

Item 3

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL CABINET

Conference Room 1,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Thursday,
20 January 2005

Time: 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor R.S. Fleming (Chairman) and

Councillors Mrs. A.M. Armstrong, Mrs. B. Graham, A. Hodgson,
M. Iveson, D.A. Newell, K. Noble, J. Robinson J.P and W. Waters

In

Attendance: Councillors Mrs. B.A. Clare, Mrs. K. Conroy, Mrs. J. Croft, V. Crosby,
G.C. Gray, Mrs. J. Gray, D.M. Hancock, J.E. Higgin, Mrs. L. Hovvels,
J.G. Huntington, G. Morgan, B.M. Ord, Mrs. E.M. Paylor, J.K. Piggott,
A. Smith, Mrs. I. Jackson Smith and J. Wayman J.P

CAB.131/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that Councillor K. Noble would be declaring a prejudicial interest in Item No. 7 – Operation of School Pools At Fishburn and Thornhill Gardens, Shildon as he was a member of a local Steering Group which had been set up to consider the possibility of taking over the operation of the pool.

CAB.132/04 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 6th and 13th January 2005 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

CAB.133/04 AUDIT COMMISSION - ANNUAL AUDIT AND INSPECTION LETTER

Consideration was given to the above. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Catherine Andrew and Sarah Diggle from the Audit Commission were in attendance to present the letter and answer questions.

It was reported that the letter summarised the conclusions and significant issues arising from the Audit Commission's 2003/2004 audit and inspections of the Council.

Specific reference was made to the good progress that the Council was making in implementing the actions set out in a new Corporate Plan to deliver its corporate ambitions and address the weaknesses identified by Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). It was noted that a number of strategies had been developed to improve performance and steady progress was being made across most areas

It was, however, pointed out that the measurement of the extent of progress and the assessment of the effectiveness of the actions was

partially hampered by the lack of key and relevant measures that would demonstrate the success in achieving some of the community outcomes.

With regard to services for young people, it was reported that the services provided by the Council had been judged to be fair, with promising prospects for improvement. Key strengths included the Council's understanding of the area and the needs of young people, its prioritisation of services for young people, its strong partnership working for the services and the active involvement in the LSP Young Peoples Partnership.

Members noted that the Council's overall Corporate Governance arrangements were considered satisfactory in most key areas. The Council's accounts had again been produced early to a high standard and had been given an unqualified audit opinion on 25th November 2004.

Specific reference was also made to the consultation document regarding the changes proposed to Comprehensive Performance Assessment and the introduction of Direction of Travel Assessments.

RESOLVED : That the report be received.

CAB.134/04 SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE - AUDIT COMMISSION INSPECTION FINDINGS AND ACTION PLANNING

Consideration was given to a report setting out the findings and the recommendations of the Audit Commission in respect of the Council's services for children and young people. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was reported that the Audit Commission had rated the Council's services as fair (one star), with promising prospects for improvement and had recommended the following four broad areas for improvement:

- Setting out formally the Council's approach towards services for Young People in a Young People's Charter.
- Ensuring that services were focused on outcomes
- Determining the value for money of the existing approach
- Developing a structured consultation framework

It was noted that an Action Plan had been prepared to address the four improvement areas and two issues that had emerged from the self-assessment process – the co-ordination of services and safeguarding of children.

It was proposed that an Officer Working Group be established to develop and deliver the Action Plan, in accordance with the Audit Commission's three months deadline.

RESOLVED : 1. That the findings and recommendations of the Audit Commission in respect of Council services for Children and Young People, as

set out in its report of December 2004, be noted.

2. *That the Service Review Action Plan be developed and that an Officer Working Group be given delegated authority to develop the Plan as appropriate to achieve the overall objectives, within the agreed resource parameters.*

CAB.135/04 NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES - CCTV AND COMMUNITY ALARM CONTROL ROOM

Consideration was given to a report regarding the future development and management of the Council's community alarm and the CCTV services to meet the changing and developing markets. (For copy see file of Minutes).

The report sought approval for the Council to retain a combined control room, maintain 24 hour services for community alarms and CCTV from its own centre and enter into a three year agreement with Tunstall to operate a Hosted Services Technology Management System, at a gross cost of £45,000, with a net cost after savings of £18,000 in Year 1 and £8,000 in subsequent years.

It was explained that under a Hosted Services arrangement, Tunstall would provide and manage the technology necessary to receive and process calls from individual Carelink alarm units and then deliver the call, together with the associated data on the nature of the call, client details etc, to the Council's own monitoring centre. The arrangement would allow Sedgefield Carelink to monitor calls on behalf of the Borough and its partners or re-route calls to Tunstall Response, when appropriate.

It was pointed out that hosting offered access to the latest technology , without the need for the Council to invest in purchasing and accommodating such technology and associated infrastructure and would provide flexible options in terms of service continuity. It would also remove the requirement for an annual maintenance agreement.

With regard to the CCTV service, it was noted that early indications within the context of the Service Review suggested that scope existed to expand the service, both in terms of fixed cameras and mobile facilities, however, any expansion needed to be developed in accordance with a robust Business Plan.

The report also proposed that the post of Neighbourhood Services Manager, which was currently vacant, should be re-designated Neighbourhood Services Business Manager (POH), with a clear emphasis initially on driving forward the desired changes as detailed in the report and thereafter ensuring the services continued to respond to new and changing business opportunities. It also proposed that the posts of Carelink Safety Manager and Carelink Services Manager be

re-graded to take account of the additional operational management responsibilities.

- RESOLVED :**
- 1. That Option 1, detailed in the report, be adopted and a 3 Year Agreement be entered into with Tunstall, to operate a Hosted Services Technology Management System, at a gross annual cost of £45,000, with a net cost after savings of £18,000 in Year 1.*
 - 2. That the principles set out in the report regarding funding, expansion, development and management of the community alarm and CCTV service be agreed.*
 - 3. That the post of Neighbourhood Services Manager (POH) be re-designated Business Manager and the posts of Community Safety Manager and Carelink Services Manager be re-graded from POC to POF.*

N.B. In accordance with Section 81 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor K. Noble declared a prejudicial interest in the following item and left the meeting for the duration of discussion and voting on the item.

CAB.136/04 OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL POOLS AT FISHBURN AND THORNHILL GARDENS, SHILDON

Consideration was given to a report regarding the above. (For copy see file of Minutes)

Members were reminded that Cabinet, at its meeting on 19th September 2002 had agreed to the transfer of Shildon and Fishburn School Pools to Sedgefield Borough Council from Durham County Council on the understanding that the running costs would be reasonable.

It was reported that the Fishburn Pool was operating reasonably within the staffing costs to income framework, whereas the Shildon Pool was not achieving that standard.

It was pointed out that if the Council continued to operate both pools within the existing activity programme for the 2004/05 financial year, the collective projected expenditure was £23,620 against a budget of £10,590. The anticipated operating costs for both pools in the 2005/06 financial year was £27,670.

Specific was made to the problems of water leakage at the Shildon pool, which had led to it being closed and drained on 11th January 2005. It was reported that the estimated cost of repairing the overflow channels of the pool was £10,000, which could increase to over

£15,000, if it was necessary to replace pipework.

Members' attention was drawn to the fact that 2005/06 revenue budget had been prepared on the assumption that the pool at Shildon would be closed in view of the costs of maintenance and the proximity of other swimming pools.

It was noted that Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 at its meeting on 26th January 2005 would be considering in detail the revenue budget proposals for the culture and recreation portfolio, including the operating costs of both school pools.

- RESOLVED :**
1. *That the school pool at Thornhill Gardens, Shildon be closed.*
 2. *That the school pool at Fishburn be kept open, subject to its operating costs being closely monitored.*

CAB.137/04 CAR PARKING AT LOCOMOTION, NATIONAL RAILWAY MUSEUM AT SHILDON

The Lead Member for Culture and Recreation presented a report seeking approval to develop an overflow car park. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was explained that local residents had expressed concern regarding their inability to park outside their own homes in view of visitors to the Locomotion parking their cars in the narrow streets adjacent to the museum.

Members noted that in the period 25 September 2004 to the end of December 2004, over 80,000 people had visited Locomotion, with 75% arriving by car.

Specific reference was made to discussions that were taking place with a town centre retailer regarding the use, particularly on Sundays, of hard standing within the town, which would be suitable for a park and ride facility.

It was also reported that discussions had been held with Durham County Council and the Police regarding the introduction a resident parking permit scheme in the narrow streets surrounding the museum, however there seemed to be a reluctance on the part of the County Council to develop the proposal. The Leader of the Council agreed to write to the Leader of Durham County Council regarding the need for such a scheme.

It was explained that the construction of an overflow car park on land shown on Plan 2 attached to the report, would provide an additional 48 car parking spaces and a further 4 coach spaces, bringing the total to 95 car parking spaces, 8 disabled spaces to 8 coach spaces. The proposal, which estimated to cost in the region of £65,000, would cater

fully for weekday demand and demonstrate to local residents that the Council was taking the issue of car parking very seriously.

- RESOLVED :*
1. *That the land shown at Plan 2 attached to the report be developed as an overflow car park.*
 2. *That monies be made available in the 2004/05 financial year from contingencies.*
 3. *That a letter be sent to the Leader of Durham County Council regarding the need to introduce a residents permit parking scheme in the vicinity of Locomotion.*

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Gillian Garrigan, on Spennymoor 816166 Ext 4240