

**At a meeting of the CABINET held in the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND  
on Wednesday 18 July 2012 at 2.00pm**

**Present: -**

Councillor P. Watson in the Chair

Councillors Blackburn, Gofton, G. Miller, P. Smith, Speding and Trueman

**Also in attendance:-**

Councillors Oliver, Stewart and Wood.

**Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 20 June 2012 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.

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillor Kelly.

**Receipt of Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**Items Arising from Scrutiny Committees:-**

**Children Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee : As Soon as Possible : Early Intervention and Locality Services in Sunderland – Policy Review Final Report**

The Children Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee and the Chief Executive submitted a joint report (copy circulated) to set out the recommendations of the Children Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee following the Committee's review into early intervention and locality services.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chairman of the former Committee, Councillor P. Stewart, was in attendance to introduce the Children Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee's Policy Review, "As soon as Possible : Early Intervention and Locality Services in Sunderland." He explained that the Committee had chosen to look at these two issues as they had many benefits and were vitally important processes in terms of ensuring that children, young people and families are supported through difficult periods in their lives. He explained that intervention and support could take many forms from intensive multi-agency support for a number of issues to additional childcare support, all with the aim of improving outcomes for individuals and families.

Councillor Stewart advised that the committee had gathered evidence from a wide range of stakeholders and the Department for Education had made comments on the review which had proved extremely useful in helping the Committee to form its conclusions.

Councillor Stewart summarised that the Policy Review looked at two main areas of locality services, Children's Centres and XL Youth Villages. He explained that during the review there had been a redesign of the Children's Centre service delivery and it had been important to look at ways of avoiding reductions in service delivery at a time when some peripheral training and funding support had been withdrawn. He added that the XL youth projects were very good examples of providing an impact targeting young people and providing education in relation to STDs and teenage pregnancy. He explained that whilst the service's impact had been excellent in North Sunderland, further work to learn from the successes needed to be undertaken to move into other areas of the City and this had been taken on board.

Turning to the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), Councillor Stewart reported that the assessment form and referral process were too long and it should be clearer and more streamlined for stakeholders to make it more accessible to as many service providers as possible to ensure that intervention is available to everyone who may need it. He added that more training was required for both officers and Members. He drew attention to eleven recommendations of the Review and remarked that seven of them related to the CAF and the Directorate had been fully engaged and supportive. In addition the Committee also agreed to write to the relevant government department in relation to their general concerns relating to perverse funding arrangements.

In response to the presentation, Councillor Smith thanked Councillor Stewart, the Scrutiny Committee and the Head of Scrutiny and Area Arrangements for the Policy Review which had been considered alongside the findings from other reviews and inspections and Children's Services had contributed to the Action Plan. The recommendations were welcomed in helping the Directorate to further improve the way children and families were supported.

The Chairman took the opportunity to thank all the former Scrutiny Committees for their efforts and assistance in moving forward and improving services.

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

2. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Children Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee Policy Review Final Report be noted and the recommendations contained within the report be approved, and
- (ii) the proposed Action Plan for the implementation of these recommendations, which has been prepared in consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s), be noted.

### **Foreign Travel Policy**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) on the Council's policy and associated guidelines on Foreign Travel.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chairman reported that the City Council's current policy on Foreign Travel had been agreed in 1999. He advised that since that time the level and nature of international activity, and associated foreign travel, had increased and this was reflected in the decision to develop an International Strategy for Sunderland in 2006.

Cabinet Members were advised that the revised draft Policy included guidelines on all aspects associated with Foreign Travel by Officers and Members and had been developed over a number of years, involving officers from areas such as Corporate Assurance and Procurement, Insurance, Legal and Democratic Services, Occupational Health, Human Resources.

The Chairman highlighted that new arrangements would be introduced to minimise the risks which could be associated with foreign travel to ensure the City Council discharged its duty of care to the best of its ability, while ensuring the objectives of each visit were clear and value for money was achieved. He added that carbon off-setting for flights was also to be introduced in line with the Council's sustainability commitments.

The attention of Cabinet Members was drawn to a number of areas of the policy which had already been implemented, including changes to class of travel for flights, and the City Council's expenditure on foreign travel had reduced by approximately 40% over the last three financial years.

The Chairman reminded Cabinet Members that the benefits of international engagement, including levels of investment and jobs created by overseas companies, were reported annually to Cabinet in the International Strategy Annual Report; the most recent annual report, covering the period to March 2012, had been considered by Cabinet in June.

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

3. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted and the proposed Foreign Travel Policy and Guidelines as set out within the report be approved.

### **EU Covenant of Mayors – Sustainability**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which sought retrospective authorisation for the Leader to participate in the EU Covenant of Mayors seminar, 'Covenant Signatories Meet Business to Convert Plans into Actions', in Brussels on 22 June 2012.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Trueman reported that Sunderland had a long-standing commitment to sustainability, which was reflected in the city's Climate Change Action Plan, and the city was a signatory to both the Eurocities Declaration on Climate Change and the EU Covenant of Mayors and had committed to carbon emission reductions of at least 20% by 2020. He advised that it had been acknowledged, however, that local authorities could not address the challenges of the transition to sustainable energy alone and that partnership with the private sector and other local stakeholders would be key. He explained that the Covenant of Mayors' seminar on 22 June 2012 aimed to showcase the private sector's engagement with European local and regional Sustainable Energy Action Plans, and facilitate further co-operation to support achievement of sustainability targets.

Councillor Trueman explained that Sunderland had been approached to speak at the event in late May as one of five speakers and panel members, and the sole local authority representative, within its session. He added that this had followed a visit by a EUROCITIES delegation to the city as part of the EU-funded Cascade project. Under this, a delegation of Sustainable Transport practitioners from five European cities visited Sunderland for several days in May of this year to take in part in a peer learning exercise focussed on sustainable energy in urban transport. He clarified that Sunderland was engaged in a series of initiatives related to sustainability which contributed towards achievement of the targets set out in the EU Covenant of Mayors. These ranged from the Low Carbon Economic Area and Enterprise Zone, and the production of Electric Vehicles, to flagship buildings such as the Sunderland Aquatic Centre.

Cabinet Members were advised that the request for Sunderland to be present at the EU Covenant of Mayors' seminar reflected the city's positive reputation with EUROCITIES colleagues in relation to sustainability and it was important that the City Council engaged effectively within appropriate European networks, in line with the city's International Strategy, to identify and pursue the opportunities they could open up for Sunderland.

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

4. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the participation in the EU Covenant of Mayors seminar and the consequential travel by the Leader to Brussels be authorised, and
- (ii) the range of initiatives within Sunderland in relation to the city's sustainability commitments be noted.

### **Seafront Regeneration Capital Programme Delivery**

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek approval to the next phase of public realm improvements at Seaburn and Roker, including proposed refurbishment work to Roker Pier and Lighthouse. The proposed schemes would be funded from the Council's Capital Programme although the opportunity would also be taken to use this as match for appropriate bids for external funding support.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Speding reminded Cabinet Members that in February 2010 the Seafront Regeneration Strategy and the Marine Walk Masterplan and in July 2011 the Seaburn Masterplan were adopted. He reported that in December 2009 the Council was awarded £1m Sea Change funding, which was matched with £0.5m of the Council's own resources, to deliver a first phase of improvements at Marine Walk, Roker. He advised that a first phase of improvements was also undertaken at Seaburn, largely funded by North Area Committee with contributions from other Area Committees.

Councillor Speding reported that in order to continue the delivery of the Seafront Regeneration Strategy the capital programme allocated £1.5m for further improvements at Roker and Seaburn over the next 3 years. He added that to deliver these improvements it was proposed that the £1.5m budget be split between Roker and Seaburn as follows:

£700,000 Seaburn phase 2 improvements  
£700,000 Roker phase 2 improvements  
£100,000 for supporting projects at Roker and Seaburn

Cabinet Members were advised that match funding of the £700,000 allocated for Seaburn would be used as match funding for a £2m bid to the Big Lottery, for Coastal Communities funding, to deliver further infrastructure works at Seaburn which would assist with the proposed comprehensive redevelopment as set out in the Seaburn masterplan. It was reported that a report dealing with this in more detail will be considered by Cabinet in the coming months.

Councillor Speding reported that a £1.35m programme of refurbishment works including major maintenance works to the Grade II listed Roker Pier and Lighthouse would take place over the next 3 years. He explained that these works would include repairs to the lighthouse and pier structure, resurfacing of the decking and restoration/replacement of railings and opportunities for match funding towards the works, from for example the Environment Agency, was being explored.

Cabinet Members having welcomed the proposals, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the proposed regeneration programme for Roker and Seaburn, to be funded by the £2.85m capital programme allocation between 2012 and 2015 be approved, and
- (ii) the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Secretary, be authorised to appoint contractors to deliver future phases of improvements.

### **First Capital Review 2012/2013 (including Treasury Management)**

The Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services submitted a report (copy circulated) detailing proposed changes made to the Capital Programme 2012/2013 since its approval and providing an update on progress in implementing the Treasury Management Borrowing and Investment Strategy for 2012/2013.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Speding highlighted that there had been a number of variations to the 2012/2013 capital programme included over £7.6m of expenditure reported to Cabinet in June that had been reprofiled from 2011/2012. He explained that this was mainly as a result of finalising agreements with landowners and contractors, reviewing scheme requirements to minimise costs to the Council and, reprofiling of works to minimise service disruption.

Councillor Speding drew attention to other variations totalling £22.4m which were also proposed to the capital programme in 2012/2013, which predominately related to a commercial opportunity for the Council to provide a maximum of £20m towards the re-financing of Newcastle Airport debt portfolio on an invest to save basis. He advised that a more detailed report on this would be submitted to Cabinet in due course. Turning to the main other changes, Councillor Speding highlighted additional transport works that would be funded from specific grants and contributions of £1.2m, and to an additional contribution of £0.5m that the Council had agreed to make towards the regeneration of the former East End Orphanage into an extra care facility.

Cabinet Members were also advised that the Council had been successful in its bid for 5 schools to be transformed through the governments Priority School Building Programme and that there were no areas for concern or any issues which required review under the Treasury Management aspects of the report.

Cabinet Members having commended the report, it was:-

6. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) in relation to the Capital Programme, approval be given and where necessary it be recommended to Council, for the inclusion of additional schemes and variations to existing schemes for 2012/2013 detailed at Appendix A, as a variation to the capital programme, and
- (ii) in relation to the Treasury Management Strategy, the positive progress in implementing the 2012/2013 Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators be noted.

### **Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Innovations Fund Bid**

The Executive Director Children's Services submitted a report (copy circulated) on an opportunity to bid for funds, in partnership with Northumberland County Council, from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to improve outcomes for the 14-16 year old cohort of young people who at risk of not participating in Education, Employment and Training (NEET).

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Smith highlighted that the report and in particular drew attention to a proposal for the Council to act as the social investor for the Sunderland cohort of young people and to put in an initial investment of £300,000 with Northumberland acting as the social investor for their respective cohort and investing £150,000 for their element of the bid. She explained the implications of this position should Cabinet be minded to approve the report.

Cabinet Members were advised that despite the work that the Council was engaged in to tackle NEET the numbers were slowly rising and currently stood at 10.3% of the cohort. Councillor Smith reported that this programme would generate funding of £1.77m over the 3 years of the programme which would help to address the needs of a cohort of approximately 500 14-16 year old young people.

Councillor Smith clarified that the way that the Innovations Fund worked was similar to other Payment by Results programmes so that each outcome met attracted an element of funding. She explained that there would be a range of different outcomes such as improved attendance, improved behaviour and at the higher end, entry to level 1, 2 and 3 qualifications. In addition as the social investor, the Council would use the investment to commission voluntary and other organisations who worked with young people to deliver the improvement in outcomes;

Cabinet Members were advised that in terms of the £300,000 initial investment it was proposed that the Council might wish to use start-up funding linked to the Troubled Families Initiative, or Family Focus, given that the families that would be identified for this would be in the same client groups and some of the interventions would be the same or similar.

Councillor Smith reported that there was also a return on the investment of approximately 31% if the interventions were successful and how the funding model worked was illustrated in the report at paragraph 8.2. She reported that the application was submitted on 29 June which detailed the Council's intended approach.

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

7. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) approval be given for Sunderland City Council to act as Social Investor for the joint bid with Northumberland County Council to the Department for Work and Pensions Innovations Fund with an initial investment of £300,000 in respect of the Sunderland cohort of 14-16 year olds at risk of becoming NEET, and
- (ii) the implications of this position be noted.

### **Hylton Red House Primary/Bishop Harland CE Primary Schools - First Stage Consultation on Future Arrangements**

The Executive Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to outline the current position with regard to Bishop Harland CE and Hylton Red House Primary Schools and to seek approval to progress options to address future arrangements at both schools to the first stage of consultation.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Smith drew attention to the background and current position for both schools and the different governance arrangements that were in place, in that Bishop Harland was a voluntary aided Church of England School and Hylton Red House was a local authority maintained community school. She explained that both Bishop Harland CE and Hylton Red House Primary Schools had both recently been subject to Department for Education (DfE) scrutiny as schools not making significant progress or in an Ofsted category respectively. In addition both schools also had significant levels of surplus places.

Cabinet Members were advised that both schools were now improving. Hylton Red House Primary had been inspected recently under the new Ofsted Framework and had come out good with some outstanding features.

Councillor Smith reported that the DfE was still keen to explore an organisational solution, particularly for Bishop Harland. She advised that the schools were already working very closely together with an Executive Headteacher in place and working together across a range of curriculum areas.

Cabinet Members were advised that informal consultation between the Council, the Church of England Diocese of Durham, and the two governing bodies had indicated support for a 'local solution' in this particular case rather than a nationally prescribed solution such as an enforced or directed academy. Councillor Smith reported that as the legislation for school organisation proposals had changed, all new schools would be academies apart from voluntary aided schools. She explained therefore that one viable alternative to the academy route for these particular schools would be to close both existing schools and to open a new Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School. She added that both governing bodies and staff supported this proposal, subject to further consultation being carried out.

Councillor Smith assured Cabinet Members that other options would be explored during the consultation process and the views of all consultees would be listened to carefully. She added that should the Cabinet agree to proceed to the first stage of consultation, a further report would be brought back to the October Cabinet meeting to report the outcomes of this and would be asked to determine whether to proceed to the next stage which would mean statutory proposals.

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

8. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the proposal to progress to the first stage of consultation on options to re-organise the existing Bishop Harland CE and Hylton Red House Primary Schools be approved, and
- (ii) feedback on the outcomes of the consultation be considered at the Cabinet Meeting to be held on 10 October 2012.

### **Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 2012/13**

The Executive Director of City Services submitted a report (copy circulated) on the Council's Food Law Enforcement Service Plan for 2012/13.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Blackburn reminded Cabinet Members that the Council produced a Food Law Enforcement Service Plan each year in line with best practice partnership working with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) following their required format. He reported that the purpose was to protect public health and consumer interests in relation to food and to be the key document in the event of any audit of the authority by the FSA.

Councillor Blackburn explained that the plan set out the resources the Council had in respect of Food Safety and its intentions for deploying those resources to best effect. He added that the Council's approach balanced proactive engagement with food premises to voluntarily raise standards as good business practice, whilst recognizing the need for strong and effective enforcement where necessary.

Cabinet Members were advised that on the engagement front, the Council promoted the Safer Food, Better Business scheme which encouraged food businesses to establish and comply with a food management system. The Council offered help and support for this and responded to 87 specific requests for advice last year.

Councillor Blackburn updated that Cabinet Members that since the service launched the Food Hygiene Star Rating Award system in the City in June of last year there were approximately 2,000 food premises in the scheme. He highlighted that in relation to inspection and enforcement, the Council had carried out 1895 visits and responded to 356 requests for service in relation to food complaints, targeting interventions to non-compliant premises and those which did not voluntarily engage. He explained that this approach had had a positive effect with the number of Food Poisoning and Food related Infectious Diseases falling from 511 cases in 2010/11 to 363 in 2012.

Cabinet Members commended the Team in the City Services Directorate for the excellent results, it was:-

9. RESOLVED that the Food Law Service Plan for 2012/13 be referred to the Scrutiny Committee for further advice and consideration.

### **Traffic Management Services 2012-2016.**

The Executive Director City Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek approval to the principle of letting a Traffic Management Services Contract.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Blackburn reported that the Council's current contract with Roadsafe Limited to provide temporary traffic management, such as signs, cones and specialist vehicles, on the city's high speed roads, was in the extension period of a two year arrangement and was due to expire in November 2012. He added that a new tender process was required to be initiated.

Councillor Blackburn explained that it was intended that the new tender would incorporate the existing services for temporary traffic management on high speed roads as well as including traffic management for council events, road markings, highway schemes and minor repairs to roads and footpaths. He anticipated that packaging the work in such a way would deliver more competitive rates for the council. He added that the total value of the new contract, which would run for four years, was in the region of £1m and therefore European Procurement Regulations would apply.

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

10. RESOLVED that approval be given in principle to the letting of a Traffic Management Services Contract for the period 2012-2016.

### **Community Equipment Service (CES) – NHS Collaborative Framework Agreement for the Provision of Pressure Relieving Equipment.**

The Executive Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek approval to invite suppliers to tender for the provision of pressure care products via a Collaborative Framework Agreement.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Miller advised that the collaborative framework was between South Tyneside NHS Trust, Sunderland, Gateshead and South Tyneside Equipment Stores and it was proposed to award the contract to the supplier who provided the most economically advantageous tender. He explained that the Framework Agreement would be awarded in 3 separate product areas or 'lots', being Powered Beds, Static and Dynamic Support Services or more commonly known as Pressure relieving mattresses, and Static Cushions and more commonly known as Pressure relieving cushions.

Councillor Miller reported that the framework agreement would ensure that a wide and comprehensive range of pressure care products and services were available in one place, providing competitive prices for call off using the collective bargaining power of the collective organisations. He added that the contract term would be for 3 years with an option to extend for up to a further 12 months.

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

11. RESOLVED that approval be given to:-

- (i) the invitation of suppliers to tender for the provision of pressure care products using a collaborative framework agreement for South Tyneside NHS Trust, Sunderland, Gateshead and South Tyneside Equipment Stores.
- (ii) Awarding the contract to the supplier who provides the most economically advantageous tender.

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

At the instance of the Chairman, it was:-

12. 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 any individual, which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual, the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) or to consultations or negotiations in connection with labour relations matters arising between the Authority and employees of the Authority (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4).

(Signed) P. WATSON,  
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.