

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

At a meeting of the **Cabinet** held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Morpeth on Monday 29 April 2019 at 9.00am.

PRESENT

Councillor P. Jackson
(Leader of the Council, in the Chair)

CABINET MEMBERS

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

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

OTHER MEMBERS

Dodd, R.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Angus, K.	Executive Director HR/OD and Deputy Chief Executive
Hadfield, K.	Committee Services and Scrutiny Manager
Henry, L.	Legal Services Manager
Johnson, P.	Interim Executive Director of Place
Lally, D.	Chief Executive
McEvoy-Carr, C.	Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services
Roll, J.	Democratic Services Manager
Scholes, A.	Interim Executive Director of Finance
Soderquest, P.	Head of Housing and Public Protection
Stewart, J.	Strategic Housing Manager

2 members of the press and public were in attendance.

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99. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 9 April 2019, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

100. REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF HR/OD AND DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

(1) Values Implementation Plan for the Council

Cabinet was asked to approve the Council's revised mission, vision and values and endorse the Implementation Plan to embed the across the Council (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix A).

The report was presented by Councillor Oliver. The work had been led by the HR team in order to align the Plan to the current Corporate Plan and to put the focus more on residents. The process had been a very comprehensive one, with a bottom up approach taken, involving focus groups and staff from different departments, resulting in a set of meaningful values. The values were:-

- Residents First
- Excellence and Quality
- Respect
- Keeping our communities safe and well

The Plan was an important tool which would be embedded into all HR policies, and a comprehensive implementation programme would ensure that the Plan was rolled out across all departments.

Members were advised that the Values had been very much driven by individual staff contributions. They had been tested and the final Values were practical, comprehensive and represented what was really important to staff.

The Leader commented that this report was very much about bringing back a focus on residents which had been missing in recent years. He would have liked to have seen more examples highlighted in the report of the way staff responded above and beyond to the needs of residents, often in extreme circumstances, such as in spells of bad weather. There were many other examples of excellent individual working with children and old people that the general public just weren't aware of. There was a role for the Council to support communities across the County and he was confident that the Values would be properly embedded and used by staff every day.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Cabinet endorse the revised vision and values and support the implementation plan to embed the Council's vision, mission, key objectives and values across the Council; and
 - (b) further updates be received as required.
- (2) Changes to the Salary Structure for NJC Staff within Northumberland County Council**

During 2018, the National Joint Council (NJC) for England and Wales, consulted on proposed changes with trade union colleagues at a national level for the introduction of a new pay spine with effect from 1st April 2019 as part of a two year pay agreement for staff on NJC terms and conditions. The report requested endorsement for the approach taken by Northumberland County Council in respect of seeking and reaching agreement locally for staff in respect of the proposed introduction of the new pay spine. The NJC guidance did not set out a specific approach to adopting the new pay spine and local employers were advised that they should consider various options and present formal proposals around which there would be local negotiations with a view to reaching an agreement. The report set out the agreement which had been reached with trade unions, and which was proposed to be implemented in April 2019 (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix B).

Councillor Oliver set out the background to the report. Option B offered a better deal for staff and was being recommended to members, though this was slightly more expensive for the Council. This option was better for lower paid staff and was the preferred option for trade union colleagues. It supported the Council's ambition for staff to be ahead of the national minimum wage and meant some staff would get a significant pay rise. He commended the report to members.

The Leader remarked that these proposals would allow front line staff to be rewarded, which had been a long held belief for his members. They were very much valued for the work they did.

Councillor Sanderson supported this, adding that front line staff were the conduit between the Council and its residents. The quality of work delivered

and the pride in it was very impressive, and it was absolutely right that they should be repaid for this.

Councillor Jones agreed that it was important that the lowest grade was above the national minimum wage.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the Council's approach to introducing the new NJC guidance for Spinal Column Point Changes as outlined in Appendix A to the report be endorsed; and
- (b) further updates be received as required.

101. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Equalities Education

Cabinet was asked to explore the current offer of equalities education within Northumberland Schools (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix C).

The report was presented by Councillor Daley who provided some background to the current position, highlighting that the revised Ofsted Inspection Framework now required schools to challenge all forms of discrimination. He had a number of discussions and had had a recent positive meeting with Show Racism the Red Card representatives. He had, today, received a statement from Show Racism the Red Card which he read from as follows:-

“Show Racism the Red Card would like to place on record our thanks to Northumberland County Council (NCC) for supporting our charity since 1996 and in particular the funding of our schools work over the last 10 years. We are unhappy with the press and media claiming that we have ended our relationship with Northumberland County Council, as that is simply not the case. We are still working in Northumberland schools and have plans to apply to the Council for delivering Teacher Training in the future.”

Councillor Daley referred to the disappointing media storm around this whole issue. He had great pride in the work undertaken by the Council on fairness and equality in schools and denounced any slur to the contrary. He then highlighted some of the £137,000 worth of time, resource and work

commitments which had been undertaken in the last couple of years which included:-

- Two Stonewall workshops annually £1,000
- 12 half or full day hate crime awareness workshops in schools from the Police £7,200
- Trinity Youth 2 half day training through Early Help offer £1,000
- Trinity Youth free support groups in schools £4,000
- YOS individual interventions re rate and hate £2,000
- “Casework” 50 half day interventions £12,500
- Holocaust Memorial Day commemorations two staff for three days £3,000
- Resources developed and shared with all schools for Refugee Week, Black History/LGBTHM month £1,500
- Free conference teach meets £8,250
- Race equality/gender/identity/sexual orientation training events support and facilitation £1,000
- GEO Stonewall funded projects for eligible schools £3,500
- Poverty and Pupil Premium Conference, summer projects £60,000
- Council staff time allocated to these events £10,000
- Police hate crime Independent Advisory Group[membership and co-production of strategies and resources to prevent and challenge hate crime, radicalisation and extremism - 14 days annually £7,000

Councillor Daley referred to the Equalities Fund which would become available to commission bespoke and targeted interventions and workshops. Show Racism the Red Card would be able to apply to that fund and he was proud that the Council was leading on this strong message to communities.

Members warmly supported the initiatives and were proud of the work being done. The Council was recognised by Stonewall as one of the top five local authorities nationally for anti-discriminatory LGBT inclusion, and all members had a responsibility to promote equalities issues.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the decision not to renew the Service level agreement with Show Racism the Red Card be noted; and
- (b) Cabinet support the alternative ways in which the funding will be used to help schools to tackle all forms of prejudice and discrimination, meet the new OFSTED inspection requirements from September 2019 and implement statutory Relationships Education from September 2020.

102. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chairman agreed to take an item of urgent business. The report was urgent because of the need to commence the consultation process before the next meeting of Cabinet would take place.

Housing Strategy for Northumberland 2019-2021

The report presented members with the draft Housing Strategy for Northumberland 2019-2021 providing details of the proposed strategic objectives for the Council's Housing Service for the following three years.

Councillor Riddle advised that legislative changes meant that the Strategy needed to be updated to reflect both these, and the current Corporate Plan, which aimed to support the delivery of affordable housing whilst supporting rural communities and encouraging community led housing. The Local Plan would also set a minimum requirement on housing numbers and specifically affordable housing. The report requested a four week consultation and the results would be considered by Scrutiny and Cabinet. A delivery plan detailing the Council's plans for delivery would be produced separately for discussion.

RESOLVED that the draft Housing Strategy, which outlines Northumberland's housing vision, priorities and ambitions, be approved for consultation.

103. 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:-

Agenda Item	Paragraph of Part I of Schedule 12A
8	3 - Information relating to (the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in

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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 relating to the contract.

104. REPORT OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PLACE

Street Lighting Modernisation Project - Contractual Dispute

The report informed Cabinet of the current status of the Council's Street Lighting Modernisation Project in terms of progress towards completion of works, forecast budget outturn position and areas of contractual dispute. The report also sought approval for an additional capital budget allocation to meet on-going payments up to contract completion (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix D).

Councillor Sanderson detailed the historic issues which had led to the current position, and which were now having to be addressed. Briefly, these were:-

- Poor communication and a lack of oversight of project costs and benefits
- Lack of recognition of the risks
- Inconsistencies in the contractual documents and figures

He reported that 97% of the work had now been completed and it was hoped that the programme would be finished by September. Members also discussed the financial implications of the programme, including prospective cost savings, reduced energy usage and the revenue impact from additional capital input.

RESOLVED that recommendations 1 to 5, as detailed in the report, be agreed.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....