

CABINET

Thursday, 5 November 2009

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	S Foulkes (Chair)	Finance & Best Value
	Councillors	S Holbrook	Corporate Resources
		G Davies	Housing & Community Safety
		P Davies	Children's Services & Lifelong Learning
		G Gardiner	Environment
		S Kelly	Community & Customer Engagement
		M McLaughlin	Social Care & Inclusion
		R Moon	Culture, Tourism & Leisure
		J Quinn	Streetscene & Transport Services
		J Stapleton	Regeneration & Planning Strategy

174 MINUTES

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet on 15 October 2009 be confirmed as a correct record.

175 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

176 CHILDREN'S CENTRE SCHEME AT GREASBY LIBRARY - SCHEME AND ESTIMATE REPORT

A report by the Director of Children's Services described the work required to provide Children's Centre facilities in Greasby for families of under-fives by way of an extension to Greasby Library as part of Phase 3 of the Programme of Children's Centre Development. Phase 3 was intended to provide facilities for those areas not covered under Phases 1 and 2.

The Cabinet was asked to consider and approve the proposals.

Resolved: - That

- (1) The Scheme and Estimate, as presented, be welcomed and accepted.**
- (2) The Director of Technical Services be authorised to obtain all necessary statutory approvals for the project.**
- (3) The Director of Technical Services be authorised to seek tenders for the project.**
- (4) The Director of Children's Services be requested to use his delegated authority to accept the lowest bone-fide tender and report his acceptance of the tender to Cabinet in due course in accordance with the Council's Procurement Policy.**

177 **CO-LOCATION FUND BID FOR AREA TEAMS**

A report by the Director of Children's Services outlined the recent successful bid made to the Co-Location Fund for £927,000 of capital money. The report set out the proposals included as part of the bid, to create Area Team offices in parts of the borough where Children's Service multi disciplinary Area Teams would be based to deliver Children's Services and requested that they be approved.

It was noted that this proposal would generate savings and that the result of this approach would be some premises being declared surplus to the Council's requirements.

Resolved: - That

- (1) The approach outlined in the bid be agreed**
- (2) Further work be undertaken in order to develop the scheme and estimates for the proposed sites.**

178 **STRENGTHENING OF GRANGE ROAD BRIDGE (HAYMARKET TUNNEL), BIRKENHEAD**

A report by the Director of Technical Services requested approval to enter into an agreement with Network Rail Infrastructure Limited for the strengthening of Grange Road Bridge (Haymarket Tunnel) and to the necessary finance being provided from the Transport Capital Programme.

Resolved - That:

- (1) The contents of the report be noted;**
- (2) The entering into a contract between the Council and Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd for the strengthening of Haymarket Tunnel be approved;**
- (3) The funding of the necessary works be from the Transport Capital Programme.**

179 **PARKING STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT**

A report by the Director of Technical Services sought the Cabinet's endorsement for the development of a Wirral Traffic Model and Birkenhead Town Centre Transport Strategy that would enable a Wirral Parking Strategy to be developed. The report provided an overview of key issues to be considered in the development of a Wirral Parking Strategy and invited the Cabinet to advise of any additional points it wished to see being considered.

In view of the timescale involved in respect of the proposal for parking on the run-up to Christmas, the Cabinet considered the need to waive the call-in process.

Resolved:

- (1) The development of the Wirral Traffic Model and Birkenhead Town Centre Transport Strategy as described in Section 4.0 of the report be endorsed;
- (2) The development of a Wirral Parking Strategy, to complement the Council's Integrated Regeneration Strategy and other corporate priorities, based on the principles in Section 5.0 of the report be endorsed;
- (3) The key issues in the report be noted.
- (4) In the light of difficulties being experienced by retailers as a result of the Economic Recession, the sum of up to £20,000 be taken from the money set aside from the 2009 reduction in the rate of VAT, in order to provide assistance on car parking charges in the run-up to Christmas, as happened last year.
- (5) "Free from Three" policy be instituted on the three Thursdays before Christmas, on the 3rd, 10th, 17th December 2009 in the shoppers' car parks in Birkenhead, Liscard, Heswall and West Kirby and that there also be free parking all day Boxing Day and New Year's Day to help attract shoppers to the Sales.
- (6) The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management be requested to enter into negotiations with the owner of the Cherry Tree Centre Car Park in Liscard to see if the Council can assist with allowing them to make the same offer to their shoppers.
- (7) Call-in on the matter of the free parking period outlined in points 4 – 6 above be waived to ensure that the necessary arrangements can be made before the Christmas period.

180 **COMPREHENSIVE ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY - FINAL DRAFT**

A report by the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services provided an update on the progress of the Comprehensive Engagement Strategy (CES) following the end of the three month consultation period. The Council had taken the lead in developing this key document and Cabinet was asked to endorse the final version of the CES, attached to the report as Appendix A.

Resolved:- The amended strategy, attached as Appendix A to the report, be approved.

181 **PROJECTED BUDGET 2010-11**

A report by the Director of Finance detailed the projected budget for 2010-2011, which would be the final year of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 (CSR).

Resolved: -

- (1) That the projected budget for 2010-11 be updated and reported regularly to the Cabinet
- (2) That it be noted that the financial items on this agenda, including items 10, 13 and 14, will make significant progress towards closing the budget gap outlined in this report.
- (3) However, it be recognised that there is still come way to go, and the final details of Wirral's grant settlement are still unknown.
- (4) The importance to Wirral residents of keeping Council Tax increases as low as possible, particularly in times of real financial difficulty, is understood and this Cabinet will endeavour to do everything possible to keep increases to a minimum.

182 BUDGET PROJECTIONS 2011-2014

A report by the Director of Finance informed that with the release of further documents supporting the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget on 22 April 2009 it was now possible to revise the initial estimate of the projected budgets for the years from 2011 to 2014 and set out the detail.

Resolved: - That

- (1) The budget projections be kept under review as the global recession develops.
- (2) Further efficiencies be sought through the delivery of the strategic change programme, the extension of that programme and by specific service efficiencies.

183 INFLATION PROVISION

A report by the Director of Finance advised that the projected budget for 2010-11 currently provided for both pay and price inflation at 2% in line with the provisions included in the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007. The report recommended that this provision be varied.

Resolved: - That

- (1) The pay estimates for 2009-10 be reduced by 1% and the saving of £1.6m be transferred to General Fund balances.
- (2) The provision for pay awards in 2010-11 be reduced to 1% and the provision for price inflation be deleted reducing the projected budget by £5.2m.

184 WORLD EXPO 2010

A report by the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services advised that World EXPO 2010 was due to be held in Shanghai, China, between 1 May 2010 and 31 October 2010. It was being referred to as the "Business Olympics" and the City of

Liverpool was the only UK City to have a stand at the event after London's withdrawal.

The City of Liverpool had offered all boroughs in the City Region the opportunity to support the event and its stand, which would be branded as "Liverpool - Gateway to the North West".

All of the City Region authorities had been given the opportunity to participate in EXPO 2010. In addition, Peel Holdings, the major sponsor of EXPO, had asked that the Council have a presence at EXPO as the company intended to use the opportunity to promote the Wirral Waters scheme. The Director saw this as an important opportunity to promote Wirral on a world stage, both generally and specifically, as the location of the Wirral Waters scheme. Members were aware of the theme of the Investment Strategy 'Think Big' and this would provide the Council with the opportunity to do, just that, to a huge audience from across the world, at a world class event.

The Cabinet was asked to endorse Wirral Council's financial support and Officers' attendance at the event

Resolved: - That

- (1) Wirral supports the World EXPO 2010 for the reasons set out above and in the report and that the costs be funded from the Working Wirral Programme International Links project.**
- (2) Further opportunities for wider participation at EXPO 2010 be reported to the Cabinet as they arise**

185 EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved: That, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and 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.

186 PROCUREMENT 2010-2011

On 6 November 2008, the Cabinet had approved a projected procurement savings target of £1.5 million for 2009/10 for those areas of expenditure involving corporate contracts. A report by the Director of Finance informed of progress towards achieving this savings target and other procurement initiatives that had a direct impact on service departments, and also outlined possible additional procurement efficiencies for 2010-11.

Resolved:- That

- (1) The procurement efficiencies delivered in 2009/10 be noted.**

- (2) **Procurement efficiencies from corporate contracts estimated at £682,000 be agreed for 2010/11.**

187 **VAT RECOVERY**

The Cabinet, at its meeting on 19 March 2009, agreed that work be undertaken with PriceWaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC) in respect of backdated Value Added Tax (VAT) claims. A report by the Director of Finance highlighted the progress on the claims, the reimbursement received by the Council to date, the payments made to PwC, and the potential future recovery.

Resolved: -That

- (1) **The content of the report be noted.**
- (2) **The net receipt of £532,954 be added to balances.**
- (3) **The payment of £106,593 to PwC be funded from the Efficiency Investment Budget.**

188 **DRAKE ROAD, LEASOWE - RELEASE OF RESTRICTIVE COVENANT / CHERRYBANK, WALLASEY - PURCHASE OF LAND**

A report by the Director of Law, HR & Asset Management detailed the terms agreed for the release of a restrictive covenant by the Council in respect of land at Drake Road, Leasowe, in return for the purchase of land by the Council in Cherrybank, Wallasey.

Resolved: - That

- (1) **The restrictive covenant on the land in Drake Road, Leasowe, be released in accordance with the terms set out in the report.**
- (2) **The site in Cherrybank, Wallasey, be purchased in accordance with the terms set out in this report.**

189 **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS - UPDATE ON NEW BRIGHTON**

The Chairman informed that as further information had just been received on funding in respect of the New Brighton development, he had agreed to take this item of urgent business to enable the development to proceed within the timescale laid down.

A report by the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services served to update Members on the progress of the New Brighton development and detailed issues associated with the legal agreements in place to reflect proposed changes to the programme of development.

In view of the urgency of this matter, the Cabinet was asked to consider waiving the "call-in" process.

Resolved: That

- (1) The variations to the supplemental Development Agreements as set out in the report be agreed.**
- (2) The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services, in conjunction with the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management be authorised to:**
 - (a) negotiate and complete any necessary documentation**
 - (b) negotiate and conclude the funding agreement with Neptune Wirral Limited.**
- (3) In view of the urgency of this matter, the call-in process be waived.**