

## **CABINET DECISIONS ON REPORTS PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED BY THE CORPORATE SERVICES AND ECONOMIC GROWTH OSC**

The following reports were presented to the OSC on 11 November 2019 for comment prior to determination by the Cabinet.

The following is an extract from the Cabinet minutes of 12 November 2019 when considering those reports:

### **(1) Budget 2020-21 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2020-2023**

The report provided an update on the development of the 2020-21 Budget and the Medium Term Financial Plan covering the period 2020 to 2023. It also detailed budget proposals for 2020-21 to meet the budget gap, as a basis for budget consultation, prior to the receipt of the Local Government Finance Settlement 2020-21 in December 2019 (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix A, along with the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC circulated at the meeting).

The report was introduced by Councillor Oliver who advised that the report detailed the current interim position. A lot of work had been done since the last budget on the savings plan and on the 2020-21 budget. £9.8m of savings needed to be identified and he was confident that a deliverable budget would be achieved, but it would be an ongoing process until next February to get there. Confirmation was still awaited of funding in many areas following the delay in the Spending Round, and there was also much political uncertainty, but hopefully the election would bring some clarification.

He detailed the main points of the report:-

- Savings would be made across all areas
- Modest Council Tax rises
- Invest to save measures and activity to improve the efficiency of the Council
- Alignment to the Corporate Plan
- Key areas of savings were highlighted within the services
- Central functions - new officers had been recruited to improve efficiency and drive forward collaborative working; training budgets would be centralised; long vacant posts were being examined; further changes to the management structure were planned, lots of work on digital transformation.

The report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC had been circulated. Councillor Oliver referred to the main points and advised that the Committee had supported the report's recommendations.

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (a) the revisions to the assumptions within the 2020-21 Budget be noted;
- (b) the budget balancing measures for 2020-21 totalling £9.800 million be approved as a basis for budget consultation, prior to the receipt of the Local Government Finance Settlement 2020-21;
- (c) it be noted that further work is required to refine the Medium Term Financial Plan and that there are still budget balancing measures required to be identified over the term of the Medium Term Financial Plan; and
- (d) the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC be noted.

**(2) Governance for the Borderlands Partnership**

The report outlined the governance arrangements for the delivery of the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal by the Borderlands Partnership, and its immediate implications for the County Council (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix D, along with the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC circulated at the meeting).

This report was presented by Councillor Oliver, who highlighted the main points:-

- Heads of Terms had now been signed on this very exciting deal of around £70m.
- This was a great opportunity to work with similar authorities
- Operating costs of around £118,000 needed to be found to run the project
- The programmes and projects relevant to Northumberland were - Quality of Place, Destination Borderlands, Digital, Business Infrastructure, Rural Innovation and Energy.
- Formal governance arrangements would be put in place as detailed in paragraph 5 of the report.
- The Economic Forum would include business community members and would collectively support and guide the activities of the growth deal. The County Council would be the accountable body this side of the border.
- Officers of the County Council had played leading roles in developing the deal.

Members spoke in full support of the report, welcomed the opportunity to work more closely with neighbouring authorities, and acknowledged both the work so far to get to this point, and the ongoing work on business cases.

The report from the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC had been circulated. Councillor Oliver advised that there had been a detailed discussion at the meeting and members had supported the report. The Committee had been advised that further funding could become available and officers were talking to the Government about other projects which were in the pipeline for development.

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (a) the Collaboration Agreement be approved as the basis for providing the

Governance Framework for the delivery of the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal by the Borderlands Partnership whilst recognising that the County Council will act as the accountable body for funds invested by the UK Government in England and as the host authority for the staff recruited to the Programme Management Office (PMO);

- (b) it be agreed that the operating costs associated with the delivery of the Growth Deal are shared equitably between the participating authorities as detailed at para 19;
- (c) Cabinet approve funding of £118,000 (£14,000 2019-20 and £104,000 2020-21) recurrently for the phase 1 Growth Deal Operating Costs from the Council's contingency with subsequent authority given to the Leader and Chief Executive, as required, to approve future variations to this amount; and
- (d) the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC, and the comments made, be noted.

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