

**SOUTH RIBBLE BOROUGH COUNCIL****COUNCIL MEETING – 17 APRIL 2013****REPORT OF THE CABINET**

The Cabinet met on the evening of Wednesday 20 March 2013.

On that occasion, the Cabinet considered the matters set out below. Decisions shown in boxed areas are subject to Council confirmation; the reports considered by the Cabinet were available to all members in advance of the Cabinet meeting.

**1. Authorisation of Expenditure of Capital Programme Schemes 2013/14**

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources introduced this report which sought approval to commit capital expenditure for works to Moss Side Depot and the Civic Centre and for Disabled Facilities Grants as set out in the Capital Programme for 2013/14 approved by Council on 6th March 2013.

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources informed Cabinet that this report was not committing the Council at his stage to all the work at the Civic Centre and further reports on the electrical works and the Photo Voltaic System would be presented to Cabinet before final schemes were approved.

It was decided:-

1. That authority be granted under Section 3.4 of the Financial Regulations to incur capital expenditure of £165,000 for works at Moss Side Depot, and authority be delegated to the Director of Planning & Housing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, to determine the most appropriate scheme and accept the most economically advantageous tender (all other aspects of the procurement being conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules);
2. That authority be granted under Section 3.4 of the Financial Regulations to incur capital expenditure of £343,200 for works at the Civic Centre. (the procurement being conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules)
3. That authority be granted under Section 3.4 of the Financial Regulations to incur capital expenditure of £75,000 for fire suppression in the Civic Centre and Moss Side Depot. (the procurement being conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules)
4. That authority be granted under Section 3.4 of the Financial Regulations to incur the capital expenditure of £554,566 for disabled facilities grants.

**2. Performance Monitoring Report – Third Quarterly Report 2012/13 - April 2012 to December 2012**

The Leader of the Council introduced this Performance Monitoring report which had previously been considered and well received by the Scrutiny Committee on 11 February 2013.

Members endorsed the views of the Scrutiny Committee in congratulating the Leader and all those involved in the significant progress made against the Corporate Plan and the budget;

It was decided to note the report.

### 3. Review of the Council's Constitution

The Leader of the Council introduced this item and referred to the Governance Committee's work on keeping the Constitution under review and asked the Chair of Governance to take Cabinet through the report.

The Chair of Governance informed Cabinet that the Constitution Task Group had conducted annual reviews of different sections of the Constitution and submitted reports to the Governance Committee and Cabinet prior to adoption of the proposed changes by Council at the start of each new municipal year and it was intended that this review would culminate in the adoption of the revised Constitution at the start of the 2013/14 municipal year.

He indicated that this current review had focused on four topics covering various sections of the Constitution: Working Groups and Panels, the Executive arrangements, Scrutiny Procedure Rules and the Contract Procedure Rules.

Cabinet Members acknowledged the work of the Governance Committee and asked if in future the changes to the Constitution could be highlighted.

It was decided:-

1. That Cabinet recommend that Council adopt the proposed changes to the Constitution as set out in the Appendices to the report with effect from the first Council meeting of the new municipal year in 2013.
2. That the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the chairman of the Governance Committee, be authorised to update the Constitution to reflect the outcomes from Recommendation 1 above.

### 4. Consultation Draft - Central Lancashire Highways and Transport Master Plan

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning & Housing reported that the Borough Council had been consulted by the County Council on a Draft Central Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan which the Planning Committee had previously considered and made comments to the County Council. However, it was clear that the implications of the Masterplan had a wider corporate dimension, and this report sought further comments of the Cabinet in order to prepare a more corporate response. An extension of time in order to submit a further response had been requested from the County Council.

Cabinet supported the completion of the Penwortham Bypass but expressed concern regarding the proposed timescale for implementation and in addition, the real danger that the completion of the bypass would result in moving one bottleneck to a different location. This justified a firm commitment for a new bridge crossing.

The South Ribble Western Distributor as proposed would only direct traffic to the A59 causing additional congestion both on this route and on the only route to the north through the west side of Preston. The Guild Bridge proposal needed to be brought forward, and not left until after 2026 as indicated in the document. The Bridge was crucial if economic growth in Central Lancashire were to be successfully promoted.

Cabinet Members expressed their extreme disappointment that the Masterplan did not make reference to the long standing Council desire for the construction of the Cross Borough Link Road. The need to facilitate movement on purpose built roads across the urban core of the Borough was of paramount importance and needed to be viewed as part of the proposed strategic road network. Without this Link Road then both the County and Borough Councils' ambition to both enhance the attractiveness of public transport and to

improve the residential and retail environments as at Tardy Gate would not be delivered and as such the route required the explicit support and commitment of the County Council in the Masterplan.

Cabinet Members confirmed that the provision of the necessary infrastructure to support the development proposed in the LDF was seen by the Council as critical and most certainly an absolute requirement that delivery was in line with the rate of development. It was totally unacceptable for there to be a large time period between the development of sites shown in the LDF and the later provision of the necessary infrastructure. It was also unacceptable for there to be a significant delay which allowed problems of congestion to occur before action was taken. On that basis, the Cabinet viewed it as essential that the proposals in the Masterplan were firmed up and co-ordinated with the planned release of land as set out in the LDF.

Support was also expressed for the re-opening of the Midge Hall Railway Station which was important to increase the sustainability and transport options for the Moss Side Test Track development and Pickering Farm and Public transport improvements for bus provision were also essential.

It was decided:-

That Cabinet note the response sent on behalf of the Planning Committee, and endorse the additional views expressed in this report, and the further views of Members, set out above and send a further response to the County Council.

## **5. Revenues and Benefits Discretionary Policies**

The Cabinet Member for Shared Services & Corporate Support introduced this report which detailed changes necessary to update South Ribble Borough Council's policies for Discretionary Housing Payment and Discretionary Rate Relief from 1 April 2013 following changes to legislation, and sought powers to amend those policies and existing policies for Localised Council Tax Support and Exceptional Hardship for Administrative changes as necessary.

It was decided:-

1. That the updated "Discretionary Housing Payments Policy" as detailed in Appendix A of the report be adopted.
2. That the updated "Discretionary Rate Relief Policy" as detailed in Appendix B of the report be adopted.
3. That powers to make minor administrative changes to the above policies, together with the Council's Council Tax Support Scheme and Exceptional Hardship Policies be delegated to the Director of Business Transformation in consultation with responsible Cabinet Member.

## **6. Northbrook Barn, Leyland**

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources introduced this report which set out terms provisionally agreed for the disposal of Northbrook Barn, a detached property owned by the Council, and converted for use as a training centre during the mid 1990s and currently subject to a lease to Orvia Property Ltd who had asked to surrender the lease.

A number of alternative uses had been investigated including continued office or other uses for the existing building and conversion or redevelopment for market or affordable housing. Taking into account the Council's policy aspirations for the use of its property assets and the prevailing economic conditions for the uses envisaged, the best option was sale of the property for an office/community related use. Negotiations had been conducted with a local group who had come forward with such a proposal and provisional agreement of terms were set out in the report.

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources suggested an amendment to Paragraph 12 of the terms as set out below:-

"12 Other conditions of sale

The parties will exchange contracts for sale on the terms outlined above, with a staged purchase structured as follows –

- a. The Council will grant the purchaser possession of the property on 1st May 2013 on payment of an initial sum of £35,000, subject to the surrender of the existing lease in favour of Orvia.
- b. The transaction is to be completed on 1st November 2013 on payment of the balance of £135,000.
- d. A condition will be included in the conveyance to ensure that if the property is subsequently used or developed for a more valuable, use such as housing, the additional value realised will be paid to the Council.

It was decided that the terms provisionally agreed as amended above be approved.

## **7. The Cabinet's Forward Plan**

It was decided to approve the Forward Plan submitted under section 22 of the Local Government Act 2000.

I hereby commend the report of the Cabinet to the Council.

**COUNCILLOR MRS MARGARET SMITH**

**LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**