

SOUTH RIBBLE BOROUGH COUNCIL**COUNCIL MEETING – 18 SEPTEMBER 2013****REPORT OF THE CABINET**

The Cabinet met on the evening of Wednesday 4 September 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. Empty Homes Policy

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning & Housing introduced this report which informed Cabinet that in South Ribble, compared to the national average, numbers of long term empty properties were low at 2.4% compared with a national average of 4.2%, with long term empty homes (over 6mths) representing 1.1% of the stock profile. None the less the August 2012 stock condition survey reported 456 long term empty homes in the borough.

This policy would ensure that the Council utilised the most appropriate option available when dealing with long term empty homes, and provided assurances that full consideration and the most cost effective action would be taken to bring the empty properties back into use.

It was decided to recommend to Council that:

1. The Empty Homes Policy for dealing with empty properties be approved.
2. Delegated authority be granted to the Director of Planning and Housing in consultation with Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Housing where appropriate, to take the most effective course of action and to report to cabinet in accordance with the policy.

2. Performance Monitoring Report – Year End 2012/13 - April 2012 to March 2013

The Leader of the Council introduced this report which informed Cabinet that the Council's corporate plan was agreed in September 2011 following extensive engagement with councillors after the May 2011 elections and that, to ensure the Council's performance was managed effectively, regular reports were provided to the Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet as part of the performance management framework. This report outlined the Council's performance from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013.

The Leader also informed Cabinet that this report had been fully discussed at the Scrutiny Committee held on 25 June 2013

It was decided to note the report.

3. Commercial Services

The Cabinet Member for Shared Services & Corporate Support introduced this comprehensive report which considered the services provided by Commercial Services and outlined the various options available to the Council for its future.

Members of Cabinet commented on the thoroughness of the report which, given the findings on the cost of the service, left the Council with little option but for the closure of Commercial Services.

Members expressed their sadness that it had come to this and praised the staff for their loyalty and skills over the years, in particular in recent years while the service had been under scrutiny.

The Chair of Scrutiny expressed concern at how the service had got to where it was now and suggested that it should be referred to the Scrutiny Committee before a final decision was made.

Other Members present also voiced their sadness at the proposed loss of this service and thanked the staff for their professionalism and dedication over the years which had built up a reputation across Lancashire for the quality of the service provided.

It was decided that the following be approved:

1. That transitional arrangements, identified within this report, are implemented to ensure the smooth closure of Commercial Services.
2. That all in-house catering services cease; the Coppice Restaurant is closed and that external markets are investigated as a suitable alternative for the provision of catering services for:
 - a) Mayoral and Civic Events
 - b) Elected Member / Officer Teas and/or Buffets
3. That existing arrangements for Room Hire is migrated to Gateway.
4. That authority be granted to the Head of Human Resources in consultation with the Leader of the Council to resolve any Human Resource implications arising from these changes; any such decisions will be made in accordance with all relevant Council policies.
5. That delegated authority be granted to the Director of Business Transformation in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Shared Services and Corporate Support, to finalise alternative service provision for Elected Member meals (plus accompanying Officers) Mayoral and Civic Events and any buffet support for room hire.

Following the decision the Leader of the Council reiterated the thanks of Cabinet to all members of staff connected with Commercial Services for their professionalism and dedication over the years.

4. Open Space and Playing Pitch SPD – Adoption

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning & Housing introduced this report which explained the background to and the purposes and objectives of the Open Space and Playing Pitch Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

The report pointed out that SPDs offered local planning authorities the opportunity to add guidance in specific policy areas which must be prepared in consultation with interested parties, and be subject to a screening process to discover whether a sustainability appraisal would be required.

It was decided to recommend to Council that:

1. The attached Central Lancashire Open Space and Playing Pitch Supplementary Planning Document be adopted.
2. That delegated authority be granted to the Director of Planning and Housing in

consultation with the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Housing, to make minor text, layout and formatting amendments following the completion of the four week period stipulated by Part 12 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

5. Electrical Upgrading, Roofing Works & Fire Suppression, Civic Centre and Moss Side Depot

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources introduced this report which sought approval to award a contract to the company who submitted the lowest price tender for the improvement of roofs and electrical services replacement at the Civic Centre, Leyland; and fire suppression Systems to rooms at the Civic Centre.

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources brought to Cabinet's attention the decision to remove from the contract the installation of a photo voltaic system at the Civic Centre, Leyland as the payback period was too uncertain and fire suppression systems to rooms at the Moss Side Depot would be too disruptive. The Cabinet Member also brought to Cabinet's attention the fact that although there had been a number of expressions of interest only one tender had been received.

It was decided that:

1. A contract be awarded to Harry Fairclough Construction Ltd - subject to the provision of a bond and parent company guarantees - to carry out improvement work to the civic centre roof, electrical services replacement and fire suppression systems.
2. A variation to the contract be issued to omit the fire suppression systems to rooms at the Council Depot, and to exclude the installation of a photo voltaic system at the Civic Centre.
3. Any decisions relating to further variations to the contract (following on from the decision on the future of Commercial Services) be delegated to the Director of Planning and Housing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources
4. A further report be presented to Cabinet regarding fire suppression proposals at Moss Side Depot

6. Member Development Plan - Outturn Report 2012/13

The Leader of the Council introduced this report which reminded Cabinet that a Member Development Plan had been developed and approved by the Council in 2012. The Plan set out the Priority Objectives for the period 2012 – 15 and identified Key Actions to be addressed on an annual basis. The report provided a narrative of the progress against the Key Actions in 2012-13 and proposed some amendments to the Plan for 2013-14.

The Leader also informed Cabinet that this report had been fully discussed at the Scrutiny Committee held on 13 August 2013.

It was decided to note the report.

7. Our People Plan (progress 2011/12 and draft 2012/13)

The Leader of the Council introduced this report which informed Cabinet that Our People Action Plan was launched in 2008, building on the previous Organisational Development Strategy subject to a review in 2011, with the number of Priority Objectives and Key Actions reducing or becoming more streamlined.

The report presented the 2012-13 out-turn for the Council's Our People Action Plan and put forward a proposed Plan for 2013-15,

The Leader also informed Cabinet that this report had been fully discussed at the Scrutiny Committee held on 13 August 2013.

It was decided to recommend to Council that:

That the 2012-13 out-turn for the Council's Our People Action Plan be noted and the proposed Plan for 2013-15 be approved.

8. Byelaws

The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods & Street Scene introduced this report which informed Members that there was a long history of nuisance issues from skateboarding and ball games at the Tesco site, off Towngate in Leyland and that it was believed that the introduction of byelaws would help to reduce the nuisance issues.

The report sought approval to commence the necessary procedures for obtaining provisional approval from government for introducing byelaws on the Tesco site and a number of other sites around Leyland Town Centre. There would then be a subsequent report to Council seeking authority to actually make the byelaws should the government prove to be supportive of these proposals.

Members confirmed the high level of nuisance issues in the area and referred to the level of complaints from local shopkeepers and members of the public.

Whilst all Members accepted that there were nuisance issues in the vicinity of Tesco's, some were sceptical of the impact byelaws would have as they still required enforcing and it was the current lack of enforcement that was contributing to the problem.

The Cabinet Member accepted that the Byelaws were not the be all and end all, but were part of a package of measures which were being introduced with the cooperation of Tesco's management. In response to a question he confirmed that other areas of the borough could be considered in the future if it proved necessary, but he was not aware of problems elsewhere that were at a similar level to those at Tesco's.

It was decided to recommend to Council that:

1. The Director of Neighbourhoods be authorised, in consultation with the Deputy Leader, Neighbourhoods and Streetscene, to seek provisional approval from government to the making of byelaws to control skateboarding and the playing of games (including the playing of ball games) as detailed in this report.
2. In the event that the government grants provisional approval to the proposed byelaws, the appropriate byelaws should then be made – such approval from Council would be sought by a further report.

9. Community Infrastructure Levy

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning & Housing introduced this report which reminded members that following receipt of the CIL Examiners report in July, Council adopted the CIL Charging Schedule on 24th July, with charging of the levy to commence from 1st September and that it was now necessary to bring forward a composite list of schemes to consult on.

A question was asked on the mechanism for the parished and non parished areas of the borough.

The Cabinet Member responded that the challenge was to make sure that the final 123 list was a comprehensive list agreed by all as the way forward.

It was decided to recommend to Council that:

1. A revised composite 123 List of schemes to be funded through CIL be prepared for consultation as per the statutory requirements;
2. A further report be presented to Council to agree the revised composite 123 List;
3. Following on from Council approval of a revised composite 123 List that Cabinet agree should agree an annual programme and 3 year rolling programme for scheme delivery.

10. Electronic Document Records Management System

The Cabinet Member for Shared Services & Corporate Support introduced this report which informed Members that the EDRMS was a document imaging system that both allowed users to scan documents to a secure data storage system and also allowed other IT systems to electronically send records for secure storage within EDRMS. As such it was crucial to the smooth running of a number of services, including Revenues, Housing Benefits & Council Tax Support, Planning and Gateway. However a critical part of EDRMS was now failing on a regular basis and it was crucial for the continued smooth running of Council services to undertake a technical upgrade to the "Optical Plasmon Drive" which was used to store documents.

It was decided that the following be approved:

1. To incur the requisite expenditure to replace the "Optical Plasmon Drive" to the EDRMS system with an Image Server together with associated upgrades and licenses as detailed in the report, in accordance with financial regulation no.3.
2. To waive paragraphs 10.1 to 10.3 (intermediate value procurement) of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules to enable this essential upgrade work to be carried out by our current supplier for the reasons set out in this report.
3. To vire £50,000 of the capital budget set aside for CAPS replacement to fund the proposed expenditure on EDRMS, in accordance with financial regulation no.3.

11. The Cabinet's Forward Plan

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

12. Cabinet Meetings Starting Time

The Leader of the Council introduced this item and sought members' views on the starting time for Cabinet meeting following the trial over the last 6 months.

It was decided that Cabinet meetings would in future commence at 5.00pm.

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

COUNCILLOR MRS MARGARET SMITH

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL