NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

At a meeting of the Cabinet held at County Hall, Morpeth on Wednesday 2 November 2016 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillor J.G. Davey
(Leader of the Council, in the Chair)

CABINET MEMBERS

Arckless, G.R.          Ledger, D.
Dungworth, S.          Reid, J.
Hepple, A.          Swithenbank, I.C.F.
Jackson, P.A.       Tyler, V.
Kelly, P.

OTHER MEMBERS

Armstrong, E.           Hutchinson, J.I.
Dickinson, S.          Pidcock, B.
Dodd, R.R.         Richards, M.E.
Gobin, J.J.        Sambrook, A.G.
Homer, C.              Simpson, E.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Hadfield, K.                  Committee Services Manager
Henry, L.                      Legal Services Manager
Ketley, M.                     Head of Planning Services
Lally, D.                 Deputy Chief Executive
Mason, S                       Chief Executive
Rowlinson, D.                   Senior Planner
Sanderson, J.                  Planning and Housing Policy
Soderquest, P.                Head of Housing

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37. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on Tuesday, 11 October 2016, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

38. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Councillor Hepple disclosed an interest in the urgent business item which had been circulated to be dealt with later on the agenda (Transfer of Homes for Northumberland Limited assets and liabilities to Northumberland County Council), as a Board Member and Chair of the HfN Board.

Councillor Reid disclosed an interest in item 7 on the agenda (Loan to Arch Commercial Enterprise Ltd) as a Board member of Arch. This applied to other Board members present.

Mr Henry reminded the members involved that Councillor Hepple had received a dispensation from the Standards Committee for HfN matters at Cabinet, and that all Arch Board members had received a dispensation from the Standards Committee to participate to the fullest extent as councillors in Arch related matters.

39. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND ECONOMY

Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy
Pre-Submission Draft: Proposed Further Major Modifications

The report sought approval for the publication and consultation on the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy - Pre Submission Draft: Proposed Further Major Modifications and associated documents (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix A, along with the report of the Economic Growth and Strategic Transport OSC circulated at the meeting).

Some amendments to the report were circulated (copy also attached to the signed minutes).

Councillor Hepple introduced the report highlighting that approval was now being sought to go to consultation on major modifications. The proposed further major modifications related mainly to the proposal for a garden village at Dissington, changes to employment land allocations at Morpeth and preparation of a revised supplementary planning document for south east Ponteland.

Consultation would run from 11 November to 23 December and there would be two drop in events in Morpeth and Ponteland. Following consultation, Council would consider the submission document in February 2017 and
A number of points were raised by members, including:

- Councillor Jackson did not support the proposals because he did not feel that local concerns had been addressed, the evidence base for the proposals was questionable, they did not give protection to communities from development and created a developers’ charter, a definition was needed of “affordable homes” in the garden village development, green belt development was widely opposed locally as it was supposed to prevent encroachment from Newcastle City and there was nothing in the Strategy to bring economic growth or job creation.

- Councillor Kelly commented on Councillor Jackson’s negative view of the document and his resistance to his Group being involved in the LDF Cabinet Advisory Group, whose work had resulted in the current stage of progress. He reiterated that all evidence had been objectively assessed by external bodies and the document currently reflected an informed view. Each piece of evidence had been examined and integrated into the document by officers, who were to be commended for their work, and he had every confidence in the end result.

- Councillor Reid queried the position with the core strategy should the garden village expression of interest not be approved by government, and asked whether its inclusion within the core strategy would open it up for the development of 2000 houses regardless. Mark Ketley advised that the report to Cabinet in July, when the submission of the expression of interest had been approved, had proposed the inclusion of this in the core strategy even if government support for the garden village initiative was not received. On that basis, Councillor Reid advised that he could not support the report.

- The Leader advised that these 2000 homes would form part of the Council’s overall figure of new homes to achieve. Councillor Jackson queried what the Council’s allocated figure was. Mark Ketley advised that one million new houses needed to be built by 2020 and garden village developments were a key delivery mechanism of that.

- Councillor Jackson queried what the population of the greater Ponteland area was projected to be over the next 15 years which officers agreed to provide.

- In response to some of the comments made, Councillor Hepple advised that starter homes costing up to £250,000 were now included in the Government’s definition of “affordable”, the Council was supporting a government initiative in its bid for a garden village, the public could not be denied the opportunity to comment on the proposals by rejecting the report’s recommendations and housing development was a good economic generator, which was much needed in the County.

- Councillor Ledger reminded members that the final decision on the core strategy would be made by the Government Inspector and the
arguments being put forward now would be taken into consideration then.

- With the Chair’s permission, Councillor Dodd queried, should the garden village proposal be approved, whether all of the 500 affordable homes would be located within his division or elsewhere. Mark Ketley advised that this was covered by garden village policy DGV2. Under the garden village scheme, 30% of housing would have to be affordable either on the garden village site, or in the wider Ponteland area, and this could include a range and mix of tenures.

On the recommendations being put to the vote there voted **FOR: 8; AGAINST: 1 (PAJ); ABSTENTIONS: 1 (JR).**

**RESOLVED** that:-

(a) approval be given to the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy - Pre Submission Draft: Proposed Further Major Modifications for consultation;

(b) approval be given to the Draft South East Ponteland Supplementary Planning Document for consultation;

(c) authority be delegated to the Director of Planning and Economy, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Growth, to approve any non-material amendments to the final text of the consultation documents prior to commencement of the formal consultation; and

(d) the report of the Economic Growth and Strategic Transport OSC be noted.

40. **URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chair advised that he had two items of urgent business as follows:-

(1) **Transfer of Homes for Northumberland Limited assets and liabilities to Northumberland County Council.**

The report asked Cabinet to agree to the approval of the transfer to Northumberland County Council of the 22 properties built by Homes for Northumberland Ltd at Allendale and the transfer of the remaining assets/liabilities of Homes for Northumberland Ltd to facilitate the company being wound up (copy attached to the signed minutes).

The report was urgent because of the need to finalise accounts and close the HfN company within the current financial year in order to avoid incurring any further costs.

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Phil Soderquest advised members that twenty two properties in Allendale remained in the ownership of HfN and the company could not be closed down with Companies House until ownership had been transferred to the County Council.

Councillor Reid accepted the need for the proposal but queried whether it was possible for any other stock to remain within the ownership of HfN which might have been overlooked. He suggested that this be investigated and authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to also arrange for the transfer of ownership to the County Council of any such properties should this be the case. Members agreed with this course of action.

RESOLVED that:-

(a) the transfer of the 22 properties built by Homes for Northumberland at Allendale at book value be approved;

(b) the transfer of the remaining assets/liabilities of Homes for Northumberland be approved to enable the company to be wound up;

(c) the Head of Housing investigate whether any further properties remain within the ownership of HfN, and should this be the case, authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to arrange for the transfer of ownership to the County Council.

(2) Notes of the Capital Works Cabinet Advisory Group

Cabinet was asked to receive the notes of the Capital Works Programme CAG held on 13 October 2016 and to agree all of the recommendations highlighted within Minute No.s 25(c)(1-5) and 25(e).

This was presented by Councillor Simpson who asked members to endorse the recommendations detailed above.

RESOLVED that the notes be received, and the recommendations highlighted within Minute No.s 25(c)(1-5) and 25(e) be approved.

41. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

(a) That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the Agenda as it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act, and
(b) That the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure for the following reasons:-

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<th>Agenda Item</th>
<th>Paragraph of Part I of Schedule 12A</th>
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| 7           | 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)  
The public interest in seeking this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure because of the serious consequences for the Authority and others if the information should come into the public domain. |

42. REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Loan to Arch Commercial Enterprise Ltd

The report sought the approval of members to provide a commercial loan to Arch Commercial Enterprise Ltd (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix B, coloured pink and marked, “Not for Publication”).

Before discussion on the item began, Councillor Jackson sought clarification of the position regarding disclosures of interest for members of the Arch Board. Mr Henry reminded members that Arch Board members who were also Cabinet members had a dispensation from the Standards Committee to participate to the fullest extent. Whilst he did not feel there was any conflict of interest, it was a matter for the individual member to decide upon. Councillor Jackson advised that he would participate in such issues at Cabinet, but not at Arch Board.

A number of points were raised by members.

On the recommendations being put to the vote, there voted FOR: 8; AGAINST: 2 (PAJ/JR); ABSTENTIONS: 0

RESOLVED that Council be recommended to agree the recommendations as detailed in the report.

CHAIR………………………………………..

DATE………………………………………..

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