

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

At a meeting of the **Cabinet** held at County Hall, Morpeth on Tuesday 11 April 2017 at 10.00am.

PRESENT

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

CABINET MEMBERS

Arckless, G.R.
Dungworth, S.
Hepple, A.
Kelly, P.

Ledger, D.
Swithenbank, I.C.F.
Tyler, V. (part)

OTHER MEMBERS

Nisbet, K.
Pidcock, B.
Sambrook, A.G.

Simpson, E.
Wallace, A.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Hadfield, K.

Henry, L.
Johnson, A.
Lally, D.
Mason, S

Committee Services and Scrutiny
Manager
Legal Services Manager
Director of Education and Skills
Deputy Chief Executive
Chief Executive

83. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Dickinson, Jackson and Reid.

84. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on Tuesday 7 March 2017, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

85. REPORTS OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

(1) Potential Loan to Alnwick Town Council

The report provided details of a potential loan facility to Alnwick Town Council for £190,000. The Town Council would subsequently lend £190,000 to Alnwick Town Juniors Football Club for the provision of new club house facilities including, changing rooms, toilets and club room (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix A, along with the report of the Corporate Resources and Regional Affairs OSC circulated at the meeting).

The Leader introduced the report, highlighting that the proposals had been supported by both the Risk Appraisal Panel and Scrutiny, and providing some detail to the background of the proposal which involved support both for young players and their families.

In response to a query from Councillor Kelly, the Leader confirmed that the proposal was supported by Councillor Castle, one of the local members.

On the recommendations being put to the vote there voted **FOR:7; AGAINST: 0; ABSTENTIONS: 0**

RESOLVED that:-

(a) Council be recommended to approve a loan facility of up to £190,000 to Alnwick Town Council subject to:

- The Council receiving;
 - Alnwick Town Council's Secretary of State approval to borrow,
 - Final project costs, and
 - A signed copy of the legal agreement between Alnwick Town Council and Alnwick Town Juniors Football Club.
- A signed copy of the new lease agreement between Northumberland Estates and Alnwick Town Juniors Football Club is supplied to the Council prior to any loan draw down.
- The Council's Legal Team agree a legal agreement with Alnwick Town Council in advance of any loan draw down by the Town Council, containing the terms and conditions set out within this report.

Only once all of these conditions have been met can the loan be drawn down;
and

(b) the report of the Corporate Resources and Regional Affairs OSC be noted.

(2) Potential Loan to North East Equality and Diversity (NEED) Ltd

The report provided details of a proposed loan facility to North East Equality and Diversity (NEED) Ltd of £450,000 for the purchase of the former Fire Station at South Road, Alnwick; along with a short term advance for up to 4 months of £90,000 to cover VAT associated cash flow implications (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix B, along with the report of the Corporate Resources and Regional Affairs OSC circulated at the meeting).

The Leader highlighted the main points of the report, detailing the background to the company. The Council would have a legal charge on the asset to provide protection in the event of any default on the loan. The proposals had been supported by both Risk Appraisal Panel and Scrutiny.

Members spoke in support of the proposals and the valuable service such organisations provided, particularly in rural areas where support was limited.

On the recommendations being put to the vote there voted **FOR:7; AGAINST: 0; ABSTENTIONS: 0**

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Council be recommended to approve the two Loan Facilities of £450,000 and £90,000 to North East Equality and Diversity (NEED) Ltd subject to the following;
- the Council's Legal Team agree a legal agreement with North East Equality and Diversity (NEED) Ltd in advance of any loan draw down by the organisation, containing the terms and conditions set out within this report.
 - the Council's Legal Team place a legal charge on the asset which the organisation purchase using the loan facility in advance of any loan draw down by the organisation.
- (b) the report of the Corporate Resources and Regional Affairs OSC be noted.

86. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND ECONOMY

The Borderlands Initiative

The report updated Cabinet on recent progress made in developing the Borderlands Initiative in collaboration with Carlisle City Council, Cumbria County Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council, and Scottish Borders Council

(copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix C, along with the report of the Economic Growth and Strategic Transport OSC).

Councillor Hepple advised that there was strong support for this initiative from authorities on both sides of the border and from both the Scottish and UK governments. There were benefits to be gained on all sides, particularly in rural areas.

Councillor Kelly commented that this was not a new concept and referred to past attempts to get a similar initiative off the ground. The initiative needed to be supported or it would be abandoned by the government and he agreed on the need for unity to protect the Authority's interests.

Councillor Dungworth agreed the proposal should be supported, not just from an economics point of view, but because lots of communities straddled the border in their everyday lives.

Councillor Ledger had also attended the summit, and he commented on the large land area and sizeable populations involved, and the sparsity problems the authorities involved had in common. He fully endorsed the initiative.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the progress taken to develop the Borderlands Initiative, particularly in raising awareness as to the economic challenges and opportunities of the area with both the UK and Scottish Governments, be welcomed;
- (b) the Framework prepared by Ekos Consulting on behalf of the Borderlands Initiative Steering Group, as the basis for subsequently unlocking the potential of the area, be approved;
- (c) It be agreed that, as part of this commitment, the Council will fully participate in:
 - a further political "Summit" of the five participating local authorities to cement the endorsement of the Framework as a collective
 - the preparation of a Memorandum of Understanding or similar to formalise the partnership arrangements with the participating authorities
 - presenting the Framework to both the UK and Scottish Governments as a basis for negotiating further investment in the area to accelerate the delivery of priority projects
 - undertaking a period of pro-active engagement with stakeholders to secure wider buy-in and support for the Initiative;
- (d) as part of its ongoing contribution to the delivery of the Initiative, approval be given to:
 - continued participation in the Steering Group and the development of subsequent and proportionate governance arrangements
 - an allocation of up to £40,000 as the Council's contribution to support the appointment of a dedicated Programme Manager equipped with a

working budget for a period of two years to facilitate the delivery of the Initiative - this sum can be met from existing budgets

- (e) it be acknowledged that the activity taken forward through the Borderlands Initiative is complementary and strengthens the ongoing discussions to secure devolution of powers and funding from the UK Government; and
- (f) the report of the Economic Growth and Strategic Transport OSC be noted.

87. REPORT OF THE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION IN NORTHUMBERLAND TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The report presented the findings of the Alcohol Consumption in Northumberland Task and Finish Group to the Cabinet for its consideration (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix D).

The report was presented by Councillor Nisbet, who commended the work which had been done on this topic. It had raised awareness of the issues involved, which was to be welcomed.

Councillor Dungworth fully endorsed the report and supported its wide ranging recommendations. There was still work to do around developments in Scotland and changes to the drink driving legislation, which would be followed up once they had been embedded. She added that, on the positive side, fewer young people were drinking now than used to be the case though she acknowledged that some were drinking excessive amounts of stronger alcohol. It should be recognised that young people were more sensible, but some work was needed to target the most vulnerable groups.

Councillor Arckless agreed that more work needed to be done with young people to encourage the development of good habits at an early age. The most important thing was attitudes, and there was a long way to go before attitudes to alcohol could change in the same way that attitudes to smoking had. He commended the valuable work which had been done but acknowledged the work which remained.

RESOLVED that the recommendations detailed in the report of the Task and Finish Group be agreed.

88. NOTES OF THE CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAMME CABINET ADVISORY GROUP

Cabinet was asked to consider the notes of the Capital Works Programme CAG meeting of 16 March 2017 and the recommendations detailed at Minute No.45 (c)(1-4) (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix E).

RESOLVED that the notes be received and the recommendations detailed at Minute No.45 (c)(1-4) be approved.

89. AREA COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

Cabinet was asked to consider feedback from recent Area Committee meetings (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix F).

RESOLVED that the feedback be received.

90. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair agreed to the following matter being dealt with as urgent business on the basis that a decision was required before the next meeting of the Cabinet.

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

School Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for the 2017/18 Academic Year

The report sought Cabinet approval (determination) of the School Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for the 2017/18 Academic Year as required by the School Admissions Code 2014 (copy attached to the signed minutes).

Councillor Tyler declared an interest in this item as a governor of Whitley Memorial CE First School.

RESOLVED that:-

1. the Council's proposed admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for 2017/18 be noted;
2. the relevant proposed coordinated admissions scheme and Admissions Policy for voluntary and controlled schools provided in the Appendices to the report be noted; and
3. approval be given to the admission arrangements for 2017/18.

The Leader advised that this could be the last meeting of Cabinet before the election. He therefore wished Councillors Arckless and Kelly well and thanked them for their input into the work of the Cabinet during the previous four years.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....