

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

At a meeting of the **Cabinet** held at County Hall, Morpeth on Tuesday 10 April 2018 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

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

CABINET MEMBERS

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

Oliver, N
Riddle, J.
Sanderson, H.G.H.

OTHER MEMBERS

Armstrong, E.
Davey, J.G.
Dodd, R.R.
Dunbar, C.
Flux, B.

Gibson, R.
Hutchinson, J.I.
Reid, J.
Renner Thompson, G.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Aviston, S.

Elsdon, A.
Hadfield, K.

Henry, L
Lally, D.
McEvoy, C.

Turner, M.

Head of School Organisation and
Resources
Director of Finance
Committee Services and Scrutiny
Manager
Legal Services Manager
Chief Executive
Executive Director of Children's
Services
Head of Property and Capital
Programming

Three members of the press and public were present.

77. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Wearmouth.

78. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the following meetings, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair:-

- (a) Tuesday, 13 March 2018
- (b) Monday, 19 March 2018

79. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Homer disclosed an interest in item 9 on the agenda (Active Northumberland Financial Position 2017-18) as a Board member, and advised that she would leave the room whilst the matter was considered.

80. REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

(1) Outcomes of Special Educational Needs and Disability Strategy and Capacity Consultation

The report provided an update to Cabinet on the outcomes of consultation that has been carried out seeking the views of parents, carers, education and health professional on the Northumberland Area SEND strategy. The consultation included a range of options and ideas on how capacity could be increased within the county's special schools. The report provided an update on the outcomes of informal consultation on the proposals to increase the capacity at Hexham Priory School through the enlargement of its building, and at The Dales School, Blyth through the addition of a satellite site in Ashington. Cabinet was also asked to approve the publication of statutory proposals in relation to the expansion of these schools (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix A, along with the report of the FACS OSC).

The report was presented by Councillor Daley who set out the background to the current position. He reported that between 2013-2017 there had been a 32% increase in pupils classed as having some form of special educational need or disability. This now represented 14% of the total school population. There was no capacity to accommodate additional pupils, therefore one of the immediate actions which had been taken was to create 82 additional places to cope with additional demand.

He referred to the consultation events which had taken place at the end of last year which had been well attended, and the good response rate from parents/carers and teachers. The key elements which had come out of the informal consultation were the need for more support within mainstream schools, the need for more specialist places locally, staff training and development and listening to parents and young people.

Ms McEvoy referred to the two key areas in the consultation events - the vision and strategy and taking forward plans for support, and placement planning and increasing capacity. She highlighted the main response themes which had come out of the consultation which were detailed in the report. The findings had led to a revised vision and statement being produced and to officers looking at how to increase capacity swiftly.

Mrs Aviston advised that members had formally agreed funding to increase capacity at Hexham Priory and The Dales, and the building work had been contracted. This report was now seeking permission to submit a statutory proposal for that.

Councillor Renner Thompson presented the report from FACS OSC, highlighting the suggested change to recommendation 2.

Member comments included:-

- Councillor Homer queried how success would be measured and asked whether any of the operational and strategic groups were already underway. Ms McEvoy confirmed that there was a framework in place to measure outcomes for children but officers were always looking to review and improve that framework. She also confirmed that the groups were in place, and that there was a governance framework which could be shared.
- Councillor Riddle agreed that it was important to make provision for this and to keep it in County where possible. He sought assurances that provision was equitably spread across the County to meet where demand was. Mrs Aviston advised that there was a need for an additional 24 places between Alnwick and Berwick but the demand from parents was for additional resource provision in mainstream school, rather than growing special educational needs provision. This would need to be worked on with mainstream schools to identify where the existing resource provision could be situated because no schools had come forward wanting to host such provision. This could be addressed in the next phase of consultation.
- Councillor Sanderson agreed it was very important to progress this and welcomed the proactive stance. He felt it was vital for children with SEND needs to be educated within the County, and within their local area rather than being transported elsewhere.
- Councillor Jones welcomed the clarity of the report. The issues of particular interest to her were the need to simplify the referral process, access for rural areas and increasing capacity and effectiveness in mainstream schools.

The Leader proposed that the recommendation from Scrutiny could be accepted, subject to the deletion of “particularly the North” and substitution with “of Northumberland,” in recommendation 2, which members supported.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Cabinet approve the adoption of a revised Special Educational Needs and Disability Strategy as a result of the consultation with parents and others;
- (b) Cabinet approve a more detailed consultation on options to expand capacity for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities with a focus on all parts of the County of Northumberland;
- (c) Cabinet note the informal consultation that had taken place on a proposal to increase the capacity at Hexham Priory School;
- (d) Cabinet note the proposal and rationale to increase capacity at The Dales School by 50 places through the addition of a satellite site in Ashington to be called 'Ashdale' and approve the addition of this site to the school with effect from 1 September 2018;
- (e) Cabinet permit the publication of a statutory proposal setting out the intention of the County Council to increase the capacity of Hexham Priory School by an additional 32 places through the enlargement of the school building with effect from 1 September 2018;
- (f) Cabinet note that the outcomes of the informal consultation on the options to expand capacity for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and the outcomes of the formal consultation following publication of the Statutory Proposals in relation to Hexham Priory and The Dales Schools will be brought back to Cabinet in June for a decision; and
- (g) the recommendations from FACS Scrutiny be endorsed in accordance with the detail above.

(2) Children's Social Care Improvement Plan

The report presented Cabinet with an updated position on current progress in relation to the Children's Social Care Improvement Plan (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix B, along with the report of the FACS OSC).

Councillor Daley introduced the report and highlighted to members that this was about going over and above what Ofsted had asked the Authority to do in 2016. Ms McEvoy reminded members that the Authority had been inspected by Ofsted in 2016 and as a result, an Ofsted Action Plan had been developed. It had since become clear that there were additional activities which the Council would benefit from in relation to improving the quality of service provision so a detailed social care improvement plan had been developed, which was reviewed monthly. A recent focussed visit from Ofsted had looked at the improvement plan and self evaluation and endorsed them. She then drew members' attention to the key priorities.

Councillor Renner Thompson advised that FACS Scrutiny had supported the report.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Cabinet note the progress made against the actions of the Improvement Plan; and
- (b) the report of the Family and Children's Services OSC be noted.

81. REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND INCLUSION POLICY MANAGER

Northumberland Cultural Strategy 2018-2030

The report presented a refreshed Northumberland Cultural Strategy 2018 - 2030 for approval (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix C, along with the report of the Communities and Place OSC circulated at the meeting).

Councillor Homer introduced the report and made specific reference to the ambition and aspirational language which had been used which she felt was appropriate in terms of setting out the Authority's ambition going forward.

Some positive feedback had already been received from the North East Cultural Partnership and it was important to stress that the Authority wanted to work with partners, as the content of the Strategy could not all be delivered by Northumberland County Council alone.

Points from Scrutiny had been embraced and anything that dated the Strategy would be removed, and the colour scheme made DDA compliant.

Two sessions with stakeholders were planned and then the framework would be put together, which would measure the Strategy.

Councillor Reid advised that Scrutiny had discussed the language and the inclusion of things which dated the Strategy. Members wanted to see the detail of the delivery plans in due course.

The Leader accepted this point and stressed to members the importance of the Strategy in capturing the identity and culture of the County and promoting the tourism offer. The County was a great place to live and work, and more needed to be done to celebrate and publicise that.

Members fully supported the Strategy and the proactive approach being taken. Councillor Sanderson expressed his particular support for goal 2 (developing talent and skills progression for our children and young people) and hoped that resources would be directed to the delivery of this goal.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the Culture Strategy for the county be approved; and
- (b) the report of the Communities and Place OSC be noted.

82. 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 9 March 2018 (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix D).

(1) Fire & Rescue Officer Support Vehicles

RESOLVED that Council be recommended to approve the revised arrangements and reduced budget profile of £311,000 over the next three financial years;

(2) Seven Oaks Park

RESOLVED that Council be recommended to endorse the proposals and approve the associated budget requirement of £20,000, to be met from existing Parks Enhancement Programme budget, and on the basis that responsibility for the future maintenance of this play area and the play area at Alexandra Park is transferred to Cramlington Town Council.

(3) Disabled Facilities Grant

RESOLVED that Council be recommended to accept the additional grant award of £226,277 and increase the budget allocation accordingly.

83. 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
9(1-2)	3 - The reports contain 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 on (1) because disclosure would adversely affect the Authority's ability to conduct its affairs and on (2), because disclosure would prejudice the Port of Blyth's ability to negotiate with partners and give its competitors a commercial advantage.

84. REPORTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

(1) Enterprise Zone - Bates Terminal, Blyth - Infrastructure Works

The purpose of the report was to enable the Cabinet to make a formal recommendation to the County Council in respect of the Council contribution of £1.2 million towards the Port of Blyth, Bates Terminal, Enterprise Zone Infrastructure works (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix F, coloured pink and marked "Not for Publication" along with the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC).

At this point, Councillor Jackson declared an interest as a member of the NELEP and left the room whilst the matter was considered. Councillor Daley took the Chair.

RESOLVED that Council be recommended to agree recommendations 1-5 as detailed in the report.

In accordance with MInute No. 79 above, Councillor Homer left the meeting.

(2) Active Northumberland Financial Position 2017-18

The report provided members with an overview of the 2017-18 financial position of Active Northumberland and its impact on the charity's financial position (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix E, coloured pink and marked "Not for Publication").

Members had a detailed discussion about the gravity of the current situation and how it had been arrived at. Councillor Oliver highlighted the actions which had been taken to turn things around, which he was pleased to report were having a positive effect.

Members were advised that funding to a maximum of £2.635m in assistance needed to be provided or it would not be possible for the Active Northumberland Board to sign off the accounts of Active Northumberland as a going concern. It was noted that, following a decommissioning letter from the Council, with effect from 1 April 2018, Active Northumberland's remit was solely to provide leisure services.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the 2017-18 financial position of Active Northumberland be noted; and,
- (b) the Council provide additional funding to Active Northumberland up to a maximum of £2.635 million for the financial year 2017-18.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....