



RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The following is a record of the decisions taken at the meeting of **CABINET** on **THURSDAY 27 OCTOBER 2011**.

These decisions will come into force and may be implemented from **8 November 2011** unless the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or its Committees object to any such decision and call it in.

2012/13 Budget, Medium Term Financial Plan 2012/13 – 2015/16 and Council Plan Update

Key Decision Corp/R/11/1

Summary

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Corporate Director, Resources and Assistant Chief Executive Officer that provided an update on the following:

- (i) 2012/13 budget;
- (ii) Development of 2012/13 – 2015/16 MTFP Model;
- (iii) Development of Council Plan and Services Plans;
- (iv) Equality Impact Assessments;
- (v) Consultation processes,

and which sought approval for Corporate Directors / Assistant Chief Executive to continue to utilise delegated powers where relevant to action savings plans to ensure financial targets are met.

It is very important that early action is taken to ensure progress can be made in achieving savings to achieve the challenging targets we face for 2012/13. Some of the savings options proposed by Service Groupings can be actioned under the delegated powers within the Constitution by Corporate Directors in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio holders.

It is expected that due processes will include consultation with staff and Trade Unions. Consultation on the MTFP will take place during November 2011 with Area Action Partnerships and with Overview and Scrutiny, and further consultation will take place with Overview and Scrutiny in early January 2012 before reporting proposals on the MTFP and 2012/13 Budget to Cabinet on 8 February 2012. Cabinet will then make recommendations to Full Council on 22 February 2012.

Decision

1. The Cabinet noted:

- (i) the Investment bids and new Base Budget pressures;
- (ii) that Service Groupings have submitted savings plans to achieve revised savings targets across the MTFP;
- (iii) the revised position on the 2012/13 Base Budget;
- (iv) the announcement of a one-off Council Tax Freeze Grant for 2012/13;
- (v) the new 2012/13 – 2015/16 MTFP Model;
- (vi) progress made in the development of the Council and Service Plans;
- (vii) the continued underpinning of the MTFP process via a robust Equality Impact Assessment process;

2. The Cabinet agreed:

- (i) the proposed Council Plan objectives and outcomes framework and the proposed MTFP consultation process, and noted the continued equalities process.
- (ii) that Corporate Directors / Assistant Chief Executive review their operations, and within the parameters of their delegations as contained in the constitution, devise proposals for savings (including where required: staffing reductions, restructures, implementation or review of charges, service reviews) in order to achieve the amount of savings required. Having devised such proposals, consult upon them and take into account the outcomes of such consultation.

**Housing Revenue Account Self Financing and Medium Term Financial Plan
Key Decision Corp/R/11/1**

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 Government's Self Financing proposals for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), and also on the development of the HRA Business Plan and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2012-13 onwards.

The HRA pulls together the income and expenditure associated with maintenance of the Council's housing stock of just under 19,000 dwellings. The Council is required to set an annual HRA budget and set the level of tenants' rents and other charges.

There are radical reforms for social housing being proposed by Government where the intention is to give the Council more local control and the ability to plan over a longer time horizon for management of its housing stock. The change is also designed to enable the Council to have a stronger relationship with its tenants and customers as decision making is moved from Central Government to Local Government.

Whilst there is currently a stock options process taking place that will seek to identify preferred options for the future management and maintenance of the housing stock, the report focuses on developing an indicative financial plan for the HRA as part of the Council's MTFP process. This will assist in planning housing investment over the coming years.

Decision

The Cabinet: -

- Noted the implications arising from the changes in housing finance with the implementation of self-financing from April 2012;
- Noted the preparations being made for self financing including the preparation of a 30 year HRA Business Plan;
- Agreed to receiving a further report containing an Asset Management Plan and Investment Strategy for the Housing Stock;
- Agreed to pursuit of efficiency savings to maximise resources for investment in the housing stock.
- Agreed a 5-year capital investment plan for the Council's housing stock which will be brought to Cabinet at a future date;
- Authorised the Corporate Director of Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Resources and Housing to make appropriate arrangements to enable the Council to implement self-financing including decisions on borrowing;
- Agreed that the change be communicated to Council tenants using CLG's summary explanatory leaflet in order to strengthen the Council's Strategic Landlord responsibilities with its tenants.

Review of Access to and Provision of Household Waste Recycling Centres Key Decision Ref: NS/08/11

Summary

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services that set out the results of the review of Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) provision, and which sought approval to commence a process of public consultation on the changes recommended in the review, including a reduction in the number of sites; the introduction of a mobile provision in certain areas and changes to the access policies relating to this provision.

Durham County Council has a statutory duty under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 section 51 to provide places for the disposal of household waste that are reasonably accessible and free of charge. Section 51 does not specify the number of facilities required. There are currently 15 HWRCs within the county, contracted to Premier Waste Management Ltd. for their management and maintenance. Premier chooses to sub-contract the management of these sites to ten sub-contractors who individually hold contracts for one or more of the sites.

With the increasing demands for providing recycling facilities, the sites have had to develop from initially being a couple of open skips to providing a maximised recycling service. This consequently led to increased pressure on the footprint of these sites.

In 2003/4 ten of the existing sites were significantly upgraded utilising Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) funding amounting to £1.4 million. Further essential health and safety related upgrades were carried out in 2010/11.

The present condition of these sites, the constraints of the Medium Term Financial Plan and the impending procurement exercise provide the opportunity for the council to re-examine current HWRC service provision. These drivers exist nationally, with many authorities conducting similar reviews which have been recently publicised in the media.

The review of the HWRC's has resulted in a proposal to rationalise the current service provision which will mean reducing the overall number of sites. The council therefore needs to identify the impact this will have on service users, particularly in terms of equality and diversity. It is therefore important that a period of consultation is entered into before any final decision is made on the future of these facilities. A consultation plan has therefore been developed to ensure that users of these sites are given the opportunity to feed in their views and highlight any concerns. This will also provide an opportunity to develop a profile of service users in relation to the equality strands.

As the review has also highlighted a lack of adequate provision in certain areas of the county and recommends this is addressed by implementing a mobile solution; this provides the council with an opportunity to engage with residents to shape this future provision by asking their preference as to how the mobile solution should operate to meet their local needs.

The third element to the review relates to amending and clarifying certain elements of the policies relating to access and usage of the HWRCs, and consultation will provide an opportunity for users to highlight any issues that these changes may precipitate.

The consultation will run for a six week period during the latter part of 2011 with results being fed back to Cabinet in a further report in the early part of 2012, in good time to inform the procurement process scheduled to start in the spring.

Decision

The Cabinet agreed to the commencement of a public consultation on:

- a revised Household Waste Recycling Centre service provision of nine fixed sites supplemented by mobile facilities.
- obtaining service user views on an alternative mobile provision for Household Waste Recycling Facilities in the Lower Teesdale and Weardale areas.
- revisions to Household Waste Recycling Centre policies, particularly a reduction in permit numbers issued per application from five to three, adjustments to vehicle acceptance criteria, clarification of commercial waste acceptance policy and revisions to opening times.

Colette Longbottom
Head of Legal and Democratic Services
31 October 2011