior Responsible Officer for communications data applications. Following revised guidance advising that Designated Persons should have greater independence from the service areas seeking communications data requests, the Assistant Director, Community Services and the Head of Legal Services were approved as additional Designated Persons.

**Xentrall Shared Services Annual Report 2014/15**

4. It has been seven years since the establishment of Xentrall Shared Services, the partnership between Darlington and Stockton Councils to provide ICT, transactional finance and HR and design and print, and Cabinet has received the seventh annual report which shows that the service has now delivered all the efficiencies and main benefits as outlined in the original business case, plus additional efficiencies and is now on target to make £13.6 million savings over the 10 years of the partnership which is nearly double the original target.
5. Cabinet previously approved a revision to the ten-year partnership agreement which makes the partnership a rolling agreement with no defined end date, allowing it to operate as a going concern and provide stability for the services and staff.

**Land Adjacent to St Clare's Abbey**

6. Cabinet has declared an area of Council-owned land adjacent to St Clare's Abbey, surplus to requirements and approved a joint marketing exercise with the Hospitaller Order of St John of God, subject to agreement in relation to highways,

planning and conservation issues.

7. The Hospitaller is selling the land for residential development, subject to planning permission, and if the Council-owned land is sold at the same time, it should create economies of scale which will benefit both parties by increasing the sale value.

### **Land Adjacent to Feethams Leisure Site – Lease of Additional Land**

8. Cabinet has also declared an area of land adjacent to Feethams Leisure site surplus to requirements.
9. The area of land, which is between the site of the Feethams Leisure Complex and the adopted highway, was to be adopted by the Council with a view to it being used by one of the restaurant units of the complex for external dining under a Street Licence, however, it has since been considered preferable that the land is not adopted to ensure it remains available for use by the tenants of the restaurant. The land will therefore be declared surplus and a separate lease granted to the developers, Terence Hill.

### **Land at Feethams and Beaumont Street**

10. A number of areas of Council-owned land at Feethams and Beaumont Street have been declared surplus to requirements and approval given to market and subsequently dispose of the sites for development.

### **Procurement Plan and Procurement Board Update**

11. In accordance with Contract Procedure Rules, Cabinet has further considered the Procurement Plan following additional contracting intentions which have developed since approval of the Annual Plan in April 2015, and determined, in accordance with criteria, which of those contracts shall be delegated to Officers and which are deemed to be strategic.
12. We were also advised about the decisions taken by the Procurement Board to waive Contract Procedure Rules during the period 30 May 2015 to 9 September 2015, and the reasons justifying the exception.

### **Individual Electoral Registration (IER)**

13. This year's Annual Canvass commenced on 1st August 2015, and Household Enquiry Forms (HEFs) were delivered to every property in the Borough. Where appropriate, further reminders were issued over the weekends of 5th/6th September 2015, and 10th/11th October 2015, to those electors who had not responded. Canvassers have also been visiting properties throughout October and November to encourage the completion of outstanding forms.
14. Invitations To Register (ITRs) were delivered to any identified new electors, and also to those electors who had failed the verification process in 2014, and who had

still not been successfully verified. Again, a series of reminders have been delivered where necessary, together with a personal visit to the property.

15. Key messages to encourage registration during the Canvass period have appeared in the 'One Darlington' magazine, on the Council's social media profiles, and in The Northern Echo. The new Register of Electors will be published on 1st December 2015, and work will continue to encourage as many residents to register prior to publication accordingly.

**Councillor Stephen Harker**  
**Cabinet Member with Efficiency and Resources Portfolio**