

City of Durham

At a Meeting of the **CABINET** held in the Gala Theatre, Durham, on Monday, 17th December, 2007, at 2.30 p.m.

Present: Councillor Reynolds (in the Chair)
and Councillors Bell, Dickie, Jackson, Pitts, Rae, Southwell, Thomson and van Zwanenberg.

Also Present: Councillors Bartle, Cowper, Kellett, Marsden, Mitchell, Robinson, Turnbull and Wilkinson.

413. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest submitted.

414. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Woods.

415. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 3rd December, 2007, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Portfolio Member Recommendations or Items Requiring a Cabinet Decision

416. HOUSING BENEFIT – REVIEW OF LOCALITIES/BROAD RENTAL MARKET AREA BOUNDARIES

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Director of Financial Services submitted a comprehensive report identifying changes to the locality rent boundary applicable to the City Council, which had been notified by the Department for Work and Pensions and was applicable to all new and existing claimants upon review of their claims after 29th October, 2007. The report also identified the implication of this policy change on existing claimants and set out proposals to minimise the financial hardship that may be faced as a result of these changes.

Resolved: (i) That the changes in locality rent boundaries and the impact on local reference rents from 29th October, 2007, be noted.

(ii) That discretionary housing payments up to the value of the Local Reference Rent applicable prior to 29th October, 2007, be made for all existing claimants up until the point in time that the Local Reference Rent exceeds the level applicable prior to the changes introduced on 29th October, 2007.

(ii) That the new Local Reference Rent be applied to all new claimants and to existing claimants once the new Local Reference Rent exceeds the levels applicable prior to the changes introduced on 29th October, 2007.

(iii) That private sector landlords of existing claimants be informed of the changes and potential impact on their tenants, with a view to influencing any rent increases in 2008/09 whilst the new Local Reference Rents catch up with the levels applicable prior to 29th October, 2007.

417. PARTNERSHIP WORKING TO DELIVER “GO WARM DURHAM CITY”

The Portfolio Holders for Environment and Communities and the Head of Property Services submitted a comprehensive report on a proposed working partnership between Domestic Energy Solutions and City of Durham Council to deliver a scheme entitled ‘Go Warm Durham City’ in line with the “Affordable Warmth Strategy”.

Resolved: (i) That the ‘Go Warm Durham City’ initiative in partnership with DES be approved.

(ii) That the initial pilot period until 31st March, 2008 covering 3,500 homes be approved, and following a successful evaluation, the scheme be extended to a further 3,000 homes over the next 2 years.

418. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL’S LICENSING POLICY

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture and Director of Strategic Services submitted a comprehensive report seeking approval of the proposed revised Statement of Licensing Policy as required under the Licensing Act 2003.

Resolved: That the proposed revised Statement of Licensing Policy be approved.

419. IN PRIVATE

Portfolio Member Recommendations or Items Requiring a Cabinet Decision

420. LEASE OF FOOTBALL GROUND AT BRANDON WELFARE PARK TO BRANDON UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB

The Leader of the Council, Director of Strategic Services and Head of Legal and Strategic Services submitted a report to consider leasing the football ground at Brandon Welfare Park to Brandon United Football Club.

Resolved: That the disposal of Brandon Welfare Park football ground to Brandon United Football Club by way of a lease on the terms set out in the report be approved.

Note: All Officers, with the exception of the Director of Corporate Services and Head of Legal and Strategic Services, left the Meeting during consideration of the undermentioned item.

421. EARLY RETIREMENT/VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCY APPLICATION

The Leader of the Council and the Director of Corporate Services submitted a comprehensive report to consider an application for Early Retirement / Voluntary Redundancy.

Resolved: (i) That Mr Spears’ application for Early Retirement/Voluntary Redundancy be approved and that the post of Chief Executive be deleted from the Establishment.

(ii) That the Executive Director be appointed Head of Paid Service with terms and conditions equivalent to that of the retiring Chief Executive.

Note: The Leader of the Council expressed, on behalf of Members, thanks to the Chief Executive for his service, and confidence in the Executive Director to take the Council forward in the future.

The Meeting terminated at 2.50 p.m.

Chair