

Cabinet

Meeting held 15 January 2014

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

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 There were no apologies for absence.

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 Mazher Iqbal declared a personal interest in agenda item 10 'School Places in Sheffield: Report Back From Consultation' (see minute 9 below) as a Governor of Acres Hill Primary School

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2013 were approved as a correct record.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 Petition supporting the Proposed Don Valley Railway Line from Sheffield to Stocksbridge

Cabinet received a petition, containing 2000 signatures, supporting proposals for a railway line between Sheffield and Stocksbridge. In submitting the petition Chris Bell, the lead petitioner, commented that the proposals would shorten journey times and were supported by many in the local community.

Cabinet referred the petition to Councillor Leigh Bramall, Cabinet Member for Business, Skills and Development. He commented that he supported, in principle, better services. All projects needed to be assessed for cost benefit and whether they would deliver the best value for money. Councillor Bramall stated that he would provide a formal written response to Mr Bell.

5.2 Petition Requesting the Council Review a Number of Taxi Issues

Councillor Ibrar Hussain submitted an additional 118 signatures in support of the petition submitted to the Council on 8 January 2014 requesting the Council review a number of taxi issues. It was agreed that these signatures would be added to

those previously submitted.

5.3 Petition Opposing the Proposed Expansion of Acres Hill Primary School

Cabinet received a petition, containing 146 signatures, opposing the proposed expansion of Acres Hill Primary School. Terry Navin spoke in support of the petition. He stated that he was concerned about the profound impact the proposals would have on school children. The intention was to prevent local people having to travel far to school but the outcome would actually be the opposite and it would encourage people from outside the local area to attend Acres Hill.

The potential addition of 100 children would drive performance down at the school and would have a devastating impact on children already there. The proposals stated that the expansion would be a temporary measure until 2015 but literature released by the school had said 2020. The proposals would also create a traffic hazard and a traffic count had not been undertaken despite being promised.

Cabinet referred the petition to Councillor Jackie Drayton, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families. Councillor Drayton responded that she would provide a written response to the petition. Across the country in recent years there had been a major increase in birth rates. Sheffield had also seen a number of new arrivals from other countries. There was therefore a need to build new schools and ask schools across the City to find temporary places.

The reason that the proposed expansion was temporary was that officers needed to assess the impact of the proposed new school in Darnall and whether parents would decide to send their child there rather than Acres Hill. Acres Hill had had a pre-christmas visit from Ofsted. Ofsted had reported that the school had taken rapid action to implement improvements requested through an action plan. Councillor Drayton commented that what counted in raising attainment was quality of teaching, learning and leadership and not numbers of pupils. The traffic issues would be looked at and highways officers would be involved in the development of the proposals.

5.4 Petition in respect of Selective Licensing

Cabinet received a petition, containing 8 signatures, opposing selective licensing in the Fir Vale/Page Hall area. Ashran Ashraf addressed Cabinet in support of the petition. He stated that he did not have any rental properties in the target area but wanted to object to the proposals. The first reason for objecting was the financial cost of the scheme. Similar schemes in other local authorities had been loss making and the costs for the proposals were new and would not be met by existing budgets.

Additional staff would be required to administer the scheme and would not be funded by licensing fees. The scheme stated that no more than 4 people would be able to live in a 2 bed house so Mr Ashraf questioned if that meant when the scheme was introduced people would be evicted from their homes if they lived in a house with more than 4 people?

Proposals for the scheme also stated that 2 references would be required to obtain a license and that, if a landlord was unable to provide them a meeting would need to be arranged with Council officers. This could lead to over 300 meetings needing to take place and Mr Ashraf questioned whether this was a good use of officer time. The conditions for the Fit and Proper persons test were also not specified. A number of poor families could be made homeless as a result of the scheme through no fault of their own. In conclusion, Mr Ashraf stated that he believed the money identified for the scheme would be better spent on employing a Housing Enforcement Officer to specifically target rogue landlords.

Cabinet referred the petition to Councillor Harry Harpham, Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods. He commented that the Council needed to be mindful of budgets whilst at the same time providing the best possible services. Residents and businesses within Page Hall were overwhelmingly in favour of the proposals. Some landlords did not support the scheme and where this was the case the Council had spoken extensively to them.

Councillor Harpham acknowledged that the scheme would not solve all the problems in the area and other services were working hard to try and address the problems. He would not support a scheme which would mean people being evicted onto the streets and people would be supported to find an alternative solution. The Council would ensure that discussions would be held with landlords and prospective tenants to explain their rights and how to act and behave appropriately. The scheme would not necessarily clear the litter on the streets but it would highlight to landlords that they had a wider responsibility to other people living in the area.

5.5 Public Question in respect of the Proposed Expansion of Acres Hill Primary School

Terry Navin referred to £485k which had been allocated for the expansion of Acres Hill Primary School. He commented that, if it was to be a temporary measure as had been stated, this seemed as disproportionate amount of money to spend. He therefore asked what the benefits were of expanding the school?

In response Councillor Jackie Drayton, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families commented that the money spent on the expansion of the school would depend on the time period of the temporary measure. It would create additional school places in the area which were badly needed.

5.6 Public Question in respect of Proposals to Build a New School in the Tinsley Area

Sabi Akram referred to a recent public meeting held in the Tinsley area to discuss proposals for the building of a new school on part of Tinsley Park. She asked if, following this meeting, the Council still wished to proceed with the proposal and, if so, how could the Council go against its own policy in the Green and Open Spaces Strategy?

In response, Councillor Jackie Drayton reported that the Council was required to

enter into statutory consultation on the proposals. With the proposals for the new school the Council had been into the community to talk to parents, schools, governors and the local community before the statutory consultation had begun to assess whether to proceed. If the report on the agenda for this meeting was agreed the statutory consultation period would now commence and for new schools this would be 6 weeks. The planning process also had a statutory consultation requirement.

During the pre-consultation period the local community had put forward alternative proposals and these were being examined by Council officers. However, it was important to note that there would not be a proposal to build on the playing field site if it was felt that there were more suitable alternatives available. A Project Group would be established comprising all interested parties and stakeholders.

Councillor Drayton commented that she was proud of Sheffield being the greenest City in the country and wanted to protect that. If part of Tinsley playing field was used for the new school she would look to see if that green space could be replaced elsewhere in the area. Further work would be done to assess the concerns raised in the next phase of consultation prior to a final decision being taken and Councillor Drayton was keen to work with the local community to find the most appropriate solution.

5.7 Public Question in respect of Proposals to Build a New School in the Tinsley Area

Muzajar Rahman referred to his attendance at the last meeting of Cabinet, held on 18 December 2013, to submit a petition opposing plans to build a new school on Tinsley playing field and commented that he had not yet received any feedback to that petition. Mr Rahman also asked why community cohesion had not been considered and why proper consultation had not taken place? He also asked when the request for funding to the Government had been submitted and why no consultation had taken place with the local community at that stage?

In response, Councillor Jackie Drayton commented that it had been a long held wish to build a new school in Tinsley but this had not been possible due to a lack of funding. When funding was made available by the Government for new schools the City Council applied for funding and it was believed that this had been granted. However, when the Government heard that it would be merging the infant and junior schools the granting of funding was withdrawn. Council officers continued to make representations to the Government and it was agreed that money would be made available for new places. This still meant a gap in funding which the Council had to find.

Councillor Drayton stated that she would provide a written response confirming the dates and times of the submission to Government. The 6 week consultation period would now commence and she would welcome people's help in getting access to the whole community.

5.8 Public Question in respect of Office Accommodation

Julie Gledhill asked if the Cabinet were aware that a Sheffield based property

consultancy had reported to Insider Media Limited that confidence was returning to Sheffield City Centre's office market with the amount of Grade A take-up in the last quarter of 2013 more than double the equivalent period in 2012?

Councillor Leigh Bramall and Councillor Julie Dore, Leader of the Council both commented that they were aware and it was extremely welcome and a positive sign for the City.

5.9 Public Question in respect of the Libraries Review

Dave Jefferies referred to the review of libraries which was currently being undertaken in the City. He commented that a consultation that could not result in changes to the original proposals had little value. He therefore asked when the library review consultation was first set up what possibilities of change to the proposals were envisaged?

Councillor Mazher Iqbal, Cabinet Member for Communities and Inclusion, responded that consultation had started in the summer of 2012 and a second round of consultation had commenced in September 2013. It was always envisaged that the consultation results would influence recommendations. All options would be considered. Robust evidence had been provided to support the proposals and the process had been open and transparent throughout.

5.10 Public Question in respect of the Libraries Review

Ruth Woodhouse referred to the meeting of Full Council, held on 8 January 2014, in which she believed she had not received a clear answer to her question on libraries, literacy and the effect the closures would have on children across the City. She therefore asked the following questions:-

- What does the Council have to say about the effect that closing more than half of our libraries will have on literacy levels and therefore educational results, individual job prospects and quality of life for thousands of children and young people across the City, now and into the future?
- Have you consulted and done your research on the role of libraries in promoting fluent reading and its benefits, and discussed this in full with the attention and gravity it deserves? If so, what were your conclusions and how is this course of action still being justified? And if you have not, when is this going to happen?
- Can Council thoughts and conclusions on this topic please be made public for concerned teachers, heads, families, librarians and indeed children who would be affected by the proposed disappearance of their local library?

In responding, Councillor Mazher Iqbal apologised if Ms. Woodhouse believed that he did not answer her question fully at the meeting of Full Council held on 8 January 2014. He informed her that the Council was facing huge cuts to its budget and as a result the library service couldn't continue as it was. Therefore, a root and branch review of the service was commissioned which had to bear in mind

the requirement for the Council to provide a comprehensive and efficient service.

Dialogue with key stakeholders took place in 2012 and the Council was taking on board the views of local people. A number of groups had requested that the Council extend the deadlines so that they could put together a business case and the Council was committed to fighting to keep as many libraries open as it could. Proposals would be discussed at Council meetings including Cabinet and a Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Jackie Drayton added that she believed being literate and articulate was the key to attainment. A lot of work was being undertaken to assist volunteers to go into schools to assist children with their learning. She could see how passionate people were about libraries from the views of those who attended the Council meeting on 8 January 2014. She referred to the Government's policy of the Big Society and how local communities would be encouraged to run local services which was a clear ideological shift and would be seen in youth services and libraries amongst others.

5.11 Public Question in respect of the Libraries Review

William Hiorns asked a number of technical questions in relation to the review of libraries. In response, Councillor Mazher Iqbal stated that he would provide written responses to the questions. The Libraries Act defined what an efficient and comprehensive service should look like. A number of organisations had come forward with business plans which would be considered. Councillor Iqbal did not believe at the end of the process 14 libraries would be shut.

5.12 Public Questions in relation to the World Student Games and the Libraries Review

Peter Hartley submitted a number of questions in relation to the World Student Games and the Libraries Review. Councillor Julie Dore stated that written responses would be provided to Mr Hartley's questions.

5.13 Public Question in relation to the Drug and Alcohol Co-Ordination Team Commissioning and Procurement Plan

Ayesha Heaton referred to the third recommendation of the report on the Sheffield Drug and Alcohol Co-ordination Team Commissioning and Procurement Plan on the agenda for the meeting which was for Cabinet to approve the parties who will award the contract. She therefore asked how do Cabinet Members or Commissioners intend to secure clinical input into the decision making process for the award of the contract?

Councillor Mary Lea, Cabinet Member for Health, Care and Independent Living commented that the report referred to was a very complex report which outlined a number of interventions. Where the Council didn't have the expertise they would go out to find the experts and would seek advice from the Clinical Commissioning Group amongst others so clinical expertise would be sought.

5.14 Public Question in relation to Selective Licensing

Chris Bryan, owner of a property in the area designated for the Selective Licensing scheme, asked if any social housing providers were able to provide references for tenants that wanted to move to private housing? He also asked if the Council were planning any educational programmes in the area regarding litter?

Councillor Harry Harpham responded that he would need to clarify in terms of data protection whether social housing providers were able to provide references on tenants and would provide a written response to Mr Bryan. Educating people on litter did take place but the Council was always keen to learn best practice from other authorities.

5.15 Public Question in relation to Selective Licensing

Lisa Swift referred to the report on Selective Licensing and the Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA). She commented that it stated that the impact on race of the proposals was high but offered no further explanation. She also believed that the scheme would impact on the Roma community but they were not referred to. She stated that the scheme would increase homelessness and the report did provide information on resources to deal with that problem. Finally, she referred to the statement in the report that it would reduce the number of children under 14 and asked what the impact of this would be for the proposed new school in Fir Vale?

In response, Councillor Harry Harpham commented that the EIA did not reference the Roma community as the scheme was targeted at landlords and he hoped it would prove effective in landlords providing decent, safe, effective housing. The scheme was the result of a response to a request for the Council to do something about the problems in Page Hall. The scheme would not solve all the problems but would help to improve the situation in the area.

Councillor Jackie Drayton added that there would still be enough children in the area to need a new school.

5.16 Public Question in relation to Shale Oil

Nigel Slack asked the following questions in relation to Shale Oil:-

- Given the Government's renewed push for shale oil exploitation in the UK and the increased level of 'bribes' they are now offering, does the Council know which companies, if any, have been granted licenses to explore for Shale oil deposits beneath Sheffield?
- Has the Council received any representation from or had any meetings with, formal or otherwise, any exploration companies?
- Will the Council confirm the commitment, reported on BBC Look North at the beginning of the week, to prevent Fracking within the Sheffield City boundaries?

- What can the Council then do to prevent the fracking operations in neighbouring Councils, which appear less opposed to the process, from either exploiting reserves beneath Sheffield or impacting on our environment?

In response, Councillor Jack Scott, Cabinet Member for Environment, Recycling and Streetscene reported that he did not believe any companies had been seeking funding from the Government for any work in Sheffield and he had not had any meetings with exploration companies or planning officers on the issue. He would ensure that he would respond on anything which impacted on Sheffield.

In addition, Councillor Scott commented that he believed the Government should remember that climate change was the biggest threat to society and that gas was a dirty fossil fuel which created carbon dioxide and other options needed to be explored. The only positive from the proposals was the desire to move away from the use of coal but he did not have any confidence in the Government's proposals. He would ensure that the Council would not act recklessly and endanger people's lives.

5.17 Public Question in relation to the disclosure of decisions

Nigel Slack referred to a recent decision by the Leader in respect of an amendment to the Streets Ahead contract and asked if the Cabinet Member for Environment, Recycling and Streetscene could provide any additional information as to the nature of the decision which, if it had been available wouldn't have required a public question at this meeting. He asked if future decisions could be fully disclosed in the interests of openness and transparency?

In response, Councillor Jack Scott commented that he did not have anything to add to what had already been said on the amendment to the Streets Ahead contract. The administration had a commitment to full disclosure of decisions unless there were legal reasons which were checked with Legal Services and the Chair of the relevant Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Julie Dore added that where information may not be able to be released this may be down to legal reasons and the Council had to weigh up the cost to the public of not disclosing the information against commercial confidentiality. The Council had been subject to 29 judicial reviews in the last 2 years mostly based on process. Every single one concluded that the Council had disclosed as much as possible and consulted properly so Sheffield had a good reputation in this respect.

5.18 Public Question in respect of Housing

Martin Brighton asked a number of questions in respect of housing. In response, Councillor Harry Harpham stated that a written response would be provided to the questions.

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>
<u>Children, Young People and Families</u>		
Christine Appleby	Support Worker	31
Susan Brammall	Support Worker	28
Jane Clarke	Support Worker	30
Susan Clarke	Support Worker	33
Pauline Evans	Support Worker	24
Lynda Hanson	Support Worker	33
Julie Hawksworth	Support Worker	26
Denise Hutchinson	Support Worker	30
Janet Jackson	Support Worker	27
Jean Johnson	Support Worker	22
Kathleen Keir	Support Worker	28
Brenda Naylor	Support Worker	24
Janet Rigden	Support Worker	30
Gloria Rose	Support Worker	27
Ronnie Withers	Support Worker	26
Ann Woodhead	Support Worker	23
Pauline Wright	Support Worker	27

(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. STUDENT ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY

8.1 The Executive Director, Place submitted a report in relation to the Student Accommodation Strategy. The new 5 year Student Accommodation Strategy set out the City Council's expectations for new and existing student accommodation provision in the City.

8.2 **RESOLVED:** That Cabinet:-

- (a) endorses the Student Accommodation Strategy 2014-19 as a statement of the Council's expectations for new and existing student accommodation provision in the City;
- (b) approves the accompanying 2014-19 Student Accommodation Strategy Action Plan; and
- (c) notes that the Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods will agree the further development of the action plan following annual reviews, in accordance with the functions reserved to him in the Leader's Scheme of Delegation.

8.3 Reasons for Decision

8.3.1 To enable the Council to set out a clear vision and delivery plan for student housing and related services which will help the Council to achieve its ambitions to be a Great Place to Live and for Sheffield to be a Competitive City.

8.3.2 The new Student Accommodation Strategy will provide a statement of recommendations to help our partners, potential funders and residents understand our ambitions for new and existing student provision in the City. Having this information available will help them to consider and develop their own opportunities to deliver this shared vision.

8.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

8.4.1 Although local authorities do not have a statutory duty to produce a Student Accommodation Strategy, previous government guidance has urged local authorities to take a more strategic approach to housing as part of their place shaping role.

8.4.2 Without a current Student Accommodation Strategy, there will be no clear vision for Sheffield's student accommodation and services that can be shared with partners, residents, developers and funding bodies.

8.4.3 Any benefit gained from not allocating resources to develop a strategy and monitor its action plan would be outweighed by the costs incurred through not developing a

joined up strategic approach to housing policy and investment decisions. Progress updates of the strategy's action plan will also help to ensure that our priorities will be regularly monitored and that new opportunities to progress our ambitions are considered.

9. SCHOOL PLACES IN SHEFFIELD: REPORT BACK FROM CONSULTATION

9.1 The Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families submitted a report providing an update following consultation on providing additional school places in 6 areas of the City. It sought permission to take the next steps in bringing forward proposals to increase places where necessary.

9.2 **RESOLVED:** That Cabinet:-

(a) approves the publication of statutory notices with regard to the proposed increases in places at Acres Hill (temporary), Greystones Primary, Hallam Primary and Wybourn Primary Schools for September 2015. Cabinet will receive a further paper reporting on representations received and seeking a final decision in March 2014;

(b) approves the publication of statutory notices on the proposals to bring together Tinsley Nursery Infant and Tinsley Junior Schools on the Tinsley Recreation Ground site to create a through school, through an increase to the age range of Tinsley Junior School and the closure of Tinsley Nursery Infant School. Cabinet will receive a further paper reporting on representations received and seeking a final decision in March/April 2014; and

(c) defers a final decision on additional places in the Firth Park area until a further review in Autumn 2014.

9.3 Reasons for Decision

9.3.1 Providing sufficient primary school places is a statutory duty of the Council. This will mean that Sheffield children reaching primary school age in 2014 and beyond will continue to have a school place in the area of the City in which they live.

9.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

9.4.1 The consultation process allowed for alternative proposals to come forward. These were described in section 5 of the report under the consultation responses for each area.

10. DESIGNATING AN AREA OF PAGE HALL FOR A SELECTIVE LICENSING SCHEME

10.1 The Executive Director, Communities submitted a report describing the impact that more responsibly managed private rented housing could make to the quality

of life of both established and newer residents in Page Hall. The report proposed that a Selective Licensing scheme be introduced in the area to help achieve this.

10.2 **RESOLVED:** That Cabinet:-

- (a) approves the designation of the area referred to in the report and defined on the map, set out in Appendix A of the report, as being subject to selective licensing, to come into force on 22 April 2014 and, unless revoked beforehand, to remain in force for a period of five years from that date.
- (b) approves the Selective Licensing scheme detailed in the report, including the Scheme Licensing Fees set out in Appendix E of the report and the Scheme Standards set out in Appendix D; and
- (c) delegates authority to the Director of Commissioning to amend the Scheme Licensing Fees and the Scheme standards as necessary for the successful administration of the scheme.

10.3 **Reasons for Decision**

- 10.3.1 There is a high demand for private rented accommodation in Page Hall from new arrivals. This has led to some landlords letting their properties irresponsibly – e.g. not carrying out adequate tenancy management to support new arrivals to use local facilities appropriately and understand local cultural norms. We believe that better tenancy management support would help to tackle the related issues of anti-social behaviour and low housing demand, and, most importantly, improve the lives of local residents.
- 10.3.2 Council officers in many departments are experiencing referrals to streets and properties where there are large numbers of residents congregating, properties that have large numbers of people living in them, unsanitary conditions, property disrepair or lack of general maintenance, fly tipping and general household rubbish piled in yards.
- 10.3.3 The condition of properties and the local street scene is making the area less desirable. House prices are falling despite high demand for rental properties from the new arrivals, and most of the new homes in the area are now privately rented. We believe that this imbalance in tenure, irresponsible letting practices and a lack of integration from new arrivals is making the area a worse place to live. The proposed area for selective licensing is therefore an area of low housing demand.
- 10.3.4 We recognise that some private landlords operating in the area are professional and responsible. They co-operate and respond to the advice of housing and environmental officers. However, there also a number of landlords that are reluctant to accept full landlord responsibilities and continue to refuse to meet their obligations to tenants and the local community.
- 10.3.5 The documents and evidence provided as part of the recent consultation made

the case for a Selective Licensing Scheme for a specific area in Page Hall. We believe that this case still holds.

10.3.6 However, during the consultation we learned a lot about the local area and we listened carefully to the views of landlords and residents. We have therefore amended our proposal to focus on a smaller geographic area where challenges are most pronounced – with the rest of the proposed area being covered by the voluntary scheme that was the preferred choice of local landlords.

10.3.7 The additional enforcement activity – made possible by the Council's successful Government funding bid, will provide overall support and boost to the programme by ensuring that housing disrepair and tenancy mismanagement is dealt with strictly and quickly.

10.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

10.4.1 Stay as we are.

10.4.2 We could continue with the current regulatory approach and address a limited number of service requests on that basis. The approach would have some impact, but not in a forceful and targeted way.

10.4.3 Over the last decade there has been significant investment in the area, which has included Housing Market Renewal funding. However, despite this, the area has failed to see any improvements in the housing market in terms of demand and house prices. The Migration Impact Funding did have limited positive effect, although this was not provided for long enough to establish sustainable changes.

10.4.5 Our current reactive approach cannot focus enough on developing effective partnerships with other services, the voluntary sector and landlords. The investment in 'on the ground' support as a result of the scheme will help us take a more proactive approach.

10.4.6 **Introduce Selective Licensing within the whole of the designated area of Page Hall where consultation took place**

There is the option and general support from the community to introduce Selective Licensing across the whole area. This would result in around 900 private rented properties being required to licence.

10.4.7 But it was also clear throughout the consultation that landlords and residents felt that the majority of the problems occurred in the roads in the grid to the left hand side of Page Hall Road. This is backed up by the higher level of interventions from Private Housing Standards than anywhere else in the consultation area.

10.4.7 Demand for properties and house prices are also slightly in the area outside the proposed Scheme area. It is anticipated that the proposed Voluntary Registration Scheme for this area will see further improvements. It will be reviewed and may be considered for Selective Licensing at some point in the

future. The housing market will also be monitored to establish if prices are falling compared with other areas in the City.

11. THE PAGE HALL VOLUNTARY REGISTRATION SCHEME

11.1 The Executive Director, Communities submitted a report proposing to introduce a Voluntary Registration Scheme in a defined geographical area of Page Hall to the north of the City. The scheme would run alongside a Selective Licensing scheme in another part of Page Hall that was the subject of an additional report to Cabinet.

11.2 **RESOLVED:** That

- (a) the Voluntary Registration Scheme detailed in the report be approved;
- (b) the fee structure set out in paragraph 6.8 of the report and the scheme standards set out in Appendix D of the report be approved; and
- (c) delegated authority be given to the Director of Commissioning to amend the scheme standards and fee structure as appropriate.

11.3 Reasons for Decision

11.3.1 There is a high demand for private rented accommodation in Page Hall from new arrivals. This has led to some landlords letting their properties irresponsibly – e.g. not carrying out adequate tenancy management to support new arrivals to use local facilities appropriately and understand local cultural norms. We believe that better tenancy management support would help to tackle the related issues of anti-social behaviour and market weakness, and, most importantly, improve the lives of local residents.

11.3.2 Council officers in many departments are experiencing referrals to streets and properties where there are large numbers of residents congregating, properties that have large numbers of people living in them and associated noise nuisance, unsanitary conditions, property disrepair or lack of general maintenance, fly tipping and general household rubbish piled in yards.

11.3.3 The condition of properties and the local street scene is making the area less desirable. House prices are falling despite high demand for rental properties and most of the homes in the area are now privately rented. We believe that this imbalance in tenure, coupled with irresponsible letting practices, is making the area a worse place to live.

11.3.4 We met some private landlords operating in the area that were experienced, professional and responsible. They co-operate and respond to the advice of housing and environmental officers, but again, there were some that were reluctant to accept full landlord responsibilities and continue to refuse to meet their obligations to tenants and the local community.

11.3.5 During the consultation we learned a lot about the local area and we listened carefully to the views of landlords and residents. It became clear there was a smaller defined area that had the most concentrated problems, but some streets in the surrounding area also had issues – although less serious and not so highly concentrated. At Appendix E of the report, the map of interventions by the Private Housing Standards team shows the levels of activity in the Selective Licensing area, and the voluntary scheme area. For this reason our response is a twin track approach that proposes, alongside the legally enforceable Selective Licensing scheme proposed in another report on the agenda for this meeting, a Voluntary Registration Scheme in the remainder of the defined area.

11.3.6 The Voluntary Scheme was suggested by a number of landlords who were open to receiving education and advice about landlord responsibilities. This is an opportunity to deliver widespread training and advice programmes so that landlords build up a more open dialogue with the Council's housing inspection officers to improve their asset and their management abilities. It is anticipated that this will also help to drive up standards and improve the housing market in the whole of the area.

11.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

11.4.1 Stay as we are.

11.4.2 We could continue with the current regulatory approach and address a limited number of service requests on that basis. The approach would have some impact, but not in a forceful and targeted way.

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- 11.4.7 Demand for properties and house prices are also slightly better in the area outside the proposed Scheme area. It is anticipated that the proposed Voluntary Registration Scheme for this area will see further improvements. It will be reviewed and may be considered for Selective Licensing at some point in the future. The housing market will also be monitored to establish if prices are falling compared with other areas in the City.

12. PROVISIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL SETTLEMENT 2014/15

- 12.1 The Executive Director, Resources submitted a report providing Members with details of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2014/15 and 2015/16.

- 12.2 **RESOLVED:** That the financial impacts set out in the report as a result of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement announced on 18th December 2013 be noted.

12.3 Reasons for Decision

- 12.3.1 To formally record the financial impact of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2014/15 and 2015/16.

12.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

- 12.4.1 There were no alternative options proposed.

13. REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING 2013/14 (MONTH 7) AS AT 31/10/13

- 13.1 The Executive Director, Resources submitted a report providing the month 7 monitoring statement on the City Council's Revenue and Capital Budget for 2013/14.

13.2 RESOLVED: That Cabinet:-

- (a) notes the updated information and management actions provided by the report on the 2013/14 management position;
- (b) will give consideration to the use of the Public Health underspend, highlighted in paragraph 7 of the report, to either support the current budget pressures or be carried forward to support the 2014/15 budget;
- (c) in relation to the Capital Programme, approves:-
 - (a) 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 his nominated

officer, as appropriate, to award the necessary contracts following stage approval by Capital Programme Group;

- (b) the proposed variations and slippage in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (c) the acceptance of the grants in Appendix 2 of the report and notes the conditions and obligations attached to them and notes;
- (d) the latest position on the Capital Programme and the additions and variations approved under delegated authorities.

13.3 **Reasons for Decision**

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

13.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

13.4.1 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.

14. **SHEFFIELD COMMUNITY COVENANT ANNUAL REPORT 2013**

14.1 The Executive Director, Resources submitted a report updating Cabinet on the key achievements on the Community Covenant during 2013.

14.2 **RESOLVED:** That the progress made on the Community Covenant in Sheffield in the last year be noted.

14.3 **Reasons for Decision**

14.3.1 The Community Covenant ensures that services:-

- encourage local communities to support the Service community in their area;
- nurture understanding and awareness amongst the public of issues affecting the Armed Forces community;
- recognise the contribution made by the Armed Forces Community;
- remember the sacrifices made by the Armed Forces community;
- encourage activities which help to integrate the Armed Forces Community into local life;
- encourage the Armed Forces community to help and support the wider community

The annual report provides information on the progress of these aims.

14.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

14.4.1 There were no alternative options presented for consideration.

15. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE, HRA BUDGET AND RENT INCREASE 2014/15

15.1 The Executive Directors, Communities, Place and Resources submitted a joint report providing the 2014/15 update to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan. The report also presented a 2014/15 revenue budget for the HRA.

15.2 **RESOLVED:** That this Cabinet recommends to the meeting of the City Council on 5th February, 2014 that :-

- (a) the HRA Business Plan update report for 2014/15 be approved;
- (b) the HRA Revenue Budget for 2014/15 as set out in Appendix B to the report be approved;
- (c) the rent increase for Council dwellings by an average of 6.2% from April 2014 be approved;
- (d) the rents for Council dwellings being set at target rent, when re-let following vacancy, from April 2014 be approved;
- (e) the increase of annual rents for garages and garage sites by an average of 6.2% from April 2014 be approved;
- (f) the increase of community heating charges by 3% in 2014/15 be approved;
- (g) it notes that it may be necessary to amend the sheltered housing service charge, in the event of a review of the service, if the Supported Housing Subsidy changes as part of the Council's wider budget setting process;
- (h) it resolves that charges for furnished accommodation and temporary accommodation are not increased;
- (i) it delegates authority to the Director of Commissioning, Communities to amend the burglar alarm charge in 2014/15 in line with the costs incurred under the new contract. Until the contract is in place and the charges are known the burglar alarm charge will remain unchanged; and
- (j) it delegates authority to the Director of Commissioning, Communities and the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods to authorise prudential borrowing as allowed under current Government guidelines.

15.3 Reasons for Decision

- 15.3.1 To maximise the financial resources to deliver key outcomes on key services in the context of a self-financing funding regime.
- 15.3.2 To contribute to making neighbourhoods a great place to live by ensuring continued investment into Sheffield's Council housing.
- 15.3.3 To continue to plan for the long term sustainability of services whilst taking every opportunity to introduce service improvements.

15.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

- 15.4.1 To increase rents for Council dwellings by less than the Government formula – The Government's self-financing debt settlement of 2012 assumed an amount of rental income over 30 years which was in line with the National Social Rent policy and was deemed sufficient to support the debt allocated to Council housing in Sheffield and the delivery of Council housing in the long term. Although the social rent policy is changing, the level of debt to be supported has not and so a reduction in income has a direct impact on the capacity of the plan.
- 15.4.2 Not to prioritise a Council housing stock increase programme – the reinvigoration of the Government's Right to Buy policy means that if the Council is to retain any 'additional' receipts generated by the increased sales discounts now available to tenants, the receipt must be used as a contribution (30% maximum) to new affordable housing. Forecasts in 2013 suggest the level of such receipts will be significant in the coming years. The alternative to retaining these receipts would be to pass the receipts to a registered provider such as a housing association. Retaining the receipt in the HRA allows the Council to invest in new Council housing units to offset Right to Buy losses in a way which is beneficial to the plan, tenants and potential Council tenants over the long term.

(NOTE:1.This item is referred for approval by the City Council and cannot, therefore, be called in for scrutiny; and
2. The report on the Housing Revenue Account will be circulated to all Council Members).

16. SPITAL HILL SHOP FRONTAGE IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

- 16.1 The Executive Director, Place submitted a report seeking approval for a proposed Spital Hill Shop Front Improvement Scheme (The Scheme) to be delivered under the Successful Centres Programme.
- 16.2 It was reported that there were errors in the appendix. Paragraph 3.2 should read a maximum of £4,500 per shop and not £5,000 and the last sentence of paragraph 2.7 should refer to a take up of at least 90% not 80%.
- 16.3 **RESOLVED:** That Cabinet:-

- (a) approves the proposed Shop Front Improvement Scheme detailed in the report and set out in the appendix (subject to the maximum amount of assistance that can be paid to each shop being £4500 as in the report) to the report be approved;
- (b) delegates authority to the Head of Commercial Services to finalise the procurement process, evaluate tenders and select the contractor to deliver the works under the above scheme, in accordance with Council procedures; and
- (c) delegates authority to the Director of Commercial Services, in consultation with the Director of Legal and Governance and the Director of Finance to negotiate and agree the terms of appointment with the Contractor selected to deliver the works for the above scheme.

16.4 Reasons for Decision

- 16.4.1 The Successful Centres Strategy approved by the North East Community Assembly in 2012 identified the importance of improving the appearance of the streetscape and public realm within the Spital Hill District Centre as well as improving Ellesmere Green as two of the top priorities for the community.
- 16.4.2 The proposed scheme will support independent traders and help to boost the confidence and image of the centre, increase the footfall to improve the local economy.

16.5 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

- 16.5.1 Do nothing – This would mean leaving any improvement to the market. However, the current economic climate is not conducive to this, as there is already widespread market failure and there is a strong risk of Spital Hill District Centre falling into further decline.
- 16.5.2 As proposed – the Scheme aims to deliver a project that will deliver the agreed objectives for Spital Hill District Centre outlined in the Successful Centres Strategy to improve the viability, use and appearance of the centre.
- 16.5.3 Another option is a scheme providing loans to owners to carry out the shop front improvements – in order for the scheme to be successful, the majority of independent traders need to participate so that a sufficient impact can be made on the street scene. In the current economic climate, owners will find it difficult to make substantial payments to fund the whole costs of shop front improvements.

17. SHEFFIELD DRUG AND ALCOHOL CO-ORDINATION TEAM COMMISSIONING AND PROCUREMENT PLAN

- 17.1 The Executive Director, Communities submitted a report setting out the work undertaken by the Sheffield Drug and Alcohol Co-ordination Team to develop a commissioning and procurement plan for publicly funded community drug and alcohol treatment in Sheffield.

17.2 RESOLVED: That Cabinet:-

- (a) notes and approves the Sheffield Drug and Alcohol Community Treatment Commissioning and Procurement Plan, including the model of 'end to end' services and the associated cost savings as outlined in the report;
- (b) delegates authority to the Director of Commissioning, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Health, Care and Independent Living and Homes and Neighbourhoods and Director of Commercial Services to approve the Procurement Strategy for the tenders for each service;
- (c) delegates authority to the Director of Commissioning and Director of Commercial Services in consultation with the Director of Legal and Governance to agree contract terms and approve a contract award following the tender process; and
- (d) delegates authority to the Director of Commissioning in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Health, Care and Independent Living and Homes and Neighbourhoods and the ability to take such steps as he thinks appropriate to achieve the outcomes outlined in the report.

17.3 Reasons for Decision

- 17.3.1 The proposals in the report are based on a robust commissioning process. There is an annual process of detailed analysis of local need and trends carried out to inform local commissioning. There is proactive quarterly performance monitoring on currently commissioned services which have been used to identify good practice and shortcomings within the current model and provision. There is reference to national strategy, performance indicators, funding models and national clinical and good practice guidelines moderated against local need and demand. These processes have informed the development of the commissioning and procurement plan and the associated service specifications.
- 17.3.2 There has been further reference to the investment that successful drug treatment completions bring to the City in the form of the Public Health Grant and the expected Health Premium. There is a need to commission effectively and resource sufficiently in order to secure the outcomes required to maximise the investment and potential gains through the Health Premium. This is balanced against the financial pressures experienced by Sheffield City Council and the need to spread any investment across a range of public health outcomes. The commissioning and procurement plan recommends cost savings of £1.2m across 3 years as achievable without negative impact on service users, communities and performance.
- 17.3.3 The report follows 6 month internal consultation within Sheffield City Council on the outline commissioning and procurement plan which set out the proposed type and volume of treatment to be commissioned and the associated costs and savings from the commissioning model. A further 8 week Public and Stakeholder consultation was launched on 4th November 2013 and the outcomes of this were

included as an appendix to the main report.

17.3.4 Commissioning and Finance within the Communities Portfolio, Commercial Services and the Director of Public Health have been key stakeholders in the development of this plan.

17.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

17.4.1 The “Do Nothing” option of re-tendering all current services using the same model and specifications was considered as part of this process. This option was rejected because the current system was only ever an interim position in the total reconfiguration of the treatment system which commenced in 2009. Option 1 does not address the current problems in the system of non-value adding steps, hand offs and unnecessary transfers for clients to receive support. It does not address current performance issues of a plateau in treatment exits. It does not rebalance the treatment system towards non opiates. It does not achieve the required cost savings.

17.4.2 Combine drug and alcohol services into single services. This option was rejected because it does not meet the current expressed preferences of alcohol service users to be treated separate from drug users. It does not ensure a differentiated offer or distinct culture of service for non-opiate users as a minority group within drug and alcohol treatment services. This will be retained as an option in future procurements as the treatment population changes and is less dominated by opiate use (assuming the current trend continues and 10% of the opiate using population leave treatment successfully and do not return).