

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

At a meeting of the **Cabinet** held at County Hall, Morpeth on Tuesday 10 October 2017 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

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

CABINET MEMBERS

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

Sanderson, H.G.H.
Wearmouth, R.

OTHER MEMBERS

Davey, J.G. (part)
Dodd, R.R. (part)
Flux, B.

Pidcock, B. (part)
Reid, J. (part)
Watson, J.G.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Barnes, G.

Hadfield, K.

Hedley, P.

Henry, L.

Lally, D.

McNaughton, S.

Soderquest, P.

Turner, M.

Revenues, Benefits and Customer
Services Manager
Committee Services and Scrutiny
Manager
Chief Fire Officer
Legal Services Manager
Interim Chief Executive
Strategic Transport Policy Manager
Head of Housing
Head of Property and Capital
Programming

22. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Daley and Riddle.

Ch.'s Initials.....

23. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on Tuesday 12 September 2017, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

24. REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service Fire and Rescue Plan (Integrated Risk Management Plan) 2017-2021

The report presented outcomes of *Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service Fire and Rescue Plan (Integrated Risk Management Plan) 2017-2021* consultation (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix A, alongside the report of the Communities and Place OSC).

The Chief Fire Officer introduced the report highlighting that 52 responses had been received, overwhelmingly in support of the recommendations. This was the highest number of responses to a consultation on this type of document. Members' attention was drawn to the key issues including the safe and well being expansion areas, the consultation and awareness campaign for false alarms and the charging regime, the expansion of the volunteer network and the success of the EMR pilot in Hexham, which it was hoped could be rolled out to other rural areas. Annual reviews of the Plan would be carried out to capture emerging issues and to make changes on the direction of travel where necessary.

Councillor Reid advised that the Community and Place OSC had agreed with the content of the report and supported the recommendations.

Members welcomed the positive response to the consultation and the direction of travel regarding community support, which was appreciated by communities. Engagement with volunteers was essential and the EMR initiative was key for the County because of its geography.

Member comments included:-

- Councillor Sanderson referred to an incident on the A69 that morning and sought reassurance that the Fire Service had the right equipment in place in the right areas to deal with all incidents, asking for further detail regarding response times in particular from Haydon Bridge/Haltwhistle, the A1 north of Alnwick and A697 north of Longframlington to ensure they were comparable with the south east of the County. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that every appliance contained the same equipment. Resources were located appropriate to the road network and response times from manned stations would be slightly quicker than from those

stations which were not manned. However, he would provide the information requested.

- Councillor Homer asked about recruitment of retained firefighters in the west of the County. The Chief Fire Officer advised that a successful campaign had recently taken place in Prudhoe and a trainee course was currently being run at Fire HQ involving ten recruits who would be deployed at stations across the County. He was also looking at uprating the retained firefighter strategy which would be brought to members for approval in due course.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Members approve Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service Fire and Rescue Plan (Integrated Risk Management Plan);
2. Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service Fire and Rescue Plan (Integrated Risk Management Plan) be aligned to the term of the Local Authority Administration. This means the plan covers the period 2017 to 2021;
3. Safe and Well-Being Visits be expanded to include other areas of risk;
4. Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service seek to expand its volunteer programme, to further support its prevention activity including:
 - a. Safe and Well-Being Visits
 - b. Youth inclusion
 - c. Community engagement
5. Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service seek to implement a charging scheme for persistent False Alarm (Apparatus) callouts;
6. Where the opportunity arises, Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service work with partners and stakeholders to expand current Emergency Medical Response (EMR) into other areas of the county;
7. Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service continue to review its staffing and management arrangements to ensure continued effective and efficient service delivery and balance resource to risk; and
8. The report of the Communities and Place OSC be noted.

25. REPORTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF LOCAL SERVICES AND HOUSING DELIVERY

(1) Community Housing Fund

The report provided members with the details of the Community Housing Fund allocation received by the Council to support the delivery of Community Led Housing and sought approval of the Community Housing Fund Policy which set out how the fund could be utilised and how applications for funding would be considered (report attached to the signed minutes as Appendix B, alongside the report of the Communities and Place OSC).

The report was presented by Phil Soderquest who set out the background and highlighted the main points.

Councillor Reid reported that Communities and Place OSC had welcomed the funding and had noted the potential for complications, but felt that efforts should concentrate on making the policy work in order to secure further funding in future. The Committee had also felt that 15 years clawback was too short a period and that it should be extended.

Members commented as follows:-

- Councillor Homer referred to a recent CAN session that she had attended and queried whether the housing needs figures were realistic and whether there was anything that could be done to move the process on for the housing needs surveys. Mr Soderquest advised that officers were to support Communities CAN in developing a programme of housing needs surveys. It was important to identify where these could realistically be delivered and there were opportunities with colleagues in development management to support that.
- Councillor Oliver had also attended this session and commented on the level of expertise both from officers and the groups who delivered these projects. He felt it would be helpful if S106 funds could be brought into the equation and made a plea that developers be encouraged to include broadband facilities at the point of development. Mr Soderquest confirmed this was a key element.
- Councillor Sanderson welcomed this initiative from the Government and suggested that regular updates were made to ensure progress. Mr Soderquest agreed on the need for OSC challenge to ensure objectives were being delivered, particularly as the fund could grow.
- The Leader commented that this was proper devolvement of Government funding and more could come through the devolution proposals. He agreed that regular involvement from Scrutiny was essential, and with the suggestion from them that the clawback period should be extended. He moved an amendment to the proposed policy that the monitoring and clawback provision be extended to 25 years in the first instance, which members supported.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the content of the report and the current work with Community Action Northumberland (CAN) to develop Communities CAN be noted;
- (b) the Community Housing Fund Policy be approved subject to the amendment of the monitoring and clawback provision as follows:-

“The Council reserves the right to seek repayment of any grant awarded, should any homes provided through this programme be taken out of community ownership within 25 years of the completion of the scheme”;

- (c) the Director of Local Services and Housing Delivery be authorised, in

consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to review and revise the policy to reflect and address any practical issues arising from its implementation; and

(d) the report of the Communities and Place OSC be noted..

(2) Management of Unauthorised Encampments

The report provided members with the details of the powers available to the Council to manage unauthorised encampments and set out proposals for the development of temporary stopping places in Northumberland for Gypsies and Travellers to reduce the community impact arising from some unauthorised encampments. Members were also asked to approve the Protocol for Managing Unauthorised Encampments in Northumberland (report attached to the signed minutes as Appendix C, alongside the report of the Communities and Place OSC).

Councillor Reid reported that Scrutiny had supported the pragmatic way forward being proposed in the report and had felt that a good balance had been achieved by officers. The encampments were all illegal, and the proposals offered flexibility to ensure the best approach was adopted in each case.

With regard to the suggestion from Scrutiny for seven days a week cover, Mr Soderquest advised that he would discuss this further with Councillor Reid.

Member comments included:-

- Councillor Sanderson had some concerns that the need for quick decisions could lead to poor decisions. He queried whether enough thought had been given to delineating specific sites. Mr Soderquest confirmed that potential sites had been identified in drafting the report. Some sites were more suitable than others both in terms of planning implications and the needs of the encampment/travellers. This option could be discussed further with the portfolio holder, but on balance, he felt each case should be considered on its merits.
- Councillor Homer commented that more work could be done to plan for traveller movements, some of which could be predicted, such as the Appleby horse fair. Mr Soderquest agreed that some movements were cyclical; his concerns were around the illegal encampments of which there was little or no notice.
- Councillor Jones understood the concerns around short notice and that some idea of what areas could be involved was needed.
- The Leader felt it was important to be as flexible as possible. However, more work on the identification of potential locations would be helpful to have in the background.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the content of the report be noted and the proposals for the future use of temporary negotiated stopping places to assist with the management of unauthorised encampments be agreed, taking into account the comments regarding the identification of potential locations as above;
- (b) the Protocol for Managing Unauthorised Encampments in Northumberland be approved; and
- (c) the report of the Communities and Place OSC be noted.

26. REPORTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES

(1) Approval of the Business Rates Revaluation Relief Scheme

The report sought Cabinet approval to recommend to County Council the Business Rates Revaluation Relief Scheme for Northumberland (report attached to the signed minutes as Appendix D, alongside the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC.

The report was introduced by Councillor Oliver and Mr Barnes highlighted to members the benefits of the revaluation scheme, including the fact that there was no application process. Northumberland was ahead of the game in this region.

Members commended the work which had been undertaken.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Council be recommended to approve the Business Rates Revaluation Relief Scheme attached to the report as Appendix 1; and
- (b) the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC be noted.

(2) Approval of the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2018-19

The report sought Cabinet approval to recommend to County Council the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2018-19 (report attached to the signed minutes as Appendix E, alongside the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Council be recommended to approve the Council Tax Support Scheme attached to the report as Appendix 1 for adoption as the Council's local scheme for 2018-19; and

- (b) the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC be noted.

27. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND ECONOMY

Transport for the North – Incorporation as a Sub-National Transport Body

The report asked the Council as Local Highway Authority to consent to the making of Regulations by the Secretary of State to establish Transport for the North (TfN) as a Sub-National Transport Body under section 102J of the Local Transport Act 2008. The consent of each Highway Authority within the area of each Combined Authority which is a Constituent Authority of TfN was required to the making of Regulations by the Secretary of State because the Regulations contained provisions giving TfN highway powers to be exercised concurrently with the Local Highway Authorities (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix F).

RESOLVED that formal consent be given under section 102J of the Local Transport Act 2008 to the making by the Secretary of State of Regulations to establish Transport for the North as a Sub-National Transport Body and giving TfN concurrent highway powers.

28. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PROPERTY AND CAPITAL PROGRAMMING

Summary of New Capital Proposals Considered by Officer Capital Strategy Group

The report summarised proposed amendments to the Capital Programme considered by the officer Capital Strategy Group at its meeting held on 06 September 2017 (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix G).

RESOLVED that the following be agreed:-

- **Hirst Park Revival: Accept** the grant award from HLF (capital element £1,838,177) and approve the overall capital budget requirement of ££2,143,177, including £190,000 of Council resource to be met from existing Parks Enhancement provision;
- **Retained Fire Stations Ground Source Heat Pumps: Approve** the new budget requirements for Bellingham (£198,757), Allendale (£130,470) and Rothbury (£76,215) retained fire stations;
- **Cramlington Development Fund – Cramlington Town Football Club: Approve** the capital grant award of £15,102;
- **Flood and Coastal Erosion Programme: Approve** the revised budget allocations;

- **Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund: Approve:**
 - acceptance of the £5m Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund Tranche 2A award from the DfT;
 - the County Council match funding requirement for the project of £1.5m be funded from the £2.25m allocation within the Medium Term Financial Plan for "Contingency to Support Grant Funded Projects", and;
 - agreement to proceed with the project.
- **Empty Homes Programme:**

Councillor Sanderson queried whether the position would be regularly monitored by Scrutiny. Mr Turner agreed to check this.

Approve the new Council capital requirement of £200,000 and overall Capital Budget requirement of £750,000.

29. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULT AND COMMUNITY CARE SERVICES

Home Care Fees

The report informed Cabinet of a decision made under delegated powers to offer a new fee structure to contracted home care providers in the County (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix H).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

30. 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 items on the Agenda as they involve 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
12	3
	Information relating to the business or financial affairs of a particular person including the Authority holding that

information. The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the interest in disclosure because they contain financial information on the value of potential contractual claims which could prejudice future negotiations by contracted parties, and because disclosure would prejudice the Council's ability to negotiate with partners.

31. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the confidential minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on Tuesday, 12 September 2017, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....