



RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The following is a record of the decisions taken at the meeting of **CABINET** on **THURSDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2011**.

These decisions will come into force and may be implemented from **4 October 2011** unless the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or its Committees object to any such decision and call it in.

Policies for the Management of the Councils Cemeteries **Key Decision: NH/NS/15/10**

Summary

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director for Neighbourhood Services to consider, in the light of public consultation, proposals for the management of the County Councils Cemeteries.

On 13 April 2011 Cabinet reviewed a series of draft policies for the management of the County Councils cemeteries. These proposals were informed using feedback from a Members Seminar held on 15 November 2010.

Cabinet recognised that this is a sensitive, and potentially emotive issue in sometimes balancing the wishes of many cemetery visitors, with their expectation of a well maintained and respectful surroundings, with the personal needs of the bereaved who may hold strong views as to the look of their friend or relatives graveside and how they feel they wish them to be remembered. In view of this sensitivity, Members approved a consultation exercise to be undertaken with residents and stakeholders involved in bereavement services (for example clergy, funeral directors, stonemasons and others).

Consultation began on 3 May 2011 and ended on 25 July 2011, with a wide variety of organisations contacted and alongside residents invited to respond either directly or using a questionnaire format on the County Councils website.

A total of 235 responses were received, with 218 being online and 17 returned in paper format. The majority of responses (92%) were from members of the public, however clergy, monumental masons and funeral directors also responded. Whilst the majority of respondents (78%) considered themselves

of Christian faith, there were small (or single) numbers of Jewish, Humanist, Jehovah's Witness, together with those expressing atheist and 17.7% expressing none. Written responses included a meeting and subsequent letter from the Durham Diocesan Advisory Committee.

Five of the County Councils cemeteries were awarded Green Flag status this year in recognition of their standards of maintenance, environmental practices and community involvement. This represents the largest number awarded for cemeteries in the Country and represents well the future ambitions of this service in providing high quality and respectful surroundings that meet the needs of visitors and the local community.

The consultation has revealed an endorsement to the draft proposals from residents and stakeholders with a majority of respondents in favour of each of the specific measures. Strongest support is given to extending cemeteries where there is a need (80.2%), using qualified memorial masons (89.7%), not allowing kerbside surrounds in certain areas (75.7%), providing a minister (where religion can be ascertained) at Municipal funerals (81%) and allowing adornments (69.9%). There was still a majority in favour of charging more for burial for non residents (56.3%), and limiting adornments (with the exception of smaller items) to two months (57%), although with the latter proposal, in the light of 32.1% of those disagreeing citing longer time, it is suggested that this period be lengthened to three months.

The rules and regulations are important aspect of cemetery management and will allow a consistent and fair approach to be made. It is important that the bereaved and visitors are familiar with them, and the reasons why, in the interests of the cemetery they are there. To this end, subject to approval, an accessible guide would be produced providing an explanation in a user-friendly way.

Separate and more service specific guides will be distributed to Funeral Directors and Memorial Masons. It is proposed that any enforcement is of course a last resort, with cemetery managers continuing their practice of being sensitive and respectful to the needs of the bereaved as far as possible.

Decision

The Cabinet:-

- a) Agreed the principles to extend or develop new / existing cemeteries where there is demonstrable need, and subject to available resources.
- b) Agreed to an increased charge for those who wish to be buried in County Durham but live outside the area from 1st April 2012. This would be set out as part of charges for 2012/13.
- c) Agreed that all memorial mason companies who work in the cemeteries must be registered with the British Register of Accredited

Memorial Masons (BRAMM) scheme and to be implemented with immediate effect.

- d) Agreed to pocket (where possible) unsafe memorials after we have written to families informing them of the issues and giving them a period of time to repair, those that we are unable to pocket i.e. crosses/columns will be laid flat.

- e) Agreed to re lift all current memorials that are lying down and pocket (where possible) from existing budgets and this would be planned over the next 10 years and will be prioritised on current risks and maintenance issues, this will also be in line with the headstone testing programme and the work completed whilst work is being undertaken in each cemetery.

- f) Agreed that new kerb surrounds will not be allowed in cemeteries that are currently free from them, including new burial sections and cemetery extensions. To be implemented from 1 October 2011.

- g) Agreed to permit kerbside surrounds in cemeteries (or parts) areas where there has been a tradition of their use and to setting a one off charge of £308 from 1st October 2011, thereafter to be incorporated in charges.

- h) Agreed in future to contact families and request removal of unauthorised kerbside surrounds giving families one month to remove these or they will be removed and stored for collection at a suitable location identified within the cemetery from 1 October 2011.

- i) Agreed to allow adornments within a personalisation area at the base of the memorial from 1 October 2011.

- j) Agreed to allowing adornments within the curtilage of the grave for a period of up to three months, beyond which time the family will be requested to remove all but a couple of smaller items left at the base of the memorial from 1 October 2011.

- k) Agreed to provide for a religious/ non denominational representation to attend municipal burials if denomination can be ascertained, to be implemented with immediate effect.

- l) Agreed to continue to charge for searching for family history at a charge of £17 to be implemented with immediate effect and to introduce a website facility once all records have been updated.

m) Agreed to examine the business case for the development of a woodland burial site at Durham South Road Cemetery, implementing arrangements subject to no budgetary pressure.

n) Agreed to consider and agree implementation of the Rules and Regulations documents that reflect these policies from 1 October 2011.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board Review Working Group – Area Action Partnerships

Summary

The Cabinet considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive on the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board working group review of Durham County Council's Area Action Partnerships.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board established a cross-party Working Group to undertake a review of the County Council's Area Action Partnerships examining practices and processes to establish:-

- The difference that they have made,
- Areas for further improvement,
- The potential for further refinements in light of a changing policy and partner environment.

The Scope of the Review was framed within a series of Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs) covering Governance Arrangements; Resources; Community Involvement and Engagement; Impact and Performance Management.

The report presented the key findings in relation to these topics and identifies a number of conclusions and recommendations that aim to improve AAPs and provide an evidence base to ensure that they remain "Fit for purpose, Fit for the Future."

Decision

The Cabinet noted the recommendations in the summary of the Overview and Scrutiny working group report and agreed to formulate a response within the six month period identified in the report for systematic review of the recommendations.

Quarter 1 2011/12 Performance Management Report

Summary

The Cabinet considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive that presented progress against the Council's corporate basket of performance indicators (PIs) and report other significant performance issues for the first quarter of 2011/12.

This is the quarterly performance report for the Council covering April – June 2011. The report contains information on key performance indicators, risk management

and Council Plan progress. This is the first monitoring report that the Council has published following the abolition of much of the prescribed elements of the former local government performance management framework such as the National Indicator Set.

It is based on a corporate basket of indicators and set of actions developed internally and which reflects the key priorities of the Council. Further improvements to the performance monitoring arrangements such as reporting performance at a sub-county level and the reporting of comparative performance information are being developed and their introduction is programmed in for later in the year.

Performance against key indicators and delivery against planned actions in the first quarter of 2011/12 is favourable for five out of the Council's six Altogether priority themes. The key area of focus remains against the Altogether Better Council theme. Whilst this area is progressing it remains less strong than other priority themes with 32% of Council Plan actions that are behind schedule. This is reflected in terms of performance with over 60% of key indicators deteriorating and also not achieving target.

The Council is taking action to improve these areas. However, it is imperative that attention remains focussed on this priority theme as, by its nature, this reflects the corporate heart of the Council. Improvements made in this area will affect how the council deliver on all of our other priorities.

Decision

The Cabinet:-

- a. Noted the performance of the Council at Quarter 1 and the actions to remedy under performance.
- b. Agreed all changes to the Council Plan outlined below:

Altogether Healthier

- Promote the uptake of preventive services through improved advice and information by: a programme of signposting to community and universal services - Revised from June 2011 to September 2011
- Working with NHS County Durham, implement the Cardio Vascular Disease programme, with specific projects to develop outreach services in 5 venues across 2 localities - revised from June 2011 - October 2011

Altogether Greener

- Improve the quality, appearance and biodiversity of Jubilee Park, Howden le Wear by engaging with communities to enhance this key open space and deliver a mix of creative and natural play features and equipment - revised from May 2011 - July 2011
- Reduce the need to travel to access Council services through better use of technology delivered by the Channel Migration and Improvement Strategy - revised from April 2011 to October 2011

Altogether Better Council

- Produce a corporate accessibility strategy - revised from November 2011- awaiting revised target date
- Development of 2 more Gypsy and Traveller temporary stop-over areas in the county - revised from August 2011 to December 2011
- New Revenues & Benefits System. To implement a new Revenues and Benefits System - revised from August 2011 to December 2011
- New Revenues & Benefits System. To re-locate all revenues staff to one location – revised from August 2011 to November 2011
- New Revenues & Benefits System. To re-structure our Revenues and Benefits service - revised from August 2011 to October 2011
- Harmonised Pay and Conditions of Employment. Implement a new fully costed pay and grading structure for agreement by CMT and the Council – revised from December 2011 to April 2012

Deleted actions

- Review transport connectivity between our towns and evaluate potential infrastructure and public transport improvements. Priority 4 corridor A690
 - Support schools to place participation of children and young people at the heart of learning by working towards Investing in Children Membership and Rights Respecting Schools Award level
 - Ensure that young people have access to high quality, impartial information, advice regarding the learning opportunities and support available to inform their choices - Implement new Information, Advice and Guidance standards
 - Manage the 'Time Bank' project in north West Durham (skills exchange project in the community)
- c. Noted progress with key Council and Service Plan actions.

Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2011/12 – Period to 30 June 2011

Summary

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director Resources provide Cabinet with a forecast of 2011/12 Revenue and Capital outturn for the period to 30 June 2011. The report is the first indication of the Revenue and Capital outturn for 2011/12.

Revenue

The following adjustments have been made to the Original Budget:

- (i) agreed budget transfers between Service Groupings;

- (ii) budget transfer from contingencies for items outside the cash limit - the key pressure is for hyper inflation on fuel and energy of £1.395m;
- (iii) planned use of or contribution to Earmarked Reserves.

Capital

The General Fund capital budget for 2011/12 was set at £194.155m and was approved by County Council on 23 February 2011. Slippage from the 2010/11 capital programme was approved by Cabinet on 13 July 2011 amounting to £37.29m.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget was set at £25.245m with approved slippage of £0.71m from 2010/11.

The Member Officer Working Group (MOWG) has recently reviewed the capital programme taking into account further developments and analysis of changes and demands on resources.

As part of the development of the next Medium Term Financial Plan, Service Groupings have re-profiled the capital programme over the years in which expenditure is expected to be incurred. The re-profiled capital budgets were approved by MOWG on 27 July 2011, along with additions to the Capital programme relating to the receipt of additional funding / contributions. At this meeting MOWG also approved the addition of £1.67m to the 2011/12 capital programme for the following:

- (i) Gala Theatre - £0.15m for essential equipment to invest in digital projection facilities for the theatre;
- (ii) £1.52m to be added to the current Twin Bin capital budget to enable more / larger bins to be purchased and to account for price increases. The recommended adjustments with the revised Capital programme for 2011/12 being £256.3m.

Decision

The Cabinet:-

- Approved the Revised Net Expenditure Budget of £448.369m for 2011/12.
- Approved the Revised Capital Budget of £256.282m for 2011/12.
- Noted the forecast use of Earmarked Reserves.
- Noted the forecast end of year position for the Cash Limit and General Reserve.

Roundabout Sponsorship / Illegal signs and Adverts Policy

Summary

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services that identified the potential for environmental improvements that could be generated by the sponsorship of highways assets e.g. verges, roundabouts, lamp-post banners and Christmas trees/lights etc. The report also identifies a consistent approach to the enforcement of A-boards, goods for sale and illegal signs on the highway.

In September 2005 Cabinet approved an Enforcement Policy Statement that sought to prioritise monitoring/inspections and standardised enforcement procedures of 'Display of Goods and A-Boards on Footpaths, Paved Areas and Highway Verges'. This policy statement accepted that compliance monitoring would be based on the hierarchy of footways and subject to available resources. A leaflet entitled 'Display of Goods and A-Boards on the Highway' was produced and was 'A guide to enforcement policy for Traders, Pedestrians and Other Highway Users'.

Members of the Authority have requested that the Highway Authority adopt a 'zero tolerance' approach with regard to signs placed within the highway which do not comply with Traffic Signs Regulations and are hence considered to be illegal. This follows a mandate agreed at the Members Workshop on enforcement in 2009 and was introduced to reduce street clutter and improve the environment.

Currently there are many areas across the County that are subjected to issues of encroachment onto the public highway through a proliferation of signage for the marketing of businesses. This is both unsightly and gives cause for concern with regard to safety of the travelling public due to causing a distraction to motorists.

The enforcement of the current approach requires significant daily resources and leads to frequent frustration and objection from sign owners about inconsistent enforcement and also complaints that other Authorities licence advertising signs.

Durham County Council has also recently received several approaches to allow sponsorship of roundabouts. This could see improved maintenance and landscaping of the roundabout funded by the applicant in return for the erection of advertising signs by the sponsoring company and/or generate a revenue for the Council. These applications have been considered, however, a competitive procurement exercise would need to be undertaken to include the wider highway asset as identified within this report. It is anticipated that this would take several months to undertake.

The A-Board Guidance Note is in conflict with the 'zero tolerance' mandate as it may allow A-Boards to remain when they are considered to be illegal signs. This has been raised by the owners of some signs when we have removed their signs whilst allowing others to remain in accordance with the guidance note. The guidance note was agreed as a method of determining priorities whilst ensuring that they did not prevent the free and safe passage of pedestrians and other highway users.

An investigation of the policies of other Authorities, both locally and nationally, and this shows no definitive or consistent approach across the local area or nationally. Some local Authorities operate a 'zero tolerance' policy whilst others licence the signs and allow sponsorship of roundabouts.

Decision

The Cabinet agreed, subject to consultation with relevant access groups, to:

- (i) The sponsorship of highways assets within the County to allow improved landscaping and planting whilst permitting the erection of small advertising signs and generation of a revenue stream.
- (ii) Consult on the continuance of the enforcement policy statement relating to A-Boards, goods for display and other signs within the County
- (iii) To the enforcement and subsequent removal of all illegal signs.
- (iv) The production of a Communication Plan and use this as part of the consultation process for A Boards and Goods for Sale to ensure that any proposed policy is supported by internal and external stakeholders

Private Sector Housing Strategy for County Durham

Summary

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development that sought approval of the Private Sector Housing Strategy (2011- 2015) for County Durham.

The Private Sector Housing Strategy sets out how the Council and our partners will ensure that the key objectives of the Housing Strategy will be met in relation to private sector housing.

The five key priorities covered by the Private Sector Housing Strategy include:

1. Area based regeneration
2. Meeting needs of vulnerable people/ Improving and adapting properties
3. Improving management practices and stock condition in the private rented sector
4. Bringing empty homes back into use
5. Making properties more energy efficient

The Private Sector Housing Strategy describes how the private sector housing service's resources will be targeted on the existing housing regeneration projects inherited from the previous District Councils and how each element of the service will play its part in a coordinated approach to deliver sustainable improvements. These are areas with the worst concentrations of housing problems including poor stock condition, high numbers of empty properties, high levels of deprivation and anti social behaviour.

The delivery of capital investment programmes, the selective acquisition and demolition of some housing, group repair schemes, environmental improvements, and new housing development, each play a part in this form of housing renewal, but they also need to be supplemented by effective work on energy efficiency, empty properties, with private landlords and with wider economic regeneration interventions. It is recognised that in the future housing will be more integrated with

wider economic activity. The action plan within this strategy includes the introduction of a more systematic approach to the prioritisation of regeneration and areas of opportunity involving housing, planning, transport and economic functions.

Every opportunity will be taken to lever in private sector funding streams and develop private sector partnerships aimed at increasing financial resources to enable the delivery of additional housing.

The Strategy will focus on areas with the worst concentrations of housing problems and describes how the needs of vulnerable people across the whole of County Durham will continue to be met through the provision of a repairs and adaptations service supported by the provision of loans for vulnerable and financially excluded households.

A safety net service will be provided to ensure that priority housing issues in the private sector occurring outside of priority regeneration areas can be effectively dealt with.

Over the term of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan, subject to confirmation, around £23.4 million has been earmarked to deliver the strategy. This is made up of £4 million, exclusive of grants, for Disabled Facilities, £14.6 million for area based regeneration and safety net projects and a further £4.8 million for the Financial Assistance Policy.

Decision

The Cabinet approved the Private Sector Housing Strategy for County Durham.

Barnard Castle Vision Governance

Summary

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development that provided an update on the activities of Barnard Castle Vision, including details of achievements to date, reports on the recent independent evaluation, outlines current governance arrangements and made recommendations for future governance arrangements.

Barnard Castle Vision (BCV) was established in 2006 to lead a 20-year programme of economic regeneration activities within the town of Barnard Castle. Initially membership of the partnership included Teesdale District Council as accountable body for funding, Teesdale LSP, One NorthEast, Durham County Council, County Durham Economic Partnership, a voluntary and community sector representative, Teesdale Marketing Limited and the Enterprise Agency.

A broad programme of activity strands developing the actual and potential resources of the town linked to physical areas within it was agreed, underpinned by core principles of benefit to residents, young people, inward investors, and visitors, and a commitment to 'transformational change'.

The delivery team is managed by an officer in Economic Regeneration and includes a small number of specialist staff on either a secondment or contract basis.

The BCV has been responsible for 15 projects, which have spent £1,962,000 of One North East funding within Barnard Castle. This sum includes initial research, survey, delivery team and development costs. It has successfully applied to the Heritage Lottery Fund for £87,000 of landscape development funding. This initial funding enabled the Vision to work towards securing a full HLF grant of £1.9m to enhance the landscape of Barnard Castle and the surrounding area, incorporating many of the projects arising from the Vision's existing landscape strategy.

Over the past two years the political and funding landscape has changed considerably and it is therefore an appropriate time to consider the way forward. A recently produced evaluation carried out by Newcastle University (CURDS) presents an appropriate opportunity to consider the role of BCV, revisit the Board structure and refresh the governance model.

The current governance model has developed from a structure proposed by EKOS Consulting in 2007 to oversee the development and implementation of a 20 year programme of regeneration activities in Barnard Castle, and has been amended twice in recent years to reflect the needs of the work programme.

A key consideration from the outset has been to ensure effective delivery. This is important not only in terms of community engagement and delivery of the overall Vision, but also in delivering key regeneration projects and interventions which arise from this. The priority was and remains to have a regeneration vision for Barnard Castle which is not only ambitious and maximises the economic contribution of the Town, but which also reflects the views of local people, is realistic and deliverable.

A report produced by Ekos Consulting in 2007 (undertaken prior to the development of the BCV Partnership Board) set out potential delivery model options and made clear recommendations on the governance arrangements for both the development and delivery phases of a regeneration partnership in Barnard Castle. A strong focus was placed on ensuring that the delivery mechanism was sustainable, sought to achieve maximum value for money, avoided duplication and ensured that as much resource as possible was directed towards project implementation.

Following this, appropriate arrangements to oversee the development of the BCV Partnership structure were agreed. The governance model adopted is structured around a small, focused, high calibre Board, with an independent Chair. The involvement of wider communities of interest has been formalised through the establishment of project steering groups and through liaison via the 1000 Voices project. The project steering groups bring additional expertise through Durham County Council officers, individuals, businesses and local and regional organisations. This mechanism ensures stakeholders not represented on the Board have the opportunity to feed into the development and delivery of the Vision.

Decision

The Cabinet:-

- Endorsed the Regeneration and Economic Development Portfolio Holder joining the Board of Barnard Castle Vision with the Assistant Portfolio Holder acting as substitute.
- Sought a review of the BCV Board Terms of Reference by the Board once new arrangements are in place.

Update of the Office Accommodation Programme

Summary

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development that provided an update of the Office Accommodation Programme following the first 6 months of delivering the strategy which was agreed by Cabinet in November 2010.

The report establishes the Office Accommodation Strategy and scope against revised programme objectives, provides an update on progress to date, the challenges that have been faced and actions that are being implemented to ensure improved performance and successful delivery going forwards.

Cabinet approved the original office accommodation strategy on 2 November 2010 to enhance the council's customer services provision. This will be achieved through improved Customer Access Points (CAP's) via 14 dedicated facilities and 4 main office centres, and also by rationalising not 'fit for purpose' office accommodation before April 2014.

The Office Accommodation Strategy is an invest to save programme. It is anticipated that the capital expenditure (£8 million) will be exceeded by the sale of vacated sites via capital receipts. Longer term revenue savings will be achieved by vacating inefficient buildings, rationalising office accommodation, maximising space usage and co-locating services. Monitoring of savings will be presented to Cabinet post 2011.

Decision

The Cabinet:-

- (i) Agreed the proposed governance model to support delivery of the Office Accommodation Programme.
- (ii) Agreed the programme as proposed in Appendix 4.
- (iii) Approved the proposals for new CAPS in the following locations:

- Durham City CAP to be located in 7 Millennium Square and Clayport Library
- Crook CAP to be reconfigured in the former Civic Centre and co-located with the Library
- Barnard Castle CAP to be co-located into a refurbished Library building as part of the Witham scheme
- Newton Aycliffe CAP to be co-located with the Library into Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre

DIGITAL DURHAM PROGRAMME UPDATE

Summary

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Corporate Director, Resources, and Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development that provided an update on the Digital Durham programme and the bid for funding to Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK), and which sought agreement to the proposed governance arrangements for the programme going forward

Cabinet agreed on 9 March 2011 to the proposed plans to provide next generation (super fast) broadband in County Durham through a funding bid to seek the investment required from Broadband Delivery United Kingdom (BDUK) and the commercial broadband providers.

The original bid to BDUK was submitted on 15 June, requesting a £10.2 million grant. The awards were announced on 27 May but Durham was not successful at this time. Three bids were successful including Wiltshire, Norfolk and Devon and Somerset (a joint bid) sharing £50 million.

BDUK have since announced that Durham (and Gateshead) has been allocated an indicative amount of £7.79m (£30k), which equates to approximately £52 per unconnected property across the county.

For context, Northumberland has been allocated £7.03m, Tyne and Wear (excluding Gateshead) £3.42m and Tees Valley £0.77m. None of these has yet submitted a bid.

The money will be made available once a Local Broadband Plan (equivalent of the bid document) has been signed off by BDUK and governance arrangements are in place. The bid will be resubmitted on 30 September with an announcement on our funding from BDUK in October.

The Digital Durham programme has been operating with an officer working group that meets on a monthly basis. As the programme is now set to enter the procurement and delivery phase it is appropriate to set up a strategic board to ensure that the programme achieves its objectives.

Decision

The Cabinet noted the ongoing activities within the programme, and agreed to the proposed structure and make up of the Digital Durham Strategic Programme Board.

Joint Commissioning Strategy for Domestic Abuse Services in County Durham 2011-14

Summary

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director, Adults Wellbeing and Health with a final draft of the Joint Commissioning Strategy for Domestic Abuse Services 2011-14.

The Safe Durham Partnership recognised that the development and delivery of Specialist Domestic Abuse Services across the county particularly in respect of adults and Children's outreach services was necessary especially in the context of a unitary Council. A Scrutiny report in 2007 had highlighted the problems associated with domestic abuse in the County.

A single approach to these services has been developed by the Domestic Abuse Forum Executive Group (DAFEG) and this has been accepted by the Safe Durham Partnership Board.

The Safe Durham Partnership Board agreed that a commissioning approach should be adopted and Durham County Council and NHS County Durham agreed to combine budgets and commit recurrent funding to commission specialist domestic abuse services.

The Safe Durham Partnership Board approved this approach in January 2011 and at the DAFEG meeting held on the 8th February 2011 the consultation framework was agreed. The draft strategy was then circulated for a three month period of consultation.

Following the three month consultation period the strategy was updated and the final draft agreed by the Safe Durham Partnership Board at their meeting on 24th May 2011.

The purpose of the strategy is to bring together information from a range of sources, including service users, and service providers in both the statutory and voluntary sectors. It considers access to current service provision and the performance of those services related to outcomes. This will assist in identifying gaps in service demands and the potential cost of the services required in meeting that demand.

The strategy provides framework to support the commissioning of high quality services which respond to the broad spectrum of needs for those experiencing or witnessing domestic abuse.

Furthermore it establishes how and what the Safe Durham Partnership will commission in respect of specialist services based on identified needs linked to the key priorities identified within the SDP Plan. The strategy will support the vision of

the Partnership that *“every child, adult and place in County Durham will be, and will feel safe.”*

Durham County Council and NHS County Durham have identified the funding that will be available to support the commissioning of services from 2012. It is envisaged that Supporting People will continue to fund the accommodation based refuge services but at a reduced level; Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) will continue to be funded by partner agencies from core funding. Given the combined funding from the Council and NHS County Durham is limited and based on the assessment of need it has been agreed by the Council and NHS County Durham and the Safe Durham Partnership that the priorities for change attached to this commissioning strategy are:

- Specialist outreach services for adults and children.
- Awareness raising and specialist preventative work based around a zero tolerance approach.
- Remain safe scheme.
- Voluntary domestic abuse perpetrator programmes.

Decision

The Cabinet agreed the strategy which will enable the commissioning process to commence.

Review of Indoor Sport & Leisure Facilities – Update & Evaluation of Further Bids

Key decision NS/04/11

Summary

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services that provided an update & evaluation of further bids on the Review of Indoor Sport & Leisure Facilities.

At its meeting of 13th July 2011 Cabinet agreed to close indoor leisure facilities at Ferryhill, Glenholme and Sherburn from 1st October 2011. At the same meeting Cabinet also indicated that consideration would be given to any further proposals received prior to closure taking effect. The purpose of this report is to inform members of proposals that have been subsequently received and the outcome of the evaluation of those bids, following the Cabinet report in July.

Cabinet (2 March 2011) approved the Sport and Leisure Strategy 2011-2014 and considered the outcome of a wide ranging review of Indoor Facilities, approving consultation on the potential closure or transfer of six indoor facilities to 3rd party operators.

Following an extensive consultation process, Cabinet considered a further report (13 July 2011) detailing the outcome of that consultation exercise and made recommendations as to the future of the six facilities identified in the earlier report.

Cabinet were aware of the financial pressures in terms of meeting the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) savings targets. These targets include the need to achieve an

annual saving of c£1.098m from a review of indoor leisure facilities. Actual savings resulting from the proposals approved by Cabinet were £1.105m, £7K over the required saving within the MTFP.

At its meeting in July, Cabinet agreed to a number of recommendations. Included within these were the closure of facilities at Ferryhill, Glenholme and Sherburn; the commencement of discussions with Deerness Valley Gymnastics Club and Future Leisure in Coxhoe in order to transfer Deerness Leisure Centre and Coxhoe Leisure Centre to these organisations and for the Council to continue to retain and operate Abbey Leisure Centre on a restricted basis in order to minimise cost / achieve a net nil subsidy from the Council.

Whilst Cabinet (July) recognised the extensive and inclusive consultation process that had been followed with regards to seeking alternatives to closure and ultimately approved the closures of facilities at Ferryhill, Glenholme and Sherburn, it also highlighted its commitment to consider any further 3rd party submissions that might be received prior to the closure date that would result in continued operation of the facilities, so long as this was at nil cost to the Council in terms of revenue and capital funding and that TUPE requirements had been fully met where appropriate.

Following evaluation of submissions from six 3rd party organisations the Evaluation Panel has identified a potential viable business case for Sherburn LC from organisation 'B' – Sherburn Village Parish Council. No other viable proposals have been received from 3rd parties for the other two facilities for the reasons outlined in the report.

This will result in the closure of Ferryhill LC and Glenholme LC from 1 October 2011 and their subsequent disposal, in line with the Council's disposal programme. Sherburn LC will also close from 1 October 2011 but will, subject to discussions with regards to the lease of these premises, reopen as a community club venture under the management of Sherburn Village Parish Council.

5 out of the 7 leisure facilities, including the Roseberry Grange golf course, that were at risk of closure will continue to operate, at nil cost to the Council, delivering services to the community. Given that this review has been undertaken on the basis of having no cost to the authority, the retention of 5 facilities should be seen as a positive outcome. At the same time the disappointment of not being able to retain the remaining facilities needs to be recognised. It is hoped however that the review will provide a solid base from which to strategically deliver the core offer for sport and leisure services in the future, as detailed in the Sport and Leisure Strategy 2011-2014.

Decision

The Cabinet:-

- i) Agreed to commence discussions with Sherburn Village Parish Council for the lease of Sherburn Leisure Centre, giving delegated approval for the agreement of the lease to the Corporate Director of Neighbourhood Services and Portfolio-holder for Strategic Environment and Leisure,

subject to satisfactory arrangements relating to finance and operational matters being concluded; and

- ii) Noted the original decision to close Ferryhill and Glenholme LC's from 1 October 2011, together with the arrangements to demolish / dispose of the sites, in line with the 13 July Cabinet report, remains unchanged.

Colette Longbottom
Head of Legal and Democratic Services
26 September 2011