

# CABINET

Thursday, 4 September 2008

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	S Foulkes (Chair)	
	Councillors	S Holbrook G Davies P Davies S Kelly	M McLaughlin R Moon J Quinn J Stapleton
<u>In attendance:</u>	Councillors	JE Green	L Rennie
<u>Apologies</u>	Councillors	G Gardiner	

## 170 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council referred to the sad deaths of Lieutenant Commander Ian Fraser, VC, DSC, RD and Bar, Freeman of the Borough, Gerry White, Chairman of Wirral Chamber of Commerce and Councillor Holbrook's father and the Cabinet stood in silent tribute to their memories.

The Leader of the Council welcomed Bill Norman, Director of Law, HR and Asset Management to his first meeting of the Cabinet.

## 171 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd July 2008 had been printed and published and no matters had been called in.

**Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd July 2008 be approved and adopted.**

## 172 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The members of the Cabinet were invited to consider whether they had a personal or prejudicial interest in connection with any of the items on the agenda and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of such interest. No interests were declared.

## 173 COMMUNITY AND CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT ADVANCING ASSETS FOR COMMUNITIES

Wirral had been selected to participate in the Advancing Assets Demonstration programme which was led by the Development Trusts Association (DTA) on behalf of the Government. Members were asked to confirm Wirral's participation in the programme and to agree the details of a support package proposed by the DTA.

**Resolved - That Wirral's participation in the pilot programme be confirmed and the proposed support package provided by the Development Trusts Association be accepted.**

174 **FINANCE AND BEST VALUE  
PROJECTED BUDGET 2009-11**

The Director of Finance presented a report on the projected budgets for 2009-2011 to coincide with the period of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 (CSR). The report set out the budget summary for 2008/9, variations that had been identified for 2009/11, a number of other development and details of balances.

The Leader of the Council moved a motion, duly seconded, and it was -

**Resolved - That**

**(1) Cabinet notes the increased pressures on Wirral's budget, including an estimated £9m increase in energy and fuel costs, which means that the target for efficiency savings now exceeds the original projections by over £7m;**

**(2) Cabinet notes that substantial work is being undertaken to close this gap, particularly in the areas of Adult Social Services and Asset Management, and therefore states its intention to bring a packet of recommendations forward to Cabinet on October 16th and Cabinet on 6th November 2008 in order to make real and immediate progress on reducing the budget gap; and**

**(3) Cabinet instructs Chief Officers to do everything possible to contain any potential overspends this year, and to continue to seek out further efficiencies over and above the original £13.7m target in order to close the budget gap.**

175 **PROTOCOL ON DELEGATED DECISION MAKING**

At its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2007, the Cabinet agreed a protocol on delegated decision making. Following the review of the scheme of delegation, approved by the Council on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2008 it was proposed that the protocol be amended to streamline the delegated decision-making process.

It was proposed that the protocol be amended, so that where a Cabinet member has received a report on a matter that can be decided under that Cabinet member's delegated powers, and the Cabinet member agrees with the recommendation(s) set out within the report, then no meeting would need to be held to discuss that report.

Once a response had been received from a Cabinet member to approve the recommendations contained within a report, then the Chief Officer would request Committee Services to publish the record of the decision and make this available for call-in.

If the relevant Cabinet member did not approve the recommendation of the Chief Officer, then a meeting would be established in line with the existing protocol.

**Resolved: That the protocol for delegated decision making be amended as set out above.**

176 **CORPORATE PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2008 - 2011**

Since the Corporate Procurement Strategy (CPS) was approved by Cabinet, in December 2003, the procurement agenda both inside and outside the Council had progressed. Cabinet on 5 October 2005, approved the adoption of a revised Corporate Procurement Strategy (CPS). The Director of Finance presented a report which sought Members approval to a revised Strategy which would determine the procurement activity of the Council for the next three years.

The revised CPS was designed to address the changing agenda and carry the procurement activity of the Council forward to achieve efficiencies and savings.

**Resolved: That the revised Corporate Procurement Strategy be approved.**

177 **CORPORATE PLAN FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING SUMMARY**

The Chief Executive presented one of a series of reports submitted throughout the year presenting an overview of the performance of the council in delivering the vision for Wirral as set out in the corporate plan and covered the first quarter of 2008/9.

The report provided an overview of the authority's performance and the circulated appendices gave a more detailed break down against performance, capital and revenue budgets and risks. A fifth appendix identified the list of three year targets for the corporate plan.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources indicated that he felt there was scope for further integration within the reports and felt that this would be progressed in future reports.

The Leader of the Council felt that the transparency of the report could be improved and that the report could be made more 'user-friendly'.

With the permission of the Chair, the Leader of the Conservative Group addressed the Cabinet. Councillor Green felt that the report was close to achieving a balanced scorecard approach and hoped that this could be further improved. In terms of over-performance, he indicated that by taking action to reduce over-performance, this could increase the number of performance indicators that were deteriorating. He further requested that the value of projects be included.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services welcomed Member's comments on the report.

The Leader of the Council moved an amendment, duly seconded, and it was –

**Resolved That**

**(1) the performance to date be noted;**

**(2) the attached three year targets for the corporate plan be approved;**

(3) Cabinet recognises that there will shortly be a revision of the Corporate Plan and asks that the new targets be incorporated into that plan and amended as necessary;

(4) Cabinet notes that the report and appendices contain considerable amounts of technical detail which, however, may not be readily accessible to all members of the Council or members of the public;

(5) Cabinet therefore asks that a brief supplementary report be produced for its next meeting which details each priority for improvement and the progress made against that priority in lay terms, so improvements made can be easily understood in terms of their overall benefit to Wirral, and that areas where improvements are not being achieved be spelt out in the same way with the actions being taken to remedy the position; and

(6) Cabinet further notes that there is a report on tonight's agenda on Transformational Change in Adult Social Services which details measures being taken to tackle the financial costs of increased demands for Adult Social Services, which have been giving cause for concern and agrees to monitor closely the effectiveness of these measures.

#### **CORPORATE RESOURCES**

#### 178 **COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT (CPA) - USE OF RESOURCES**

The Director of Finance presented a report which provided details of progress against the 2008 Comprehensive Performance Assessment Use of Resources action plan. The report also outlined future activity against the plan including activities which would contribute towards the 2009 Use of Resources element of the Comprehensive Area Assessment.

#### **Resolved: That**

(1) the progress against the Use of Resources action plan be noted; and

(2) regular reports be brought to Cabinet on progress against the action plan which will be revised in line with forthcoming Audit Commission guidance.

#### **ENVIRONMENT**

#### 179 **'REDUCING THE COUNCIL'S CARBON FOOTPRINT' - PROGRESS REPORT**

The Director of Technical Services presented a report which updated Members on the various projects currently being undertaken by Technical Services to achieve the Corporate Objective to 'Reduce the Council's Carbon Footprint', as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan.

Cabinet Members were asked to note the progress made to date on the ongoing projects and to endorse the further initiatives proposed, including the monitoring of future progress by senior officers in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Environment.

The Deputy Leader of the Council moved a motion, duly seconded, and it was -

**Resolved: That**

**(1) the performance and progress made on the various Council 'Carbon Footprint Reduction' projects to date undertaken by the Technical Services Department be noted;**

**(2) the further 'Carbon Footprint Reduction' projects proposed be endorsed and an action plan be quickly produced setting out the planned implementation of this programme along with the action plans produced for other Corporate Plan Priorities; and**

**(3) the proposed arrangements for monitoring the delivery of these projects including regular informal briefings for the Cabinet Member for Environment be endorsed.**

**180 IMPROVING ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY PROJECT PLAN**

The Director of Technical Services presented a report which detailed the proposed Project Plan prepared by Technical Services in partnership with Biffa Waste Services, Regeneration, Pathfinder Projects and local housing associations to achieve the local environmental quality objectives set out in the Council's Corporate Plan and Wirral Local Area Agreement.

The report sought Cabinet endorsement for the proposed Project Plan and the proposed monitoring of progress by senior officers in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transport and the Cabinet Member for the Environment.

**Resolved: That**

**(1) the proposed Local Environmental Quality Action Plan be noted and endorsed; and**

**(2) the proposed arrangements for monitoring the delivery of the Plan including regular informal briefings for the Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transport and the Cabinet Member for the Environment be endorsed.**

**181 CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LIFELONG LEARNING  
DIRECT PAYMENTS**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which proposed to increase the rates for direct payments to the level paid by Adult Social Services. The additional cost, estimated to be £20,000 would be met from the Carers Grant.

**Resolved: That**

**(1) direct payments be increased in line with rates set by the Council for carers of adults, backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008; and**

**(2) in future, increases to the rates of Direct Payments are applied consistently by the Council to both Children and Adult service users.**

182 **ALTERNATIVE MEANS TO FUND NATIONAL MINIMUM FOSTERING ALLOWANCES**

The Director of Children's Services presented a report which considered a number of alternative means to fund the cost of implementing the National Minimum Fostering Allowances in Wirral. There were concerns with each alternative described and it was recommended that costs of £500,000 be built into the Projected Budget for 2009-10.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning acknowledged that this matter would impact on the Council's budget however he felt that implementation would avoid more costs in the longer term. Councillor Phil Davies welcomed the report and supported the recommendations.

**Resolved: That:**

- (1) the proposals to increase Fostering, Adoption and Special Guardianship Allowances from October 2008 be agreed;**
- (2) in order to meet the costs in 2008-09 the Departments will fund the partial introduction of the Allowance from grant; and**
- (3) in order to pay the National Minimum Fostering Allowances from April 2009, the Departmental Budget be increased by £500,000 and that this be built into the projected budget for 2009/10.**

183 **STREETSCENE AND TRANSPORT SERVICES  
2008/9 LOCAL TRANSPORT CAPITAL PROGRAMME - COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WALKING STRATEGY PROGRAMMES INCLUDING FEEDBACK FROM AREA FORUMS ON DE-CENTRALISATION OF FUNDING**

At the Cabinet meeting held on 12th June 2008 a report was considered on the de-centralisation of Integrated Transport funding to Area Forums. Cabinet subsequently agreed to continue the allocation of funding to the two Forums concerned for the current year 2008/9 and the Director of Technical Services presented a report which set out the revised Capital Programme for approval.

Cabinet had also requested formal feedback from the two Forums on the success of this initiative and this was also included in the report.

The Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transport Services welcomed the positive feedback received from the Area Forums.

**Resolved: That**

- (1) the Community Safety Projects programme as outlined in section 3.0 be approved;**
- (2) the Walking Strategy programme as outlined in section 4.0 be approved;**

(3) the Director of Technical Services be authorised to select suitable alternatives from the reserve list of schemes, in consultation with Party Spokespersons, in the event that it proves impractical to proceed with an approved scheme or unallocated finance becomes available;

(4) the positive consultation feedback from the two pilot Forums and strong support for the continued de-centralisation of funding in future years be noted; and

(5) Officers be requested to consult the remaining nine Forums in the next cycle of meetings to determine if they wish to receive de-centralised funding for 2009/10 based on the success of this pilot initiative.

184 **HIGHWAY AND ENGINEERING SERVICES PROCUREMENT EXERCISE - 4PS GATEWAY HEALTH CHECK 2 REVIEW**

The Director of Technical Services presented a report which informed Members of the results of the Gateway Health Check 2 Review of the Highways and Engineering Services Procurement Exercise which was undertaken by officers from the 4Ps organisation on 17th and 18th June 2008.

The Review was one of the few Highways and Engineering Services Health Check 2 Reviews carried out thus far, and was considered an important process by the 4Ps such that both Reviewers were "Lead Reviewers".

The report has been prepared in accordance with the Cabinet resolution of 1st December 2005 that it "be provided with a copy of the full Gateway Review and a detailed report on the actions to be taken in response to each recommendation" (Minute 349 refers).

The report now detailed the recommendations from the final report of the 4Ps Gateway Health Check 2 Review Team together with appropriate actions to be taken in response. The Gateway Health Check 2 Review final report was appended to the report.

The Director of Technical Services further reported that 6 tenders had been received for the contract.

**Resolved: That**

(1) the contents of the report be noted; and

(ii) a further Gateway Review (Gate 3 to confirm Investment Decision) prior to Award of Contract be approved.

185 **SOCIAL CARE AND INCLUSION  
TRANSFORMING ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES – ACHIEVING A STABILISED AND SUSTAINABLE BUDGET**

Across the country, Adult Social Services were struggling to cope financially with the increased level of demand for services and higher personal expectations of what should be available. Wirral was no exception to this trend. In order to deliver preventive care and maintain individuals in their own homes as long as possible, within the restrained budgets available to local authorities, a radical change was needed to the way services were provided, with a move to a much more individualised approach.

The Transformation of Adult Social Services in Wirral was the focus of a major change programme. The direction of travel was approved by full Council on 21 April 2008, with Cabinet receiving reports in March, June and July. The change process would deliver personalised services and support the Council's strategic objective: To improve health and wellbeing for all, ensuring people who require support are full participants in mainstream society. In particular the transformation programme gave focus to the improvement priority to Promote Greater independence and Choice.

The Director of Adult Social Services presented a report which outlined the work underway to achieve a stabilised and sustainable budget during the period of transformation. Noting the pressures facing the department, the report provided details of action being taken across all service areas. Key efficiencies in the plan would require further decisions to be made by cabinet.

The Director's report asked Cabinet to note the potential need for bridging finance of £3.4m in year one of the three year budget stabilisation plan in order to allow savings in place time to take full effect.

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Inclusion welcomed the report and thanked officers for their hard work in limiting the amount of overspend in the budget.

**Resolved: That**

**(1) the continuing efforts of officers to manage within resources, recognising the high probability of overspends of £3.483m in 2008-9 and £0.761m in 2009-10, which are likely to require funding from balances, be noted; and**

**(2) the Director of Adult Social Services be requested to present a further report to its meeting of 6th November 2008 on options to stabilise the department's medium term budget and deliver further efficiencies towards the corporate target.**

**HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY**

186 **WIRRAL PARTNERSHIP HOMES - PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION**

Cabinet were advised of proposals put forward by Wirral Partnership Homes to amend its constitution and Cabinet's endorsement was sought to those changes.

With the permission of the Chair, the Leader of the Conservative Group indicated that Wirral Partnership Homes should be requested to avoid meetings of the full Council when setting their meeting dates.

The Leader of the Council moved an amendment, duly seconded, and it was –

**Resolved That**

(1) Wirral Partnership Homes be requested to avoid meetings of the full Council when setting their meeting dates and be provided with details of the Council's calendar of meetings; and

(2) the Council member vote in favour of the amendments to the Articles of Association of Wirral Partnership Homes Limited.

187 **EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**Resolved** - That, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by the relevant paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act.

188 **FINANCE AND BEST VALUE  
MERSEYSIDE WASTE DISPOSAL AUTHORITY PRIVATE FINANCE INITIATIVE  
(PFI) SCHEME - FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Director of Finance presented a report which updated Cabinet on the progress of the scheme and the issues highlighted by the Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority (MWDA) around the additional costs associated with delays in the acquisition of sites.

**Resolved: That**

(1) the latest position reported by the Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority be noted; and

(2) representations continue to be made to the Government that funding should be provided in order to meet the costs being placed upon local authorities, and Council Taxpayers, in meeting the waste agenda.

189 **CORPORATE RESOURCES  
LAND AT EUROPA BOULEVARD, CONWAY PARK, BIRKENHEAD**

Cabinet were updated on the current situation regarding the proposed developments at Europa Boulevard/Conway Street, Conway Park, Birkenhead, and Cabinet's view was sought on the appropriate way forward.

**Resolved: That the relaxation of the development phasing requested by the proposed lessee be approved for the reasons set out in the report.**

190 **REGENERATION AND PLANNING STRATEGY  
REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

Approval was sought to provide a grant from the Think Big Investment Fund to the company named in the report in the sum of £66,000 to assist towards their business expansion project.

**Resolved: That a Think Big Investment Fund grant of £66,000 be approved towards the business expansion project being undertaken by the company named within this report.**

191 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business.