

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Cabinet

Meeting held 19 February 2014

PRESENT: Councillors Julie Dore (Chair), Leigh Bramall, Jackie Drayton, Isobel Bowler, Ben Curran, Mazher Iqbal, Mary Lea and Jack Scott

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 An apology for absence was received from Councillor Harry Harpham.

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

2.1 No items were identified where it was proposed to exclude the public and press.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 Councillor Jack Scott declared a Disclosable Pecuniary interest in agenda item 14 (see minute 13 below) 'Voluntary Sector Grant Aid Investment in 2014/15' as an employee of Voluntary Action Sheffield. Councillor Scott left the room during the discussion and took no part in the decision on the item.

3.2 Councillor Ben Curran declared a personal interest in agenda item 14 (see minute 13 below) 'Voluntary Sector Grant Aid Investment in 2014/15 as a trustee of Ben's Centre.

3.3 Councillor Jackie Drayton declared a personal interest in agenda item 14 (see minute 13 below) as a trustee of the South Yorkshire Community Foundation.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2014 were approved as a correct record.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 Petition in respect of Fir Vale School Admissions Consultation

Nargis Thabet submitted a petition, containing 8 signatures, against the proposal from Fir Vale School in relation to its admissions policy of fair banding as opposed to the current policy of children attending the school who live in catchment. She commented that the policy would impact negatively on the children's education and would put added pressure on these children to travel to schools that were not in catchment and thereby putting them under increased emotional pressure at a time when they needed security to live and thrive.

She further commented that the school had so far failed to respond clearly to the petitioners' request for an open consultation despite their repeated requests. She

therefore requested that the Council scrutinise the proposed policy carefully and work to protect the educational needs of children in the area.

In referring the petition to Councillor Jackie Drayton, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Julie Dore, reported that the Council was aware of the proposals and would be closely monitoring them.

Councillor Jackie Drayton thanked Ms Thabet for submitting the petition and stated that the Council adopted a common admissions policy across the City which all schools complied with. Fir Vale School wanted to adopt a different admissions policy which would be based on ability, which went against the City wide policy.

She stated that she, as Cabinet Member for Children Young People and Families and Jayne Ludlam as the Executive Director of the Children, Young People and Families portfolio, had written to the Headteacher of the school expressing the Council's concerns at the proposed changes to the admissions policy. Councillor Drayton added that she had also written to the school as a local Elected Member, to raise hers and the communities concerns and calling on her to organise a public meeting in the school, to explain the proposals and the implications for the young people in Burngreave. She stated, she had not received any reply so far. She added that the headteacher had written to feeder schools in the area informing them of proposed changes. However, she had not written to inform local Councillors, the Member of Parliament for the area or the Council of these proposals.

Fir Vale School was at the heart of the local community and people showed a great desire to want to send their children to the school. The Council believed that the proposed policy was divisive. The City Wide Learning Body were currently instigating a review of the admissions policy across the City and it was hoped that all schools would sign up to any changes. Councillor Drayton again thanked Ms Thabet for submitting the petition and informed her that any information or petitions received would form part of the Council's appeal to the school.

5.2 Public Questions in respect of the Housing Revenue Account, TARA's, Policies of the Current Administration and the Bedroom Tax

Mr Martin Brighton submitted 7 questions in relation to the Housing Revenue Account, a group in the South West area, TARA's, policies of the current administration and the bedroom tax. Councillor Julie Dore reported that written responses would be provided to Mr Brighton's questions.

5.3 Public Question in respect of the Living Wage

Mr Nigel Slack referred to a recent report in the Times Educational Supplement detailing the pay award to one of the Vice Chancellors of the University of Sheffield of 39% at the same time as resisting the implementation of the living wage, offering its staff 1% and attempting to drive down wages and conditions for the lowest paid in its catering 'special purpose vehicle' Unicus, by offering terms

and conditions below those of current staff. Mr Slack believed this was against the Sheffield First 'Fairness Framework' guidelines to which, as a member organisation, the University of Sheffield had contributed. He therefore asked will the Council be making an 'open and continuous case to the University of Sheffield that this was unacceptable behaviour from a member organisation and a partner?

In response, Councillor Julie Dore stated that the Fairness Commission had been Chaired by Professor Alan Walker and had agreed that it would meet periodically to monitor the progress and outcomes of its recommendations which had been circulated to the appropriate bodies. In respect of the living wage, the Sheffield Executive Board had written to all partner organisations requesting that they implement the living wage. The Board would consider who was and wasn't implementing the living wage and consider what actions to take. Where an organisation said that they could not afford to implement the living wage but the Executive Board believed they could, this would be followed up.

5.4 Public Question in respect of the Bedroom Tax

Mr Nigel Slack referred to a decision taken by Judicial Tribunals in Bolton and Monmouth which for the first time had defined the word bedroom for the purposes of the 'Bedroom Tax' legislation and rejected the premise that a bedroom is any spare upstairs room or even a room specified as a bedroom in any description of the property. A bedroom is defined by its use as a bedroom. He therefore asked what impact will this have on the way the Council now administers the 'Bedroom Tax' and had any consideration been made of the potential impact on the Council's budget of the need to potentially inspect all properties currently expected to fall within the legislation or the potential cost of mass appeals against decisions of the Council to apply the 'Bedroom Tax'?

Councillor Julie Dore reported that, unfortunately, Councillor Harry Harpham, Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods, was absent from the meeting as he would have been able to provide a more in depth answer to Mr Slack as Councillor Dore was aware that a lot of work was being done investigating the implications of the 'Bedroom Tax'. However, she believed that it was an evil tax and the Council were looking at every possible way to alleviate the impact on those affected. She would pass the question on to Councillor Harry Harpham who would provide a written response.

5.5 Petition in respect of Libraries

Mr William Hiorns submitted a petition, containing 8 signatures, calling on the Council to reconsider the choice of operating model for the future of libraries in the City and undertake to keep all libraries in the City open. He believed that the policy would impact on the most vulnerable in society. Although he was aware that a needs assessment had been undertaken, he did not believe the needs of particular groups had been recognised.

Mr Hiorns did not believe that other operating models had been considered at the Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee meeting held on 18 February 2014. The fact that so many concerns

had been expressed from members of the public showed that the policy was flawed. Officers had not explained the methodology behind the support for the proposed operating model and the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee had not allowed questioners to set the context behind their questions. In conclusion Mr Hiorns asked what members of the public needed to do to see the operating model being discussed in an open and transparent manner and who was responsible for the overall governance of the Council?

In response Councillor Mazher Iqbal, Cabinet Member for Communities and Inclusion, reported that he had discussed the proposals in the Council Chamber at a number of public meetings. He had attended the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee, referred to by the petitioner, to answer questions. He believed that the Chair of that meeting had facilitated discussion well. 13 different models had been looked at before a decision had been made on the preferred operating model. The reasoning behind that had been made explicit in the Cabinet report. He believed that the Council was meeting its legal requirements to offer a comprehensive and efficient library service.

5.6 Petition in respect of Libraries

Ruth Woodhouse submitted a petition, containing 15 signatures, calling on the City Council to address the crisis in library services by making a fair plan for all of Sheffield's libraries and committing to a lasting, city-wide collaboration with local community groups at every library. A mix of librarians, library staff and volunteers should be distributed and shared fairly to support the needs of all people who used the City's libraries. The petitioners rejected the proposed 3 tier system where some libraries were allocated Council library staff while others were not. They believed that libraries without librarians could not succeed.

In response Councillor Mazher Iqbal reported that the Libraries Review commenced in July 2011. The consultation which took place in 2012 focused on how to attract non-library users to use the service against the background of a national trend of declining library usage. The Council's budget for 2014/15, which was on the agenda for this meeting, would see cuts of £58m this year on top of £180m already cut from the budget. He stated that these cuts were unfair and disproportionate.

Councillor Iqbal trusted the advice given to him by officers which was evidenced in the report and included a technical appendix. It was incumbent on all local authorities to give consideration to equalities. However, it was clear that any reduction in the budget would have an impact on services. Councillor Iqbal believed that the proposed operating model met the requirement to provide a comprehensive and efficient service. There was nothing in the statute which stated the definition of comprehensive and efficient.

Fifteen business plans had been submitted to run libraries and the Council had made a financial commitment for the first 3 years to supporting those libraries run independently. Sheffield Futures had been commissioned to do targeted work in certain areas. An appendix to the report outlined in detail the consultation process and its outcome.

5.7 Public Question in respect of Library Staff

Hugh Cotton asked whether the Cabinet Member believed it was fair that the hubs and Central Library would have the use of 112 paid professional staff whilst the co-delivered and independent libraries, representing over 50% of libraries in the City, would only have 2 paid professional staff. Mr Cotton also asked, if the proposals were agreed, whether the Cabinet Member would keep an open mind and keep the position under review?

Councillor Mazher Iqbal responded that the 3 different categories of library had been consulted upon in the most recent consultation. He believed the operating model met the need to provide a comprehensive and efficient service. He had visited Broomhill and spoken to library users to seek their views.

80% of the budget for libraries was for staff and the proposals would see a reduction of 75 full time equivalent staff. There had been efforts made to try and keep all libraries running through 'salami slicing' hours, not filling staff vacancies etc. but the status quo could no longer continue. A guidance pack had been issued for community organisations thinking of submitting a business plan to run a library and a number of workshops had been held with partner organisations.

5.8 Public Question in respect of Library Closures

Neil Metcalfe commented that libraries provided a wonderful service to the community and questioned why any needed to be closed and why the Council would not stand up to the Government when they were cutting budgets?

Councillor Julie Dore commented that the Council was extremely dependent on Government funding and if they cut funding by half the Council's budget would be halved. The Council had now been forced into making extremely difficult decisions where no service, apart from safeguarding, could be completely protected. It was apparent that it would be impossible to keep all libraries open all of the time.

5.9 Public Question in respect of Future Options for Library Services

Akeem Balogur asked whether the Council had considered opening up the library network to allow outside organisations, such as social enterprises to run them?

In response Councillor Mazher Iqbal stated that on the back of the public consultation, the Leader of the Council had issued a call to action which asked organisations to come forward to see if they had any ideas of how the Council could work in partnership. 27 organisations had responded and their responses had played an important part when considering the operating model. The associate libraries would remain on the IT system and the catalogue system would remain in all libraries.

5.10 Public Question in respect of Volunteer Staff

Dorothy Wilson referred to Burngreave Library, which had two part time staff, and

proposals to move into Sorby House and use volunteer staff. She commented that a number of people in Burngreave already did volunteer work as well as paid work and she did not believe there was the capacity available to provide volunteer staff to work in the library.

Councillor Mazher Iqbal responded that with the £180m cuts which the Council had been forced to make 1200 staff had left the authority and a further 600 would leave in the next municipal year. Because the administration recognised the inequalities in the City, the proposals of the Fairness Commission would be applied. The Council had met with a group in Burngreave and discussions would continue as to how to take things forward. He recognised the tremendous pressure being put on communities and commented that the Council would work to try and retain services where they could.

5.11 Public Consultation in respect of Library Consultation

Jayne Finlay referred to a recent announcement nationally that William Sieghart had been commissioned to carry out an independent report on the role/future of libraries in England. This consultation ended in March. She therefore asked if the Council would be willing to wait to hear the results of this nationwide consultation before making a final decision on Sheffield's Libraries?

Councillor Mazher Iqbal confirmed that he was aware of the national consultation. It would be important to feed in to the national consultation what we had learned from the Sheffield consultation over the last few years. Discussions had been held with the Arts Council but that did not bring forward any extra information and no additional resources would be allocated.

Councillor Julie Dore added that, initially when the Government announced its austerity programme, it said that it would front load the cuts to the initial years of the programme. The most recent announcements appeared to contradict that. She suggested that the national consultation may be due to the fact that the Government now realise the damage the programme was doing to public services. She welcomed the consultation but didn't expect any final conclusions to lead to additional resources.

5.12 Public Question in respect of the Budget

Kathy Whittaker referred to a statement from Councillor Ben Curran, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, at the meeting of Full Council held on 5 February 2014 asking where the public would make the cuts if they had the choice. In Broomhill the public had found a leading accountant from a Sheffield firm who had offered to look over the books. This request had been refused and Ms Whittaker asked why this was the case?

Councillor Ben Curran responded that the Council had nothing to hide. There was a well qualified finance team employed by the Council who had been trained in public sector finance. The accounts were audited by qualified auditors. If the Council were to accept the offer and other such offers this would take up a lot of officer time at a time when resources were tight.

Councillor Julie Dore added that the consultation originally started in 2011 when the Council became aware of the severity of the cuts. Every single household had received a letter asking for their views on where reductions should be made and there was a good response to this. Since then there had been a lot of consultation undertaken and focus groups. There had been two public sessions recently where major stakeholders were in attendance. The Council had also established a Business Advisory Panel who had been kept informed of the budget setting process. A decision had been made to protect children's safeguarding from any cuts so, as a result, savings had to be found elsewhere. Despite the consultation and focus groups the Council had never heard of a more effective way to undertake the process.

5.13 Public Question in respect of Libraries

Chaz Lockett commented that he believed that Council could use funding from the reserves and renegotiate private contracts to obtain funding to keep all libraries in the City open. He therefore asked why the Council were not doing this and listening to the people?

Councillor Mazher Iqbal stated that the Council were not allowed to set an illegal budget. They relied heavily on the Government grant and the money received from Council Tax only accounted for 12% of the Council's budget. The Council did challenge the Government where they could and had run a campaign for a Fair Deal for Sheffield and had visited 10 Downing Street to present a petition in that respect.

Councillor Julie Dore commented that if the Council set an illegal budget the Government would take over and the cuts would be far worse.

5.14 Public Question in respect of Library Staff

Louisa Walker stated that she believed that without trained library staff a library would not run effectively. If the proposed operating model was approved, she was concerned that this represented a two tiered service. She therefore asked if the Council would consider redistributing staff from the hub libraries to allow all people across the City the same access?

Councillor Mazher Iqbal confirmed that as part of the proposals a volunteer co-ordinator would be appointed to assist the 10 associate libraries. Buildings would be offered at peppercorn rent. Associate libraries would be able to decide whether they wanted to opt in or out of the catalogue system. Unfortunately, resources were not available to employ staff at the associate libraries.

A number of workshops would be held and community organisations would be invited to attend. Support from the Council would always be available. If at some point in the future additional resources became available, the Council could look again at putting additional resources into libraries. If the Council reduced hours of libraries any further it wouldn't be doing them or the community justice.

5.15 Public Question in respect of Libraries

Marcus O'Hagan commented that he did not believe that Councillor Iqbal had answered questions at previous meetings which the public had put to him or responded to a request for a review of the answers and this was creating frustration. He therefore asked if an associate library was considered to have failed would this be brought back under Council control or left to be closed? He believed that the Council must have a contingency plan in place and without this the proposals should not be agreed.

Councillor Julie Dore commented that she believed that Councillor Iqbal had provided clear answers to questions which had been put to him. It can often be difficult to understand why an extra £1.6m cannot be found to maintain the status quo. If an associate library was seen to be failing it would depend on the circumstances at the time how the Council would respond. Contingencies had been put in place through the offer of funding for three years to support them. It was hoped that the Council could convince the Government of the need for further funding within that three year period.

5.16 Public Question in respect of Libraries

Ruth Woodhouse asked the following four questions in respect of libraries:-

- Could the Council note her request for more time to consider and respond to the proposals published in the Cabinet report?
- How will the Council eliminate discrimination given that it wouldn't be possible with the proposed three tiered model?
- How will school visits continue city-wide without staff, and what measures will the Council take to avoid the loss of this essential service across the City?
- Many Sheffield libraries now manage on a 21 hour a week. It is not ideal, but also by cutting hours elsewhere would retain a library service for all, which could be extended again later. Is it not time to explore this alternative model, so we share staff and the burden of cuts, and support vulnerable groups across the City?

In response to the first question, Councillor Iqbal commented that the Council had been working on the review since July 2011. The proposals in the report had been consulted upon for a 12 week period and from that an additional recommendation of additional funding to support the associate libraries for 3 years had been agreed. He therefore believed sufficient time had been given for the proposals to be considered. There had been opportunities within the consultation period for people to ask any technical questions which they didn't understand.

In relation to the second question, Councillor Iqbal commented that he had already answered this previously. In respect of the third question, Councillor Iqbal reported that the schools' library service was a traded service which 71% of schools had signed up to. Park Community Action Group had submitted a business case and the Council would work closely with them.

Councillor Jackie Drayton added that many schools had their own libraries. However, she still believed it was important that children and young people were able to visit a library. Visiting Central Library, for example, may be the only opportunity which a child has to visit the centre of the City.

Regarding the last question, Councillor Iqbal commented that the Council believed that the spirit of the people of Sheffield would ensure that libraries stayed open. The Council would work to support this through the pledge to support associate libraries for three years. The Cabinet report referred to 13 different models and after careful consideration and taking into account the outcome of the consultation he believed that the proposed operating model was the fairest for all.

Councillor Julie Dore further commented that because the Council knew the funding available for 2014/15 and a good indication of funding for 2015/16 they were able to confirm funding for co-dependents for 2 years. In the meantime the Council would fight to keep libraries open. She was confident that hub libraries would be sustainable. If the Council had decided to split funding across all 27 libraries she could not have guaranteed that all would have remained open.

5.17 Public Question in respect of Libraries

Nigel Slack asked given that one of the organisations interested in running an associate library was a faith group, what safeguards were to be put in place to ensure that that part of the library service remained secular and comprehensive in its offer to the public of Sheffield? Mr Slack also asked whether there would be a mechanism that allowed for the City Council to resume control of any associate library that failed the standards that the City expected and what would be the definitions of those standards and therefore of failure?

Councillor Iqbal confirmed that there were policies in place to ensure that no one group discriminated over another. The faith group concerned said that they would provide the service rather than preach their faith. In terms of the definition of failure and standards it would depend on the circumstances at that time. As part of the initial business planning process the Council had held a number of different workshops and officers had met with each individual organisation. The Business Plan needed to ensure that the library would be sustainable and viable in the future.

6. ITEMS CALLED-IN FOR SCRUTINY

6.1 There were no items called-in for Scrutiny.

7. RETIREMENT OF STAFF

The Chief Executive submitted a report on Council staff retirements.

RESOLVED: That this Cabinet :-

(a) places on record its appreciation of the valuable services rendered to the City

Council by the following staff in the Portfolios below:-

<u>Name</u>	<u>Post</u>	<u>Years' Service</u>
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Children, Young People and Families

Jacqueline Barker	Business Support Officer	23
Anne Chipchase	Headteacher, Beighton Nursery Infant School	37
Ann Fox	Senior Teaching Assistant, Hinde House School	27
Jill Russell	PE Teacher, Hinde House School	37

Place

John Sorby	Maintenance Fitter	26
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Resources

Jane Edwards	Communications Manager	33
Josephine Paszek	Category Support Officer	24

(b) extends to them its best wishes for the future and a long and happy retirement; and

(c) directs that an appropriate extract of this resolution under the Common Seal of the Council be forwarded to them.

8. THE FUTURE OF SHEFFIELD LIBRARY SERVICES

8.1 The Executive Director, Communities submitted a report seeking approval on the proposal for the future of Sheffield's Libraries, Archives and Information Services.

8.2 In addition to this, Cabinet considered a report (circulated at the meeting) of the Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee which had considered the Cabinet report at its meeting held on 18 February 2014. Councillor Cate McDonald, Chair of the Committee, attended the meeting to present the report of the Scrutiny Committee. She reported that the Committee resolved that they were satisfied that the proposals contained in the Cabinet report can be put forward to the Cabinet at its meeting to be held on 19th February 2014 and requested that the Executive Director, Communities submit a report on the progress made in implementing the proposals, set out in the Cabinet report, to the Scrutiny Committee in 12 months' time.

8.3 Dawn Shaw, Head of Communities Services Projects, Communities, presented the

report. She outlined to Cabinet that the proposals had been developed following extensive consultation. It was important to establish a new service which would meet the needs and aspirations of a modern service. The proposals in the report took into account over 7,000 survey responses between October 2012 and January 2013 as well as the views expressed in the workshops and public meetings.

8.4 Where a library had been identified as vulnerable, community groups and organisations were encouraged to submit business plans to run the library. Every library which had been identified as vulnerable has had a group come forward with an initial business plan in place approved by the Council.

8.5 £262k of funding had been identified from Council resources to support associate libraries running and associated costs.

8.6 Questions from Cabinet Members

Councillor Jack Scott referred to the needs assessment outlined in the report. He asked who had been involved in that, whether it covered the whole City and which groups were involved? Councillor Scott also asked why officers chose that particular approach?

In response, Andi Walshaw, Performance and Research Manager, reported that the methodology for the needs assessment had been established in 2011. The current model was a very comprehensive model and took into account the needs of all groups in the City. He was confident that the data in the report was correct and it had been subject to intense scrutiny to ensure this.

In response to a further question from Councillor Scott about how the assessment covered the whole City, Mr Walshaw reported that the assessment focused on all groups across the city. Scores were worked out based on catchments for each library based on the number of registered users for each local library. The needs of those aged 65 and over and under 19 were looked at as well as low attainment and BME population for each library catchment. There was also a focus on the Indices of Deprivation, both the Learning, Skills and Training domain and the Index of Multiple Deprivation. These figures were weighted by population. Geography was focused on at the priority tool stage and the distance between a library and its nearest neighbour by public transport was calculated from information provided by the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTTE). Officers modelled what would happen if certain libraries closed and assigned people to their nearest local library. The assessment also took into account the priorities of the Fairness Commission.

Councillor Scott then asked a question in relation to the consultation. How comprehensive had this been? What had been done to ensure that disadvantaged groups were consulted with properly? Had the Local Authority responded to comments from people with expertise in this field?

In response, Kate Register, Quality and Involvement Development Manager, reported that her team had run the consultation from October 2013 to January

2014. Her team was independent from the library service and had expertise across many areas. It was the job of her team to make sure the proposals were clearly explained and that they obtained views from as many people as possible across the City.

The consultation had also focused on trying to get people who didn't usually have their say in consultations such as these to express their views. There had been an online survey available for people to fill in as well as a hard copy available at First Point and libraries across the City. Officers had emailed the consultation to 7,500 organisations and asked them to cascade this down to their partners and others.

Easy to read formats were made available and it was also issued in different languages where required. A member of the team had offered to go and talk to the groups directly to explain the survey and questions further. People had been given the opportunity to ring up and officers were able to provide advice and guidance on completing the survey.

In total comments had been received from around 9,000 people across the City. 200 letters and posters had been received from children. All responses had been analysed. There was a strong wish to let children and young people have their say and groups had been commissioned specifically to consult with children. The consultation had been advertised on Schools Point and a number of schools had asked officers to visit schools to talk to children and staff.

Each survey had 12 free text boxes available for people to express their views and these had been analysed carefully. Officers had made sure that the consultation responses had been included within the Cabinet report.

Officers had endeavoured to ensure that they had consulted widely with disability and Black, Minority and Ethnic (BME) groups and people completing the survey had been asked to provide information about themselves to see if there were any similarities in answers between particular groups.

Andi Walshaw added that, following suggestions that there had been errors in the needs assessment, he had listened to the feedback and taken the comments on board and had looked again closely at the methodology. Although some minor calculation errors were found, he was unable to find the errors highlighted, and the minor calculation errors had no bearing on the outcome of the categories.

Councillor Mary Lea asked how the proposals would ensure that a comprehensive service would be provided which would reach all groups across the City?

In response, Dawn Shaw commented that the development of the service would be an evolutionary process. The Council was looking to develop a buddying service for the associate libraries with the hub libraries. It was hoped that the funding offered to support the associate libraries in the first 3 years would help to keep the libraries open.

Work was being undertaken across the Council with different services to look at how the library could be a portal within the community. The school library service

would be expanded and the children's library would be maintained and a Little Library service operated for those who didn't wish to engage with the traditional library.

Councillor Lea then asked why the names of the non-Council run libraries had been changed from independent to associate libraries?

Dawn Shaw responded that the Council wanted to work together in partnership with community groups and broader communities. The label of an independent library suggested that the Council would not support them when that wasn't the case.

Councillor Lea then asked how the Council would mitigate against the discontinuation of the mobile library service?

Dawn Shaw reported that, to mitigate this, the Council would be extending the Home Library Service and this would go out to communities where people who met the criteria couldn't access a static library. The Little Library Service for children could be extended and the Council were still maintaining the opportunity for people to access a library service.

Councillor Jackie Drayton referred to the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) included in the report. That stated that in four areas the proposals would have some significant impact. The BME community in Tinsley/Burngreave, Young People in Park and Old People in Tinsley. How would the Council therefore mitigate against this?

Steve Eccleston, Assistant Director, Legal Services, reported that the role of the EIA was as a tool to enable an understanding of what the issues were and how the Council was meeting the obligations of the Equality Act 2010. This stated that the Council must have due regard to eliminating discrimination and due regard to protected groups such as the BME community, elderly people etc. There was no formal obligation in law to undertake an EIA but it was considered to be good practice.

The EIA started out by looking at the challenges facing each group. It then looked at an action plan for each group which highlighted the negatives which were apparent for each group but also work which could be done to mitigate against these. The EIA looked at each library which was vulnerable to closure and outlined data in relation to these. Mr Eccleston considered the EIA to be a very thorough document but also a live document and this could be reviewed when the issue came back to Scrutiny in 12 months' time.

Councillor Drayton commented that a number of people had said to her that they did not wish to be an independent library and wanted to be part of the Council's library network. In moving a recommendation to amend the name of the libraries from independent to associate did this mean that those libraries could be part of the wider library network?

Dawn Shaw confirmed that this was the case and they could still be part of the

People's Network with access to the library catalogue and could access services. The Volunteer Co-ordinator would also assist associate libraries and it was hoped to introduce the buddying system.

Councillor Leigh Bramall, Cabinet Member for Business, Skills and Development, commented that the hub model assumed an increasing reliance on people using public transport. In the needs assessment how was the distance measured? Was there any indication of a typical journey time? Could people access a hub library and the Central Library within a reasonable journey time?

Andi Walshaw reported that the distance was measured from bus stop to bus stop via its actual route and the bus stop needed to be within 300m of the library. This meant that in most cases the distance between the same libraries was different in each direction. Although the travelling time was not taken into account, Mr Walshaw was confident that people would be able to access a library within a reasonable time.

Councillor Ben Curran, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, commented that he was aware that groups welcomed the additional Council resources which had been allocated to support the associate libraries in the first three years. However, there was still some anxiety. How did the money match up to what the groups said they needed? Was this sufficient to make the model work and how would the funding be distributed?

Lynne Richardson, Project Manager, reported that it had been discussed with the groups concerned what funding was needed. The funding was based on a budget for the running costs of the associate libraries and the Volunteer Co-ordinator post. The groups would not be bidding against each other for the funding and it would be distributed based on a set allocation.

Councillor Isobel Bowler, Cabinet Member for Sport and Leisure commented that she was aware from within her portfolio when the council had to remove staffing budgets from the two Adventure Playgrounds these have been able to remain open run by local Friends of Groups. However, these groups required significant support to do this. Therefore, how was the Council supporting the library groups and how would we continue to support them?

Dawn Shaw reported that extensive workshops had been held and guidance issued for business planning. All the initial business plans submitted met the Council's criteria. Further workshops would now be held in the transitional period until September 2014. If groups required further assistance the Council could look at this. The final business plans needed to be submitted by 30 June 2014 which would then be evaluated for going forward. There was a clear wish for continued Council support as highlighted by proposals for a buddying system.

Responding to a further question from Councillor Bowler regarding training for volunteers, Dawn Shaw reported that training packages would be offered which would help them understand the library service. Support would also be offered in recruitment and retention of volunteers.

Councillor Jackie Drayton commented that she had seen good examples of strong community groups willing to run the libraries. She asked if any consideration had been given to buddying with friends groups?

Dawn Shaw confirmed that this was the case and where there was expertise within community groups this should be shared. This would be a learning experience for the Council as well as community groups. The Council were working with the voluntary sector looking at developing a central pool of volunteers which could be shared across the City.

Councillor Julie Dore commented that not much reference had been made in the discussion for the need to modernise the service. User numbers had dramatically declined in recent years and most people were moving towards accessing material in other ways.

Dawn Shaw confirmed that this was an important part of officers' consideration. They were looking to introduce e-books and wifi more widely across the service. Officers were working with officers within digital inclusion to look at the digital offer. Older people had commented that they valued the community space to interact with others so officers were looking at that and they were taking on board the creativity and vision of other organisations.

8.7 Comments from Cabinet Members

Councillor Jackie Drayton commented that she welcomed the feedback from young people and commended all the people working hard to try and keep the libraries open. She also thanked the staff who had helped and supported these community groups to keep the libraries open. She appreciated that it was a difficult and emotive subject. Cabinet Members understood the implications of agreeing the proposals and it was a difficult decision but they had been elected to often make decisions in difficult circumstances.

Councillor Mary Lea commented that she recognised the health implications related to loneliness and isolation and that libraries were a good place for people to interact. Associate libraries were a good avenue to address this and she believed that the Council was delivering on its public health outcomes.

Councillor Bowler commented that she was disappointed that the decision to approve the recommendations had to be made and she was a library member and user so it was not the case, as she had heard from the press was being suggested, that no member of the Cabinet had a library card or used a library. At the same time she was optimistic for the future of the service across the city because local people were stepping forward. She recognised that if the Council failed to set a budget someone else would set it and even more libraries would close. She valued the fact that people cared about their community and was impressed with what people had achieved thus far. She was reassured that officers would do all they could to support libraries in the future.

Councillor Mazher Iqbal commented that this had not been an easy decision to make. He was grateful to his Cabinet Assistants, fellow Cabinet Members and

Councillors for their support. He appreciated the fantastic staff that worked at the Council and at libraries across the City. It had been heartwarming to hear the responses of community groups. The process did not end at this meeting and the Council would work closely with groups to develop their business plans to ensure continued sustainability and viability. Councillor Iqbal also thanked the Chair of the Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee for her hard work and support. In conclusion, Councillor Iqbal thanked the members of the public and stated that he had tried to answer the questions fully and it was important that this opportunity existed to hold Councillors to account. He then moved that the independent libraries be renamed associate libraries.

8.8 RESOLVED: That Cabinet:-

- (a) agrees a new operating model for community libraries. Taking account of the Council's obligation to deliver a comprehensive and efficient library service as informed by the needs assessment, consultations undertaken and Equality Impact Assessment. The new operating model will consist of:-
- 11 Sheffield City Council run hub libraries
 - Up to 5 co-delivered community libraries
 - Retain Tinsley Library as a Council run facility until its rental agreement expires in 2016
 - Up to 10 associate libraries, with support for up to 3 years
 - New opening times for Central Library
 - Closure of the mobile library service
 - Development of the Home Library Service through a volunteer programme
 - All other existing library, information and archives services will be retained including the Schools Library Service
 - A volunteer programme
- (b) agrees £262,000 of funding from Council resources, carried forward to 2014/15, to support the sustainability and viability of associate libraries and volunteering, in response to issues raised during the consultation around the needs of older and disabled people and the role which libraries play in promoting health and well-being;
- (c) agrees funding of £262,000 from Council resources to support associate libraries and volunteering for the period 2015/16 and 2016/17, in response to issues raised during the consultation around the needs of older and disabled people and the role which libraries play in promoting health and well-being;
- (d) subject to consultation with the relevant Cabinet Members, requests that the Executive Directors, Communities and Resources, to explore the potential for a further capital allocation for any major repairs to associate libraries; and
- (e) notes the resolution of the Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny

and Policy Development Committee, taken at its meeting held on 18 February 2014.

8.3 **Reasons for Decision**

- 8.3.1 Following extensive public consultation, to implement the review of the Libraries, Archives and Information Service, establishing a new service which will meet the City's aspirations for the future, will be comprehensive and efficient and will develop new partnerships with community organisations and people who use library services.
- 8.3.2 This new service will take account of the issues raised in the public consultation, the needs assessment and Equality Impact Assessment and will be affordable.

8.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 8.4.1 The options considered in determining the proposed operating model can be found in Section 8 of the report, now submitted, and further detail in Appendix I of the report.
- 8.4.2 Following analysis of the consultation 2013/14 and the Equality Impact Assessment, the options considered and rejected were:
- (i) No change to the proposal.
 - (ii) Offer all the associate libraries (with an approved initial business plan) co-delivery status for a limited period.
 - (iii) Offer all the associate libraries (with an approved initial business plan), an enhanced support offer, including financial support for a limited period. Access to Council services limited to a book depository service.

9. **REVENUE BUDGET FOR 2014/15**

- 9.1 A joint report of the Chief Executive and Executive Director, Resources was submitted which sought approval for the City Council's Revenue Budget for 2014/15, a 2014/15 Council Tax for the City Council and outlined the levies and precepts made on the City Council by other authorities.
- 9.2 As part of Cabinet's consideration of the joint report, it was noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee had noted the following recommendations, without amendment, as part of its consideration of the joint report earlier in the day.
- 9.9 **RESOLVED:** That the City Council, at its meeting on 7th March 2014 be recommended to:-
- (a) approve a net Revenue Budget for 2014/15 amounting to £451.248m;
 - (b) approve a Band D equivalent Council Tax of £1282.75 for City Council services, i.e. at the same level as 2013/14;

- (c) approve the Revenue Budget allocations and Budget Implementation Plans for each of the services, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report;
- (d) note that, based on the estimated expenditure level set out in Appendix 3 to the report, the amounts shown in part B of Appendix 6 would be calculated for the City Council for the year 2014/15, in accordance with sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992;
- (e) note the information on the precepts issued by the South Yorkshire Police Authority and the South Yorkshire Fire and Civil Defence Authority, together with the impact of these on the overall amount of Council Tax to be charged in the City Council's area;
- (f) approve the proposed amount of compensation to Parish Councils for the loss of council tax income in 2014/15 at the levels shown in the table below paragraph 186"
- (g) approve the proposed changes to empty property discounts in respect of Council Tax
- (h) note the latest 2013/14 budget monitoring position;
- (i) approve the Treasury Management and Annual Investment Strategies as set out in Appendix 7 to the report and the recommendations contained therein;
- (j) approve the Minimum Reserve Provision (MRP) Statement set out in Appendix 7 to the report; and
- (k) delegate authority to the Director of Finance to undertake Treasury Management activity, to create and amend appropriate Treasury Management Practice statements and to report on the operation of Treasury Management activity on the terms set out in those documents.

(NOTE: 1.This item is referred for approval by the City Council and cannot, therefore, be called in for scrutiny)

10. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2014/15

- 10.1 The Executive Director, Resources submitted a report setting out the proposed Capital Programme from 2014-15 onwards describing the programmes to be undertaken, listing the projects to be delivered and setting out the context in which it had been compiled.
- 10.2 As part of the Cabinet's consideration of the report it was noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee had noted the following recommendations, without amendment, as part of its consideration of the report earlier in the day.
- 10.3 **RESOLVED:** That the City Council, at its meeting on 7th March 2014, be recommended to:-

- (a) approve those specific projects included in the years 2013-14 to 2017-18 programmes as at Appendix 8 of the report. Block allocations were included within the programme for noting at this stage and detailed proposals will be brought back for separate Member approval as part of the monthly monitoring procedures;
- (b) note the proposed Capital Programme for the 5 years to 2017/18 as per Appendix 8 to the report; and
- (c) approve the allocations from the Corporate Resource Pool (CRP) and the policy outlined in Appendix 4 to the report such that the commitment from the CRP is limited to 1 year and no CRP supported schemes are approved beyond 2014-15. (If substantial capital receipts are realised within 2013-14 or 2014-15 a further report will be brought to Members as part of the monthly approval process).

(NOTE: This item is referred for approval by the City Council and cannot, therefore, be called in for scrutiny)

11. REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING 2013/14 (MONTH 8) AS AT 30/11/13

11.1 The Executive Director, Resources submitted a report providing the month 8 monitoring statement on the City Council's Revenue and Capital Budget for 2013/14.

11.2 **RESOLVED:** That Cabinet:-

- (a) notes the updated information and management actions provided by the report on the 2013/14 Revenue Budget position;
- (b) in relation to the Capital Programme, approves:-
 - (i) the proposed additions to the capital programme listed in Appendix 1 of the report, including the procurement strategies and delegations of authority to the Director of Commercial Services or nominated Officer, as appropriate, to award the necessary contracts following stage approval by Capital Programme Group;
 - (ii) the proposed variations and slippage as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report; and notes
 - (iii) the variations listed in Appendix 1 of the report with the delegated authority of EMT and Directors; and
 - (iv) the latest position on the Capital Programme including the current level of delivery; and
 - (v) delegates authority to the Cabinet Member for Finance, the authority

to vary approved amounts for projects until 31st May 2014.

11.3 Reasons for Decision

11.3.1 To formally record changes to the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme and gain Member approval for changes in line with Financial Regulations and to reset the capital programme in line with latest information.

11.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

11.4.1 A number of alternative courses of action are considered as part of the process undertaken by Officers before decisions are recommended to Members. The recommendations made to Members represent what Officers believe to be the best options available to the Council, in line with Council priorities, given the constraints on funding and the use to which funding is put within the Revenue Budget and the Capital Programme.

12. SPORT FACILITIES INVESTMENT

12.1 The Executive Director, Place submitted a report seeking Cabinet approval for the City Council to invest £3.5m capital into a £24m City programme for renewing and improving the City's sports facilities.

12.2 David Morton, Clerk to the Ecclesfield Parish Council, attended the meeting in support of the proposals and commented that he welcomed them and requested that Cabinet approve the recommendations.

12.3 **RESOLVED:** That Cabinet:-

- (a) notes and approves the facilities investment strategy set out in the report and, in particular, agree the development of North Active and Graves Tennis and Leisure Centre;
- (b) notes that, as part of the City Council's capital approval process, capital investment proposals to invest £1m at Graves and construct the £7.1m scheme at Thorncliffe have been submitted to Cabinet as part of the month 8 finance report. The report also sets out the conditions of the external finance grants and seeks approval to enter into contracts to accept the funding;
- (c) notes that future running expenditure will be approved via the 2015/16 budget setting process;
- (d) delegates authority to the Executive Director, Place, in consultation with the Director of Commercial Services approval of the Procurement Strategy for the works required for North Active;
- (e) delegates authority to the Executive Director, Place, in consultation with the Director of Legal and Governance, Director of Finance and Director of

Capital and Major Projects to award and finalise the terms of a contract for the works at North Active;

- (f) delegates authority to the Executive Director, Place, in consultation with the Director of Commercial Services approval of the Procurement Strategy for the future operation of North Active;
- (g) delegates authority to the Executive Director, Place, in consultation with the Director of Legal and Governance, to award and finalise the terms of a contract for the operation at North Active;
- (h) delegates authority to the Executive Director, Place, in consultation with the Director of Legal and Governance and the Director of Finance, to enter into agreements for external funding into the Council for the purpose of meeting the costs at North Active and to approve the terms of such funding agreements;
- (i) delegates authority to the Executive Director, Place, in consultation with the Director of Legal and Governance and the Director of Finance, to enter into agreements with Sheffield City Trust (or any group company) to provide funding (by grant, loan or otherwise) for Graves TLC and to approve the terms of that funding; and
- (j) delegates authority to the Executive Director, Place, in consultation with the Director of Legal and Governance and the Director of Finance, to take such other steps as he may deem appropriate to achieve the outcomes in the report in relation to North Active and Graves TLC projects.

12.4 **Reasons for Decision**

12.4.1 The recommendations are based on a facilities investment strategy which will achieve the triple aim of improving facilities, improving health and reducing running costs. The strategy has therefore attracted the support of a number of national and City partners and will trigger a £24m investment programme.

12.4.2 The City Council faces its biggest ever challenge in terms of dramatically reducing budgets – including those for sports facilities. By contrast, there are significant new opportunities for external capital investment in facilities. The proposed strategy is therefore ‘invest to save and grow participation’ i.e replace facilities that are high cost, under-utilised or nearing the end of their life and invest in lower cost and higher qualities facilities which will increase participation and therefore improve health. Particular focus will be placed upon attracting low participant groups to the new facilities and, particularly those suffering from poor health.

12.5 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

12.5.1 The facilities investment strategy considered a number of alternative options. The first strategic choice was made in 2013 in relation to the future of Don Valley Stadium. The rationale for its closure was based not only on the £700k saving on annual operating costs and the avoidance of alternatively having to close several

community pools to achieve the same level of saving, but also the capital cost of stadium repairs – estimated at £1.6m and rising to £4m in future years.

- 12.5.2 Given the City Council's limited availability of capital funds, the choice therefore was to spend up to £4m to repair one facility (Don Valley Stadium) – with limited consequent savings on running costs, no expected resulting increase in participation and no prospects of any contributions from external funders – or invest £3.65m to trigger a £24m investment programme in four redeveloped/new facilities (Woodbourn, Concord, Graves and North Active) – with major savings on running costs, significant increases in participation and unprecedented leverage of external capital. The simple choice was therefore between 'invest to stand still' at DVS or 'invest to save and grow participation' in four facilities.
- 12.5.3 It is perhaps not surprising that the compelling case for the £24m investment programme has won the strategic support of both Sport England and NCSEM.
- 12.5.4 In terms of North Active – the alternative of refurbishing Chapeltown Pool has been considered. However, it is already over 50 years old and is nearing the end of its economic life; refurbishment or even a like-for-like pool replacement will not attract external capital; the current pool is too small to serve as the single district pool for the north and the site is too small to build the required district pool and associated fitness/health facilities. The choice is either a new pool now or face the risk of no pool in the near future.
- 12.5.5 Similarly, the option of refurbishing Stocksbridge pool or building a new pool in Stocksbridge has been considered. However, an independent consultants study in 2013 (commissioned by Sport England and the City Council) concluded that refurbishment would provide only a 'relatively short to medium term solution' and would be 'unlikely to offer value for money'. Furthermore, refurbishment would not attract external capital and would still result in a pool with significant operating costs. Unfortunately, the limited catchment population served by a potential new facility in Stocksbridge is such that Sport England and NCSEM have confirmed they would be unable to contribute any capital funds.

13. VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANT AID INVESTMENT IN 2014/15

- 13.1 The Executive Director, Communities submitted a report focusing on the allocation of the Voluntary Sector Grant Aid Budget for 2014/15. This is a transitional year and the report proposes that a full review of the current Voluntary Sector Grant Aid criteria and processes takes place between January and June 2014, which will form part of a wider assessment of how the Council invests in the Voluntary, Community and Faith (VCF) Sector in future years.
- 13.2 **RESOLVED:** That Cabinet:-
- (a) approves that a full review of the current Voluntary Sector Grant Aid criteria and processes takes place between January and June 2014, which will form part of a wider assessment of how the Council invests in the VCF Sector from 2015/16 onwards;

- (b) having had due regard to the provisions of Sections 149 and 158 of the Equality Act 2010 and Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, and to the issues raised by those provisions, approves the grant award recommendations listed in Section 4 of the report, and detailed further in Appendix 1;
- (c) endorses the award process described in Appendix 2 to the report and approves the actions, arrangements and recommendations at Sections 4 and 11, and the following specific delegations:-
 - (a) delegates authority to the Director of Housing:-
 - (i) to administer the Lunch Clubs Small Grants Fund as described in Appendix 1 to the report;
 - (ii) to agree the terms of and authorize the completion of all funding agreements relating to grants made from the Lunch Clubs Small Grants Fund and the Voluntary Sector Grants Fund, together with any associated agreements or arrangements that they may consider appropriate, provided that if the terms of a proposed funding agreement involves the variation of any standard terms previously agreed by Internal Audit and/or Legal Services the agreement shall not be completed without the consent of the Chief Internal Auditor and the Director of Legal and Governance;
 - (iii) that where (a) a change of circumstance affects the ability of an organization to deliver the purpose of a grant awarded, (b) the Director considers the performance of the organisation to be below an acceptable standard or (c) an organisation has breached any of the award conditions contained in their funding agreement, to review, adjust or suspend grant awards;
 - (b) The Director of Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Inclusion, is authorised:-
 - (i) to allocate up to £15,000 to further support infrastructure services in the second 6 month period (1st October 2014 – 31st March 2015).
 - (ii) to agree the amounts, purposes and recipients of any individual grants awarded in year from the Grant Funds including any additional sums received or returned or unpaid funds.
 - (iii) that where (a) a change of circumstance affects the ability of an organisation to deliver the purpose of the grant awarded or (b) the Director considers the performance of the organisation to be below an acceptable standard or (c) an organisation has breached any of the award conditions contained in their funding agreement, to withdraw grant awards.

13.3 **Reasons for Decision**

13.3.1 The allocation of this funding will fundamentally contribute to the Council's Strategic outcomes around 'Tackling Poverty and Increasing Social Justice'. In addition it will contribute to the following objectives:-

- A Strong and Competitive Economy
- Better Health and Wellbeing
- Successful Children & Young People
- Safe and Secure Communities
- A Great Place to Live
- An Environmentally Responsible City

13.3.2 In addition, the allocation of this funding will contribute to the Fairness Commission's recommendations around:-

- Health and Wellbeing for all
- Fair Access to High Quality Jobs and Pay
- Fair Access to Benefits and Credit
- Housing and a Better Environment
- A Safe City
- What Citizens and Communities can do

14.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

14.4.1 There were no alternative options presented in the report for consideration.

14. **BUILDING AND ACQUIRING NEW COUNCIL HOUSING**

14.1 The Executive Director, Communities submitted a report setting out the strategic case for building and acquiring additional affordable homes, beyond the initial 75, and sought authority to undertake the required planning and consultation work to do so. This followed the approval by Council on 5 February 2014 of the HRA Business Plan Update for 2014/15 which outlined the potential within the Business Plan to deliver approximately 600 Council homes through a mixed programme of acquisitions and new build over the next 6 years.

14.2 **RESOLVED:** That Cabinet:-

- (a) approves the development of a mixed programme of acquisitions and new build to renew the Council's housing stock;
- (b) delegates authority to the Director of Regeneration and Development Services in consultation with the Director of Commissioning and the Interim Director of Council Housing Services to identify properties for acquisition for Council Housing and prepare the necessary capital approval submission in line with Council's approval process;
- (c) delegates authority to the Director of Capital and Major Projects, in

consultation with the Director of Regeneration and Development Services to negotiate and agree terms for the acquisition of the properties identified and delegates authority to the Director of Capital and Major Projects to instruct the Director of Legal and Governance to complete the necessary legal documentation;

- (d) delegates authority to the Director of Regeneration and Development Services in consultation with the Director of Commissioning, the Interim Director of Housing Services and the Director of Capital and Major Projects to identify sites for new build Council Housing, specify the type and size of homes required and prepare the necessary property disposal and capital approval submission in line with Council's approval process; and
- (e) delegates authority to the Director of Commissioning in consultation with the Director of Finance to set such charges for the tenancy of each dwelling acquired or built under this programme as he deems reasonable.

14.3 Reasons for Decision

- 14.3.1 Sheffield's Strategic Housing Market Assessment estimates that an additional 725 affordable homes would be required each year for the next 5 years to meet projected need in the City.
- 14.3.2 Delivering the proposed programme of additional Council housing would maintain the authority's housing stock at a sustainable level in the light of continuing loss of stock through Right to Buy.
- 14.3.3 Delivering a significant element of new build Council housing within the programme would contribute towards overall housing and economic growth in the City whilst increasing the choice of housing locally.
- 14.4 Acquiring additional stock would have wider strategic benefits including bring empty properties into use and increasing choice within the housing stock.

14.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

- 14.4.1 The alternative to delivering the programme is for the Council's housing stock to continue to both age and reduce. This would leave the HRA with less debt but it would leave the City with less affordable housing when more is needed.
- 14.4.2 Officers considered the possibility of extending the role of the Sheffield Housing Company (SHC) to provide new Council homes. However, building of council houses on Council land was not part of the SHC's procurement and would be a new public works contract that must be tendered for under public sector procurement rules. The 30 new Council homes to date were acquired from the SHC, not built for the Council by the SHC. If the SHC wanted to build houses for the Council they would need to respond to the tender along with any other interested parties.
- 14.4.3 The alternative option for the potential new build sites would be disposal on the

open market. A specific option appraisal would be undertaken for each site within the Strategic Business Case required for the Council's capital process.

15. GATEWAY PROTECTION PROGRAMME

15.1 The Executive Director, Communities submitted a report seeking authority for the Council to enter into two further funding agreements for an extension of the Gateway Protection Programme, to run from 1/4/14 – 31/3/16 and, subject to satisfactory funding arrangements, for the Council to continue receiving the grant funding from the Home Office for the delivery of the programme and enter into sub-agreements with Hull City Council and the Refugee Council, on terms which reflect the Council's agreements with the Home Office, for the services that they deliver.

15.2 **RESOLVED:** That, subject to the Home Office agreeing the costs submitted, Cabinet approves:-

- (a) that the Council enters into 2 funding agreements with the Home Office to deliver the Gateway Protection Programme for the period from 1/4/14 – 31/3/16;
- (b) that the Council enters into funding agreements with the Refugee Council and Hull City Council for the elements of the programme that they deliver on terms that reflect the Council's agreement with the Home Office; and
- (c) that delegated authority be given to the Executive Director, Communities in consultation with the Director of Finance to instruct the Director of Legal and Governance to finalise terms and to complete the necessary documentation.

15.3 Reasons for Decision

15.3.1 The Council has managed a successful programme delivery partnership with Hull City Council and the Refugee Council since 2011. As well as overall management of the programme, the Council has also managed the provision of housing and associated tenancy support for the Gateway refugees. The local authority VCF partnership provides excellent quality and value for money services and delivering a further programme going forward will ensure the continuity of the current delivery partnership as well as providing the best housing and resettlement services for new refugees arriving in the City.

15.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

15.4.1 If the Council did not enter into the funding agreements with the Home Office for this extension the Home Officer have confirmed that they would not have enough time to identify another partner in the City to provide the housing and to contract with for the resettlement programme in Yorkshire and the Humber. This would mean that the national programme may not achieve its quota to resettle 750 refugees in 14/15.

- 15.4.2 The current delivery partners have both committed to continuing the existing arrangements for the period of the extension.