

**SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
CABINET**

Conference Room 1,  
Council Offices,  
Spennymoor

Thursday,  
17 February 2005

Time: 10.00 a.m.

**Present:** Councillor R.S. Fleming (Chairman) and  
  
Councillors Mrs. A.M. Armstrong, Mrs. B. Graham, D.A. Newell, K. Noble,  
J. Robinson J.P and W. Waters

**In Attendance:** Councillors Mrs. B.A. Clare, Mrs. J. Croft, V. Crosby, A. Gray, G.C. Gray,  
J.E. Higgin, J.G. Huntington, M.T.B. Jones, J.M. Khan, J.P. Moran,  
G. Morgan, Mrs. E.M. Paylor, A. Smith, T. Ward and J. Wayman J.P

**Apologies:** Councillors A. Hodgson and M. Iveson

**CAB.149/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

It was reported that Councillor K. Noble would be declaring the following interests:

Prejudicial Interest - Item No. 5 – Budget Framework 2005/06 in relation to the operation of Schools Pools at Fishburn and 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 at Fishburn.

Prejudicial Interest - Item 12. – Any Other Business – Local Government Association Member Task Group – Gypsies and Travellers – as he was named in the report.

**CAB.150/04 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2005 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (For copy see file of Minutes).

**CAB.151/04 RICHARD PRISK, HEAD OF STRATEGY AND REGENERATION**

The Leader of the Council expressed his good wishes to Richard Prisk, who was leaving the Council to take up a new post at Easington District Council.

**CAB.152/04 POST CPA IMPROVEMENT PLANNING - PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND CONTROL ARRANGEMENTS**

Consideration was given to a report setting out the proposed approach to formalising the Council's partnership development and control arrangements in response to concerns that had been raised through

audit and inspection. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was reported that an outline Action Plan had been developed, detailed in Appendix 3, which rationalised all existing corporate activity in relationship to partnership working and incorporated all recommendations from audit and inspection.

The report also proposed the following corporate definition of 'partnership working':

'A joint-working arrangement in which the Council agrees to co-operate and collaborate with one or more legally independent organisations to achieve a series of shared objectives and outcomes'

Members noted that approval of the Action Plan would necessitate the amendment of the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance Action Plan as well as the division of the Consultation, Community Involvement and Partnership working improvement plan into two separate plans, one covering consultation and the other partnerships.

- RESOLVED :*
- 1. That the Partnership Working Action Plan, detailed in Appendix 3, be approved.*
  - 2. That the adjustment of existing corporate plans be in line with the above Action Plan be approved, including the partition of the Consultation, Community Involvement and Partnership Working Improvement Plan into two separate action plans and that monitoring be delegated to the appropriate Scrutiny and Overview Committees.*
  - 3. That the proposed corporate definition of 'partnership working' as detailed in the report to guide the operation of partnership working in which the Council engaged, be approved.*

**CAB.153/04 BUDGET FRAMEWORK 2005/06**

Consideration was given to a report detailing the results of consultation undertaken in relation to the Council's initial budget proposals together with copies of the minutes of the special meetings of the Council's three Overview and Scrutiny Committees held to consider the proposed budget framework. (For copies see file of Minutes).

Members' attention was drawn to Appendices 1 and 2 of the report, which detailed the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and feedback from Council Tax Focus Groups respectively.

It was explained that the draft Budget Framework considered by

Cabinet on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2005, had carried a risk assessment in view of the possible delays in receiving major capital receipts. It was now likely that such a delay could run for several more months and the risk assessment needed to be re-visited to reflect the prospect that the anticipated receipts may not be realised in full in the short term.

It was therefore proposed that a further £300,000 be set aside from the Budget Support Fund to replace the loss of potential investment income during 2005/06. It was also proposed that the initial risk assessment be triggered and the following areas of budget growth be postponed until the Director of Resources considered it was prudent to proceed:

- Environment Portfolio
- Community Safety Portfolio

With regard to the Capital Spending Programmes, it was further proposed that the budget provision for Special Regeneration services (£5,000,000) also be postponed until it was prudent to proceed.

Specific reference was made to the following:

### **Skate Park**

It was explained that the Council had not been able to deliver the Mobile Skate Park service to the four contributing Town and Parish Councils as it could not find a suitably qualified HGV driver. A reduced service had therefore been re-negotiated with the Town and Parish Councils, which involved the supply of a variety of pieces of equipment free of charge to the Councils to compensate for their initial assistance with the capital cost.

It was reported that a capital bid of £25,000 had been made to provide a range of ramps, equipment and trailer that could be towed behind a normal vehicle. The new Skate Park would be transportable throughout the Borough and could be used indoors or outdoors, including the Council's Leisure Centres. Any organisation wishing to hire the equipment would be required to pay the full cost unless its use formed part of the holiday activity or Positive Futures Programme.

**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 matter and left the meeting for the duration of discussion on the item.**

### **School Pools at Fishburn and Thornhill Gardens, Shildon**

Members were reminded that Cabinet in September 2002 had agreed to the transfer of Shildon and Fishburn School Pools to Sedgefield Borough Council on the understanding that that the running costs would be reasonable.

It was explained that following problems of water leakage the pool at

Shildon had been closed to the public since 14<sup>th</sup> January 2005. There was no provision in the 2004/05 Culture and Recreation Capital Programme to fund the works therefore external financial assistance would be required. It was estimated that approximately £25,000 a year would be required to invest in the fabric of the pool for at least the next 4 years to keep the building in a good state of repair.

It was therefore reported that the anticipated annual running costs for Shildon and Fishburn pools for 2005/06 were £19,450 and £14,000 respectively. It was therefore proposed to allocate £14,000 to operate the pool at Shildon, with the additional revenue costs of £5,450 to come from outside sources such as Shildon Town Council and the local Swimming Pool Committee.

It would also be expected that Fishburn Parish Council and the Fishburn Swimming Pool Committee would contribute towards any revenue costs over and above the baseline figure.

### **Sedgefield Advice And Information Service**

It was explained that discussions had taken place with representatives of Sedgefield And District Advice And Information Service regarding the sustainability of funding levels and although the value of the service provided was recognised by the Council, it was acknowledged that there was a particular need to safeguard the outreach facilities that the Service provided away from its main offices in Spennymoor and Newton Aycliffe.

It was noted that none of the other District Councils used the Housing Revenue Account as a source of funding for 'Citizens Advice'.

It was proposed that the contribution to be made from the Housing Revenue Account to the Sedgefield Advice and Information Service be reduced by £7,000 and that discussions take place with all other providers of advice regarding the future provision of advice and information within the Borough.

**RESOLVED :** *That in accordance with 2(b) of the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules, Cabinet makes the following recommendations to Council as its firm proposals for the Budget Framework 2005/07:*

*1. That insofar as General Fund Services are concerned, the Budget Framework previously agreed by Cabinet, at a meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2005, be amended as follows:*

*1.1 The Budget for the Culture and Recreation portfolio be revised to reflect –*

*(a) an increase of £14,000 in relation to*

- the Shildon Pool;*
- (b) an increase of £6,000 in relation to the Skate Park;*
- (c) a reduction of £26,060 in relation to the Locomotion, which reflects the confirmed contribution from the NRM.*

*1.2 By making these adjustments the General Contingency Fund will now be set at £461,060.*

*1.3 The Budget for the Supporting People portfolio be reduced by £7,000 in relation to the contribution to the Advice and Information Service and that no inflationary allowance be made on the contribution. The resultant saving to be reflected as a reduced contribution from the Housing Revenue Account.*

*2. The draft Budget Framework carried a risk assessment because of the possible delays in receiving major capital receipts. Unfortunately, it now seems likely that this delay could run for several more months and the risk assessment needs to be re-visited to reflect the prospect that anticipated receipts may not be realised in full in the short term.*

*2.1 In the circumstances it is recommended that a further £300,000 be set aside from the Budget Support Fund to replace the potential loss of investment income during 2005/06. It is also recommended that the initial risk assessment is also triggered and that a number of budget growth areas be postponed. The postponement of the following areas of growth will run until such time as the Director of Resources indicates that it is prudent to proceed.:-*

*Environment Portfolio : £242,000  
Community Safety Portfolio : £118,000*

*2.2 As a consequence of these recommendations, it is proposed that:-*

*2.2.1 The net revenue budget for 2005/06 is set at £12,410,000.*

- 2.2.2 *The increase in the Borough Council Tax is confirmed at 3%, taking the Band D tax to £175.60.*
3. *That insofar as the Housing Revenue Account is concerned, the Budget Framework previously agreed by Cabinet on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2005, be confirmed and, the Housing Revenue Account contingency be adjusted to reflect the reduced contribution to the Advice and Information Service. As a consequence it is proposed that:*
- 3.1 *A rent increase of 4.03% be applied to all basic rents and target rents, with effect from 4<sup>th</sup> April 2005.*
- 3.2 *Rent restructuring continues to be applied to bring basic rents towards target rents at the maximum level of +/- £1 per week.*
4. *That insofar as the Capital Spending Programmes are concerned, the Budget Framework previously agreed by Cabinet on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2005, be confirmed and as a consequence it is proposed that the Capital Programme be set at £15,800,000. However, in accordance with the risk assessment referred to previously, it is further recommended that the budget provision for Special Regeneration services (£5,000,000) be postponed until such time as the Director of Resources indicates that it is prudent to proceed.*

**CAB.154/04 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2005/06**

Consideration was given to a report outlining the strategy to be followed by the Council over the medium term in relation to its Treasury Management activities, which took account of the new guidance on investments issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. (For copy see file of Minutes)

**RESOLVED :** *That Council be recommended to approve the Treasury Management Strategy 2005/06 and the Investment Strategy 2005/06 and adopt the Prudential Indicators and Limits 2005/06 to 2007/08.*

**CAB.155/04 ASSET MANAGEMENT - FOUL WATER DRAINAGE SYSTEM, COUNCIL OFFICES, GREEN LANE, SPENNYMOOR**

The Leader of the Council presented a report seeking approval to renew the foul water drainage system at the Council Offices, Green Lane, Spennymoor which was suffering from major defects. (For copy see file of Minutes).

- RESOLVED :*
- 1. That the foul water drainage system at the Council Offices, Green Lane, Spennymoor be renewed at an estimated cost of £69,000, inclusive of design and supervision fees.*
  - 2. That the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Lead Member for Resource Management, be authorised to let a contract for the works to the company who submits the lowest tender on condition that the tendered sum is within the budget provision of £69,000.*

**CAB.156/04 SPENNYMOOR TOWN CENTRE - CONTRACT NEGOTIATION**

Further to Minute CAB.143/04 of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2005, the Lead Member for Regeneration presented a report seeking approval to accept the tender negotiated with Seymour (Civil Engineering Contractors) Limited for the construction of Phase 1 of the proposed footpath link between the Asda Supermarket and High Street, Spennymoor. (For copy see file of Minutes).

- RESOLVED :* *That the negotiated tender submitted by Seymour (Civil Engineering Contractors) Limited in the sum of £50,598.43 be accepted.*

**CAB.157/04 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the following:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1	-	11 <sup>th</sup> January 2005
Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2	-	18 <sup>th</sup> January 2005

(For copies see file of Minutes).

- RESOLVED :* *That the Committees recommendations be noted and appropriate action be taken.*

**CAB.158/04 AREA FORUMS**

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the meetings of the following:

Area 2 Forum	-	11 <sup>th</sup> January 2005
Area 3 Forum	-	12 <sup>th</sup> January 2005
Area 5 Forum	-	25 <sup>th</sup> January 2005

(For copies see file of Minutes).

*RESOLVED : That the reports be received.*

## **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

*RESOLVED: That in accordance with Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 7 and 9 of Schedule 12a of the Act.*

### **CAB.159/04 ASSET MANAGEMENT - LAND SALE AT DEAN AND CHAPTER INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, FERRYHILL**

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval to sell 0.12 hectares of land at Dean and Chapter Industrial Estate, Ferryhill. (For copy see file of Minutes).

*RESOLVED : That the recommendation detailed in the report be adopted.*

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

### **CAB.160/04 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION MEMBER TASK GROUP - GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS**

The Leader of the Council presented a report seeking authorisation for Councillor K. Noble , Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Regeneration to attend the meeting of the Local Government Association's Task Group on Gypsies and Travellers at London on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2005. (For copy see file of Minutes)

*RESOLVED: That Councillor K. Noble be authorised to attend the meeting of the Task Group on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2005.*

**Published on 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2005.**

**These Minutes contain no Key Decisions and will be implemented immediately.**

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#### **ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

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