

## **NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **CABINET**

At a remote meeting of the **Cabinet** held on Tuesday 8 September 2020 at 10.00 am.

### **PRESENT**

Councillor G. Sanderson  
(Acting Leader of the Council, in the Chair)

### **CABINET MEMBERS**

Oliver, N.  
Renner-Thompson, G.  
Riddle, J.R.

Watson, J.G.  
Wearmouth, R.

### **OTHER MEMBERS**

Dodd, R.

### **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Bradley, N.

Service Director – Strategic  
Commissioning and Finance  
Democratic and Electoral Services  
Manager

Hadfield, K.

Executive Director of Finance  
Legal Services Manager

Hand, C.

Henry, L.

McLoughlin, J.

Executive Director: Regeneration,  
Commercial and Economy

McEvoy-Carr, C.

Executive Director of Adult Social  
Care and Children's Services

O'Farrell, R.

Interim Executive Director: Place

## **118. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meetings of Cabinet held on 9 June and 7 July 2020, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

Ch.'s Initials.....

## 119. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

### Financial Performance 2020-21 - Position at the end of June 2020

The report informed the Cabinet of the current financial position for the Council against the Budget for 2020-21 (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix A).

The report was introduced by Councillor Oliver who advised that further funding was expected from the Government and he detailed some of the effects on individual services of dealing with Covid. All teams were working hard and there had already been a significant achievement of the savings plan.

Members asked questions regarding the increase in recycling figures and the level of projected underspend, which had already fallen to £7.322m since the end of July when the report was prepared.

#### **RESOLVED** that:-

- (a) the report be noted;
- (b) the projected overspend of £9.335 million be noted;
- (c) the pressures currently identified, including the impact of Covid-19 be noted;
- (d) it be noted that the Council anticipates there will be further funding forthcoming in relation to the income that the Council has “lost” as a result of Covid-19;
- (e) Cabinet approve a net re-profiling of £67.370 million; £73.744 million from 2020-21 to 2021-22; and £6.374 million from 2021-22 to 2020-21 to reflect estimated expenditure levels in the current financial year;
- (f) Cabinet approve the new grants and amendment to existing grants at Appendix A and the required changes to the budgets; and
- (g) Cabinet note the progress on the delivery of the approved savings at Appendix B.

## **120. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HOUSING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION**

### **Proposed Appropriation of Lyndon Walk, Blyth from The General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account**

The report sought approval to the land and buildings at Lyndon Walk in Blyth being transferred from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account to enable the Council to develop the site for 10/12 assisted living residential units (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix B).

Councillor Riddle highlighted the main points of the report. It was hoped to bring an update to members in six months' time.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet approve the transfer of Lyndon Walk, Blyth from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account.

## **121. 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 on 3 July and 3 August 2020 (Appendix C).

#### **121.1 Berwick Leisure Centre 3G Pitch Grant**

Members were advised that the procurement exercise had come in at £200,000 above the grant received but there was provision within the scheme for it.

**RESOLVED** that the grant award of £500,000 from the Football Foundation be accepted, and accordingly an increase in the project's overall budget provision from £22.647 million to £23.147 million be approved.

#### **121.2 School Nurseries Capital Grant Fund**

**RESOLVED** that:-

- the grant award of £370,922 from the Department of Education (DfE) be accepted, and the Council's capital programme be amended accordingly to allow the creation of the additional nursery places at Morpeth Road Primary (£271,916) and Cramlington Village Primary (£99,016).
- Cabinet note that both successful applications are for academies, and therefore the projects will be delivered by the schools themselves, with the Council performing a monitoring role and in turn providing grants to the schools.

### **121.3 Prudhoe Waterworld Play Park**

Members noted the decision taken to award the contract on this matter under the Council's Finance and Contract Rules (see also Minute No.122 below).

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet approve the proposals and associated budget requirement of £86,000 – to be met from the Prudhoe Town Council Play Park provision in the approved capital programme for 2020-21.

### **121.4 Car Parking Improvements Programme**

Members noted that this was for design work. The Leader asked that officers consider the need for cyclist facilities so that they could better access bus links.

Members spoke in support of this initiative and the positive working with Network Rail which had taken place. Members also paid tribute to the efforts of SENRUG and the Greater Morpeth Development Trust

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet accept the proposals and approve a budget of £35,000 to enable the initial work required to provide additional parking at Morpeth station – to be met from the existing Car Parking provision within the approved capital programme for 2020-21.

### **121.5 Rural Gigabit Connectivity Schools Programme**

Members welcomed this funding which would be vital, particularly for schools in rural areas.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet accept the grant award from the Department of Education (DFE) for £537,000 and approve the associated budget requirement in 2020-21 capital programme to connect the 18 primary schools to an ultrafast gigabit capable connection.

## **122. REPORT OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PLACE**

### **Decision under Finance and Contract Rules - Playground Improvements next to Waterworld, Prudhoe**

A decision was taken by the Interim Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Local Services under Rule 2.4 of the Council's Finance and Contract Rules (Spending Limits for Corporate Directors and Executive Members) to enable the award of a contract for the provision of new play equipment at the playground located next to Waterworld site in Prudhoe, so that the playground could be brought back into use before the end of the school summer holidays. Funding

provision for these works was included within the MTFP capital programme for 2020-21.

In accordance with Rule 2.5 of Finance and Contract Rules, the decision of the Leader to agree with the urgency of this matter was being reported to Cabinet for information.

**RESOLVED** that the decision be noted.

## **123. 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
10	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 because commercial negotiations are currently ongoing with the landowner regarding the acquisition.

## **124. REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR - STRATEGIC COMMISSIONING AND FINANCE**

### **Northumberland Rail Line acquisition proposals considered by Officer Capital Strategy Group**

The report summarised a proposed amendment to the Capital Programme, in relation to the Northumberland Rail Line project, considered by the officer Capital Strategy Group virtually on 03 August 2020 (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix D, coloured pink and marked Not for Publication).

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet approve the recommendations detailed in paragraph 2.1 of the report.

**CHAIR**.....

**DATE**.....