

CABINET

Thursday, 3 November 2011

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	S Foulkes (Chair)	Finance and Best Value
	Councillors	G Davies	Housing and Community Safety
		P Davies	Regeneration and Planning Strategy
		AER Jones	Corporate Resources
		B Kenny	Environment
		A McArdle	Social Care and Inclusion
		AR McLachlan	Children's Services & Lifelong Learning
		C Meaden	Culture, Tourism and Leisure
		H Smith	Streetscene and Transport Services
		J Stapleton	Community and Customer Engagement

171 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All Cabinet Members who had been appointed as school governors declared a personal interest in Item No. 13 on the agenda – School Redundancy Costs by virtue of their appointments.

Councillor P Davies declared a personal interest in Item Nos. 14 on the agenda – Riverside Housing Association and Wirral Council's Joint Challenge Fund (Minute No. refers) and 15 – Tender Report – Construction of 3G Synthetic Football Pitch at Woodchurch High School (Minute No. refers) by virtue of him being a Governor of both Woodlands Primary and Woodchurch High Schools.

Councillor B Kenny declared a personal interest in Item No. 14 on the agenda – Update Children and Young Peoples Department Capital Programme 2011/12 and Proposed Asset Disposal (Minute No. refers) by virtue of him being the Chairman of the Governors at Mersey Park Primary School

Councillor A McLachlan declared a personal interest in Item No. 9 on the agenda – Riverside Housing Association and Wirral Council's Joint Challenge Fund (Minute No. refers) by virtue of her being a Board Member of the Beechwood and Ballantyne Community Housing Association.

Councillor C Meaden declared a personal interest in Item No. 14 on the agenda – Update Children and Young Peoples Department Capital Programme 2011/12 and Proposed Asset Disposal (Minute No. refers) by virtue of her being a Governor of Bedford Drive School.

Councillor H Smith declared a personal interest in Item No. 14 on the agenda – Update Children and Young Peoples Department Capital Programme 2011/12 and Proposed Asset Disposal (Minute No. refers) by virtue of him being an Local Authority Governor of Portland Primary School.

172 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 13 October 2011 be confirmed as a correct record.

173 **PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE SERVICES PROCUREMENT EXERCISE (PACSPE)
- OUTCOME OF CALL-IN**

The Cabinet received the draft Minutes of the call-in meeting of Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 20 October 2011 and noted its recommendations as follows:

“RESOLVED:

That this Committee notes the following:

- the Cabinet appeared to ignore, and did not even mention, the findings of the Office of Government Commerce Gateway Reviews that the Parks & Countryside Services Procurement Exercise (PACSPE) had been subjected to;
- no attempt was made to publically question officers from the Finance Department, the Legal Department and the Procurement Unit who were members of the PACSPE Project Board as to whether the ‘risk’ identified by District Audit, and made so much play of in the Cabinet resolution could or had been satisfactorily mitigated;
- no discussion was had by Cabinet Members of the risks of not awarding the contract.
- no mention or discussion took place regarding stakeholder management or the views of key stakeholders about the benefits of clear quality improvements that were built into the procurement exercise. In fact, other than the views of the Council Trades Unions, the results of consultation and the views of park users and user groups were not even mentioned by a single Cabinet Member at the meeting;
- no reference was made to the new post of Community Engagement Manager to work with Friends, stakeholders, user groups and local Area Forums or the new key performance indicators developed through PACSPE to reflect the change to a more customer and community focused service;
- insufficient account appeared to be taken of the reduction from costs of £8.1 million per year to £7.4 million per year already achieved by the PACSPE process with the potential to reduce costs by a further very large sum. Indeed, it is hard to understand how the Leader of the Council characterised the potential savings as marginal;

- no effort appeared to be made by Cabinet Members to discuss or evaluate the additional costs to Council Tax payers of purchasing what has been accepted as worn out equipment requiring immediate replacement at a very significant cost or the TUPE costs of bringing current contractor staff into the Council workforce and pension scheme, per annum, or over the 10 year period;
- no mention was made of the training and development programme for staff and volunteers or the three to six new apprentices to be created as part of PACSPE;
- no explanation was given at Cabinet regarding the opposition to a 10 year contract that would reduce annual costs by a significant amount]and improve the quality of our parks and countryside, other than the expressed need contained in the resolution to reduce spending by £85 million over three years;
- therefore we believe that the decision to refuse to award the PACSPE contract would see the ever decreasing quality of a service starved of investment by this administration which is already characterised by going for the quick fix instead of making the difficult but necessary strategic decisions in the interests of Wirral residents; and
- this Committee therefore, recommends that the PACSPE contract should be let to the designated preferred bidder.”

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Steve Foulkes reported that Cabinet Members had been informed of the representations made at the call-in meeting on Cabinet Minute 117 (22 September 2011)- Parks and Countryside Services Procurement Exercise (PACSPE) and had read the Minutes.

Councillor J Green, who was in attendance at the Cabinet, meeting, challenged the Minutes of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 20 October 2011 informing that neither he, nor the Chair of the Committee, agreed with them, as they were at odds with their recollections of the proceedings of the meeting.

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management reported that the Minutes in question were still in draft and would be considered by the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its next ordinary meeting scheduled for 23 November 2011. The Committee would determine whether they were a correct record or not. However, Minutes were not written to provide a verbatim record of all that was said at a meeting. Minutes attempted to capture the essence of debate and set out what was resolved at a meeting. The Director advised that, in his opinion, having been present at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, the Minutes, as presented, were a fair and accurate record of its proceedings.

Councillor Foulkes, in responding to the resolution of the Committee that had considered the call-in, reported that the Cabinet considered that everyone who had worked and been involved with the Parks and Countryside Services Procurement Exercise (PACSPE) had put their best efforts into it. However, the Cabinet believed that a major error had been made in the process. The error made was that an in-

house bid had not been allowed. Councillor Foulkes compared the PACSPE with the Council's previous Highways and Engineering Services Procurement Exercise (HESPE) and told the meeting that if a similar process to that of the HESPE had been adopted and an in-house bid had been allowed, that bid could have been used as a bench mark in the decision making process. For whatever, reason the previous Administration had agreed not to do this.

The Cabinet had been influenced by the HESPE and by the District Auditor who had identified that the Council was not able to provide information on activity and performance of the HESPE contract to determine whether it was receiving better value for the money spent. As a consequence this was now the basis for a qualified conclusion in respect of the Council's Value for Money Statement. The Cabinet considered that this was reason enough not to let the PACSPE contract.

Councillor Foulkes also referred to the criticism being levied at the Council by the District Auditor, over its ability to make a strategic decision. He told the meeting that the Cabinet would be making a strategic decision on the PACSPE and that was to run the Council's Parks and Countryside Service in-house and aim to bring about improvement by investment (invest to save) and by concentrating on developing working practices. Councillor Foulkes was encouraged by those who represented the workforce, who believed that efficiencies could be made with regard to the in-house option. It was noted that the PACSPE contract was to have covered a ten year period. It was considered easier to carry out negotiations in respect of efficiencies that could be made in-house rather than entering into dialogue with outsourced contractors.

Councillor Chris Meaden, as the Cabinet Member for Culture, Tourism and Leisure informed that she did not want anyone to think that the Cabinet had taken the decision not to let the PACSPE contract lightly, or that it did not want to take into account all of the time, effort and hard work that had gone into getting the procurement exercise to the point where tenders had been received and evaluated. This had been one of the hardest decisions the Cabinet has had to make and the Cabinet was aware that Wirral people valued their Parks and Countryside very highly.

The decision had been taken against a background of:

- serious criticisms of the Council's Corporate Governance, including its commissioning and management of contracts;
- a Qualification of the Council's Value for Money Statement on the HESPE contract, with a warning about implications for the PACSPE contract;
- serious considerations over the cost of contractual inflation over a ten year period when the Council faced major and increasing financial pressures;
- the need to maintain maximum flexibility in the Council's workforce at a time when the Cabinet was unaware of what might happen next;

The decision had also been taken with the realisation that times were changing and that increasingly other organisations were starting to bring services back in-house again to deliver the flexibility needed to survive tough times: e.g. BP had announced

that it had decided to bring all of its outsourced work back in-house and that the savings from the flexibility this would provide would be substantial.

Councillor Meaden told the meeting that she had every confidence in the staff to deliver the best services possible for the people of Wirral and that the Cabinet would be actively monitoring every move to make sure that high standards were achieved and maintained within the budget set.

On a Motion moved by Councillor Foulkes, seconded by Councillor Meaden and carried on a vote of 9 for and 0 against (Councillor G Davies was unable to vote as he had not been present at the beginning of the meeting and consequently, had not heard much of the debate) it was

RESOLVED: That

- (1) this Cabinet has considered carefully the resolution submitted to it by the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee;**
- (2) the Cabinet recognises the detailed work that went into the procurement process and the Gateway Reviews that were carried out as part of that process and does not question the thoroughness of those Reviews or the dedication and ability of those carrying out those Reviews;**
- (3) however, the Cabinet believes that this does not alter the fact that detailed unit costs and specific activity levels, which would have allowed for full comparator costs to be available to check against the tender specifications, were not available and that this would have left the Council open to the same criticism on the PACSPE contract that was levied against the HESPE contract:**
 - The Cabinet recognises the seriousness of the qualification by the District Auditor of the Council's Value for Money statement and of the warning to Members that they should be aware of the increased risk of letting a ten year contract if there is only very limited information on the costs and activity levels of the existing service because there is nothing to monitor against when assessing whether or not letting the contract has delivered better value for money.**
 - The Cabinet further considered the position that the cost of contractual inflation over a period of three years at current CPI levels would erode any savings delivered by outsourcing the contract and in subsequent years could increase costs to the Council.**
 - The Cabinet was further mindful that this decision was being taken when a highly critical Corporate Governance report had just been published which pointed in general to weaknesses in the Council's commissioning, managing and where necessary dismissing failing contractors and suppliers.**

- **The Cabinet, therefore, re-iterates its decision taking on 22 September 2011 and re-affirms the full content of the resolution passed, as stated in Cabinet Minute No. 117, including its confidence in the ability and commitment of the workforce to deliver an excellent service, with proper support and good management, over the next ten years.**

174 **BUDGET PROJECTIONS 2012-15**

A report by the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance presented the projected budgets for 2012-15 following the agreement of the budget for 2011-12 at the Council meeting on 1 March 2011.

The report set out the background, assumptions that underpinned the projections, detail on grant negotiations, other legislative issues, balances, agreed savings and relevant risks. The Council's Budget Projections from 2012 to 2015 were set out in an appendix to the report.

The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance reported that the projections represented his assumptions of the most likely outcome from a wide range of available options.

On a Motion proposed by Councillor S Foulkes, seconded by Councillor P Davies and carried unanimously, it was

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the budget projections be regularly reviewed;**
- (2) the Cabinet notes, with dismay, that the projected budget gap is likely to rise by 2014/15 to nearly £47m as a result of likely changes in the Local Government Resource Review and the implications of new legislation;**
- (3) the Cabinet recognises that these are projections based on what is known or anticipated at the moment on a pro rata basis between authorities, and could perhaps be even worse than anticipated when the direct impact on Wirral is calculated; and**
- (4) the Cabinet expresses its grave concern that potential cuts at this level will be extremely damaging to Wirral's services and to the people of Wirral at a time when the country's economy is facing a slide into depression and poorer areas will once more be those which are hit the hardest.**

175 **PROVISION FOR INFLATION 2012-13**

The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance reported that a decision was required on the provision for inflation to be included in the budget for 2012-13.

The Government had indicated that the provision being made for public service pay awards for 2012-13 would be £250 per annum for those employees earning less than

£21,000 per annum and nothing for those employees earning above £21,000. The estimated cost to the Council of this provision was £1m.

The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance set out the options which could be considered for price inflation:

- (a) Zero – Following reductions in Government grants the financial position of the Authority is such that any provision for inflation will only result in additional reductions in service provision and employment. Chief Officers would be required to contain expenditure within the existing budget. For the reasons stated, this was the recommendation for 2012-13.
- (b) Government long term inflation assumption of 2% - This was the assumption used to date in the budget projections and would cost £4.2m.
- (c) Consumer Price Index (CPI) of 5.2% - This would cost £10.9m.
- (d) Retail Price Index (RPI) of 5.6% - This would cost £11.8m.

The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance reported that income from fees and charges had traditionally been increased by 3% per annum, except where the Cabinet had agreed a variation. This increase equated to £1m.

There were a number of current issues in relation to income from fees and charges:

- (a) Following issues raised in the Social Services Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA) report relating to the agreement and application of fees and charges, Internal Audit is reviewing all fees and charges.
- (b) A review of fees and charges income is being undertaken across Merseyside.
- (c) A number of income budgets are proving difficult to sustain in the current economic climate.

Therefore, the Cabinet was recommended to agree to a full review of fees and charges being undertaken in 2012, to take account of the outcome of the reviews outlined above.

On a Motion proposed by Councillor S Foulkes, seconded by Councillor P Davies and carried unanimously, it was

RESOLVED: That

- (1) provision be made for pay awards in line with the Government recommendation;**
- (2) no provision be made for price inflation;**
- (3) income budgets be increased by 3%;**
- (4) a full review of all fees and charges be undertaken in 2012; and**

- (5) **the Cabinet asks Chief Officers to contain any price inflation costs within their existing budgets, as it notes that the long term Government assumption of inflation costs is set at 2% which is the amount contained within the projected budget, and that this will equate to a savings of £4.2m at a time when the Council is facing serious financial pressures.**

176 **TREASURY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

A report by the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance presented a review of Treasury Management activities during the second quarter of 2011/12 and confirmed compliance with treasury limits and prudential indicators. The report had been prepared in accordance with the revised CIPFA Treasury Management Code and the revised Prudential Code.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) **the Treasury Management Performance Monitoring Report be noted; and**
- (2) **the Treasury Management Strategy be revised to allow the continued use of the Natwest Bank, for short term liquidity requirements (overnight and weekends) and business continuity arrangements, despite it no longer meeting the Council's minimum credit criteria.**

177 **PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL REVIEW - SECOND QUARTER 2011/2012**

A report by the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance set out performance of the Council's Corporate Plan 2011-14 for July to September 2011, and provided members with an overview of performance, resource and risk monitoring.

The report also provided requested amendments to Corporate Plan projects and indicators for Cabinet approval.

The Deputy Director of Finance, David Taylor-Smith was in attendance at the meeting and made a presentation on Performance against the Corporate Plan. He provided a corporate overview and covered in great detail sickness absence and customer feedback.

Councillor Steve Foulkes informed that he had found the format of the presentation quite refreshing and easy to understand. It was a reasonable shot at how the Council was operating. He had been informed that this was the work of Carol Sharatt, Office Manager, Corporate Planning Engagement and Communication Performance Management. He also congratulated Mr Smith on the delivery of the presentation.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) **the Cabinet note the contents of this report and and the presentation and requested that appropriate action be taken to address the issues raised;**

- (2) **the Cabinet approve the changes to the timescales for delivering the Corporate Plan projects and indicators identified within this report; and**
- (3) **a note be sent to Ms Sharratt, on behalf of the Cabinet, thanking her for her work on the presentation which had been much appreciated.**

178 **CONTRACTS REVIEW**

A report by the Director of Finance sought the authority of the Cabinet to amend the agreement reached with PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PwC), who were undertaking a review of major contracts to support the delivery of savings.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet agrees to amend the terms of the agreement reached with PwC so that they are rewarded for their work on the basis of a fixed fee element of £50,000 (by way of credits to be written off) and a 15% contingent fee (also by way of credits to be written off) based on the savings they identify, and subject to the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management being satisfied with the detailed contractual terms.

179 **RIVERSIDE HOUSING ASSOCIATION AND WIRRAL COUNCIL'S JOINT CHALLENGE FUND**

A report by the Acting Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning informed the Cabinet that in 2005 the Council had agreed to the sale of sites within the Beechwood and Woodchurch estates to Riverside Housing Association (now known as Riverside) and to Lowry Properties Ltd for housing development. As part of the development agreement Lowry Properties agreed to pay overage on the sale of each property on these sites into a Challenge Fund account, to be set up in the joint names of Riverside Housing Association and Wirral Council.

The Agreement stated that the Challenge Fund resources should be administered by Riverside Housing Association (now known as Riverside) in accordance with its rules, and in consultation with the Council, and should be used for the benefit of the residents of the Beechwood and Woodchurch estates. In November 2010 payments were received into the Challenge Fund and mechanisms now needed to be agreed to enable the Fund's resources of £250,000 to be distributed. Appended to the report were draft terms of reference for the Challenge Fund Working Group.

Assets, liability and obligations of the Riverside Housing Association Ltd, being party to the original agreement, were transferred to Riverside Group Limited (Riverside) (Company Number 4091048).

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet agrees

- (1) **to the setting up of a Joint Working Group with Riverside to oversee the distribution of the Challenge Fund in accordance with the requirements of the Legal Agreement dated 19th May 2005;**
- (2) **that the Council's membership of this Joint Working Group should comprise the Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety; the**

Acting Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning, or deputy; and the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management; or deputy;

- (3) the draft terms of reference for the Working Group, including that the Council representatives on the Challenge Fund working group be the Council authorised signatories for the release of money from the Fund;**
- (4) the draft eligibility criteria for the use of the Challenge Fund;**
- (5) to the request from Riverside for council officers to work in partnership with the Association to administer the Fund and that the £5,000 that could support this function is not drawn down, but left in the Fund for the benefit of the communities of Beechwood and Woodchurch; and**
- (6) that officers should work with the Beechwood and Ballantyne Neighbourhood Management programme, the Beechwood Community Association and the Woodchurch Partnership to identify proposals for the use of the Fund.**

180 PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING AND REGENERATION ASSISTANCE POLICY 2011/2012 AMENDMENT

A report by the Acting Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning sought the Cabinet's approval to an amendment of the Council's 2011/12 Private Sector Housing and Regeneration Assistance Policy (referred to as "the Assistance Policy"). The Policy had been agreed by the Cabinet on 13 October 2011. (Minute No. 164 refers) This Assistance Policy was provided using statutory powers. The approved amendment would be implemented with immediate effect.

The amendment was to the grant award conditions of the Cosy Homes Insulation Programme (section 5.3 of the Assistance Policy). The change would allow the Council to meet the cost of customer financial contributions in situations where the maximum loft or wall area under the current Conditions was exceeded which would enable more effective marketing of the Programme.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet agrees to amend the Private Sector Housing and Regeneration Assistance Policy in order that Cosy Homes Insulation grants can be offered free-of-charge to all technically suitable owner occupied and private rented households and that it is implemented with immediate effect.

181 APPOINTMENT OF CONSULTANTS FOR REVIEW OF HOMELESS SERVICES IN WIRRAL

A report by the Acting Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning advised Members of the outcome of the recent tendering exercise and evaluation process carried out in respect of commissioning a review of Homelessness Services in Wirral, which the Cabinet had approved on 23rd June 2011 (Minute No. 46 refers) and sought Members' approval to appoint GLHS Ltd to carry out this review on behalf of Wirral Council.

The review was required to meet the Council's statutory duties under the Homelessness Act 2002, which included developing and publishing a new Homeless Strategy informed by a comprehensive review of all forms of homelessness in the Wirral area, assist in meeting one of the Council's Corporate Priorities to significantly 'prevent and alleviate homelessness' and assist in meeting key targets in the Housing Strategic Plan (approved by the Cabinet on 23 June 2011 (Minute No. 45 refers)), to commission a complete review of homeless services and provision in Wirral and developing and implementing a new Homeless Strategy.

The report contained an Exempt Appendix which provided details of all tenders and their respective price submissions and evaluation scores achieved against the tender scoring matrix. The inclusion of the names of the contractors, save for the successful contractor, was considered commercially sensitive and therefore considered exempt information under Part 1, Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended). (Minute No. 189 refers)

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet

- (1) notes the outcome of the recent tendering exercise and evaluation process carried out in respect of commissioning a consultant to assist the Council undertake a review of Homeless services in Wirral;**
- (2) approves the appointment of GLHS Ltd to assist the Council carry out the requisite homeless services review, required in connection with developing and implementing a new Homeless Strategy; and**
- (3) agrees to the Acting Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning, in consultation with the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management (or officers duly authorised by them) to complete any legal documents necessary to give effect to paragraph 2.1 (b) above.**

182 DWP HOSTED ONE STOP SHOPS

A report by the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance detailed changes at the four One Stop Shops sited within Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) offices on Wirral. These sites would now see visitors on an appointment basis only which fell into line with the DWP methodology of seeing customers at these sites.

Councillor Jean Stapleton, Cabinet Member for Community and Customer Engagement informed that initially she had been concerned about these changes but now considered that, in the longer term, it may be a better use of resources but it would need to be monitored.

On a Motion moved by Councillor Stapleton and seconded by Councillor Foulkes and agreed unanimously it was

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Members note the change to service delivery at these four sites;**
- (2) the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance be requested to report back on the long term proposals for each site as part of the programme of Library and One Stop Shop co-location; and**
- (3) in the meantime, the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance be requested to actively monitor the change in service, particularly on the Liscard site, because of the high volume of customers affected and report back to the Cabinet**

183 SCHOOL REDUNDANCY COSTS

A report by the Acting Director of Children's Services summarised the current position regarding school redundancy costs and the reasons for an increased budget pressure. The report recommended that schools contributed 25% of the costs of redundancies from their delegated budget from April 2012 and that a new school redeployment policy be implemented.

The Acting Director, at the Cabinet's request, also outlined the position in respect of staff redundancy costs at Academies.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet

- (1) agrees that any school affected by redundancy from 1 April 2012 be charged a contributing sum amounting to 25% of the total redundancy costs incurred (from 1 April 2012) in respect of that school; and**
- (2) subject to consultation with the professional associations and trade unions, authorises the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management to implement a revised voluntary school redeployment policy as soon as practicably possible.**

184 UPDATED CYPD CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2011/12 AND PROPOSED ASSET DISPOSAL

A report by the Acting Director of Children's Services served to update the Cabinet on the CYPD capital programme for 2011/12 and identified projects for approval from previously unallocated funding. The report also detailed CYPD properties which were no longer in operational use and set out proposals for their disposal.

Councillor Anne McLachlan, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services & Lifelong Learning raised concerns about the unforeseen work to be carried out at Academies and the impact of this on the Council. The Acting Director reported on the situation at Birkenhead Girls where the scheme of works was problematic and informed that he was currently in discussion with the contractors and the School. It was hoped that savings could be made with the scheme that still had 14 months to run. There were challenges ahead but he would monitor the situation carefully and report back to the Cabinet if it was necessary.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the additional schemes within the capital programme for 2011/12 be approved and that allocations to previously approved schemes be amended as set out in the report;**
- (2) individual schemes be the subject of scheme and estimate reports, where applicable; and**
- (3) the disposal of properties be progressed as outlined in the report.**

185 TENDER REPORT - CONSTRUCTION OF 3G SYNTHETIC FOOTBALL PITCH AT WOODCHURCH HIGH SCHOOL

A report by the Acting Director of Children's Services advised the Cabinet of the outcome of the tender process for the project to construct a synthetic football pitch and changing facilities at Woodchurch High School. The report sought ratification from Members of the acceptance of the reduced scheme and accepted the lowest tender submitted on a bill of adjustments by Blakedown Sports & Play. The report also sought approval for this scheme to be available for school use after the school's transfer to Academy status as per a lease agreement between the Academy and the Council, with the pitch remaining in the ownership of the Council.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the lowest tender submitted by Blakedown Sports & Play, to construct the pitch as detailed in the report, be accepted in the sum of £504,757.00;**
- (2) the 3G pitch upon completion remains in Local Authority ownership and be operated by the school as per a lease agreement following the schools' transfer to Academy Status. The proposed terms of the lease agreement are as follows: 20 year lease at a peppercorn rent with the school/Academy taking responsibility for all overheads i.e. repairs, maintenance, utilities, supplies, insurance, costs and maintenance of equipment;**
- (3) Director of Law, HR and Asset Management be authorised to execute an appropriate construction contract with Blakedown Sports & Play in due course, subject to them developing a satisfactory Health & Safety Plan; and**
- (4) the approved scheme be the reduced scheme as set out at paragraph 4.6 of the report, to build the pitch only, funded by CYPD and delegated school funding.**

186 ACCEPTANCE OF ENVIRONMENT AGENCY GRANTS

A report by the Director of Technical Services informed the Cabinet of the successful applications for grant funding to undertake property-level flood resilience works following an extreme storm event in August 2011 and land drainage culvert investigations.

Councillor Harry Smith, Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transport Services congratulated the Officers on their work which had benefited twenty houses.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted and the acceptance of the Environment Agency (EA) grants be approved.

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. The Public Interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.

188 APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

A report by the Acting Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning sought the Cabinet's approval to provide a grant to a company to assist its business investment project.

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations set out in the report be agreed.

189 EXEMPT APPENDIX

The Cabinet noted the detail of the exempt appendix that set out tender evaluations in respect of the 15 consultants who had tendered for the contract for Homeless Services in Wirral. (Minute No. 181 refers).