

# **NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **CABINET**

**Wednesday, 28 April 2010**

**PRESENT:** Councillor B. Hoare (Chair); Councillor P.D. Varnsberry (Deputy Chair);  
Councillors Beardsworth, Church, Crake, B. Markham and Perkins

### **1. APOLOGIES**

None.

### **2. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 17 March 2010 were signed by the Chair.

### **3. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES**

That Mr C Swinn be granted leave to address Cabinet on item 7 "Council Housing, A Real Future" A Consultation Paper.

### **4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Church declared a Personal interest in item 8B "Capital Programme- Capital Project Appraisals and Project Variations" in so far as the report referred to the Market Square Lighting Project that WNDC had provided funding for and of which he was a Board member.

### **5. ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

#### **5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ONE (REGENERATION, PLANNING, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SAFETY) - ON THE CALL-IN OF CABINET DECISION OF 3RD MARCH 2010 - LEISURE AND SPORT STRATEGIC BUSINESS REVIEW - MANAGEMENT OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

Councillor Yates submitted a report that set out the findings of Overview and Scrutiny Committee One in respect of the Call-in Hearing on the Leisure and Sport Strategic Business Review- Management Options Appraisal. He drew attention to the five grounds of the Call-in and noted the recommendation that Cabinet give a greater explanation of the timeline for the process.

Councillor P D Varnsberry commented that initial work was already under way and once it had been completed he would contact Councillor Yates to explain the timeline for Overview and Scrutiny who could then programme their own involvement as they saw fit. He remained convinced that this was the right approach to safeguard and improve services in the future.

- Resolved:**
1. That the findings of Overview and Scrutiny Committee One (Regeneration, Planning, Community Engagement and Safety) following the Call-In Hearing of 18<sup>th</sup> March be noted.
  2. That the rejection of the Call-in on the grounds that insufficient evidence had been provided in support of the five reasons for it be noted.

3. That it be agreed to give a greater explanation of the timeline of the implementation process regarding the leisure centres and possible Trust Status as soon as practicable.

## **6. MINUTES OF WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE- 17 DECEMBER 2009**

The Chair submitted the minutes of a meeting of the West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee held on 17 December 2009 for information.

**Resolved:** That the minutes be noted.

## **7. "COUNCIL HOUSING, A REAL FUTURE" A CONSULTATION PAPER**

Mr Swinn referred to the e-mails he had sent to the Directors of Housing and Finance & Support on 11 and 19 April 2010 that the Chair had agreed be circulated. He commented that a review of the HRA had been ongoing since 2007 and over that time the Council had had the opportunity to consult with tenants at least twice. In respect of the current Government consultation tenants were unaware of what was going on. Mr Swinn stated that he had attended a conference near Chester organised by the CLG and TSA for any tenant of social housing. He also stated that the future financing of council housing was probably the most significant decision that would be made for the last 21 years. Mr Swinn noted that although the Council set aside 25% of council house sale receipts for reinvestment in the stock, Right to Buy sales had diminished as tenants could not afford to buy their council homes. There was also a repairs backlog. Mr Swinn commented that there needed to be an open and transparent discussion and he referred to the Advisory Panel meetings that, so far, had been in private. Tenants had a right to be consulted. Mr Swinn queried when tenants would be consulted and when he might receive answers to the questions posed in his e-mails.

Councillor Beardsworth submitted a report that notified Cabinet that a Government consultation paper had been published on 25 March setting out proposals for dismantling the current HRA system and replacing it with a devolved system of funding and responsibility. The consultation ran until 6 July 2010. The report also indicated that the cross party advisory group to the Cabinet for Housing Options would review the document and the financial modelling. The Director of Housing noted that Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 would have a briefing on the proposals and their implications in May although the results of the modelling were not likely to be available by then. A further report would come to Cabinet in respect of a response to the consultation that would be informed both by the work of the Advisory Group and Overview and Scrutiny and by a dialogue with other Councils.

The Chair noted that the consultation affected every local authority in the country that had a HRA. The timescale of it was such that a full consultation with tenants was not possible. This matter was not an issue of housing management or of tenancy agreement but was about the financial management of the service. In the time allowed the Council would work with the public and other local authorities as best it could. The Advisory Panel, as already mentioned had been asked to work on this and Overview and Scrutiny also wished to be involved. Mr Swinn was thanked for his questions, which would be passed onto the Advisory Panel and members of the public were encouraged to get involved through Overview and Scrutiny. The Chair noted that the HRA was not sustainable as things stood. The current consultation offered a possible solution and the modelling would help to decide if it was feasible.

**Resolved:** That the report be noted.

## **8. PERFORMANCE**

## 8.1 PERFORMANCE MONTHLY REPORT - FEBRUARY 2010

Councillor B. Markham submitted a report that set out the Council's performance against the monthly indicators for February 2010. He stated that in future Cabinet would need to consider what action was necessary to ensure that performance was on target to meet the objectives of the Corporate Plan. He noted that at present the Capital Programme was linked to the performance report but it may be more appropriate for it to be aligned with corporate priority outcomes. It was also noted that capital project appraisals already included alignment with corporate priorities.

**Resolved:** That the report be noted.

## 8.2 CAPITAL PROGRAMME - CAPITAL PROJECT APPRAISALS AND PROJECT VARIATIONS

Councillor Perkins submitted a report that requested approval for schemes to be included in the 2009/10 Capital Programme, approval for variations to the 2009/10 Capital Programme and approval for the inclusion of schemes in the 2010/11 Capital Programme. All the changes were fully funded.

Councillor P D Varnsvery in particular noted the extra funding awarded for Money4Youth and congratulated the Officers and the young people themselves for the success of this initiative.

**Resolved:**

1. That Cabinet approved the following schemes to be included in the capital programme for 2009-10.

<b>Scheme Reference, Description &amp; Directorate</b>	<b>Narrative</b>	<b>2009-10 £</b>	<b>Future Years £</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
2009-10/GF075 Bus Station Improvement Works  Environment & Culture	The re-alignment of the entrance routes into the bus station to reduce bus speeds and the creation of a taxi bay for customers to be dropped off and picked up. This includes installing 3 kerb islands on the taxi rank bay and Greyfriars Bus Station entrance.	7,947	-	Revenue contribution from the Bus Station cost centre.
2009-10/GF076 Replacement Plate Maker for Print & Design Unit  Finance & Support	Replacement plate maker required, due to no maintenance being available since the existing maintenance company went into liquidation. It is essential that this piece of equipment be fully supported by a maintenance contract, which it now is.	16,420	-	Revenue contribution from the Print Unit Support cost centre.
2009-10/GF077 CCTV Equipment	Purchase of additional digital video recorder (DVR) to support and ensure business continuity	9,871	-	Ring fenced Section 106

(DVR16) Environment & Culture	for the CCTV service. Ring fenced section 106 funding for CCTV will fund this.			
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Further details of these appraisals can be seen at Annex A of the report.

2. That Cabinet approved the following variation to schemes already in the capital programme for 2009-10

<b>Scheme Reference, Description &amp; Directorate</b>	<b>Narrative</b>	<b>2009-10 £</b>	<b>Future Years £</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
2008-09/GF073 V04 Money 4 Youth  Assistant Chief Executive	NBC has been awarded an additional £14,440 for Money 4 Youth projects. This is due to NBC's consistency in delivering these projects. £12k of this is for play equipment at Billing Brook Road shops. £2,440 is for works at Camp Hill MUGA, including anti vehicle bollards.	14,440	-	DCSF
2009-10/GF069 V02 Market Square Lighting  Planning & Regeneration	Additional funding has been awarded to this project, which will be used for: 1) Projection onto Peacock Place 2) Enhancement of the proposed LED screen on Waterloo House to give cleared imagery 3) Provision of coloured lighting for the three alleyways to the Market Square 4) Increased cost of original scheme, including enhanced solution of buttons 5) WNDC project management recharge	85,800	60,000	WNDC & Arts Council

Further details of these variations can be seen at Annex B of the report.

3. That Cabinet approved the following schemes to be included in the capital programme for 2010-11.

<b>Scheme Reference, Description &amp; Directorate</b>	<b>Narrative</b>	<b>2010-11 £</b>	<b>Future Years £</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
2010-11/GF34 Playbuilder – Lings Playing Field  Environment & Culture	The Council has successfully bid for £49,300 of Play builder funding for Lings playing field. The development supports the NBC Play Strategy and will result in an imaginative facility principally targeted to the needs of 8 - 13 year olds but will also be of benefit to the wider community.	49,300	-	DCSF
2010-11/GF35 Playbuilder – Dallington Park	The Council has successfully bid for £49,300 of Playbuilder money from the DFCS, allocated through NCC, for Dallington. ie. The development supports the NBC Play Strategy and will result in an imaginative facility principally targeted to the needs of 8 - 13 year olds but will also be of benefit to the wider community.	49,300	-	DCSF

Further details of these appraisals can be seen at Annex A of the report.

The meeting concluded at 18.38 hours