

## **CABINET**

**Decision Notices and Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 18th October, 2012 at 5.00 p.m. at the Civic Offices, Telford**

**PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY, 24<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER, 2012**

**(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: MONDAY, 29<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2012)**

**PRESENT:** Councillor R.A. Overton (Deputy Leader and Chair for the meeting), E.A. Clare, S. Davies, A.R.H. England, W.A.M. McClements, H. Rhodes, C.F. Smith and P.R. Watling

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor A.J. Eade (Conservative Group Leader) and Councillor W.L. Tomlinson (Lib Dem/Independent Group Leader)

### **CB-45      MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 20th September 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

### **CB-46      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor K.S. Sahota (Leader)

### **CB-47      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

### **CB-48      SCRUTINY REVIEW OF THE MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNITY CENTRES**

**Key Decision** identified as **Response to Scrutiny Report - Review of the Management of Community Centres** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 20th September 2012

Councillor A.D. McClements, Chair of the Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee, presented the Committee's report and recommendations following their in-depth review of the management of Council-run community centres. The review was carried out following concerns being raised that community centres were under-used and not being developed to their full potential to meet the needs of local communities.

The Committee had visited 11 community centres (both Council and non-Council managed facilities) in the Borough and gathered evidence from a number of partners, local residents, Cabinet members and officers. This included looking at alternative management models and best practice. The Committee found that there was a lot of good work going on in the individual centres, but there was room for improvement in terms on engaging local communities. It was clear that the centres had suffered from a lack of

investment, and that the existing staffing levels meant there was limited capacity to develop the centres. The recent transfer of community centre management to the Priority Action Team was welcomed, as this gave an opportunity to draw on the skills within the wider team.

The Committee had concluded that overall the centres should remain in the immediate future within Council ownership and management because of their strategic importance for their communities. However, it was felt that the management model must be based on a partnership arrangement with local communities and residents. A business plan should be developed for each centre based on local needs. The Committee had made 18 detailed recommendations for consideration by Cabinet. Councillor McClements thanked the members of the Committee for their hard work on this review, and thanked Tracy Clarke (Scrutiny Officer) and other officers for their contribution.

Cllr A.R.H. England, Cabinet Member: Leisure & Wellbeing, presented the Cabinet's response to the Scrutiny recommendations. He thanked the Scrutiny Members for their report, and Tracy Clarke, Rachael Jones and Wendy Tonge for the Officer support. It had been acknowledged that there was a need to develop a different approach to the management of community centres, and the Scrutiny Review had been valuable in identifying different models and some key areas for improvement. The strategic recommendations were supported, and it was proposed to establish a Project Steering Group (including a member of the Scrutiny Committee) to oversee the review of community centres. There would be a flexible approach rather than "one size fits all", and different solutions might be developed for each centre. Appended to the report was the Cabinet's detailed response to all the Scrutiny recommendations. This included agreement that the centre at Priorslee should no longer be managed as a community centre.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) that the recommendations made by the Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee be noted, and the response set out in paragraph 3.2 and Appendix 1 of the report be approved;**
- (b) that authority be delegated to the Managing Director, following consultation with the Cabinet Member: Leisure & Wellbeing and Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services & Co-operative Council, to implement the proposals made as a result of the review of community centres.**

#### **CB-49      2012/13 FINANCIAL MONITORING**

**Key Decision** identified as **2012/13 Financial Monitoring** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 14th September 2012

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Resources & Service Delivery, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Finance, Audit &

Information Governance, which provided Members with the latest financial monitoring information for 2012/13.

It was reported that revenue spending for the year was projected to be within budget at year end, after the use of £4.4m of the budgeted contingency. Pressures arising from contractually committed inflation would be addressed using much of the remaining contingency. There were still a number of significant pressures on the budget, including the cost of Children in Care placements and use of agency staff in the Safeguarding service (projected variation of £2.3m); the cost of Adult Care and Support services following withdrawal of PCT funding (projected variation of £1.5m), the cost of Specialist Education (net projected overspend of £0.250m); along with income shortfalls of £1.4m relating to a number of services. Projected variances of over £0.100m for individual service delivery units were detailed in the report. There were benefits from active treasury management, vacancies and a one-off refund of £0.351m from the Government in relation to academies funding.

The capital programme totalled £114m, which included approved changes for slippage and new approvals. Spend was currently standing at 11%, and robust programme management and monitoring was in place to ensure schemes were delivered. Appended to the report were a number of new allocations and slippage for approval. The capital programme over the next few years relied on a significant amount of capital receipts as part of its funding, and the position was being closely monitored. There was no variation from receipts delivered compared to expectation to date.

Collection levels for Council Tax and Sales Ledger debt were behind target, while NNDR income was ahead of target at the end of August 2012.

Councillor A.J. Eade (Conservative Group Leader) expressed concern at the significant rise in the amount of the contingency being used to cover the gap in the current year's budget. The Cabinet Member responded that the 2012/13 budget had included additional contingency provision to help address any revenue shortfalls. The Council was doing as much as it could to reduce costs, while protecting front-line services for the most vulnerable, but that continued cuts in funding from central Government were putting considerable strain on key services.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) that it be noted that the 2012/13 revenue spend is projecting to be within budget at year end;**
- (b) that the proposed uses of the budgeted contingency detailed in paragraph 6.1 of the report be approved;**
- (c) that the position in relation to capital spend be noted, and TO RECOMMEND to COUNCIL that the slippage, virements and new allocations identified in Appendix 3 be approved;**

- (d) that it be noted that NNDR income collection is ahead of target while Council Tax collection and Sales Ledger outstanding debt are behind targets set.

**CB-50            PLANNING OF SCHOOL PLACES: HOLLINSWOOD INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS**

**Key Decision** identified as **Hollinswood Infant and Junior Schools** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 14th September 2012

Councillor P.R. Watling, Cabinet Member: Children, Young People & Families, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Education, Culture & Skills, which sought a final decision on whether to merge Hollinswood Infant and Junior Schools.

Cabinet, at its meeting on 26 July 2012, agreed to publish Statutory Public Notices in respect of the merger of the two schools and the establishment of a primary school from January 2013. The Notices were published on 30 August 2012 in the local press and copies sent to interested parties and displayed locally. The formal Statutory Notice period ended on 11 October 2012, and the Cabinet Member confirmed that no responses or representations had been received.

Members were satisfied that the process for the amalgamation of the two schools had been completed thoroughly, and that all parties had had an opportunity to express their views. As the Public Notice period had not produced any further comments, Members were satisfied of the benefits of merging the two schools, as outlined in previous reports.

**RESOLVED** – that the closure of Hollinswood Infants School, and the expansion and alteration of the lower age range at Hollinswood Junior School to form a primary school from January 2013, be approved.

**CB-51            DISPOSAL OF THE FORMER GOWER STREET YOUTH CENTRE, ST GEORGES**

**Non-Key decision**

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Resources & Service Delivery, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Housing, which set out proposals regarding the site of the former Youth Centre at Gower Street, St Georges.

The Youth Centre closed in September 2005, following the failure of the heating system. It was then discovered that the building needed significant further maintenance works, which made its re-opening unviable. The property had been on the market since planning permission for both conversion and new build dwellings was secured in 2008, but no purchaser had been found. In the meantime, the building had been subject to vandalism and was in a poor state of repair.

However, there had been recent interest from residential and commercial developers which met the Council's expectations of value. In addition to the capital receipt, the Council would benefit from the New Homes Bonus of circa £1,000 per annum for six years per unit built. It was proposed that £75,000 of the proceeds from the disposal be made available to reinvest in Youth provision within the St Georges area, subject to consultation.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) **that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Business, Development & Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Resources & Service Delivery, to negotiate terms to dispose of the former Gower Street Youth Centre as recommended within the report;**
- (b) **that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection, to sign or seal any documentation to give effect to the above resolution;**
- (c) **that it be noted that the net capital receipt is built into the Council's budget strategy;**
- (d) **TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that a capital estimate of £75k for Youth Provision in the St George's area, following consultation with the local community, be approved.**

**CB-52        DESIGNATION OF A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA FOR MADELEY**

**Key Decision** identified as **Designation of Neighbourhood Area – Madeley Parish** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 14th September 2012

Councillor C.F. Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration & Economic Development, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Business, Development & Housing which outlined an application from Madeley Parish Council for designation of their Parish as a Neighbourhood Area.

The Localism Act 2011 introduced Neighbourhood Planning as a mechanism to increase local engagement in plan making. In February 2011, the Council successfully bid with Madeley Parish Council for the Parish to become one of the Government's "Frontrunners". A Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group had been established, and had begun to scope the issues the Plan would address through engagement with the local community, the Council and other stakeholders. The proposed Plan area reflected the boundaries of the parish, and was appended to the report. In accordance with the Regulations, the Parish Council had given public notice of its request for designation. Following a six week consultation period, no representations had been submitted.

It was noted that no concerns about the boundary area had been raised, its correlation with the parish area would assist with any future referendum, and it

provided a good model for future neighbourhood plan proposals. Once the Parish had prepared their Plan, it would be submitted to the Council to consider, and be the subject of a local examination and local referendum. Members welcomed this initiative as a good example of partnership working and of getting the community involved in their local neighbourhood.

**RESOLVED** – that the Neighbourhood Area application by Madeley Parish Council be supported, and that the area shown at Appendix A of the report be designated as a Neighbourhood Area.

The meeting ended at 5.28 pm.

**Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices**

**Jonathan Eatough**  
**Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection**  
**Date: 24<sup>th</sup> October 2012**

**Signed:** .....

**Date:** .....