

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

At a meeting of the **Cabinet** held in Committee Room 1, County Hall, Morpeth on Tuesday 10 March 2020 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.
Sanderson, H.G.H.
Wearmouth, R.

OTHER MEMBERS

Dodd, R.

Hill, G.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Angus, K.	Executive Director of HR/OD and Deputy Chief Executive
Aviston, S.	Head of School Organisation
Bridges, A.	Head of Communications
Hand, C.	Executive Director of Finance
Henry, L.	Legal Services Manager
Lally, D.	Chief Executive
McEvoy-Carr, C.	Executive Director: Adult Social Care and Children's Services
McLoughlin, J.	Executive Director: Regeneration, Commercial and Economy
O'Farrell, R.	Interim Executive Director: Regeneration, Commercial and Economy
Roll, J.	Head of Democratic and Electoral Services
Turner, M.	Head of Property and Capital Programming
Todd, A.	Democratic Services Officer

4 members of the press and public were in attendance.

Ch.'s Initials.....

89. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Riddle and Flux.

90. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 11 February 2020, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

91. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Daley disclosed a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of item 5 on the agenda (Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan) as he had been involved with the steering group. He advised that he would leave the room whilst the matter was discussed.

92. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Outcomes of Informal Consultation on Options for West Woodburn First School

The purpose of this report was to set out the outcomes of the Informal Consultation approved by Cabinet at its meeting of 2 December 2019 on proposed options for the future of West Woodburn First School. This consultation had arisen as a result of the significant drop in pupil numbers at the school since the previous statutory consultation on a formal proposal to extend the age range of West Woodburn was undertaken in September 2019. The report also included a request to Cabinet to permit the publication of a statutory proposal. (A copy of the report has been attached to the signed minutes as Appendix A, along with the report of the Family and Children's Services OSC circulated at the meeting).

Councillor Daley introduced the report highlighting that there were currently no pupils on role at the school. The Council had worked to support the school and created a federation but since then the school had seen a significant drop in pupil numbers. It was noted that during the consultation there had been 10 responses received. 9 out of the 10 responses received supported the option to close the school, with no alternative options being put forward by consultees. A consultation event had also been held with one person attending. It was stated that there had not been any applications received for places in Reception for entry from September 2020.

It was noted that the Family and Children's Services OSC had supported the recommendations.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:-

1. Note the responses to the informal consultation that took place between 12 December 2019 and 15 January 2020 and the analysis of this feedback set out in this report:
 - Decide in the light of this report and any recommendations from the Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee whether to permit the publication of a statutory proposal on 12 March 2020, setting out the intention of the County Council to implement the following proposal:
 - Close West Woodburn First School with effect from 31 August 2020;
 - As part of the above, include the proposal to allocate the catchment area of West Woodburn First School to Bellingham Primary School from 1 September 2020.
2. Note that West Woodburn First School is categorised as a Rural School within the Department for Education's List of Designated Rural Schools 2019. Therefore, should Cabinet decide to approve the publication of a statutory proposal to close the school, as recommended in making the final decision at the end of the statutory period, Cabinet would need to take into account the DfE's guidance on rural schools and the presumption against closure, as set out in para. 28 of this report.
3. Note the implications of the recommended statutory proposal in relation to Home to School Transport as set out in this report.
4. Note that should Cabinet approve the publication of the recommended statutory proposal, the outcomes of the formal consultation would be brought back to Cabinet in May 2020 for a final decision.
5. Note the report of the Family and Children's Services OSC.

93. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REGENERATION, COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMY

Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan

The purpose of this report was to seek approval to formally 'make' the Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan passed an independent examination on 16 September 2019. A local referendum held in the Parish of Cramlington on 30 January 2020 returned a majority vote in favour of using

the Plan to make decisions on planning applications. The Council was now obliged by statute to make the Neighbourhood Plan unless it considers that doing so would breach European Union obligations. (A copy of the report has been attached to the signed minutes as Appendix B).

In accordance with Minute No.91 above, Councillor Daley left the room whilst this issue was discussed.

The Leader commented that this demonstrated the power of the Neighbourhood Plan process and he acknowledged the work involved in getting to this stage.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. Note the referendum outcome of 30 January 2020;
2. Agree to formally 'make' the Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with section 38A(4)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004;
3. Approve the decision statement (attached at Appendix 1) required under Regulation 19 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 as amended; and
4. Agree that both the Cramlington Neighbourhood Plan and the decision statement are published on the Council's website and publicised elsewhere in order to bring it to the attention of people who live, work or carry out business in the neighbourhood area; and for the decision statement to be sent to the qualifying body and anyone else who asked to be notified of the decision.

94. 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 meeting held on 07 February 2020 (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix C).

(94.1) Library Self-Service Kiosks

Councillor Homer supported the much needed replacement of the self-service kiosks in libraries.

RESOLVED that County Council be recommended to approve:-

- a new capital requirement of £174,725 within the 2020-21 capital programme for the provision of 13 self-service kiosks in libraries, and;

- the budgetary provision for the ongoing revenue impact of £10,400 per annum to be met from contingency.

(94.2) Amble Bord Waalk

The Leader stated that this scheme would further enhance the tourism and leisure offer within Amble.

RESOLVED that approval be given to an increase in the 2020-21 capital programme to include the grant funding allocation of £240,000 from the MHCLG's Coastal Communities Fund in respect of the project.

(94.3) Port of Berwick Infrastructure Improvements

Councillor Homer commented that there had been an overall excitement within Berwick for this project and the possible tourism opportunities arising from the improvements.

Councillor Wearmouth congratulated all involved in resolving the coach parking issues.

RESOLVED that approval be given to grant an award of £400,000 to Berwick Harbour Commissioner to provide a coach park as part of the wider improvement programme to attract cruise ships to stop at the Port. The grant will be funded from the 'Strategic Regeneration Projects' provision in the approved capital programme, and would be conditional on Berwick Harbour Commission entering into an option agreement with the Council to lease part of the site, should the adjacent land be purchased and used to create a larger and integrated coach/car park. Approval would also be conditional on any State Aid issues being resolved before the grant is awarded.

(94.4) Newbiggin by the Sea Sports and Community Centre

Councillor Homer welcomed the project to refurbish and remodel the centre to improve existing facilities and foster community use.

Councillor Wearmouth agreed that this was a fantastic opportunity to invest and improve a valuable local community asset.

RESOLVED that County Council be recommended to approve:-

- a new budget requirement of £1,505,000 in capital programme (£563,000 2020-21 and £942,000 2021-22 for refurbishment works at Newbiggin by the SeaSports and Community Centre;
- the appointment of a design team to undertake further design work;
- the submission of a planning application, and;
- the associated contractual commitment with a main contractor, up to a maximum value of £1,505,000, to undertake the refurbishment works.

(94.5) Car Parking Improvements Programme

Councillor Sanderson supported these proposals and welcomed the partnership working with the Town and Parish Councils.

RESOLVED that approval be given to a total allocation of £270,000 from the existing car parking provision in the programme for capacity improvements at Ponteland (£165,000) for and Newbiggin by the Sea (£105,000).

(94.6) Future Contract in Excess of Delegated Limits

RESOLVED that approval be given for the contractual commitment of £4,900,000 in respect of the main refurbishment contract for Blyth Sports Centre.

95. FEEDBACK FROM LOCAL AREA COUNCIL MEETINGS

Feedback from Local Area Council Meetings 13 - 23 January 2020 - Extracts from Minutes

Cabinet was asked to receive feedback from recent Local Area Council meetings (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix D).

RESOLVED that the feedback be noted.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....