

THE "CALL IN" PERIOD FOR THIS SET OF MINUTES ENDS AT 12 NOON ON WEDNESDAY, 22 DECEMBER 2010. MINUTE NOS. 120 AND 122 ARE NOT SUBJECT TO "CALL-IN"

CABINET MEMBER - TECHNICAL SERVICES

**MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, BOOTLE
ON WEDNESDAY 15 DECEMBER 2010**

PRESENT: Councillor Fairclough

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Jones and Tonkiss

117. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

118. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

119. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1 DECEMBER 2010

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2010 be confirmed as a correct record.

120. THORNTON SWITCH ISLAND LINK - BEST AND FINAL FUNDING BID

The Cabinet Member considered the report of the Planning and Economic Development Director indicating that in October 2010 the Department for Transport (DfT) advised the Council that the Thornton Switch Island Link, that had previously been granted Programme Entry within the Department's Major Scheme Funding Programme, had further to the Comprehensive Spending Review, been prioritised in the Supported Pool of schemes; that the Supported Pool status meant that the DfT were prepared to find funding support for the scheme subject to agreeing a 'best and final funding bid'; and that the purpose of the report was to seek approval to the Council's 'best and final funding bid' prior to submission to the DfT by the deadline of 4 January 2011.

The report concluded that the funding package set out in the report and the required DfT form was considered deliverable within the current allocation in the Council's Capital Programme, with an allowance for additional units that were the scheme promoter's responsibility.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report on the Thornton Switch Island Link be noted;

- (2) the Cabinet be recommended to approve the funding proposals included in the report, including the Council's contribution for submission to the Department for Transport as the Council's 'best and final funding bid' for apportioning funding commitment for the scheme; and
- (3) it be noted that the proposal was a Key Decision but, unfortunately, had not been included in the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions. Consequently, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Performance and Corporate Services) had been consulted under Rule 15 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules of the Constitution, to the decision being made by the Cabinet as a matter of urgency on the basis that it was impracticable to defer the decision until the commencement of the next Forward Plan because to do so would result in a failure to meet the required deadline for action.

121. 52 CHURCH ROAD SEAFORTH - REFUSAL OF PLANNING APPLICATION S/2010/1408 FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A VEHICULAR ACCESS TO A CLASSIFIED ROAD

The Cabinet Member considered the report of the Planning and Economic Development Director on Application No. S/2010/1408 for planning permission for the construction of a vehicular access at 52 Church Road, Seaforth to a classified road; and indicating that a decision on this matter was required as the Cabinet Member had delegated powers in respect of such matters where highway grounds were the sole reason for planning refusal.

The report indicated that the Traffic Services Manager had concerns over the application and detailed the reasons why he considered that the application should be refused.

RESOLVED:

That the Planning Committee be requested to refuse Application No. S/2010/1408 for the construction of a vehicular access at 52 Church Road, Seaforth on the grounds that the development would lead to conditions which are considered to be detrimental to highway safety.

122. MERSEYSIDE ENGINEERS LABORATORY SERVICE (MELS)

The Cabinet Member considered the report of the Planning and Economic Director advising of the current situation with regard to the support and funding for the Merseyside Engineers Laboratory Service (MELS) for which Sefton Council was the lead authority and accountable body on behalf of the five Merseyside Districts; and highlighting the current and future budget situation that impacted on the viability of the Business Unit and hence staff resources.

The report indicated that over recent financial years the volume of commissions placed with MELS by Constituent Authorities had declined; that the Constituent Authorities were all concerned about the increasing demand to cover deficits in the operational budget from revenue budgets at a time when substantial cuts were under consideration and that as a consequence, the future of the service had been reviewed and a number of options considered; and that it was now recommended that taking into account the views of the Constituent Authorities, Sefton Council as lead Authority should give notice to withdraw its consent to be Designated Council and to terminate the formal Agreement.

The report concluded that the proposed termination of the Agreement was considered the appropriate way forward to reduce the unsustainable demands on revenue budgets; and that it should be noted that this would involve a reduction in staff, to be achieved through the Council's normal personnel procedures and if necessary compulsory redundancies. Under the terms of the Agreement all the Merseyside District Authorities would be responsible for considering redeployment opportunities and to share any costs.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet be recommended to:

- (1) note the Merseyside Districts Authorities' view that sufficient funding and hence commissions will not be available in the foreseeable future to maintain the Merseyside Engineers Laboratory Services as a viable Business Unit;
- (2) in accordance with the Service Agreement with the Merseyside Districts Authorities, the withdrawal of Sefton Council's consent to act as Designated Council and the termination of the MELS Agreement be approved; and
- (3) officers continue to seek the full co-operation of the partner District Authorities to seek redeployment of the staff and to explore opportunities for the potential future utilisation of these specialist skills and equipment, including by private sector interests.