

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

At a meeting of the **Cabinet** held in Committee Room 1, County Hall, Morpeth on Tuesday 6 August 2019 at 10.00am.

PRESENT

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

CABINET MEMBERS

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

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

OTHER MEMBERS

Dodd, R.
Flux, B.

Gallacher, B.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Aviston, S.

Bradley, N.

Elsdon, A.
Hadfield, K.

Henry, L.
Jackson, D.

Johnston, P.
Lally, D.
Soderquest, P.

Head of School Organisation and
Resources

Service Director – Strategic
Commissioning and Finance

Service Director: Finance
Committee Services and Scrutiny
Manager

Legal Services Manager

Service Director, Education and
Skills

Interim Executive Director of Place
Chief Executive

Head of Housing and Public
Protection

2 members of the press and public were in attendance.

Ch.'s Initials.....

23. MINUTES

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

24. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Councillor Jackson disclosed a prejudicial interest in agenda item 6 (Northumberland Children's Trust) as a member of the Trust and advised that he would leave the room whilst this matter was discussed.

With regard to item 11 on the agenda (Outcome of the Tender for the Hexham New Build Schools for Hadrian Learning Trust), Councillors Homer and Oliver disclosed personal interests having children attending the school.

25. REPORT OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PLACE

Housing Strategy for Northumberland 2019-21

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 (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix A, along with the report of the Communities and Place OSC).

Councillor Riddle introduced the report, highlighting the main priorities behind the Strategy of affordable housing, a greater range of supported housing for those with additional needs and making better use of existing housing stock. The Strategy set out how these aims would be met, and he advised that officers were already looking for potential sites in areas where they were needed, and at how S106 agreements with developers could be used to further this.

Councillor Jackson advised that the Authority was the first in the north of England to declare a building programme of Council housing. This would help people to find affordable homes and would provide a supply of adequate housing for the ageing population in their own communities.

The Scrutiny report had made reference to differing views on the timeframe for the Plan. The Leader suggested that the Plan be for a four year term if the portfolio holder agreed, and Councillor Riddle confirmed that this was acceptable.

Councillor Oliver commented that the focus was on individual communities and designing specific solutions for them, which was very important.

Councillor Jones felt it was important that people living with physical disabilities or mental health issues also had access to housing which was appropriate to their needs.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the draft Housing Strategy, which outlined Northumberland's housing vision, priorities and ambitions, be approved; and
- (b) the report of the Communities and Place OSC be noted, and the Strategy be for a four year term.

26. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING

North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019-24

Cabinet was asked to consider formal adoption of the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan 2019-24 (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix B).

RESOLVED that the draft Management Plan be adopted by Northumberland County Council as the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan for 2019-24.

In accordance with Minute No. 24 above, Councillor Jackson left the room whilst the following matter was discussed.

Councillor Daley in the Chair

27. REPORT OF THE LEGAL SERVICES MANAGER

Northumberland Children's Trust

The report sought Cabinet approval to underwrite grant payments previously awarded to third party community and voluntary organisations by the Northumberland Children's Trust subject to repayment of the same (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix C).

Councillor Oliver advised that this solution would resolve the situation in a positive way until the amount could be repaid by the Trust.

The Legal Services Manager confirmed that he had not heard back yet from the Charities Commission.

RESOLVED Cabinet approval be given to underwrite grant payments previously awarded to third party community and voluntary organisations by The Northumberland Children's Trust in the sum of £66, 077, subject to repayment of the same once the Trust are able to access the funds held on their behalf by their Investment Managers

Councillor Jackson in the Chair

28. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF HR/OD AND DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Northumberland Lottery

The report provided an overview of the proposal to implement a Northumberland Lottery. The lottery would be open to both members of the public and staff, and would support local charities and good causes with its proceeds (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix D, along with the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC).

The report was presented by Councillor Oliver who referred to the Administration's desire for local engagement, accountability and democracy. This proposal would supplement the already very successful community chest scheme and would promote engagement with communities, who would benefit directly from it. The player could identify which good causes they wished to support and the proposal was based on a proven successful model with an experienced supplier. He hoped members would support the initiative and promote it to their local community groups.

Councillor Jones commented that, initially she had had some concerns that this would encourage gambling, and she noted that this point had also been picked up by Scrutiny. However, she had been reassured by the safeguards which were in place. Councillor Homer commented that the community and voluntary sector were behind this, and taking into account the safeguards which were in place, she felt she could support it. Councillor Oliver advised that the arrangements would be kept under review.

With regard to the report from Scrutiny and the recommendation that the lottery be called "The Northumberland Lottery", members supported this.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Cabinet approval be given to proceed with implementation;

- (b) “The Northumberland Lottery” brand be used; and
- (c) the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC be noted, and its view regarding the naming of the brand be supported.

29. REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, STRATEGIC COMMISSIONING AND FINANCE

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 meetings held on 14 June and 12 July 2019 (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix E).

(1) Kyloe House Development Works

Members were informed that all works would be funded by grant from the DfE. Members welcomed this proposal. Improvement works would make the centre more attractive to other local authorities seeking such a facility, as well as improving the existing environment for staff and residents.

RESOLVED that an increase in the Council’s Capital programme to include the grant awards from the DfE and associated budgets, totalling £1,628,170, for 5 elements of work at Kyloe House as detailed in section 6 be approved.

(2) County Hall Solar Car Port

The Leader commented that this was a demonstrator project which could be adopted by other employers across the County when its benefits were demonstrated. He felt it would provide the opportunity for staff to be confident in buying electric cars.

Councillor Sanderson agreed this was a very important project and thanked the officers for their work on it. It was a bold development and the carbon reduction figure quoted was very significant.

Members were advised that construction was scheduled to begin in July 2020, which was tied into the funding bid process and contract procurement.

RESOLVED that, subject to confirmation of the ERDF grant of £1,469,560, Cabinet approve a Council contribution to the project of £1,469,560, to be

met from the renewal energy provisions within the existing programme, and therefore an overall budget requirement of £2,939,120.

(3) Forum Way Roundabout, Cramlington

Members noted that work had already begun on the roundabout to incorporate a fifth leg and supported this approach, as adding this at a later date to accommodate future developments at Manor Walks would have required a complete redesign and reconstruction.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve an allocation of £300,000 from the Strategic Regeneration Projects budget to the Local Transport Plan programme for the construction of the enhanced five leg roundabout at Forum Way Cramlington.

(4) Choppington Road Land at Bedlington

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve the acquisition of the mineral rights for the Choppington Road, Bedlington site – up to a maximum cost of £400,000 - to be funded in the interim through the Strategic Regeneration Projects.

(5) Stannington First School Additional Places

Councillor Daley commented that this proposal highlighted how the Authority was able to react quickly to specific pressures and needs in the system, and he reassured members that mobile classrooms were now state of the art facilities.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve a budget of £174,250, to be funded from S106 monies obtained through the education infrastructure policy, in order to increase capacity at the school, and the implementation of 'Option 2: installation of a mobile classroom' to provide the additional capacity requirement.

Before moving to part two of the agenda, a number of points were made about the Outcome of the Tender for the Hexham New Build Schools for Hadrian Learning Trust report as follows:-

- Consultation events would take place w/c 9 September.
- Investment had long been required at the High School and this demonstrated the Administration's commitment to education in the west and the wider agenda of the school building programme across the County.

- Investment had also been long needed at Hexham Middle School and the issues at both schools were widely recognised. There was great excitement in the community about seeing the plans for the development.
- The investment would allow the school budget to be directed towards teaching, instead of repairs and maintenance, which was to be welcomed.

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 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
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| 11 | 3 - 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 disclosure would prejudice the ability for Northumberland County Council to obtain a competitive price through the re-tendering of the design and build contract. |
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31. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND CHILDRENS' SERVICES

Outcome of the Tender for the Hexham New Build Schools for Hadrian Learning Trust

The report updated Cabinet on the outcomes of the tender process for the construction of new school buildings for Hexham Queen Elizabeth High School and Hexham Middle School and sought agreement to enter into a Pre-construction Services Agreement (PCSA) with the preferred bidder (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix F, along with the report of the Family and Children's Services OSC circulated at the meeting).

Members received a presentation from Sue Aviston highlighting the main issues and the proposed timeline. She confirmed that the details of the successful contractor could not be made public until 23 August 2019.

Councillor Daley advised that he had attended the FACS OSC meeting and there had been a great deal of support for the proposals. There had been some questions about the curriculum but that was outside the Council's control. There had been concern expressed about the challenging timescale for the project, but he felt confident that having a Clerk of Works on site would ensure that the project would be monitored closely to ensure it kept on programme.

Councillor Riddle suggested that the provision of furniture needed to be addressed at an early stage. Councillor Daley advised that there could be some flexibility within the budget by decanting pupils instead of using a mobile classroom to support this, and Mrs Aviston advised that this issue would be discussed in more detail by the Steering Group.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the outcome of the tender process be noted, and approval be given to enter into a Pre-Construction Services Agreement (PCSA) with the preferred bidder in order to secure full planning permission for the project prior to contract award towards the end of January 2020;
- (b) the award of the contract, which will be above normal financial delegated limits, be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council;
- (c) Council be requested to approve an increase to the budget of £3.66m, including a further £2.37m of Council resources to deliver the scheme to provide new school buildings for Hexham Queen Elizabeth High School and Hexham Middle School, both of which form part of Hadrian Learning Trust (HLT). The scheme is scheduled for completion by September 2021;
- (d) Cabinet approve the additional £1.29m grant funding contribution that has been approved by the DfE as part of the previous successful application by the local authority to have Queen Elizabeth High School included in the Priority School Building Programme. This is a time limited and ring-fenced fixed sum that will need to be fully expended against the scheme by September 2021;

- (e) Cabinet approve a redistribution of approved funding between the previously reported funding for this project and the Seaton Valley Federation of Schools project. The original budget assumed the use of £4.00m of Schools Condition Allocation (SCA) grant; along with a project specific DfE grant award of £10.00m and £23.15m of Council resources. The funding allocation and use of SCA grant is based on maintained schools only and therefore to allocate this grant funding to an academy scheme is not appropriate. It is therefore proposed to switch the £4.00m SCA grant to the Seaton Valley Federation of Schools project and in turn replace this element of the funding for the HLT project with £4.00m of the Council's capital resources allocated to the Seaton Valley Federation of Schools project. The capital budget and level of funding for the Seaton Valley Federation of Schools remains unchanged;
- (f) the report of the Family and Children's Services OSC be noted.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....