

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

At a meeting of the **Cabinet** held in Committee Room 1, County Hall, Morpeth on Tuesday, 11 December 2018 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillor W. Daley
(Deputy Leader of the Council, in the Chair)

CABINET MEMBERS

Homer, C.
Jones, V.
Oliver, N.

Riddle, J.
Sanderson, H.G.H.
Wearmouth, R.

OTHER MEMBERS

Dickinson, S.
Dodd, R.R.
Dunn, L.

Flux, B.
Grimshaw, L.
Reid, J.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Angus, K.

Elsdon, A.
Hadfield, K.

Henry, L.
Lally, D.
Johnston, P.

Executive Director HR/OD and
Deputy Chief Executive
Service Director: Finance
Committee Services and Scrutiny
Manager
Legal Services Manager
Chief Executive
Interim Executive Director of Place

3 members of the press and public were present

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63. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Jackson.

64. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 13 November 2018, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

65. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Financial Performance 2018-19

The report informed the Cabinet of the current financial position for the Council against the Budget for 2018-19. An update was circulated at the meeting (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix A).

Councillor Oliver presented the report which updated members about performance against the budget. The budget was being constantly reviewed to make sure it was still on target. To date, £6.9m of the savings plan had been fully realised or was expected to be achieved by year end. Further work was required on £1.3m of savings.

The main budgetary pressures were in the Adult Wellbeing and Health, and Children's Services budgets. Adults had received additional funding of £1.5m. The predicted overspend at year end was £4.37m. In Children's Services, the predicted overspend at year end was £2.6m, despite additional funding of £3m. The budget for out of county placements was expected to overspend by £2m. He then detailed some of the under and overspends in the remaining budgets which were included in the report.

Mrs Elsdon referred to the update circulated, advising that the overall position had improved by £0.79m since the the original report, with a year end predicted revenue underspend of £1.25m. She reported that Executive Directors had been very good at finding compensating savings and keeping to budgets. This work was commended by members, and the significant successes in securing additional funding from government was noted and welcomed.

Councillor Daley agreed that it was important for each portfolio holder to hold officers regularly to account. Regarding out of county placements, these were expensive, but provided the support needed for the most vulnerable children. It was vital to get more done in County.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the report, and update, be noted; and
- (b) the projected underspend of £1.25 million be noted.

66. REPORT OF THE INTERIM DIRECTOR OF PLACE

Northumberland Economic Strategy 2019-2024

The report sought approval of the refreshed Northumberland Economic Strategy 2019-2024 (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix B).

Councillor Wearmouth advised that there were two parts to this report:-

- The opportunity had been taken to do a refresh in view of the number of changes which had taken place since the election. The refresh established priorities for more and better jobs with a focus on developing key sites for the location of large industry, and the regeneration of town centres such as Blyth, Ashington and Bedlington.
- The identification of funds to develop the Blyth Relief Road scheme through consultation and feasibility work. There were clear indications that funding packages were available for this work. The Strategy would also support a list of other key projects to take forward economic development in the County.

Member comments included:-

- Councillor Homer was proud to support the Strategy which she felt was aspirational but realistic. It identified the challenges and how the Council would deal with them. Tourism and the creative industries had been given the prominence they deserved given their importance to the economics of the County, and she looked forward to working with Councillor Wearmouth in future projects.
- Councillor Daley supported the Strategy as another example of joined up working between different strands of the Council's services. It was ambitious, which was to be welcomed, and demonstrated passion and a willingness to improve lives.
- Councillor Oliver commented that town centre regeneration was key to economic success and he also welcomed the initiatives for rural job creation.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the draft Northumberland Economic Strategy 2019-2024 as attached to the report be approved;

- (b) the creation of the Regeneration Investment Group and its associated processes and sub-groups as the basis by which the Council will maintain the delivery of regeneration initiatives be welcomed; and
- (c) Cabinet approve the release of £95,000 from the Council's reserves to continue the development of the business case for Blyth Relief Road.

67. REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR - LOCAL SERVICES

Additional Local Transport Plan Capital 2018-19

The report sought Cabinet's approval to include additional funding of £7.732m received by the Council from the Department for Transport for Local Transport Plan Capital Block Funding for 2018/19 within the Council's capital programme (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix C).

Councillor Sanderson was pleased to report this very good news for the County, which would go some way to repair the damage caused by last winter's floods and snow. The funding would be used as follows:-

- Bridge repair programme.
- Road resurfacing programme across the County.
- Minor roads in rural areas.
- £1.5m to Area Managers to spend in their areas on refurbishing roads and drainage works.
- £1m to improve the infrastructure in industrial estates.

Councillor Riddle welcomed the report and supported work being done to clear drains which had been long blocked. This was important in keeping water off the roads to preserve their integrity. He asked that consideration also be given to sapling trees and self seeding which often contributed to drains being blocked.

Councillor Sanderson also wished to record his appreciation to all of the staff involved in the recent reorganisation of the bin collection routes, which had gone really well thanks to the hard work of the staff.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the additional £7.732m funding received by the Council from the Department for Transport for Local Transport Plan Capital Block Funding for 2018/19 be included within the Council's capital programme; and

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- (b) it be noted that the detail of the proposed programme for expenditure of the additional Local Transport Plan funding will be agreed by the Service Director – Local Services and the Cabinet Member for Environment and Local Services in accordance with arrangements for the Local Transport Plan capital programme.

68. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair advised that he had agreed to one item of urgent business. As the report was a confidential one, it would be considered under Part II of the agenda.

69. 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 involved 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 outweighed the public interest in disclosure for the following reasons:-

Agenda Item	Paragraph of Part I of Schedule 12A
9	3 - Information relating to (the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the interest in disclosure because of the importance of ensuring that the Council is able to make use of commercially sensitive information shared by care providers, and because of the need to ensure that the fairness of the forthcoming procurement process is not compromised.

70. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ADULTS' AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Home Care Services

The report described current issues affecting commissioned home care services, and sought approval for a procurement exercise to appoint home

care providers from April 2019, with modifications to the existing contract to strengthen currently fragile services (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix D, coloured pink and marked Not for Publication).

Councillor Jones presented the report, highlighting the key points.

Members welcomed the proposals detailed in the report, and in particular, that the arrangements would enable good quality, smaller providers to bid credibly to operate as preferred providers in areas where the preferred provider was not able to meet all referrals, and potentially become future bidders for a preferred provider role. There would also be an explicit recognition of a second tier of providers in each area as back up where needed. Members noted that the providers were positive about the direction of travel.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the current issues about arranging reliable and good quality home care which were described in the report be noted;
- (b) the proposed changes to contractual arrangements with home care providers described in the report be noted;
- (c) a procurement process be launched based on the revised contractual arrangements; and
- (d) authority be delegated to the Council's statutory director of adults' and children's services the authority to approve the award of contracts following the procurement process, with the agreement of the Executive Director of Finance.

71. REPORT OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PLACE

Ford Castle Dilapidation Settlement

The report contained exempt information of the description in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 in that it contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosure because the Council was in dispute over the dilapidation claim and any settlement offer had to remain confidential in order not to prejudice the Council's position if the matter went to trial.

The report sought approval to settle the outstanding dilapidation claim following the termination of the lease held by the County Council in respect of

Ford Castle on 30 September 2016 (copy attached to the signed minutes, coloured pink and marked Not for Publication).

The report was urgent following a formal mediation between the Trustees of the Fourth Lord Joiceys Grandchildren's Settlement and Northumberland Council which had been held on Thursday 6 December 2018. The Council had until Wednesday 12 December 2018 to authorise a final settlement offer.

RESOLVED that settlement of the dilapidation claim be agreed as detailed in the report, and charged against the provision established for it.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....

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