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Northumberland County Council

Your ref:

Our ref:

Enquiries to: Jackie Roll

Email: Jackie.roll@northumberland.gov.uk

Tel direct: 01670 622603

Date: 23 December 2021

Dear Sir or Madam,

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **COUNTY COUNCIL** to be held in the meeting space, Floor Two, Block One at County Hall, Morpeth on **WEDNESDAY, 5 JANUARY 2022 at 3.00 PM.**

Yours faithfully

Daljit Lally
Chief Executive

To all members of the County Council

Any member of the press or public may view the proceedings of this meeting live on our YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/NorthumberlandTV>.

Members are referred to the risk assessment, previously circulated, for meetings held in County Hall. Masks should be worn when moving round but can be removed when seated, social distancing should be maintained, hand sanitiser regularly used and members requested to self-test twice a week at home, in line with government guidelines.



Daljit Lally, Chief Executive
County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF
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AGENDA

PART I

It is expected that the matters included in this part of the agenda will be dealt with in public.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. MINUTES

(Pages 1
- 26)

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held on Wednesday 2 November 2021 as circulated, to be confirmed as a true record, signed by the Business Chair and sealed with the Common Seal of the Council

3. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Unless already entered in the Council's Register of Members' interests, members are required to disclose any personal interest (which includes any disclosable pecuniary interest) they may have in any of the items included on the agenda for the meeting in accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council on 4 July 2012, and are reminded that if they have any personal interests of a prejudicial nature (as defined under paragraph 17 of the Code Conduct) they must not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must leave the room
NB Any member needing clarification must contact monitoringofficer@northumberland.gov.uk. Please refer to the guidance on disclosures at the rear of this agenda letter.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

by the Business Chair, Leader or Head of Paid Service.

5. CORRESPONDENCE (IF ANY) TO DATE OF MEETING.

6. QUESTIONS

to be put to the Business Chair, a member of the Cabinet or the Chair of any Committee or Sub Committee, in accordance with the Constitution's Rules of Procedure No.9.

7. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETINGS

(Pages
27 - 48)

- (1) Tuesday 9 November 2021 (see pages 37-42)
- (2) Thursday 18 November 2021 (see pages 43-48)
- (3) Tuesday 7 December 2021 (see pages 49-58)

8. COMMITTEE MINUTES

(Pages
49 - 106)

TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER MINUTES from the following Committees:-

- (1) Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC
- (2) Family and Children's Services OSC
- (3) Communities and Place OSC
- (4) Health and Wellbeing OSC
- (5) Health and Wellbeing Board
- (6) Audit Committee

9. DELEGATED DECISIONS

(Pages
107 -
108)

To note the Delegated Decisions taken since those reported to County Council on Wednesday, 7 July 2021.

10. MOTIONS

Motion No. 1

Councillor Bridgett to move the following motion, received by the Head of Democratic and Electoral Services on 20 December 2021:-

Considering the recent events both during and in the aftermath of Storm Arwen and rather than waiting for some form of national enquiry to take place (if it ever does), this council resolves:-

- to agree that it will undertake its own investigation into what occurred during and after the storm and it will task the most appropriate scrutiny/council committee to carry this out. This will include reviewing our own council policies and procedures and gathering evidence from councillors and council officers, but also questioning and gathering evidence from the utility companies such as Northern Powergrid, BT Openreach, Northumbrian Water and the mobile telecoms operators.
- to request, where necessary, that they come and provide information to the relevant scrutiny committee so that as a council, we can ensure lessons are learnt from this storm to enable all parties to build better resilience into their systems with the ultimate goal of ensuring that our residents will hopefully never have to experience such significant problems as they did as a result of Storm Arwen
- to request that the relevant scrutiny committee (in conjunction with officers) will bring together a report which outlines the issues and how those problems can potentially be mitigated. This will be brought back to the full council for debate and agreement, and will be used by this authority as a formal response should any government body or agency decide to carry out an enquiry into what happened as a result of the storm.

Motion No. 2

Councillor Morphet to move the following motion, received by the Head of

Democratic and Electoral Services on 20 December 2021:-

The Councils for Fair Tax Declaration: An opportunity for the County Council to show support for responsible tax conduct

Full Council notes that:

1. Organisations are morally obliged to pay the right amount of tax, in the right place, at the right time.
2. Polling from the Institute for Business Ethics finds that “corporate tax avoidance” has, since 2013, been the number one concern of the British public when it comes to business conduct.
3. Almost two-thirds (63%) of the public agree that the Government and local authorities should consider a company’s ethics and tax conduct, as well as value for money and quality of service provided, when undertaking procurement.
4. Around 17.5% of public contracts in the UK have been won by companies with links to tax havens.
5. It has been conservatively estimated that losses from multinational profit-shifting (just one form of tax avoidance) could be costing the UK some £7bn per annum in lost corporation tax revenues.
6. The Fair Tax Mark offers a means for business to demonstrate good tax conduct and has been secured by a wide range of businesses across the UK, including FTSE-listed PLCs, co-operatives, social enterprises and large private businesses.

Full Council believes that:

1. Paying tax is often presented as a burden, but it shouldn’t be.
2. Tax enables us to provide services from education, health care and social care, to flood defences, road maintenance and policing. It also helps to counter financial inequalities and rebalance distorted economies.
3. As recipients of significant public funding, local authorities should take the lead in the promotion of exemplary tax conduct, be that by ensuring contractors are paying their proper share of tax or by refusing to go along with offshore tax dodging when buying land and property.
4. Where substantive stakes are held in private enterprises, then influence should be wielded to ensure that such businesses are exemplars of tax transparency and tax avoidance is shunned. For example, there should be no use of marketed schemes requiring disclosure under Disclosure Of Tax Avoidance Schemes (DOTAS) regulations or arrangements that might fall foul of the General Anti-Abuse Rule.
5. More action is needed, but current law significantly restricts councils’ ability to either penalise poor tax conduct or reward good tax conduct when buying goods or services.
6. Local authorities can and should stand up for responsible tax conduct – by doing what they can within existing frameworks and by pledging to do more, given the opportunity, as active supporters of international tax justice.

Full Council resolves to:

1. Approve the Councils for Fair Tax Declaration.
2. Lead by example and demonstrate good practice in our tax conduct, right across our activities.
3. Ensure contractors implement IR35 robustly and pay a fair share of employment taxes.
4. Not use offshore vehicles for the purchase of land and property, especially where this leads to reduced payments of stamp duty.
5. Undertake due diligence to ensure that not-for-profit structures are not being used inappropriately as an artificial device to reduce the payment of tax and business rates.
6. Demand clarity on the ultimate beneficial ownership of suppliers and their consolidated profit & loss position.
7. Promote Fair Tax Mark certification for any business in which we have a significant stake and where corporation tax is due.
8. Support Fair Tax Week events in Northumberland and celebrate the tax contribution made by responsible businesses who “say what they pay” with pride.
9. Support calls for urgent reform of UK law to enable local authorities to better penalise poor tax conduct and reward good tax conduct through their procurement policies.

11. REPORT OF THE RETURNING OFFICER

THE RETURNING OFFICER TO SUBMIT the return of the person elected as Councillor for Hexham East on Thursday 16 December 2021 as follows:-

Electoral Division

Hexham East

Surname and Other Names

Suzanne Holly Fairless-Aitken

Place of residence

Merry Leazes West
Allendale Road
Hexham
NE46 2NB

Description

Liberal Democrat

12. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

(Pages
109 -
112)

CONSTITUTIONAL UPDATES

- (i) **Re-Endorsement of Appointment of Independent Chair of Standards Committee and Independent Person and Appointment of Additional Independent Person**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement of the continued appointment of Joe Jackson, the Independent Chair of the Standards Committee and Karen Milner, the Council's Independent Person under the relevant provisions of the Localism Act 2011 and to request that Council delegates to the Standards Committee the process of the appointment of two further Independent Persons.

- 13. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER** (Pages 113 - 120)
- To create a new Committee known as the Grievance Committee to hear and determine grievances raised by the Chief Executive and Chief Officers and also grievances made against the Chief Executive and Chief Officers.
- 14. REPORT OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND S151 OFFICER** (Pages 121 - 124)
- Arrangements for the Appointment of the Local Auditor (External Auditor)**
- To seek Council approval to opt-in to the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) Limited arrangements from 1 April 2023 for the five financial years commencing 2023-24 to 2027-28.
- 15. REPORT OF THE LEADER AND COUNCILLOR GORDON CASTLE** (Pages 125 - 136)
- Review of Local Area Councils**
- The report summarises the discussion and recommendations of the Local Area Council Chairs following a review of the current Local Area Council arrangements as requested by the Leader. Council is requested to consider and approve the recommendations within the report
- 16. REVISIONS TO COMMITTEE PLACES AND ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR TO TYNEDALE LAC** (Pages 137 - 160)
- Following the result of the Hexham East Electoral Division by election and the change in the numbers of the political groups, the allocation of seats to be filled by the different political groups has been reviewed in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. This has resulted in a change in the proportional split on committees, and this is set out in the report detailed at page 139-160 of the agenda. Council is requested to note the change in proportionality and to agree the changes to committee membership, which should be notified by Group Leaders to Democratic Services before the meeting. Subject to the decision taken on item 14 above, Council is also asked to elect a Vice Chair to Tynedale Local Area Council, which is currently vacant.
- 17. REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE** (Pages 161 - 172)
- Executive Management Structure Review**

The purpose of the report is to seek approval to the implementation of the revised Executive management arrangements for Council

IF YOU HAVE AN INTEREST AT THIS MEETING, PLEASE:

- Declare it and give details of its nature before the matter is discussion or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.
- Complete this sheet and pass it to the Democratic Services Officer.

Name (please print):
Meeting:
Date:
Item to which your interest relates:
Nature of Registerable Personal Interest i.e either disclosable pecuniary interest (as defined by Annex 2 to Code of Conduct or other interest (as defined by Annex 3 to Code of Conduct) (please give details):
Nature of Non-registerable Personal Interest (please give details):
Are you intending to withdraw from the meeting?

1. Registerable Personal Interests – You may have a Registerable Personal Interest if the issue being discussed in the meeting:

a) relates to any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (as defined by Annex 1 to the Code of Conduct); or

b) any other interest (as defined by Annex 2 to the Code of Conduct)

The following interests are Disclosable Pecuniary Interests if they are an interest of either you or your spouse or civil partner:

(1) Employment, Office, Companies, Profession or vocation; (2) Sponsorship; (3) Contracts with the Council; (4) Land in the County; (5) Licences in the County; (6) Corporate Tenancies with the Council; or (7) Securities - interests in Companies trading with the Council.

The following are other Registerable Personal Interests:

(1) any body of which you are a member (or in a position of general control or management) to which you are appointed or nominated by the Council; (2) any body which (i) exercises functions of a public nature or (ii) has charitable purposes or (iii) one of whose principal purpose includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member (or in a position of general control or management); or (3) any person from whom you have received within the previous three years a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of more than £50 which is attributable to your position as an elected or co-opted member of the Council.

2. Non-registerable personal interests - You may have a non-registerable personal interest when you attend a meeting of the Council or Cabinet, or one of their committees or sub-committees, and you are, or ought reasonably to be, aware that a decision in relation to an item of business which is to be transacted might reasonably be regarded as affecting your well being or financial position, or the well being or financial position of a person described below to a greater extent than most inhabitants of the area affected by the decision.

The persons referred to above are: (a) a member of your family; (b) any person with whom you have a close association; or (c) in relation to persons described in (a) and (b), their employer, any firm in which they are a partner, or company of which they are a director or shareholder.

3. Non-participation in Council Business

When you attend a meeting of the Council or Cabinet, or one of their committees or sub-committees, and you are aware that the criteria set out below are satisfied in relation to any matter to be considered, or being considered at that meeting, you must : (a) Declare that fact to the meeting; (b) Not participate (or further participate) in any discussion of the matter at the meeting; (c) Not participate in any vote (or further vote) taken on the matter at the meeting; and (d) Leave the room whilst the matter is being discussed.

The criteria for the purposes of the above paragraph are that: (a) You have a registerable or non-registerable personal interest in the matter which is such that a member of the public knowing the relevant facts would reasonably think it so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest; **and either** (b) the matter will affect the financial position of yourself or one of the persons or bodies referred to above or in any of your register entries; **or** (c) the matter concerns a request for any permission, licence, consent or registration sought by yourself or any of the persons referred to above or in any of your register entries.

This guidance is not a complete statement of the rules on declaration of interests which are contained in the Members' Code of Conduct. If in any doubt, please consult the Monitoring Officer or relevant Democratic Services Officer before the meeting.

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Agenda Item 2

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **Northumberland County Council** held on Wednesday 3 November 2021 at County Hall, Morpeth at 3.00 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor B. Flux
(Business Chair of the Council) in the Chair

MEMBERS

Ball, C.	Mather, M.
Bawn, D.	Morphet, N
Beynon, J.	Murphy, M.
Bowman, L.	Nisbet, K.
Carr, D.J.	Oliver, N.
Cartie, E.	Parry, K.
Castle, G.	Pattison, W.
Cessford, T.	Ploszaj, W.
Dale, P.A.M.	Purvis, M.
Daley, W.	Reid, J.
Darwin, L.	Renner-Thompson, G.
Dickinson, S.	Richardson, M.
Dodd, R.R.	Riddle, J.R.
Dunbar, C.	Robinson, M.
Dunn, L.	Sanderson, H.G.H.
Ezhilchelvan, P.D.	Scott, P.
Ferguson, D.	Seymour, C.
Foster, J.	Sharp, A.
Gallacher, B.	Simpson, E.
Grimshaw, L.	Stewart, G.
Hardy, C.R.	Swinbank, M.
Hill, G.	Swinburn, M.
Horncastle, C.W.	Taylor, C.
Humphrey, C.	Thorne, T.N.
Hunter, I.E.	Waddell, H.
Hutchinson, J.I.	Wallace, A.
Jones, V.	Watson, A.
Kennedy, D.	Watson, J.G.
Lang, J.A.	Wearmouth, R.W.
Lee, S.	Wilczek, R.

OFFICERS

Hadfield, K.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Hunter, P.	Service Director, Policy
Lally, D.	Chief Executive

Masson, N. McEvoy-Carr, C.	Deputy Monitoring Officer Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services
Murfin, R.	Interim Executive Director of Planning and Local Services
O'Farrell, R.	Interim Executive Director Place and Regeneration
Roll, J.	Head of Democratic and Electoral Services
Taylor, M.	Director, Business Development

One member of the press was present

46. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Bridgett, Clark, A.Scott and Towns.

47. MINUTES

With regard to Minute No. 29 (Motion), Councillor Reid queried whether notification had been made to the LGA Labour Group as per Council's decision. This would be checked.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of County Council held on Wednesday 1 September 2021 as circulated, be confirmed as a true record, signed by the Business Chair and sealed with the Common Seal of the Council.

48. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

With regard to Minute No. 23 of the CSEG OSC minutes, Councillor Grimshaw declared an interest as an Advance Board member and advised she would not participate in any discussion.

With regard to item 9 on the agenda (Motion), Councillor Wearmouth advised that he did not believe he had a conflict of interest but he would not take part in the discussion.

The Leader declared an interest as a farmer with regard to member question No. 11 on farming.

49. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Business Chair was sad to report the death of former County Councillor Terry Robson on 9 October at the age of 78. Terry represented the Hexham Central with Acomb Ward from 1984-1989 and 2008-2017. He had also been a member of Hexham Town Council where he became Mayor twice, and of Tynedale District Council.

The Business Chair also reminded members of all former councillor and honorary aldermen colleagues who had passed away during the pandemic. These had previously been reported to Council but members were now able to stand for a minute's silence in their memory.

Members were then reminded about the remembrance service being held at St. Mary's Church, Morpeth on Thursday 11 November from around 10:30 am Covid precautions would be in place. The event would also be live streamed.

The Leader updated members on the discussions regarding the wider combined authority area. The provisional offer was that if agreement was reached on an LA7 area with a mayor, then the authority might be eligible to get extra transport funding. He was happy with the existing arrangements and did not see the need to commit to a larger authority unless Northumberland would benefit from it. Discussions were continuing and he would report back to members on it in due course.

He had had a meeting this morning with MPs and the rail operators regarding the east coast main line. He had acknowledged the work done by Northern on the Northumberland Line but had stressed that the next time there was consultation on potential reductions to rail services, that all the operators should do it at the same time, and that they take note of what the Council said regarding the reduction of services for commuters.

50. MEMBER QUESTIONS

Question 1 from Councillor Hardy to Councillor Pattison

In 2019/20, the council had a budget of £2,086,884 for Disabled Facilities Grants.

Only 85% of the council's DFG budget was spent. While people living with life limiting illnesses like MND struggled to get the Home Adaptations they needed.

Will you work with me and support MNDA "Act to Adapt Campaign" to ensure that any Northumberland resident diagnosed with a terminal illness such as Motor Neurone Disease will be given priority access to DFG and Home Adaptations.

Councillor Pattison thanked Councillor Hardy for all his work to support the MND Association, which played a vital role in supporting people who suffered from it. MND was a terrible disease and was the focus of the Civic Head's charity this year.

She did agree that supporting people with MND was one of the most essential responsibilities of the Council. The financial information in Councillor Hardy's question, while technically correct, gave a rather misleading picture. The figure described as the "DFG budget" represented the amount which the Council received from the Government for DFGs and related purposes. The Government changed the rules a number of years ago to make it clear that this funding could be used flexibly to support any capital

expenditure which enabled disabled people to live in their own homes. While the largest element of spending was grants paid out under the statutory Disabled Facilities Grant scheme, the level of the funding received from the Government had in recent years been higher than was required to meet all eligible applications under that scheme, and the surplus funding had been used to support other capital expenditure outside the DFG scheme, such as providing adapted accommodation to enable people with a learning disability and associated physical disabilities to live in independent supported accommodation. Because the timing of such schemes might not align neatly with local authority financial years, funding was carried forward as necessary to ensure that it remained available to support disabled people, so underspends in one year did not mean that the money was lost.

Officers were not aware of people living with life limiting illnesses like MND who had struggled to get the Home Adaptations they needed. As the Council told the MND Association in response to the Freedom of Information request that the question was based on, there was a process already in place for ensuring that urgent applications, such as those from people with rapidly deteriorating progressive conditions, were prioritised. If Councillor Hardy, or any other members, knew of cases in which the Council had not responded as urgently as it should have done, she urged them to contact her to make sure they were looked into.

She had a few reservations about the MND Association's campaign, which asked specifically for a fast-track process for people with MND, and more favourable financial rules for people with the condition. Priorities needed to be based on the urgency of people's need rather than on their specific diagnosis, and MND was not the only condition which could create very urgent needs. In his question, Councillor Hardy had taken a broader approach, and asked for priority to be given to anyone with a terminal illness. She was assured by officers that current arrangements were designed to ensure that this happened, but was happy to take up any specific issues raised with her.

Councillor Hardy asked that anyone who was diagnosed with a terminal illness and issued with a DS1500 be given a fast track to disabled facility grants and home adaptations.

Question 2 from Councillor Hill to Councillor Wearmouth

How many complaints have Northumberland County Council had, over the last ten years or indeed ever, from residents and visitors who have taken grave offence and have had to reach for the smelling salts over the names of our streets?

Councillor Wearmouth replied that he was not aware of any.

Councillor Hill commented that there was an important point in the report to Cabinet the following week on this regarding the need for clear street signs both for directions and safety. She had an estate in her area where the street numbering was very confusing so she asked for a commitment that places like this would be picked up on. Councillor Wearmouth responded that she would need to contact Local Services about this.

Question 3 from Councillor Hill to the Leader

Whistleblowing paramedics in Cornwall, an area with some similar characteristics and demographics to Northumberland, have said that there is an ambulance crisis. They say that people are needlessly dying because ambulances cannot get to patients in time and because of ambulances having to queue outside hospitals. Furthermore, they say the public, generally, do not realise the scale of this problem and they fear this situation will get even worse as Winter approaches. How confident are you that we are not facing the same crisis here ?

The Leader noted that the question was not about a County Council service. He acknowledged that the ambulance service was a very important one and in Northumberland, the figures were approximately on average with neighbouring areas. If there were to be questions asked about the ambulance service then he suggested that they be directed to them as he did not have sufficient detail to respond.

Councillor Hill replied that she had received a detailed response from an officer accepting that there was a problem and was disappointed that the Leader had not chosen to deliver it. The Leader replied that he did not focus on being negative. He had been advised by officers that the County had a first class ambulance service. If it didn't always meet its targets, it was up to them to address that.

Question 4 from Councillor Daley to Councillor Horncastle

Horton Burn watercourse in Cramlington is an environmentally significant watercourse running through the Northburn residential area in Cramlington. It is also a recognised environmental corridor with designated healthy walking routes alongside the burn.

We have herons, ducks, fish, water voles and occasional reports of Otters. We also have significant species of plants along the waterway.

In recent years there has been an increasing number of pollution incidents including oil spillages, detergent dumping and in 2019 thousands of fish and eels killed in a major dumping incident from one of the industrial estates.

I have worked with local residents, set up a Friends Group, engaged with Northumbrian Water, the Environment Agency and others to get action. Hundreds of local residents are working with me to look after this watercourse including reporting incidents as they occur.

Will the County Council also work with me to get the Environment Agency and Northumbrian Water to fine and hold to account those responsible for dumping waste into the burn and get the clear message out that this is a living waterway and not a sewer?

Councillor Horncastle confirmed that officers in Public Protection were currently taking this important matter up with the Environment Agency, to ensure that the case was given priority.

Councillor Daley welcomed this and added that he'd been working with officers on issues such as dumped shopping trolleys in waterways and been told that riparian rights now sat with the County Council instead of Northumbrian Water or the Environment Agency. This transfer of responsibility was of concern and he asked if officers could meet with him, Northumbrian Water and the Environment Agency.

Councillor Horncastle advised that he would raise this with the Head of Public Protection at his meeting with him to find out who was responsible for what and was happy to visit the location with Councillor Daley.

Question 5 from Councillor Daley to Councillor Horncastle

As part of the St Nicholas Manor 400 + home planning application in Cramlington, where almost all homes are now completed, a series of road safety measures are planned including a new roundabout on the A1171 to improve road safety, new pedestrian crossing points plus improvements to Station Road with cycle path links as part of a section 278 agreement.

This area has been the subject of road closures due to serious road traffic accidents, complaints from pedestrians and cyclists plus massive concern from residents of Northburn, St Nicholas Manor and Nelson Village.

Why were we told in 2019 that these works would start immediately following the construction of Westmorland Way roundabout, which was completed 2019, and why is it that more than 2 years later with excuses such as delays being related to tendering processes and more recently a stone built bus shelter, which has been there for over 15 years, preventing this scheme from starting. Given that Northumberland County Council has done everything legally on our side to give the green light to this safety scheme, why is it that this urgent work shows no sign of being started?

Councillor Horncastle advised that the Council had been endeavouring to resolve a number of issues linked to site, but the development had been subject to numerous delays from the developer's legal teams. The final required legal agreement was circulated to all parties in August. Unfortunately, one of the surety providers 'National Housing Building Council' advised that the agreement was not sufficient for them to guarantee the properties. Subsequently, the Council had been working to support the developers and their solicitors to agree a wording which secured the appropriate matters. A revised agreement was circulated recently and officers were waiting feedback. Officers were pressing for a commitment towards starting these essential works. Future highways agreements would be structured in such a way that developers would be required to demonstrate compliance prior to occupation of any units.

Councillor Daley welcomed this but there were multi million pound developers across the county who were abusing the planning system and residents and the County Council was being blamed for the failures. Developers had to be held to account. He urged Councillor Horncastle and officers to come to St Nicholas Manor and see how important it was for this scheme to be progressed.

Question 6 from Councillor Ezhilchelvan to Councillor Riddle

Irresponsible parking around schools is something which affects almost every councillor in our county. Some other councils have taken a very proactive stance by using mobile number plate recognition systems on modified cars which drive around schools and capture the number plates of poorly parked cars. Acknowledging any work already done, can you please tell us what proactive measures that the Northumberland County Council is using and/or planning to use to end the blight of bad parking around our schools?

Councillor Riddle advised that the County Council had a vehicle with automatic number plate recognition system and it was used around schools where there were particular highway safety issues caused by poor parking behaviours. On a more proactive basis, the Council worked closely with schools to help them develop and implement "School Travel Plans". These used a range of approaches, including encouraging children to use non-car means of travelling to school. The Travel Plan also set out how the school worked with parents to tackle inconsiderate parking and the escalating steps that could be taken.

If anyone was aware of particular problems at a specific school he urged them to get in touch with Rob Murfin.

Councillor Ezhilchelvan was glad that this was acknowledged as a problem and was surprised that there was a vehicle going around as he had never seen it. He asked why this had not been seen and commented that those residents who had residents parking schemes, for which they paid a permit fee, were never surveyed.

Councillor Riddle responded that he would have to get information from officers on the vehicle's routes. Parking violations were the responsibility of the enforcement team. If there were concerns these should be reported.

Question 7 from Councillor Lee to Councillor Horncastle

Since my election in May I have recovered over 200 abandoned shopping trolleys in Cramlington East. Retailers have failed to attend meetings to discuss this issue. Existing legislation permits the local authority to adopt Schedule 4 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 as amended by the Clean Neighbourhoods Act 2005 which allows them to issue penalties to retailers for each abandoned trolley. Will Northumberland County Council give consideration to adopting this legislation?

Councillor Horncastle replied that the Council's Public Protection and Neighbourhood Services teams would explore the technical and practical implications of this by investigating the enforcement, collection and storage requirements. Following this, an update would be provided at the next full Council Meeting.

Councillor welcomed this but in the meantime, this was an ongoing issue and he suggested that a working group be formed to identify a speedy solution to the problem. Councillor Horncastle acknowledged that there was a problem. Officers would investigate the possibility of a working group and would also look at the conditions attached to the original planning permission.

Question 8 from Councillor Swinburn to the Leader

Northumberland County Council has rightly received significant praise for our work to tackle climate change and ultimately be Britain's environmentally greenest County. As part of the move to improve air quality, many residents in the County are now switching to electric vehicles.

Cramlington has seen a significant increase in electric car ownership and many taxi firms are looking to switch away from petrol and diesel to use an electric fleet.

Given that Cramlington is the second biggest town in Northumberland, and the recognised gateway to and from the County, how can we support the residents and growing number of people who visit the town for work and leisure, with more off street and communal charging points so that in conjunction with increased public transport and improvements to the train station, we can make Cramlington the "Green Town of Northumberland" ?

The Leader responded that the target for Cramlington in terms of carbon emissions was the same as for the rest of the County. However, given the layout of the town, he felt there was a good case to be made for rolling out some of the funding available from the capital programme for additional and improved cycleways. A feasibility study could be done on this.

Councillor Swinburn commented that in 2015 only 1.1% of new vehicles registered had a plug, compared to 3.2% in 2019 and 10.7% by the end of 2019. The pandemic had had a significant impact on vehicle sales, most noticeably this year with a massive increase in electric vehicle sales. However, there had been only two additional EVCPs in Cramlington. There was a need for action now and he asked if the Leader would meet with him and his fellow Cramlington councillors and the Town Council to develop some plans to progress the easier use of EVs in the town.

The Leader advised that there was a lot of work going on in the rollout of EVCPs and he was very keen to ensure that the County Council met its climate change targets by 2030. He was sure members could work together on this.

Question 9 from Councillor Dale to the Leader

Does this Council support the use of Smart Meters as an effective aid in the rollout of renewable energy?

The Leader confirmed that was the case. Councillor Dale welcomed this and advised that she had written to Guy Opperman MP asking when the Government expected the rollout of smart meters and asking the Government to make this a priority. She asked if the Council would write to Mr Opperman and other local MPs to support residents on this.

The Leader asked Councillor Dale to forward him a copy of that letter but added that all local MPs were supportive of the Council's work on climate change.

Question 10 from Councillor Dale to Councillor Horncastle

When does this Council expect the Council's Local Plan to be signed off by Government?

Councillor Horncastle advised that, following the Local Plan Examination Hearing Sessions, the Schedule of Main Modifications to the Northumberland Local Plan had been subject to consultation from 9 June to 4 August 2021. The representations received to the Main Modifications consultation together with the Council's response had been sent to the Inspector for consideration, prior to the report on the 'soundness' of the Local Plan being issued by the Inspector. The timescale for the receipt of the Inspector's report was outwith the control of the Council, but it was anticipated that the Inspector's report would be received before the end of 2021 and subject to the Local Plan being found 'sound', it was anticipated that the Local Plan would be adopted in early 2022.

Councillor Dale commented that all members should have a briefing on the Local Plan as many were new to the process. This could update members on the current position and explain the process. The Leader responded that he would ask the Director to arrange this. He thanked the Director and all of his staff for their work in getting to the current position.

Question 11 from Councillor Mather to the Leader

The need to address climate change is important but I'm worried about the knock on impacts to farmers and the rural community, in particular tenant farmers and their workers, many of whom have contacted me to say that they at risk of or already have been served notice to vacate land to make way for "re-wilding", tree planting etc.

Would the Leader set in motion a review by NCC of the subject by NCC officers and join me in discussions with local farmers so that we can ensure we understand the issues being encountered, and identify positive ways to address them and support our vital industry?

The Leader replied that efforts were being made nationally to find more forestry to offset carbon, and also looking for a whole new range of environmental options for farmland. Northumberland was a beautiful county because of its farmers. There needed to be balance in how the County was taken forward, and tenant farmers were vulnerable and needed to be protected. He would set a working group up of officers along with representatives of the NFU, CLA and the TFA. The County's MPs would be involved also. He would report back on this to the next Council meeting on progress.

51. CABINET MINUTES

- (1) Wednesday 25 August 2021**
- (2) Tuesday 7 September 2021**
- (3) Tuesday 12 October 2021**

With regard to Minute No. 43 of the 12 October meeting, Council Tax had the power to put increasing numbers of families into debt and she asked if the delivery plan for the household support fund include earmarking any funding as top up support for the hardship fund or other mechanisms aimed specifically for council tax support. Scrutiny Committee had raised several concerns and she needed to be assured that they had been addressed in the Cabinet meeting. The hardship fund was a discretionary scheme and there would always be people who slipped through the net.

Councillor Wearmouth asked if this could be dealt with under the substantive matter on the agenda.

Councillor Robinson asked for an update on Minute No. 48(2) which Councillor Wearmouth agreed would be provided.

RESOLVED that the minutes of Cabinet detailed above be received.

52. COMMITTEE MINUTES

(1) Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC

These were presented by Councillor Bawn.

RESOLVED that the minutes of Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC be received.

(2) Family and Children's Services OSC

These were presented by Councillor Daley who thanked Councillor Stewart for this work as Vice Chair of FACS.

With regard to Minute No. 25, Councillor Wallace asked whether a response had yet been received from the Chancellor and Education Secretary regarding heating and fuel costs for schools and he referred to Cambois Primary School where the electricity budget for the year had been set at £12,000. By September, £11,000 of this budget had been spent. This would directly impact teaching and learning. He urged the Leader to get an answer to the question being asked, as the situation was very worrying and could end in schools being closed.

The Leader replied that he had written to the Schools Minister and the Chancellor and he understood that a reply was on its way. He was confident that the issue would be taken on board but was not sure how much help they could provide. The Council felt as strongly about this issue as the local MPs.

RESOLVED that the minutes of Family and Children's Services OSC be received.

(3) Communities and Place OSC

These were presented by Councillor Oliver.

With regard to Minute No. 16, Councillor Morphet wished to make it clear that he had raised the point at the meeting so he could understand the pros and cons of alternative fuel sources and he strongly supported the idea of an HVO trial.

With regard to the resolution to acquire more gulley wagons, Councillor Gallacher supported this. This was a major problem in the south east and he asked that Ashington take priority. He also felt that staff should be trained in advance of the vehicles being delivered.

In response to some comments from members about the gulley wagons and blocked drains, Councillor Riddle advised that there were now 4 wagons which were all equipped with jettors. However, the waste water had to be disposed of at a waste transfer station. He acknowledged that there were some problems in Ashington and these were being addressed.

Councillor Ball asked when the vehicles were going to get to North Seaton Road in Ashington as this had been promised in July. The Leader advised that he and Councillor Riddle would visit to see the issue first hand. Councillor Gallacher referred to the visit with Cabinet Members and officers to Ashington in the summer. A report back from the Cabinet Member on that was still awaited and nothing had been heard from officers either. He asked that Ashington Councillors be kept updated.

(4) Health and Wellbeing OSC

These were presented by Councillor Reid.

Councillor Flux thanked him for his work as Chair of this Committee.

RESOLVED that the minutes of Health and Wellbeing OSC be received.

(5) Health and Wellbeing Board

These were presented by Councillor Flux.

RESOLVED that the minutes of Health and Wellbeing Board be received.

(6) Audit Committee

These were presented by Councillor Oliver.

Councillor Grimshaw commented that she had resigned from the Committee but was noted as submitting apologies for the September meeting. She asked that her attendance record be corrected.

Councillor Dickinson sought clarification as to whether the independent chair was able to vote on matters. The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised that the Independent chair did not have a vote. Councillor Dickinson then queried what would happen in the event of a tied vote if the Chair did not have a second or casting vote. The Business Chair suggested this was something for Constitution Working Group to consider. Councillor Oliver suggested that the Vice Chair could take over in those circumstances.

Councillor Swinburn expressed concern regarding references in the minutes to illegal activities, and other detailed matters which led him to question what the objectives were of the Audit Committee and whether this would be continuing.

Councillor Grimshaw reiterated Councillor Swinburn's concerns having watched the meeting online. Councillor Dickinson agreed and felt that the membership needed to be evaluated by the Leader. The Leader responded that he would take that decision in the appropriate way.

RESOLVED that the minutes of Audit Committee be received.

Councillor Wearmouth left at this point.

53. MOTIONS

Motion No. 1

In accordance with Council Rules of Procedure No.10, Councillor G. Sanderson moved the following motion, received by the Head of Democratic and Electoral Services on 27 September 2021:-

“That Northumberland County Council

(i) Acknowledges the efforts that this Council has made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote renewable energy;

(ii) Further recognises

that very large financial setup and running costs involved in selling locally generated renewable electricity to local customers result in it being impossible for local renewable electricity generators to do so,

that making these financial costs proportionate to the scale of a renewable electricity supplier's operation would create significant opportunities for local companies and community groups to be providers of locally generated renewable electricity directly to local people, businesses and organisations, if they wished, and

that revenues received by such local companies or community groups that chose to become local renewable electricity providers could be used to help improve the local economy, local services and facilities and to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions;

(iii) Notes that the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee, as a result of its 2021 Technological Innovations and Climate Change inquiry, recommended that a Right to Local Supply for local energy suppliers be established to address this;

(iv) Accordingly resolves to support the Local Electricity Bill, currently supported by a cross-party group of 266 MPs and which, if made law, would establish a Right to Local Supply which would promote local renewable electricity supply by making the setup and running costs of selling renewable electricity to local customers proportionate to the size of the supply company; and

(v) Further resolves to

inform the local media of this decision,

write to local MPs, asking them to support the Bill, and

write to the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, Power for People, (at Camden Collective, 5-7 Buck Street, London NW1 8NJ or info@powerforpeople.org.uk) expressing its support”.

In introducing the motion the Leader commented that it was essential to decarbonise the electricity supply if climate change targets were to be met and Northumberland was well placed to do that. If the Bill became law, it would be applicable to both commercial and community organisations, and was especially relevant for those communities who relied on alternative sources of power. The Council’s role would be to work with residents, businesses and communities. The capacity was already there to do that through the climate change team and an update on progress with the climate change agenda would be sent to all members.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Plozsaj, who felt this was a great opportunity to diversify the suppliers’ market and to support local economies and communities by keeping money in the local area. The Bill had been supported by 80 local authorities around the country.

The majority of members spoke in support of the motion. A number of additional points were made around:-

- Increasing the number of meetings held remotely where possible and paperless meetings introduced.
- Further investigation of hydro-electric and geo-thermal opportunities.
- The need for communities to see actual benefits from some of this work and for the Council to be an enabler in the provision of services rather than an actual provider itself.
- Local energy should be re-purposed to support schools in their struggle to deal with heating bills so that they could benefit from lower prices.
- All local MPs should be written to to see if a response came back from them.
- Recycling rates needed to be better.

- Neighbourhood Plans and the emerging Local Plan needed to be taken into consideration.
- Council actions should be subject to an environmental audit

The Leader responded to some of the points which had been made, and on the motion being put to the vote there voted FOR: a substantial majority; AGAINST: 0; ABSTENTIONS: 0.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that Northumberland County Council:-

(i) Acknowledges the efforts that this Council has made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote renewable energy;

(ii) Further recognises

that very large financial setup and running costs involved in selling locally generated renewable electricity to local customers result in it being impossible for local renewable electricity generators to do so,

that making these financial costs proportionate to the scale of a renewable electricity supplier's operation would create significant opportunities for local companies and community groups to be providers of locally generated renewable electricity directly to local people, businesses and organisations, if they wished, and

that revenues received by such local companies or community groups that chose to become local renewable electricity providers could be used to help improve the local economy, local services and facilities and to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions;

(iii) Notes that the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee, as a result of its 2021 Technological Innovations and Climate Change inquiry, recommended that a Right to Local Supply for local energy suppliers be established to address this;

(iv) Accordingly resolves to support the Local Electricity Bill, currently supported by a cross-party group of 266 MPs and which, if made law, would establish a Right to Local Supply which would promote local renewable electricity supply by making the setup and running costs of selling renewable electricity to local customers proportionate to the size of the supply company; and

(v) Further resolves to

inform the local media of this decision,

write to local MPs, asking them to support the Bill, and

write to the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, Power for People, (at Camden Collective, 5-7 Buck Street, London NW1 8NJ or info@powerforpeople.org.uk) expressing its support".

The meeting was adjourned at 16.58 and reconvened at 17.10.

54. APPOINTMENTS TO POSITIONS, COMMITTEE PLACES AND OUTSIDE BODIES

Council was asked to approve the changes to committee places and outside bodies detailed at pages 181- 186 of the agenda, and to elect the Deputy Business Chair and Chairs/Vice Chairs to the Committees as indicated therein. An updated document had been circulated to members.

It was noted that Councillor Seymour was to remain as Deputy Cabinet member for Corporate Services, not as detailed in the agenda, which was a typo. It was also noted that Councillor Robinson would remain on CSEG OSC as a minority place.

Councillor Daley asked for clarification of the position regarding the age restriction on the Governing Body of Netherton Park. The Business Chair and Councillor Pattison agreed this would be investigated.

The Leader nominated Councillor Paul Scott for the position of Deputy Business Chair, this was seconded by the Business Chair.

Councillor Dickinson asked why a Deputy Business Chair was being elected now and expressed disappointment that Councillor Dunbar had left the Cabinet. He also asked for a named vote on the election of Deputy Business Chair, which was supported by the required number of members.

In response to a question from Councillor Purvis regarding the composition of the JCC, Councillor Reid advised that it was about the Administration dealing with the trade unions regarding the management of the workforce and how this was dealt with. This had been the position prior to local government reorganisation. The Leader agreed that this could be looked at and had no issue with the body being cross party.

Councillor Hill thanked Councillor Reid for his chairmanship of the Health and Wellbeing OSC.

On the nomination of Councillor P. Scott being put to a named voted, the votes were cast as follows:-

FOR: 36

Bawn, D.	Morphet, N.
Beynon, J.	Oliver, N.
Carr, D.	Pattison, W.
Castle, G.	Ploszaj, W.
Cessford, T.	Reid, J.
Daley, W.	Renner Thompson, G.
Darwin, L.	Riddle, J.
Dodd, R.	Robinson, M.
Dunbar, C.	Sanderson, H.G.H.
Ezhilchelvan, P.	Scott, P.
Ferguson, D.	Seymour, C.
Flux, B.	Sharp, A.
Hardy, C.	Stewart, G.
Horncastle, C.	Swinbank, M.
Humphrey, C.	Swinburn, M.
Hutchinson, J.I.	Thorne, T.N.
Jones, V.	Watson, J.
Mather, M.	Wearmouth, R.

AGAINST: 25

Ball, C.	Lee, S.
Bowman, L.	Murphy, M.
Cartie, E.	Nisbet, K.
Dale, P.A.M.	Parry, K.
Dickinson, S.	Purvis, M.
Dunn, L.	Richardson, M.
Foster, J.	Simpson, E.
Gallacher, B.	Taylor, C.
Grimshaw, L.	Waddell, H.
Hill, G.	Wallace, A.
Hunter, E.I.	Watson, A.
Kennedy, D.	Wilczek, R.
Lang, J.	

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:-

- (a) Councillor P. Scott be elected Deputy Business Chair for the remainder of the Council year;
- (b) Council note the appointment of Councillor G. Stewart as Deputy Cabinet Member for Community Services and the appointment of Councillor C. Seymour as Deputy Cabinet Member for Corporate Services. The Deputy Cabinet Member for Wellbeing position remains vacant; and

- (c) Council agree the amendments to Committee places as detailed in the document circulated at the Council meeting, and the election of Chair or Vice Chair as detailed therein.

55. REPORTS OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND S151 OFFICER

(1) Council Tax Support Scheme for 2022-23

The report sought approval for the local Council Tax (CT) Support Scheme for 2022-23 to continue to provide support at a maximum level of 92% of council tax liability.

The report was introduced by Councillor Wearmouth. The S151 Officer advised that in addition to the CT support scheme, for the last two years the Council had offered discounts which had been funded by Government grants. In the 2020-21 financial year this had been £300, and £150 in the previous year. In the current year, this funding had been used to reduce CT bills for 13,353 claimants, and 13,040 had had no CT liability at all. Officers were looking at whether a similar scheme could be offered for the next financial year using unspent grant funding, probably at around £200-£300.

£2.4m was also available from the household support fund and it was proposed to continue the winter support programme from this which included food and fuel vouchers, food assistance during school holidays and cold weather payments. With the support which was available, it was likely that a similar number of claimants would be taken out of CT liability altogether again this year. Therefore there would be three schemes running alongside each other; the main CT support scheme, a discount scheme and the continuation of the winter assistance programme.

There were a number of member comments on this which included:-

- Councillor Grimshaw did not support the report. She asked why the different sources of support could not be combined to enable the support scheme to be dismissed. The table of illustration comparing local authorities in the region did not impress her Group and she felt that Northumberland should be one of the two authorities who chose to provide 100% support. She provided some figures for members about the effects of Government policies on working age adults and urged the Administration to scrap the proposal.
- Councillor Bawn referred members to the concise and detailed explanation which had been provided by the S151 Officer. The vast majority of claimants were not paying any council tax and the books had to be balanced. He understood that people were upset by the table contained in the report but the two most generous local authorities listed were not Labour run. This was a very sensible scheme with real additional support and he urged members to support it.

- Councillor Ball urged the Administration to take the stress off people to apply for support if the funding was already there.
- Councillor Robinson felt that the number of working age claimants was likely to greatly increase and asked if members could be provided with details of the three support schemes available so these could be passed on to constituents, or details included with council tax bills. Councillor Wearmouth agreed this could be done.
- Councillor Dickinson asked members to note that this had gone from affecting 12,000 people when first introduced to nearly 17,000 and he agreed this was the tip of the iceberg. The barriers to accessing these support schemes meant that, for many, they were out of reach. The Administration needed to focus on its own area and the needs of the people it represented, and consider whether the three support schemes should be combined to cancel the 8%, or whether it wanted more people to be pushed into the same bracket and spend council funding chasing people for payments they could not make.
- Councillor Hill paid credit to officers in the Communities Together team who had supported people through the pandemic and associated hardship and felt that 100% council tax support was the only option.
- Councillor Reid asked if members could be informed about the number of people who actually paid anything and what they were asked to pay on average.
- Councillor Dunn welcomed the questions being raised on the report by members and reiterated her concerns that the support schemes available were discretionary. However good referral partners were, there would always be some who fell through the net. She agreed with other speakers that the three funding streams should be amalgamated.

Councillor Wearmouth responded that the three funding streams from Government had to be administered separately. The S151 officer advised that the 8% for Band A equated to £97, for Band D it was £131, with most working age claimants in Bands A-C. The number paying anything in the current year was 3,313. The proposal was that equivalent support would be provided next financial year. If members agreed the report, no-one would have to apply for the discount, it would be automatically deducted from council tax bills as normal.

The report's recommendations were proposed by Councillor Wearmouth and seconded by Councillor Sanderson. The required number of members supported a named vote on the matter, and on being put to the vote, the votes were cast as follows:-

FOR: 35

Bawn, D.	Lee, S.
Beynon, J.	Mather, M.
Carr, D.	Oliver, N.
Castle, G.	Pattison, W.
Cessford, T.	Ploszaj, W.
Daley, W.	Reid, J.
Darwin, L.	Renner Thompson, G.

Dodd, R.	Riddle, J.
Dunbar, C.	Sanderson, H.G.H.
Ezhilchelvan, P.	Scott, P.
Ferguson, D.	Seymour, C.
Flux, B.	Sharp, A.
Hardy, C.	Stewart, G.
Horncastle, C.	Swinburn, M.
Humphrey, C.	Thorne, T.N.
Hunter, E.I.	Watson, J.
Hutchinson, J.I.	Wearmouth, R.
Jones, V.	

AGAINST: 26

Ball, C.	Murphy, M.
Bowman, L.	Nisbet, K.
Cartie, E.	Parry, K.
Dale, P.A.M.	Purvis, M.
Dickinson, S.	Richardson, M.
Dunn, L.	Robinson, M.
Foster, J.	Simpson, E.
Gallacher, B.	Swinbank, M.
Grimshaw, L.	Taylor, C.
Hill, G.	Waddell, H.
Kennedy, D.	Wallace, A.
Lang, J.	Watson, A.
Morphet, N.	Wilczek, R.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that County Council approve the Council Tax Support Scheme attached as Appendix 1 to the report to be adopted as the Council's local scheme for 2022-23.

(2) Treasury Management Annual Report for the Financial Year 2020-21

The report provided details of performance against the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) 2020-21, approved by the County Council on 19 February 2020. The report provided a review of borrowing and investment performance for 2020-21, set in the context of the general economic conditions prevailing during the year. It also reviewed specific Treasury Management prudential indicators defined by the (CIPFA) Treasury Management Code of Practice and CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, (the Prudential Code), and approved by the Authority in the TMSS.

Councillor J. Watson commented on the excellent performance in the preceding year.

Councillor Oliver asked whether there were any plans to smooth out the spike in the maturity profile identified in the report in future years. The S151 Officer

confirmed that as debt fell due, officers did look at the maturity profile in order to spread it out. The Council was significantly under borrowed at the present time so the markets would be monitored and when the time was right to replace internal borrowing with external, then it would be done in such a way as to smooth the maturity profile. The Strategy was being refreshed in readiness for the forthcoming year and this was one of the things which would be looked at.

Councillor Dickinson asked if a breakdown could be provided of the debts over 50-60 years old. Councillor Wearmouth responded that the detail was about when debts were going to be mature in around 50 years' time.

Councillor Dale felt a briefing for all members on the treasury management function would be beneficial. Councillor Wearmouth agreed this could be done.

Councillor Kennedy referred to previous financial decisions made by the Authority, some of which he felt were nonsensical and reminded members that the Council should not be acting this way. The Council was supposed to deliver services and act with caution, not invest in private enterprise.

RESOLVED that the report be received and the performance of the Treasury Management function for 2020-21 be noted.

56. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

Council was asked to consider two reports recently agreed for recommendation to Council by the Constitution Working Group:-

(1) Report of the Senior Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Proposed Constitutional Changes

Council was asked to review and update the Constitution and make related appointments.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer proposed that, with regard to recommendation 4, the words "and the constitution amended accordingly" be deleted and insert "for information" instead.

Councillor Dickinson supported the recommendations with the exception of the increased numbers on Committees to provide any Group with a better position.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Part 3 of the Constitution – Membership of Committees 2020/21 be amended in the following respect:

- Amendment of the table of committees on page 45 of the Constitution, to reflect the size of the Petitions Committee, Standards Committee and Staff and Appointments Committees is now 9 members, following the decision of full council on the 26th May 2021
 - Amendment of the year specified in the table of committees on page 45 of the Constitution from 2020/21 to 2021/22;
- (b) Council agree that references to the Chief Executive also being a Director of the NHS Foundation Trust and the Executive Director of HR/OD and Deputy CEO being seconded from the NHS Foundation Trust are removed from the relevant sections of the Constitution, as set out in paragraph 6 of the report;
- (c) Council note that the functions of the Executive Director of HR/OD and Deputy Chief Executive are currently being exercised by the Chief Executive as Head of Paid Service in accordance with Part 4.1 para 5.9 of the constitution, except in matters where there is a conflict of interest, whereby those matters will be delegated to the appropriate Executive Director; and
- (d) Council note that following the current Management Review, the revised structure will be reported to a future meeting of Constitution Working Group for information.
- (2) Report of the Interim Executive Director of Planning & Local Services**

Review of Planning Terms of Reference

The report reviewed the Strategic Planning Committee Terms of Reference and Powers as set out in the Councils Constitution. The change was proposed following a formal recommendation for clarification from the Local Government Ombudsman.

RESOLVED that the Strategic Planning Committee Terms of Reference be amended, as detailed below in bold and italics, to ensure clarity on whether an application is to be considered at Strategic Planning Committee, or at the Local Area Council Planning Committee:-

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference and Powers

(a) To exercise the powers and duties of the Council as Planning Authority in relation to development management under the Town and Country Planning Acts and other associated/related legislation and in particular, but not limited to, those functions listed in Schedule 1 to the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000, including the following matters which specifically require a decision by the Strategic Planning Committee:

- minerals and waste planning

- development concerning major energy and physical infrastructure proposals such as wind farms
- planning applications involving more than 100 houses and/or more than 1,000 sq metres of commercial floorspace
- planning applications involving less than 100 houses and/or less than 1,000 sq metres of commercial floorspace which raise significant strategic planning policy issues, and
- any other planning applications which represent a significant departure from the Development Plan

All applications are to be determined by the Chief Planning Officer in accordance with the powers set out in the internal scheme of delegation except for the following which fall to the **Local Area Council Planning Committee to be determined:**

- Applications submitted by or on behalf of elected members of the Council or by their spouses/partners
- Applications involving land and/or premises in the ownership or under the control of elected members of the Council or their spouses/partners
- Applications in which any senior officer* of the Council has a personal and prejudicial interest
- Determination of applications submitted by or on behalf of the Council (or by or on behalf of companies controlled by the Council); or of applications relating to land in which the Council (or company) has a significant interest (NB council to refuse such applications is delegated)
- Approval of applications where, in the opinion of the Relevant Officer, such an approval would constitute a departure from the approved Development Plan and would require a reference to the Secretary of State
- Any application which an elected member of the Council requests should be considered by the Committee, provided the request is in writing, is received within 21 days of the application appearing on the weekly list, and is supported by bona fide planning reasons (which will be reported to the Committee together with the Councillor's name)
- Any application which the Relevant Officer considers should be determined by the Committee because of special planning issues or considerations it raises including significant local interest, and
- Determination of applications where there are contrary comments received within the consultation period given raising bona fide planning issues from statutory consultees as defined in National Planning Practice Guidance.

*For the purposes of the Scheme of Delegation, Senior Officer is defined as Director or Head of Service (or equivalent title)

(b) Those functions prescribed by the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 as not being executive functions

and not elsewhere allocated by this Constitution

57. JANUARY 2022 COUNCIL MEETING

RESOLVED that the deadline for submission of motions, public questions and member questions for 5 January 2022 Council is **noon on Monday 20 December 2021**.

58. 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

15 1, 3 and 4
Information relating to Information relating to any individual, information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the Authority.

AND The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure because disclosure would adversely affect the Authority's ability to conduct its affairs.

16 1, 3 and 4
Information relating to Information relating to any individual, information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under,

the Authority.

AND The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure because disclosure would adversely affect the Authority's ability to conduct its affairs.

59. REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Executive Management Structure Review

All officers with the exception of the Chief Executive, the Deputy Monitoring Officer and the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager left the meeting at this point.

The Chief Executive advised that this matter had been withdrawn from the agenda.

60. REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Appointment of Interim Monitoring Officer

The report sought approval of the appointment of a Monitoring Officer on an interim basis, Suki Binjal, for Northumberland County Council due to the substantive post of Legal Services Manager and Monitoring Officer becoming vacant.

It was proposed that the interim appointment of Suki Binjal remained in place until a substantive appointment was made to the post of Monitoring Officer. At present the Legal Services Manager/Monitoring Officer and Director of Corporate Assurance posts were vacant and this interim post holder would cover the key required elements of those two roles.

A number of questions were raised by members which the Chief Executive answered. She thanked the three deputy monitoring officers for their work during a very difficult year.

RESOLVED that recommendations 1-3, as detailed in the report, be agreed.

The Common Seal of the County Council
of Northumberland was hereunto affixed
in the presence of:-

.....
Chair of the County Council

.....
Duly Authorised Officer

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Agenda Item 7

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

At a meeting of the **Cabinet** held at County Hall, Morpeth on Tuesday 9 November 2021 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

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

CABINET MEMBERS

Horncastle, C.	Riddle, J.
Pattison, W.	Watson, J.G.
Ploszaj, W.	Wearmouth, R.
Renner Thompson, G.	

OTHER MEMBERS

Flux, B.	Seymour, C.
Scott, P.	Stewart, G.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Binjal, S.	Monitoring Officer
Hadfield, K.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Lally, D.	Chief Executive
Lancaster, H.	Deputy Monitoring Officer
Masson, N.	Deputy Monitoring Officer
McEvoy-Carr, C.	Executive Director of Children's Services and Adult Social Care
Morgan, L.	Director of Public Health
Murfin, R.	Interim Executive Director Planning and Local Services
O'Farrell, R.	Interim Executive Director of Regeneration
Roll, J.	Head of Democratic and Electoral Services
Taylor, M.	Director of Business Development and Communities
Soderquest, P.	Head of Housing and Public Protection
Walsh, N.	Head of Cultural Services

Ch.'s Initials.....

50. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of Cabinet held on 12 October 2021 as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

51. REPORTS OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND LOCAL SERVICES

(1) Northumberland Waste Management Strategy – Outcome of Kerbside Glass Recycling Collection Trial

The report detailed the key outcomes of the kerbside glass recycling pilot scheme which had been in operation since November 2020 and recommended the next steps for this scheme and the estimated costs for rolling-out a kerbside glass collection service across the county.

The report also highlighted how the timing for the roll-out for this enhanced glass recycling service would be dependent upon the outcome of the latest consultation exercises undertaken as part of the Government's new Resources and Waste Strategy and provision of new burdens funding by the Government (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix A, along with the report of the Communities and Place OSC).

Members were very supportive of the report and the encouraging results so far. The report had also been supported by Scrutiny. A member asked about rollout across the County and the Leader advised that this was likely to be on an area by area basis. However, further progress would also be dependent on the requirements of the Government's Environment Bill which was expected in 2022.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Cabinet notes the content of the report including the success of the trial, reflecting high customer satisfaction levels, high yields of glass collected per household and what the estimated performance benefit and financial costs would be associated with the future roll-out of this service;
- (b) Cabinet agrees to the continuation of the kerbside glass collection trial through to March 2023 and to include an additional 800 properties in the four trial areas to gather further information about the future operating costs and collection efficiency, in order to evidence the County's requirements to roll out the service permanently when anticipated announcements on the Resources and Waste Strategy and provision of new burdens funding are published in early 2022;

- (c) Cabinet approves additional revenue expenditure from the Council's Transformation Fund Reserve of £31,000 during 2021/22 to meet the cost of extending the glass collection trial for the remainder of the current financial year (£18,000) and to fund the cost of purchasing an additional 800 no. 140- litre wheeled bins required for the expansion of the trial area (£13,000);
- (d) Cabinet notes that the revenue cost of £43,000 for operating the trial throughout 2022/23 will be identified as a non-recurrent revenue growth bid for consideration as part of the Council's 2022/23 to 2024/25 Medium Term Financial Plan budget setting process, which will be determined by the County Council in February 2022. It is envisaged that Government new burdens funding will be available to meet the cost of providing a new kerbside glass collection service from 2023/24 onwards; and
- (e) the report of the Communities and Place OSC be noted.

At this point Councillor Wearmouth advised that he would not be voting on the following item on the agenda as it had been considered by Morpeth Town Council. He was not declaring an interest as such, but would leave the room whilst the matter was being discussed.

(2) Proposed Adoption of Revised Boundary for Morpeth Conservation Area

The report explained the need to review the Morpeth Conservation Area and sought approval to adopt the recommended extension to the current Conservation Area boundary (Copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix B).

Councillor Horncastle advised members that this had the support of Morpeth Town Council and local members. Cabinet welcomed the proposals.

RESOLVED that the proposals to revise the boundary of the Morpeth Conservation Area as set out in Chapter 11 of the Morpeth Conservation Area Boundary Review Final Report and the plan attached to the report, be approved.

52. REPORT OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Policy for Street Naming and Numbering

The report set out the proposed policy for the identification and allocation of appropriate names for streets in the County (Copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix C, along with the report of the Communities and Place OSC).

Members were advised that this was a revision of the existing policy which had worked well since 2009 and the policy set out clearly the process for developers to follow. The issues which had been raised by Scrutiny could be addressed by the revised policy.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Cabinet approve the policy;
- (b) Authority be delegated to the Head of Housing and Public Protection to ensure that the administration of the policy and all other criteria are met; and
- (c) the report of the Communities and Place OSC be noted.

53. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that:

(a) 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
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	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
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AND

The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure public interest in disclosure because for item 8, disclosure would adversely affect confidentiality requirements with external partners, and for item 9 it would prejudice Advance Northumberland's ability to negotiate with partners and give its competitors a commercial advantage.

54. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CULTURAL SERVICES

Platinum Jubilee Celebrations in Northumberland - The County Council's Role and Scope of Activity

The report provided an overview of the national programme of celebrations to mark the historic Queen's Platinum Jubilee during 2022, and outlined the proposed role of the Council in both the high-profile national programme, and in the encouragement of communities to celebrate together across the County. The report requested non-recurrent allocations of funds to support the delivery of events (Copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix D, coloured pink and marked Not for Publication).

Members discussed the details of the report, and in particular, the arrangements for safe delivery of community events. It was noted that responsibility for safety would lie with event organisers. The default position was that events should be held off the main highway network wherever possible, which was an approach supported by the Police and advice would be available from the County Council.

RESOLVED that recommendations 1-5 and 7 as detailed in the report be agreed, and recommendation 6 be agreed as follows:-

The details of a scheme to enable local road closures to be administered free of charge for community Jubilee activity be delegated to the Head of Cultural Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Healthy Lives.

55. REPORT OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION and INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FINANCE AND SECTION 151 OFFICER

Northumberland Energy Park Phase 3 Site at East Sleekburn – update on disposal to British Volt

The report updated Members on the progress of the British Volt project, and sought approval for a change to the conditions relating to the Call Option (Copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix E, coloured pink and marked Not for Publication).

RESOLVED that recommendations (a) to (c) as detailed in the report be agreed.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

At a meeting of the **Cabinet** held at County Hall, Morpeth on Thursday 18 November 2021 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

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

CABINET MEMBERS

Horncastle, C.	Riddle, J.
Pattison, W.	Watson, J.G.
Ploszaj, W.	Wearmouth, R.
Renner Thompson, G.	

OTHER MEMBERS

Scott, P.	Seymour, C.
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OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Hadfield, K.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Hunter, P.	Senior Service Director
Johnston, N.	Climate Change Programme Manager
Lally, D.	Chief Executive
McEvoy-Carr, C.	Executive Director of Children's Services and Adult Social Care
Morgan, L.	Director of Public Health
O'Farrell, R.	Interim Executive Director of Regeneration
Roll, J.	Head of Democratic and Electoral Services
Taylor, M.	Director of Business Development and Communities
Willis, J.	Interim Executive Director of Finance and S151 Officer

Ch.'s Initials.....

56. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Flux and Stewart.

57. REPORT OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND S151 OFFICER

Budget 2022-23 and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2022-2025

The report provided an update on the development of the 2022-23 Budget and the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) covering the period 2022 to 2025. This report also detailed budget proposals for 2022-23 to meet the budget gap, as a basis for budget consultation, prior to the receipt of the Local Government Finance Settlement 2022-23 in December 2021 (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix A, along with the report of the CSEG OSC circulated at the meeting).

The report was introduced by Councillor Wearmouth and the S151 Officer took members through the key points. The Leader highlighted the points from CSEG OSC.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the revisions to the assumptions within the 2022-23 Budget be noted;
- (b) the budget balancing measures for 2022-23 totalling £9.704 million be approved as a basis for budget consultation, prior to the receipt of the Local Government Finance Settlement 2022-23;
- (c) it be noted that further work is required to refine the Medium-Term Financial Plan and that there are still budget balancing measures required to be identified over the term of the Medium-Term Financial Plan;
- (d) the budget consultation strategy be noted; and
- (e) the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC be noted.

58. REPORT OF THE INTERIM SENIOR SERVICE DIRECTOR

Corporate Plan Refresh 2021-24

The report presented the Council's Corporate Plan for 2021-2024. The Plan built on the progress from the previous Corporate Plan and presented a refreshed vision, aims and priorities. This refresh took account of the changing social and economic context as a result of the Covid Pandemic and

the Council's priorities for leading recovery across the County in the coming months and years. The priorities in the Corporate Plan will be delivered through the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan, Service Planning and Performance Frameworks (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix B, along with the report of the CSEG OSC circulated at the meeting).

The report was introduced by the Leader. He advised members about a proposal to set up a conference in the new year to bring together partners who worked on Northumberland Communities Together to see what more could be done to help those parts of the County which most needed it.

He thanked Phil Hunter for the work he had done. Mr Hunter commented that the document was very useful for setting the strategic framework for officers to take into service planning, performance management and appraisals. It was a high level statement of priorities but was plugged into the organisation in a very detailed way, and was useful in providing a framework for conversations with the Council's partners.

The Leader referred to the report from CSEG OSC which had supported the report and agreed that helping the most vulnerable residents in the county and local community initiatives should be among the Council's priorities.

Councillor Wearmouth welcomed the Plan which he felt identified the Council's priorities clearly and concisely. He drew members' attention to the excellent performance of the Northumberland economy. In October, unemployment in Northumberland had been 4.3% compared to 5% in North of Tyne, 5.3% in the North East and 4.9 % in England. These figures were testament to how well the Council had navigated through the pandemic and to the programmes the Administration had had in place to ensure that people could get a job. The future was very bright for Northumberland.

In response to a question from Councillor Watson, Mr Hunter advised that following some further graphics work, the document would be shared with the public and partners.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the refreshed Corporate Plan 2021-24 to set strategic policy direction across the Council's Services and functions be agreed; and
- (b) the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC be noted.

59. REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR CLIMATE CHANGE, BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE

Green Homes Grant, Local Authority Delivery Phase 2 (LAD2) - Grant Funding

The report sought authorisation for the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Round 2 of £2.2m grant funding – for both receipt and spend of capital funding, and subsequent inclusion in the Council’s Capital Programme (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix C, along with the report of the CSEG OSC circulated at the meeting).

The Leader thanked the Climate Change Team for their work in making climate change an integral part of everything that was done. Communities now needed to work with the Council to ensure that change was embedded. He noted that CSEG OSC had welcomed the report.

Councillor Horncastle asked how it would be possible to incentivise low income families to obtain Energy Performance Certificates. Mr Johnston advised that households who did not have them, but which it was felt would qualify, would be targeted to ensure that they got them as part of the grant funding.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Cabinet approve both receipt and spend of capital funding of the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Round 2 of £2.2m grant funding, and subsequent inclusion in the Council’s Capital Programme; and
- (b) the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC be noted.

60. REPORT OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND S151 OFFICER

Northumberland Lottery Annual Update

The report provided the annual update on the performance of the Northumberland Lottery which was launched on 25 April 2020 following approval by Cabinet on 6 August 2019 (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix D, along with the report of the CSEG OSC circulated at the meeting).

Councillor Wearmouth presented the report highlighting the key issues for members.

The Leader reported that this had been welcomed by Scrutiny and thanked staff for their work. He suggested that more could be done to promote the initiative so that communities could benefit even more from it.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Cabinet note progress to date;

- (b) Cabinet agree to support the continuation of the Lottery and appropriate marketing activities to further promote the scheme; and
- (c) the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC be noted.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....

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NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

At a meeting of the **Cabinet** held at County Hall, Morpeth on Tuesday, 7 December 2021 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

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

CABINET MEMBERS

Pattison, W.	Riddle, J.
Ploszaj, W.	Watson, J.G.
Renner Thompson, G.	Wearmouth, R.

OTHER MEMBERS

Flux, B.	Stewart, G.
Scott, P.	

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Binjal, S.	Monitoring Officer
Dorward, N.	Senior Manager - Education Development & Collaborative Projects
Hadfield, K.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Lally, D.	Chief Executive
Murfin, R.	Interim Executive Director Planning and Local Services
Roll, J.	Head of Democratic and Electoral Services
Taylor, M.	Director of Business Development and Communities
Walsh, N.	Head of Cultural Services
Willis, J.	Interim Executive Director of Finance and S151 Officer

61. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Horncastle and Seymour.

Ch.'s Initials.....

62. MINUTES

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

- (a) Tuesday 9 November 2021
- (b) Thursday 18 November 2021

63. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillors Ploszaj, Watson, Riddle and Renner Thompson declared interests as Directors of Advance in item 11 on the agenda (Trading Companies' Financial Performance 2021-22 - Position at the end of September 2021) and advised that they would leave the room whilst the matter was discussed.

64. REPORTS OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND S151 OFFICER

(1) Setting the Council Tax Base 2022-23

The report advised Cabinet of the tax base calculation for 2022-23 for all domestic properties liable to pay council tax. The tax base must be set by the statutory deadline of 31 January 2022 (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix A).

RESOLVED that the council tax base for 2022-23 be approved as detailed within Appendix A, equating to 108,605.49 Band D equivalent dwellings. This was an increase of 1,670.56 Band D equivalents from 2021-22.

(2) Financial Performance 2021-22 - Position at the end of September 2021

The report informed Cabinet of the current financial position for the Council against the Budget for 2021-22 (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix B).

The S151 Officer highlighted the key points for members.

In response to a question from the Leader regarding the mobile libraries, the Director of Business Development and Communities advised that the current units were due for renewal but the opportunity was being taken to look at an integrated model of arrangements which would cover Communities Together as well. These should be ready for the Spring.

RESOLVED that:-

- a. the report be noted;
- b. the projected underspend of £3.185 million and the assumptions outlined in the report be noted;
- c. the pressures currently identified, including the impact of Covid-19, be noted;
- d. it be noted that it is anticipated that the Council will receive further funding of £0.270 million in relation to the income that the Council has “lost” as a result of Covid-19 for April to June 2021;
- e. Cabinet approve re-profiling to the capital programme of £59.305 million from 2021-22 to 2022-23 to reflect estimated expenditure levels in the current financial year;
- f. Cabinet approve the new grants and amendments to existing grants at Appendix A and the required changes to the budgets;
- g. Cabinet note the progress on the delivery of the approved savings at Appendix B;
- h. Cabinet note the use of the contingency shown at Appendix Q;
- i. Cabinet note the use of reserves shown at Appendix R;
- j. Cabinet note the virements requested by services shown at Appendix S;
- k. Cabinet approve the creation of a reserve from the underspend in the Communities and Business Development Unit of £0.222 million to fund the purchase and first year running costs of three mobile units which will support the delivery of a preventative approach to health and wellbeing activities through localised and responsive engagement;
- l. Cabinet note that the purchase (and funding) of the three mobile units will be included in the 2022-23 Capital Plan; and the revenue impact of the ongoing running costs will be included in the 2022-23 Budget and medium-term financial plan which will be considered by Full Council in February 2022;
- m. Cabinet agree that the Interim Executive Director for Communities and Business Development can place the order for the three mobile units with immediate effect as the funding if agreed (above) will be in place and there is a long lead in time before the vehicles can be delivered;
- n. Cabinet approve the receipt of the £0.120 million grant funding from the Department for Education to support the acceleration in the opening of the Family Hubs across Northumberland. Funding can be spent on both revenue and capital;

- o. Cabinet approve the creation of the £0.112 million capital budget for inclusion in the Council's 2021-22 capital programme and £0.008 million revenue budget in 2021-22. Spend will be funded from the £0.120 million grant funding from the Department for Education to support the acceleration in the opening of the Family Hubs across Northumberland; and
- p. Cabinet approve the procurement of a delivery partner and subsequent spend of the grant funding prior to the deadline of 31 March 2022, after which any unspent grant must be returned.

65. REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE

(1) Opportunity for expansion of Northumberland HEE Project Choice

The report advised members about the opportunity to develop a wider scope of delivery for Health Education England's Project choice within Northumberland in order to more rapidly deliver on Northumberland County Council's education priorities and SEND priorities (Copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix C).

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the proposal for Health Education England to deliver supported internship provision for young people with Special Educational Needs and /or Disabilities within Northumberland County Council departments be noted;
- (b) HR&OD be authorised to commence discussions with NCC departments, using the Communications Team to promote, to establish where capacity and aspiration to accept placements exists for:
 - a. Short placements in 2021-22 academic year, and
 - b. Full academic year rotational placements for an NCC specific cohort in academic year 2022-23; and
- (c) the report of the FACS OSC be noted.

(2) Northumberland Strategic Skills Plan 2021-25 (March 2021, updated October 2021)

The report shared the *Northumberland Strategic Skills Plan 2021-25*, a document designed to guide skills planning and the approach in designing impactful vocational skills provision within the county to

yield greatest impact for residents and the local economy (Copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix D).

The report was presented by Councillor Renner Thompson who stressed the importance of the subject matter to the Council's priorities.

Councillor Wearmouth agreed this was a key piece of work, particularly when many jobs were coming into the County and the skills would be needed to match those jobs. This was linked to driving down inequality, child poverty and workless households which had already been referenced and education was the gateway to this. There was a lot of work still to do, but this was a great start.

The Leader noted that this had been supported by FACS OSC and asked officers to ensure that the Plan was made publicly available soon.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the *Northumberland Strategic Skills Plan 2021-25*, its content and general approach be noted;
- (b) the document be used with internal and external stakeholder groups; and
- (c) the report of the FACS OSC be noted.

66. REPORT OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Household Support Fund

The report provided an overview of Northumberland County Council's proposed response and delivery of the Household Support Fund (HSF) for the period 06th October 2021 to 31st March 2022 (Copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix E).

Councillor Pattison introduced the report and welcomed the funding to help those communities most in need. The Director of Business Development and Communities referred to the well established arrangements with trusted partners and community groups and was confident that the most vulnerable could be reached. A high proportion of the fund would cover the free school meal allowance. It was also aimed at those not in receipt of benefits, so it gave officers the discretion to provide support where it was needed.

Councillor Riddle asked how those families under the radar were being reached. The Director advised that good communication was key. The message that went out from the CT Team was that if anyone needed support

they should come forward, and strong networks had been established with social prescribing in primary care as well as the existing services within the Council to bring forward referrals for those who may be vulnerable. The communications message going out was not about meeting criteria, but about encouraging people to come forward if they were in difficulty.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Cabinet note the content of the report and the actions to deliver the programme;
- (b) it be agreed that Northumberland Communities Together continue to manage the administration and delivery of the HSF through to 31st March 2022;
- (c) the Household Support Fund Assistance Policy 2021 be approved to support delivery of the scheme;
- (d) any additional targeted client groups which may be identified be included in the delivery plan;
- (e) Cabinet note that NCT will work with staff across the Council directorates and services, town and parish councils to identify potential client groups who may be targeted for specific support; and
- (f) the report of the CSEG OSC be noted.

67. REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Wooler Neighbourhood Plan

The report sought approval to formally 'make' the Wooler Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan passed independent examination in May 2020. A local referendum held in the Parish of Wooler on 10 June 2021 returned a majority vote in favour of using the Plan to make decisions on planning applications. The Council was obliged by statute to make the Neighbourhood Plan unless it considered that doing so would breach retained European Union obligations (Copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix F).

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Cabinet agrees to formally 'make' the Wooler Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with section 38A(4)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 for the reasons set in the appendix 4 attached to this report;

- (b) Cabinet approves the decision statement (attached at Appendix 1) required under Regulation 19 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, as amended, and
- (c) Cabinet agrees that both the Wooler 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.

68. REPORT OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND S151 OFFICER

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 via email on 5 November 2021 (Copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix G).

RESOLVED that:-

68.1 Energising Blyth Programme - Culture Centre & Market Place

Cabinet approve the commencement of design works for this project which is grant funded through the Future High Street Fund at a value of £7,253,198 included within the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan 2021-24. Cabinet note that a further report will be brought forward once the project develops to Outline Business Case stage and has been independently appraised.

68.2 Energising Blyth Programme - Energy Central Campus (Phase 1)

Cabinet approve the acceleration of expenditure of £400,000 in 2021-22 for this project budgeted at £9,000,000, including a contribution of £2,500,000 from the Council which is included in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan 2021-24. Cabinet note that a further report will be brought forward once the project develops to Outline Business Case stage and has been independently appraised.

68.3 Energising Blyth Programme - NEP1 & Battleship Wharf

Cabinet approve a Capital Grant of £500,000 to the NEP1 and Battleship Wharf project externally funded through the Blyth Town Deal, and agree that the project progresses to formal submission to DLUHC, noting that Northumberland Council is the accountable body for all the Energising Blyth Programme funds allocated by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) which includes Town Deal funding.

68.4 England Coast Path, Infrastructure Grant Funded Works

Cabinet accept the grant award from Natural England of £145,649 for the construction of a section of the English Coastal Path route between Bamburgh and the Scottish Border, and approve the project into the 2021-24 Medium Term Financial Plan with construction to commence later this financial year and complete in 2022/23.

68.5. Noise Monitoring Equipment

Cabinet approve the proposal to purchase new noise monitoring equipment at a cost of £65,000 to be met by a revenue contribution to capital outlay (RCCO) from underspends within the 2021-22 Public Protection revenue budget.

68.6 Off-street Parking provision in Boulmer

Cabinet approve an allocation of £10,000 from the overall capital provision for parking improvements included in the 2021-24 Medium Term Financial Plan, to enable detailed design work to proceed, including preparation of an application for planning approval, for a new 24 space off-street car park.

68.7 Sustainable Warmth Grant (LAD 2)

Cabinet accept a Local Authority Delivery Phase 2 (LAD2) grant award of £2,214,042 to deliver energy efficiency measures to 220 private owner-occupied homes in Northumberland.

68.8 Wylam Wagonway Improvements

Cabinet accept a funding contribution of £518,343 from Sustrans for highway improvements to be added to the Council's capital programme in 2021-22 and agree to its expenditure on the works identified to the NCN 72 from Stephenson's Cottage, 0.7km west of Wylam, to the County boundary adjacent to Blaney Row, Newburn.

69. 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

10 3
Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

AND The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure because disclosure would adversely affect confidentiality requirements with external partners.

11 3
Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

AND The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure because disclosure could adversely affect the business reputation or confidence in the person / organisation, and could adversely affect commercial revenue.

70. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CULTURAL SERVICES

Destination Management - Structure and Future Funding Arrangements

The report provided an overview of the current and proposed management arrangements for the strategic management and marketing of tourism in Northumberland (Copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix H, coloured pink and marked Not for Publication).

Councillor Watson introduced the report and highlighted the key points. The Head of Cultural Services advised that the impact of tourism to the economy was considerable, with significant growth since 2012. The aim of the report was to formalise the integrated arrangements which had been in place since Spring 2020.

There were plans to repeat the coastal summit event as this had proved to be very popular.

In response to a question from the Leader, the Head of Cultural Services advised that there was a lot of data available on customer satisfaction levels which could be provided.

The Leader asked that an update on tourism be provided to members.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) recommendations 1-5 in the report be agreed; and
- (b) the report of the Communities and Place OSC be noted.

In accordance with Minute No. 63 above, Councillors Ploszaj, Watson, Riddle and Renner Thompson left the room at this point.

71. REPORT OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND S151 OFFICER

Trading Companies' Financial Performance 2021-22 - Position at the end of September 2021

The report informed Cabinet of the current financial positions of its trading companies for 2021-22 (Copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix I, coloured pink and marked Not for Publication).

The S151 Officer introduced the report and referred to the debate at CSEG OSC. She sought guidance from members about their preference to continue with backward looking performance reports, or whether they wished to broaden the content of the report out into future prospects.

The Chief Executive updated members on the current position and reminded members that much information had been provided to OSC members previously. Officers, as shareholders, needed to ensure that they were being effective in managing the arrangements. Going forward, Cabinet members needed to declare an interest only in those matters they were actually involved in and this should be discussed further.

The Leader advised that the Cabinet wanted to see thorough quarterly reports and members would discuss representation further.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) recommendations 1-4 in the report be agreed; and
- (b) the report of the CSEG OSC be noted.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

CORPORATE SERVICES AND ECONOMIC GROWTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the **Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in the Meeting Space, Block 1, Floor 2, County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF on Wednesday, 17 November 2021 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillor D Bawn
(Chairman in the Chair)

COUNCILLORS

Beynon, J.
Dunn, E.
Ezhilchelvan, P.
Murphy, M.

Oliver, N.
Taylor, C.
Wallace, A.

OFFICERS

Hunter P
Lally D
Greally R

Hindhaugh P
Morgan E
Nicholson, S.
Roberts M

Willis J

Senior Service Director
Chief Executive
Assistant Democratic Services
Officer
Head of Procurement
Executive Director
Scrutiny Co-ordinator
Senior Climate Change and
Sustainability Manager
Executive Director of Finance
(Section 151 Officer)

ALSO PRESENT

Sanderson, G.
Wearmouth, R.

Leader of the Council
Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder
for Corporate Services

16. MEMBERSHIP

The Chairman noted that at the Council meeting on 3 November 2021, Councillor Ezhichelvan had been appointed to the Committee in place of Councillor Carr. He welcomed Councillor Ezhichelvan to the Committee.

RESOLVED that it was noted that Councillor P Ezhilchelvan had replaced Councillor D Carr on the Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor M. Robinson.

18. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11 October 2021, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

19. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor D Bawn disclosed an interest in item 6 as he was a director of an organisation that was listed as a potential beneficiary of the Northumberland Lottery.

20. FORWARD PLAN OF CABINET DECISIONS

The Forward Plan of forthcoming Key Cabinet decisions was reported to the Committee. (Report enclosed with the signed minutes as Appendix A).

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan of key decisions be noted

21. GREEN HOMES GRANT, LOCAL AUTHORITY DELIVERY PHASE 2 (LAD2) - GRANT FUNDING

Glen Sanderson, Leader of the Council presented this report to the Committee supported by Mark Roberts, Senior Climate Change and Sustainability Manager.

The Committee welcomed the report and were assured that the funding would be prioritised to the most deprived wards and in areas where take up was more densely requested. Communications had been done to publicise the funding and Councillors of those wards had been briefed on how to access the grant.

It was anticipated that the grant would help around 200 homes and the maximum funding for each household was to be £10,000.

RESOLVED that Cabinet be advised that the Committee supported the recommendations in the report, subject to consideration of the issues raised above.

22. CORPORATE PLAN REFRESH 2021-24

Glen Sanderson, Leader of the Council presented this report to the Committee supported by Phil Hunter, Senior Service Director. The Corporate Plan Refresh was to renew the plan and pick out areas where further progress was needed. There were two key visions within the Corporate Plan; supporting industry and supporting people.

The Committee welcomed this report and thanked Phil Hunter and his staff for their efforts in putting the Plan together. Members agreed that helping the most vulnerable residents in the county and local community initiatives in that area should be among the Council's priorities.

RESOLVED the Committee agreed to advise the Cabinet that it supported the recommendations in the report, subject to consideration of the issues raised above.

23. BUDGET 2022-23 AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2022-2025

Richard Wearmouth, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services and Deputy Leader of the Council presented this report to the Committee supported by Jan Willis, Interim Executive Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer.

Following the presentation, the Committee sought clarification on the following issues:

- Members were assured that uncertainties regarding inflation increases would not have an impact on short term budgetary planning, however it was unclear what the effect would be in the longer term if inflation figures continued to increase;
- with regard to Local Services, members were advised about income proposals in respect of car parking charges in tourist areas (not Town centres); charges for bulky and garden waste, and income from excess energy generated from waste sites. In response to a question about gully cleaning and neighbourhood services as a whole, the Leader confirmed that there were no plans to make staff cuts in those areas.
- there was concern regarding the impact on rising fuel costs on Council establishments, particularly schools. Members were advised that there was an in-year contingency fund available to absorb such rises in the short term;
- it was also highlighted that the Council were aiming to de-risk themselves further from fuel by becoming a net zero Council in the future.
- the cost impact of the transfer of NHS staff to the Council was not yet known, although it was expected that details would be included in the final budget proposals;

- the Deputy Leader referred to the construction of the British Volt facility at East Sleekburn and expressed his optimism regarding the positive economic impact on the county particularly in respect of job creation;
- predicting business rates was difficult as discount and relief schemes were often announced at short notice. The Council would take a prudent approach to business growth to combat this.

RESOLVED that Cabinet be advised that the Committee supported the recommendations in the report, subject to consideration of the issues raised above.

24. NORTHUMBERLAND LOTTERY ANNUAL UPDATE

Richard Wearmouth, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services and Deputy Leader of the Council presented this report to the Committee supported by Jan Willis, Interim Executive Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer and Pam Hindhaugh, Acting Head of Procurement.

The Committee acknowledged that gambling could be a problem for some individuals but were content that the necessary mitigation measures had been put in place.

It was confirmed that there were criteria that organisations needed to meet to be eligible to access lottery grants and the Council had a number of policies in place to ensure applications were appropriately considered.

The administration fee was considered acceptable however Officers could review the fee if it was felt necessary.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet be advised that the Committee supported the recommendations in the report, subject to consideration of the issues raised above.

25. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received an update on its Work Programme for the 2021/22 council year.

RESOLVED that this information was noted.

Chairman

Date

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At the meeting of the **Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held at Meeting Space - Block 1, Floor 2 - County Hall on Thursday, 4 November 2021 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

W Daley (Chair) (in the Chair)

COUNCILLORS

C Ball
L Dunn
C Taylor

D Carr
M Swinburn
T Thorne

CHURCH REPRESENTATIVES

A Hodgson
P Rickeard

D Lennox

TEACHER UNION REPRESENTATIVES

J Sanderson

OFFICERS

C Angus
Hartwell

A Kingham
L Little
C McEvoy-Carr

G Reiter
D Street

Scrutiny Officer
Senior Manager - Performance and Systems
Support
Service Director - Education and Skills
Senior Democratic Services Officer
Executive Director of Adults and Children's
Services
Service Director - Children's Social Care
Deputy Director of Education

ALSO PRESENT

G Renner-Thompson

Cabinet Member

Press/Public : 1

26 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chair advised that there had been some changes to the Membership of the Committee which had been agreed at Full Council the previous day with Councillors Carr, Dodd and Dunbar being appointed to the Committee and

Ch.'s Initials.....

Councillors Ferguson and Stewart coming off. The Chair thanked Councillor Stewart who had been the Vice-Chair, and Councillor Ferguson for their work on the Committee and welcomed the new Members to the Committee.

27 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dodd and Dunbar along with L. Houghton.

28 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday 7 October 2021, as circulated, were agreed and signed by the Chair.

29 **DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Mr J Sanderson advised that he was an employee of Kylloe House.

30 **FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS**

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan of key decisions for November 2021 to February 2022 be noted.

31 **PERFORMANCE & FINANCE REPORT (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)**

A Hartwell, Senior Manager - Performance and Systems Support provided an introduction to the report in which Members were asked to consider current performance and the budgetary position for services within the Committee's terms of reference. Councillor Renner-Thompson, Cabinet Member advised that he was pleased with the report and the regular updates which had been provided and he acknowledged the skills and expertise of the staff.

In relation to the work of the School Improvement Partnership (SIP), judgements had improved dramatically over the previous four years and were more closely aligned to Ofsted judgements with improving trends in relation to Primary schools. The SIP team worked tirelessly to understand issues with schools to help shape and improve outcomes for schools.

The improvement in the time taken for permanently excluded pupils returning to education was due to the focussed work with schools, pupils and their parents being undertaken by Exclusion Workers. Headteachers were commended on their understanding of the inclusion work being undertaken and had embraced the inclusion agenda. Schools were robustly challenged on the levels of fixed term exclusions for SEND pupils and the issue was the subject of discussions at the Senior Management Team meetings weekly with data interrogated to identify any trends.

It was clarified that the championing of strong outcomes for all care leavers was undertaken by the Senior Manager and team with contact maintained with all the young people on a regular basis to offer support. At this point in the year, there was an underspend on the "business as usual" Children's Services budget but an overspend on the Covid budget. Some, but not all of the Covid expenses could be claimed back and this would have the result of reducing the level of

underspend on the overall Children's Services budget.

A suggestion that the Local Area Councils could be used as a vehicle to promote Fostering within the County would be explored. It was felt that the graphs included in the report could be clearer this would be fed back for future reports to the Committee.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

32 **CHILDREN'S HOMES PLACEMENT & SUFFICIENCY**

G Reiter, Service Director Children's Social Care, provided a comprehensive introduction to the report which outlined the key issues and challenges in relation to placement sufficiency for Looked After Children. The sufficiency strategy was currently being reviewed and updated and would be presented to this Committee in January 2022.

Members welcomed the impressive report and recognised that this was a very complex area. It was thought that the quality of the support provided in in-house residential placements was a key factor in the longer duration of these placements, and whilst there were some good quality external residential facilities, these were more likely to give short notice of termination due to relationship breakdowns. It was challenging to be able to find emergency accommodation in these instances as there were very few registered facilities for emergency placements.

The building of the two new children's homes had been delayed with it being explained that one of the locations previously identified had since been deemed inappropriate and a new site was being sought. Building costs had also increased and a bid had been made to the DfE to match fund the project of the total build costs. Reconfiguration of an existing home would also be made in order to assist to meet the demand for places. The need to grow the in-house provision was stressed along with the need for communities to understand the purpose of the children's homes and how the communities themselves could help with the integration of the young people into their community.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

33 **SOCIAL WORKER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

G Reiter, Service Director Children's Social Care provided an introduction to the report which gave an overview of the challenges of and responses to the recruitment and retention of social workers.

Members were advised that the recruitment and retention of experienced social workers was an issue for all local authorities. Northumberland's well established AYSE Academy for newly qualified social workers was well regarded within the region with competition for places strong, which assisted in "growing our own" workforce. The decision for social workers within the Academy to return to office based working in order to ensure that they received the appropriate level of support during the continuing pandemic, was welcomed by the Committee.

Councillor Renner-Thompson, Cabinet Member for Children's Services advised

that the recruitment and retention of social workers was one of his six key priorities and was also a part of the Council's Corporate Plan. He encouraged Members to visit the Academy and stated he was keen to invest further to increase numbers in the Academy.

Members recognised that social work was an extremely demanding profession and it took a special type of person to do this role. Councillor Swinburn highlighted that Kevin Waggott, one of our social workers was up for a National Award. Monitoring was undertaken of Covid related illness against other illness with sickness levels dropping during lockdown as people could work from home. Sickness levels had now increased as people no longer worked from home in the same way and people were more likely to be mixing and picking up viruses. Whilst some staff were required to be office based for operational reasons, a large number of staff were still working from home and it was confirmed that support was still being provided to these staff members.

Members suggested that options could be explored which would allow more flexibility in working arrangements for social workers to prevent them leaving to take up positions with agencies for this type of reason. It was also highlighted that the informal networking which took place in office environments was significantly underestimated and time should be built into the working week for people to be able to talk to each other. The importance of the Academy in transitioning the newly qualified social workers into teams was outlined with this being reflected in increased retention of these staff and the wider effective use of the Academy to train staff for a variety of roles in Northumberland. It was clarified that all staff had flexible working arrangements however this must be balanced with the need for a consistent service to be provided.

In response to questions related to the retention of those social workers coming through the Academy, it was clarified that some of the first cohort had since moved, however this was to be expected as they gained more experience and were promoted. There had only been one or two who had dropped out from the Academy with a significant number of those joining the Academy having already been students at Northumberland. The suggestion of expanding the Academy to carry out the service on behalf of other local authorities had been thought about, but had not been progressed.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

34 **NORTH EAST SUBMISSION TO THE CARE REVIEW**

The report which provided an overview of the North East Association of Directors of Children's Services submission to the ongoing National Care Review was introduced by C McEvoy-Carr, Executive Director of Children's Services. She advised that this was a once in a generation opportunity to influence the way in which Children's Services were provided going forward and had attracted a great deal of media attention. She highlighted the funding cuts which had been made within the North East and the stark data within the North East.

The Chair highlighted the stark differences even between areas within Northumberland with life expectancy of 104 in one area compared with 86 only two miles away and that the first 1001 days from birth make a massive difference on an individual's life. The tackling of inequalities was one of the most important issues for any Council or Government. He highlighted the work of the Poverty

Working Group and the need to address the inequalities and provide a fairer opportunity for all.

In response to a question related to what would be appropriate funding, Members were advised that it was not just about the funding that came in, it was also about managing care markets and these being fair for all. It was not possible to provide a definitive figure of what was required, however there was a massive growing gap between the levels of funding being provided and what was actually needed. Northumberland had ensured that there had been sufficient funding this year to make sure that Children's Services did not have an overspend. Each year there were increasing costs related to SEN, additional needs and care costs and it was a constant battle to ensure that appropriate levels of support were provided internally by the Council to maintain the services required. This was an opportunity to influence this nationally and also to manage the costs of services that we commission.

Members fully supported the involvement with the submission on behalf of the 12 Local Authorities in the North East and it was stated that the focus should be on providing the appropriate levels of care and to ensure that the young people should not be treated as an asset for profit.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

35 **FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME AND MONITORING REPORT 2021/22**

The Scrutiny Officer advised that there were two additions to the January meeting and he would circulate an updated work programme which would include the changes to the membership of the Committee.

It was confirmed that a report on safeguarding on School Transport, as requested by Councillor Ball, would be brought to a future meeting.

The Chair advised that he would meet with Councillor Dodd and the Scrutiny Officer to discuss themed scrutiny.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....

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NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the **Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
on Wednesday, 6 October 2021 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT

Councillor N. Oliver
(Chair, in the Chair)

MEMBERS

Cartie, E.	Morphet, N.
Gallacher, B.	Mather, M.
Hardy, C.	Richardson, M.

CABINET MEMBER

W. Pattison	Adults' Wellbeing
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OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

M. Baker	Service Director - Climate Change, Business Intelligence and Performance
M. Connor	Head of Early Help, Prevention and Support
N. Easton	Public Transport Manager
J. Keepin	Commissioning Manager - Children's Services and Public Health
S. Nicholson	Scrutiny Co-ordinator
R. O'Farrell	Interim Executive Director Regeneration/Accountable Officer Advance
L. Pyle	Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Co-ordinator
N. Turnbull	Democratic Services Officer

18. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bridgett, Castle, Robinson and Sanderson.

19. MINUTES

Minute No. 11.1 Private Sector Housing Strategy 2021-2023

Councillor Morphet enquired about the contact details for social housing providers which had not yet been received. The Scrutiny Co-ordinator agreed to remind officers that these were required.

Minute No. 16.1 Overview of the Fleet Replacement Programme in 2020/2021

Councillor Morphet commented that he had enquired whether the Council had considered a hydro treated vegetable oil trial and was aware of the pros and cons of alternative fuel sources.

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

- a) 4 August 2021
- b) 25 August 2021

20. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Oliver declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in item 6.1 Northumberland Climate Change Update as he was a member of the Climate Change Steering Group.

Councillor Gallacher declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in item 6.1 Northumberland Climate Change Update as he was a member of the Climate Change Steering Group.

21. FORWARD PLAN OF CABINET DECISIONS

The Committee considered the Forward Plan of key decisions (October 2021 to January 2022). (Schedule enclosed with the signed minutes).

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator reported that the Kerbside Glass Collection Trial Update had been deferred to the meeting of Cabinet in November and would therefore be included on the agenda for this Committee on 27 October 2021.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

22. SCRUTINY OF CABINET REPORT

The Committee were advised that the following report would be considered by the Cabinet on 12 October 2021. Members were requested to comment on the proposals in the report.

22.1 Integrated Domestic Abuse Services for Northumberland – Permission to Tender

The report sought permission to go to the market to commission a range of services to provide an Integrated Domestic Abuse Service for Northumberland

which would allow the Council to meet its statutory duties. The contract length was for 2 years, with an option to extend it for a further 2 years. (A copy of the report is attached to the signed minutes.)

Wendy Pattison, Portfolio Holder for Adults' Wellbeing, with Mary Connor, Head of Early Help, Prevention and Support, Judith Keepin, Commissioning Manager and Lesley Pyle, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Co-ordinator, Children's Services presented the report to the Committee.

The Committee were informed that the Domestic Abuse Act had come into force in April 2021 and placed new duties on Local Authorities including:

- Provision of safe accommodation and support for victims of domestic abuse and their children.
- Establish a local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board which was responsible for preparing and publishing a Domestic Abuse Strategy setting out how services would be commissioned to meet the needs of Northumberland residents and the LAs duties.

New burdens funding of £641,000 had been allocated by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in addition to core Council funding of £207,000.

A Task Group comprising of internal and external stakeholders had undertaken a need assessment regarding domestic abuse in Northumberland to support the Council's commissioning intentions. It was recognised that the bill required longer term commissioning and contracts to provide stability, however funding for years 2 and 3 would not be confirmed until after the annual spending review in the current year.

Key findings from the needs assessment were outlined. Consultation had been carried out with services providers, stakeholders and services users on proposals for:

- An integrated Domestic Abuse Support Service
- Children's Counselling and Therapeutic and Outreach Support
- Perpetrator Service
- Adult Counselling Service
- Domestic Abuse in Rural Northumberland

The following information was provided in response to questions or issues raised by members:

- Contact details for Domestic Abuse Support Service Northumberland (DASSN) were available on the Council's website. These would also be sent to Councillor Cartie following the meeting.
- Provision for access to interpreters for individuals from minority groups would be made explicit within the contract for the Integrated Domestic Abuse service.
- The proposals would increase and build on existing provision which would follow the model introduced in 2018 which introduced a single point of

contact for all levels of risk. Provision and support for children would be included as well as expanding capacity and resources to support more people.

- The ages specified in lots 1 and 3 were derived from definitions from the Home Office and more recently within the Domestic Abuse Act.
- It was recognised that some young people or children also posed a risk. Provision of support to parents and children was included within the proposals. The issue had also been identified as an item for consideration by a sub-group of the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board with multi-agency partners to identify a pathway and response. Staff were trained to provide support to both parents and children with risk assessment tools to identify the level of risk.
- Lot 3 was aimed at changing behaviours of those people identified as perpetrators with accredited programmes.
- Reference was made to male and female victims to be clear that the services did not solely apply to women and that support was available for male victims.
- Whilst a longer contract period would provide more stability, it had been set at 2+2 years as MHCLG funding had only been confirmed for the current year. The Council had to demonstrate its commitment to new duties under the Act in the current year, to access to funding in the remaining years. If the Council set a 3-year contract, there would be a risk, from the LA perspective, if the additional funding was not confirmed as there could be a shortfall which the LA would need to find. The proposal for 2+2 attempted to mitigate that risk.

Members supported the proposals and the work of the service.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet be advised that the Committee supported the recommendations in the report subject to the points set out regarding provision of interpreters for minority groups and consideration of extending the contract to provide more stability.

23. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REPORTS

23.1 Northumberland Climate Change Update

The report provided an update on progress against the Climate Change Action Plan 2021-23, published in January 2021. (A copy of the report is attached to the signed minutes.)

Matt Baker, Service Director - Climate Change, Business Intelligence and Performance, gave highlighted a number of areas within the report including:

- Grants of £8 million had been received to date to make improvements to the Council's estate and also assist residents earning less than £30,000.
- A 50% reduction in carbon emissions had been achieved ahead of the 2025 target, although a fall in business miles during the Covid 19 pandemic had contributed. The contribution made by colleagues in other departments, particularly Local Services, was acknowledged.

- There had been an 8% reduction in emissions across the county based on 2019 Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) data. This compared favourably to other Local Authorities where the average was 3.5%. It was difficult to assess whether the Council was 'on target' due to the complexity of calculations, but it was making good progress.
- Implementing climate change at the centre of key decisions in policy, planning, procurement and performance:
 - Use of carbon impact assessments and mitigations, if required.
 - Updating the next version of the local plan to align to net zero plan.
 - Assessment of net zero credentials of third parties.
 - Implementation of a robust reporting process for climate change, setting specific targets for each service.
- Involving Members with their contacts with community groups and town and parish councils to create a coherent plan for climate change.
- Regular reporting to the Communities & Place OSC to increase visibility and transparency and improve the county and opportunities for all residents.

The following information was provided in answer to questions from members:

- The Net Zero Investment Strategy set out the approach and framework to assist the region to become net zero. It contained 4 themes:
 - natural resources,
 - generating supply and storing energy
 - changing fabric of homes and communities
 - moving around and through the county.

The impact of the economy, jobs and skills on climate change was to be considered and opportunities where the county could become a leader.
- Net Zero considered the balance between carbon dioxide emissions and natural biodiversity assets which captured carbon. The county benefitted from natural assets such as trees and peat and an audit was being undertaken to calculate sequestration potential of peat.
- Officers were working with planning to update policies which were not climate change friendly. Examples given included the requirement to obtain planning permission where more than one ground source heat pump was required due to the size of a property, and not required in other LA areas, or prevented an EV charging point in a conservation area. The Climate Change Team were now a consultee on all planning applications that could impact on climate change.
- Performance data could be presented every 6 months given the complexities and time required to collect data.
- The opportunity to look at specific aspects of climate change in more detail was welcomed, for example, the net zero investment strategy or sequestration etc.
- A solar car port was to be constructed at County Hall which would generate 800 kwh which provide some of the electricity required by the facility and insulate against energy price increases. Opportunities to replicate this at other locations which could be utilised by members of the public were to be investigated.

- All councils and community groups needed to work together to make plans that worked for all residents. Tree surgeons and ecologists within the county council would be involved in discussions regarding location and type of trees.
- Grants for green energy solutions were available for residents in receipt of universal credit and earning less than £30,000, living in an energy inefficient home and on the edge of fuel poverty. It was hoped that funding from Government would continue for more schemes. Feedback would be given on eligibility criteria and income thresholds to see if adjusting these would bring more people into the scope of the scheme.
- Consideration of schemes which provided environmental credits.
- Options would be explored for an arm's length company if the market failed to meet demand, was too slow or too expensive, particularly in areas where the return on investment could be maximised.
- The carbon cost of the supply chain was included within the county wide figures. To incorporate embodied emissions would be a significant task and could be discussed further by the working group.
- The national approach had been followed regarding the measurement of emissions and did not include individual consumption. Small changes by individuals led to bigger cumulative changes such as a commitment to park further away or reduced use of personal vehicles on a set frequency, with benefits on fuel savings, public health and climate change.
- A schedule on carbon literacy training would be published and shared in the near future.
- Information regarding the location of the surplus free trees would be confirmed, following the meeting.
- A report on the Great Northumberland Forest would be provided to a future meeting.
- More information would be provided after the meeting regarding the connection of off-grid residential dwellings to the national grid.

The following issues were highlighted by Members:

- Working with community groups and climate change champions.
- Continued use of virtual meetings, where possible.
- Inclusion of fruit trees in the free tree scheme and creation of community gardens to enable residents to benefit from free produce which could be expensive for some residents to buy, contributing to sequestration from plants and other social benefits.
- All parties were working to address climate change.
- The right tree in the right place.
- Involve town and parish councils in the identification of preferred locations for trees and EV charging points.
- The Council should encourage, educate and support residents, local groups and the private sector to address climate change.
- The Council had to be reasonable in its planning requirements until the local plan came fully into effect.
- A suggestion that a leaflet on climate change schemes be included with the annual Council Tax bills in addition to recycling information.

Members of the Committee expressed their appreciation to the Climate Change Team for the report and the work that was being done, including those installing the EV charging points around the county.

RESOLVED that:

- a) The governance arrangements and grants of over £8m awarded to date in 2021/22 with a further £6m identified, be noted.
- b) The progress made to date, including achieving the 50% reduction in County Council emissions, ahead of the 2025 target, and the 8% reduction in County emissions, be noted.
- c) The strategic changes implemented to embed Climate Change into everyday ways of working, which may result in recommendations to change or adjust key decisions (Policy, Planning, Procurement, Performance), be noted and supported.
- d) Members pro-actively engage with the Climate Change team to enable even more engagement with residents, communities, and local businesses.
- e) The Communities & Place OSC continue to engage directly with the Climate Change service, to scrutinise and support key decisions, but also to be active in considering the Climate Change impact when providing scrutiny across all areas of the Council.
- f) Performance data be presented on a 6-monthly basis.
- g) A report on the Great Northumberland Forest would be provided to a future meeting.

23.2 NE Bus Service Improvement Plan

The Committee received a presentation from Neil Easton, Public Transport Manager on progress developing the NE Bus Service Improvement Plan. (A copy of the presentation is enclosed with the minutes.)

The powerpoint presentation included information on:

- The strategic importance of buses in the region.
- Maps which demonstrated the fully commercial bus network and also the fully or partly subsidised bus network.
- The impact of Covid-19 on bus services in Northumberland on passenger patronage and revenue.
- Future funding of the bus network: requirement for enhanced partnerships between LAs and providers and production of a Bus Service Improvement Plan to obtain future funding from 1 April 2022 onwards.
- Bid to be submitted by Transport NE (the LA7 authorities) for a share of £3 billion funding.
- Requirements of the Department for Transport (DfT) to bid for additional funding post March 2022.
- Vision for buses, the 'Ten Solutions'.
 - A £1 flat fare for under 19-year-olds.
 - A £5 multi operator flat daily fare.
 - Increased frequency of bus services and extending services in morning and evenings, particularly in rural areas.

- Improvements in information (real time in high footfall areas) and quality of vehicles
- Better lighting and mobile cameras at bus shelters to improve safety and make passengers feel safe.
- Delivering the LA7 Transport Plan commitments.

He explained that the DfT deadline for the submission of the bid had not enabled them to engage with Town and Parish Councils or communities on the proposals and therefore sought members input.

Whilst the proposals included all of the aspirations for Northumberland, there would be uncertainty regarding the prioritisation of schemes if the bid was not fully funded. The case would need to be made to highlight the rural agenda and initiatives that benefitted Northumberland.

Members welcomed the ambitious plans for Northumberland. The following comments were made:

- The introduction of a fixed daily cost was supported.
- Live tracker information used on services in other areas made travelling by bus an easy method. Other advantages included flat fares and wifi. Individual apps for the different bus companies worked well however the bid included a proposal for a combined app. Real time information was also required as some residents did not have the ability to access mobile phone apps.
- Whether the age limit for young person flat fare of £1 could be increased to 21 for those students continuing full-time education. Proposals for a reduced fare were included in the bid for 19–25-year-olds to include college and university students, apprentices and in recognition that many first jobs were not well paid.
- The potential impact of flat fares on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line. It was acknowledged that this could impact on service frequency in those areas. However, they were currently well served with some having 10-minute intervals. Use of ENCTS passes on the Northumberland line was proposed.
- Future of Blyth bus station. Discussions were being held with Arriva regarding purchase of the facility and relocation of the bus station to the market square and relocation of the depot to another site.
- There were concerns regarding facilities in Berwick which was a gateway to the county, the borders and Scotland. Officers shared concerns regarding the lack of a bus station and that the area was one which would benefit from real time information in the short-term. A strategic review was considering where residents wanted to travel, as bus routes were largely historical, and did not necessarily incorporate new housing developments or industrial estates. Network planning identified initiatives would see improvements to a number of services in that town.
- It would be helpful to see actual figures and costs in future reports rather than percentages.
- There was disappointment regarding some bus providers in Northumberland. Some companies were profit driven which led decisions on routes. Commercial decisions were required but this affected

connectivity and access and disadvantaged some groups. Lobbying by the Council and others had not always been successful. However, future decisions on revenue shortfall funding would require consultation and sign-off by the Council.

- Average wages in some areas made regular bus journeys unaffordable. The flat rate should be considered irrespective of age. The 19–25-year-old fare band incorporated a stepped-up incremental cost increase and other solutions would need to be considered by employers, such as provision of free bus passes for apprentices.
- Consideration be given to the times at which free bus passes could be used, particularly in respect of individuals who needed to travel for early health appointments.
- Comparison was made with the average cost of bus journeys in London and the levelling up agenda.
- Discussions be held with Town and Parish Councils regarding the location of bus shelters, as some had been installed on bus routes which had ceased. The bid incorporated an amount for replacement bus shelters in Northumberland. There would be consultation regarding where these were most needed, if the funding bid was successful and whether Town and Parish Councils were willing to take on responsibility for a modest ongoing cost.
- Enforcement action was required for undesirable behaviour, mainly by young people and young adults. Perceived behaviour was low level anti-social behaviour, not directed at other users. CCTV cameras were fitted on vehicles and unacceptable behaviour was referred to the police or education establishments, as appropriate.
- Connectivity should come before profit, residents in outlying towns were becoming isolated unless they had access to a car or could afford a taxi.
- The £5 flat fare was for multi-operator buses. Discussions were ongoing to include the metro and North-South Shields ferry. Multi modal, including heavy rail, would be more expensive reflecting journey time efficiencies and cost.

Members welcomed the report, the opportunity for scrutiny involvement and the opportunity for significant funds to increase passenger numbers on buses to improve viability. The Committee supported the Transport NE bid although the case for Northumberland needed to be promoted.

RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

24. REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATOR

Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee Monitoring Report

The Committee reviewed its work programme for the 2021/22 council year. (Report enclosed with the signed minutes).

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator reported that

- An annual report on the Domestic Abuse Implementation Plan be added.
- The next Climate Change update would incorporate the issues discussed earlier in the meeting.
- The Fire and Rescue report was likely to be postponed to a later meeting to coincide with the Inspection report.
- Information on bulky waste charges be included within the Local Services update with Neighbourhood Services and Highways maintenance.
- A briefing note was to be circulated to committee members on the outcome of Local Nature Recovery Strategy Pilot in the next few weeks.

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the **Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
on Wednesday, 27 October 2021 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT

Councillor N. Oliver
(Chair, in the Chair)

COUNCILLORS

Cartie, E.	Mather, M.
Gallacher, B.	Richardson, M.
Hardy, C.	
Morphet, N.	

CAB

Horncastle, C.W.	Community Services
Riddle, J.R.	Local Services

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

P. Jones	Service Director – Local Services
S. Nicholson	Scrutiny Co-ordinator
P. Soderquest	Head of Housing and Public Protection
N. Turnbull	Democratic Services Officer

25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Castle and Robinson.

26. FORWARD PLAN OF CABINET DECISIONS

The Committee considered the Forward Plan of key decisions (August to November 2021). (Schedule enclosed with the signed minutes).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

27. SCRUTINY OF CABINET REPORTS

The Committee were advised that the following reports would be considered by the Cabinet on 9 November 2021. Members were requested to comment on the proposals in the reports.

27.1 Northumberland Waste Management Strategy – Outcome of Kerbside Glass Recycling Collection Trial

The report presented the key outcomes of the kerbside glass recycling pilot scheme in operation since November 2020 and recommended the next steps for the scheme. (A copy of the report is enclosed with the signed minutes.)

Paul Jones, Service Director – Local Services, commented that the kerbside glass recycling trial had achieved an average annual yield of 72kg per household compared to an anticipated 41 kg per household. He explained that it had been anticipated that the scheme would have an impact on glass collection at bring sites. However, the Covid-19 pandemic and closure of hospitality venues earlier in the year had resulted in a 22% increase in glass collection at HWRC's and bring sites, which meant the impact of the trial on diversion rates from these facilities could not be determined.

It was therefore proposed to extend the trial until 31 March 2023 in order to provide a more accurate baseline and improve confidence in the data. There was also capacity to increase the number of households participating in the trial from 1000 to 1200 at each of the four locations. This would improve the value and productivity of the pilot.

Confirmation of new burdens funding for local authorities was expected by the end of 2022 with enhanced kerbside recycling collection services required in an Environmental Bill to come into effect in 2023/24. Collection of good quality glass material with low contamination meant that the material being collected could be used for remelt. This was environmentally beneficial, offering a positive carbon impact which outweighed the transportation activity.

Councillor Riddle, Portfolio Holder for Local Services, expressed his support for the initiative which had been well received by residents using the service. Unfortunately, it was not possible to roll the scheme out county wide until funding was made available by the Government.

The following information was provided in answer to questions from members:

- Benchmarking information had been obtained from the Waste and Recycling Action Programme (WRAP).
- Modelling work in 2019 considered the changes required to meet obligations to collect a broader range of dry recycling at the kerbside including glass and also potentially food waste. A separate trial for the collection of food waste was also being actively considered.
- The Council had made a significant investment in wheeled bins, refuse collection vehicles and the sorting plant which were working extremely well in Northumberland resulting in high quality recycled material.
- The 800 additional homes were located next to the existing pilot areas in order to maximise return and reduce travelling time between the routes and the disposal site.
- The Government had been consistent in its messaging in that new burdens funding would be provided to local authorities to enable increased kerbside

recycling services. To expand the service now would place a significant additional financial burden on taxpayers with an estimated £1.25 million in annual revenue costs and £4.2 million capital costs for vehicles and containers for the glass collection which would rise for a separate food waste collection and a broader range of dry recyclable material. The Government's strategy extended producer responsibility obligations and taxation on manufacturers and retailers of packaging materials.

- Discussions were being held with planning officers regarding provision of recycling areas in new developments. Some locations and residential properties did not have space for wheeled bins and therefore alternative solutions needed to be considered such as communal glass bins or localised bring sites. It was expected that the number of bring sites would be reduced. Sack based collections were accepted as an acceptable method of refuse collection where there was no alternative. A further trial was planned in the Hirst area to improve the containerisation of waste.
- Deposit return schemes were also being considered for beverage cans and bottles at high density locations via reverse vending machines. The merits of these were more controversial due to bureaucracy, increased costs and duplication of resource and effort.
- The extra collections were being undertaken by staff in receipt of overtime.
- The extended trial period would allow the collection of robust data which would enable the Council to lobby Government for the funds required to provide the service.

Members made the following comments:

- The officers and staff were thanked for the update and working overtime to enable the pilot scheme to run.
- Wheeled bins for glass collection were preferred from a manual handling and safety aspect as it meant that heavy boxes did not need to be lifted to chest height. It was accepted that they were convenient for some residents whilst inconvenient for those with storage issues.
- Residents could choose how often the bins were presented to be emptied. The material could be washed, did not give an unpleasant odour and therefore smaller households may not need them emptied as frequently.
- Reference was made to reduce, reuse, recycle principle and the preferred order of priority.

RESOLVED that, subject to the comments above, the Cabinet be advised that the Committee positively supported the recommendations in the report.

27.2 Report on a Policy for Street Naming and Numbering

The report set out the proposed policy for the identification and allocation of appropriate names for streets in the County. (A copy of the report is enclosed with the signed minutes).

Philip Soderquest, Head of Housing and Public Protection, explained that a review had been undertaken of the policy which was currently in place with a small number of updates as the policy had worked well. The Council only

intervened on a small number of occasions when there was disagreement between developers and parish and town councils or other consultees.

The policy set out the criteria for developers to follow and how a proposed street name was assessed to determine whether it was acceptable. Clear naming and numbering was required to ensure the effective delivery of mail, location of addresses for emergency services and identification of properties for the efficient collection of Council Tax and NNDR.

The policy made provision to allow deviation where this was required, in a very small number of cases, and required agreement by the Head of Housing and Public Protection in consultation with the portfolio holder and other partners, as appropriate.

Councillor Horncastle, Portfolio Holder for Community Services supported the updated policy which was set out the process clearly to ensure street naming and numbering was logical.

The following information was provided in response to questions from Members:

- Discussions would be held with officers to ensure that consultation was held with relevant parties to ensure proposals were appropriate as there could be disagreement if suggestions were not archeologically relevant or accurate. It was noted that branding and names were often finalised by developers prior to discussions with the local authority or construction on site. These should be held at the earliest opportunity.
- Officers would check whether street naming and numbering could be incorporated within planning conditions to ensure a timely decision for the delivery of materials and equipment on site.
- Existing street names were only changed in exceptional circumstances. The reason for a change would be considered. Consultation would include town or parish councils and may include residents. Concerns regarding an anticipated application would be discussed after the meeting.

The updated policy was supported by members who commented that:

- It was appropriate that the final decision was made by the local authority.
- The identification of a lead officer was welcomed.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet be advised that the Committee supported the recommendations in the report subject to a review of the consultation process with Town and Parish Councils.

28. REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATOR

Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee Monitoring Report

The Committee reviewed its work programme for the 2021/22 council year. (Report enclosed with the signed minutes).

It was agreed that due to the scheduled LTP workshops in November which would include an induction on the LTP process and highways maintenance, it was proposed that a review of any unresolved highways issues be deferred to a later scrutiny meeting. An update on Neighbourhood Services would be considered at the next meeting on 1 December 2021

It was noted that the following reports could also be deferred:

- Active Travel and Road Safety
- Customer Complaints Update

Members were asked to contact the Scrutiny Co-ordinator with suggestions for the work programme for future meetings.

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.

29. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair reported that this would be his last meeting as Chair as he was to be replaced by Councillor Reid at the next meeting of County Council on 3 November 2021.

Councillor Mather, Vice-Chair, on behalf of the committee, thanked Councillor Oliver for the work he had undertaken as Chair. He commented on the importance of the role of scrutiny for the Council.

Several other members expressed their gratitude and disappointment that Councillor Oliver would not be continuing as Chair.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____

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NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the **Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
on Wednesday, 1 December 2021 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT

Councillor J. Reid
(Chair, in the Chair)

COUNCILLORS

Cartie, E.	Hardy, C.
Castle, G.	Morphet, N.
Dodd, R.	Richardson, M.
Gallacher, B.	

CABINET MEMBERS

Riddle, J.R.	Local Services
Watson, J.	Healthy Lives

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

H. Bowers	Democratic Services Officer
G. Gavin	Head of Neighbourhood Services
R. Murfin	Interim Executive Director of Planning & Local Services
S. Nicholson	Scrutiny Co-ordinator
S. Rowell	Principal Transport Officer
J. Rose	Service Director, Corporate Services, Planning & Economy

30. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Chair referred to the changes in the membership which Council had made on 3 November 2021.

RESOLVED That the changes be noted.

31. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bridget and Mather.

32. MINUTES

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

- a) 6 October 2021
- b) 27 October 2021

33. FORWARD PLAN OF CABINET DECISIONS

The Committee considered the Forward Plan of key decisions (December 2021 to March 2022). (Schedule enclosed with the signed minutes).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

34. SCRUTINY OF CABINET REPORTS

The Committee was advised that the following reports would be considered by the Cabinet on 7 December 2021. Members were requested to comment on the proposals in the reports.

The Local Services presentation was reported on first due to the presenting officer having to leave the meeting early.

34.2. Local Services – Neighbourhood Services

Greg Gavin, Head of Neighbourhood Services provided a presentation which set out the primary purpose of Neighbourhood Services and outlined the key areas of responsibility and service provision. (Presentation attached to the signed minutes).

Following the presentation, the following information was provided in answer to questions from members:

- Markets had made a small surplus or had broken even pre lockdown, surplus was less because of the impact of Covid but progress was being made
- The commercial waste income had grown from £1.2m to nearly £2m in the last 5 years.
- The issue of parking at HWRCs and the suggestion of a traffic light system would be taken back, however, there had been restrictions on the numbers of vehicles during Covid but these had been rolled back and hopefully there would be less of an issue.
- The cleaning of public conveniences had increased from once a day to 3 times a day, 7 days per week which was presently temporary. There was now a £1m improvement budget for toilets over the next 2/3 years with key facilities in main town centres and key tourism sites seeing a significant refurbishment of toilets.
- Most retailers benefitted on market days from the increased footfall.

- Rights of Way maintenance would be in the second tier of priorities in respect of clear up activities following storm Arwen.
- Contamination of recycled waste was less of an issue at Household Waste Centres as attendants are there to guide people, but there was a higher rate of contamination in kerbside recycling bins, which the team target in a number of ways.
- A list of composting facilities would be circulated to Councillor Morphet. The only landfill site to be used by NCC was at Ellington.
- NEAT stood for Neighbourhood Environmental Action Teams - street cleansing and grounds maintenance
- Local Services were focusing across all service areas in relation to climate change, with a carbon baseline of waste services being undertaken so we can measure all the impacts of new recycling arrangements mandated through the Environment Bill
- If recycling bins were contaminated, a red tag would be put on the bin for the resident to empty. The team would then return to empty the bin. If offenders persisted, letters would be sent out. A last resort would be to take the bin away.
- The HWRCs hours were only reduced on the facilities where there was low volumes being brought in
- A number of fitters had been sent on specialist courses on the maintenance for electric vehicles.
- The majority of medium and large vans used fuel as this was still a long way off being viable for electric vehicles. Charging electric vehicles during a power outage would need to be built into the business continuity plan.
- The income included the income received from parish and town councils for neighbourhood partnerships.
- It would be a good idea to bring the Trees and Woodland Policy to Scrutiny.
- The two recycling areas in the south east had an opposite collection cycle to Castle Morpeth, North and Tynedale,

Members conveyed their thanks for the hard work carried out by Local and Neighbourhood Services. In return Mr Gavin thanked members and would feed this back to the teams who had worked exceptionally throughout Covid.

RESOLVED that the presentation be received

34.1 Active Travel and Road Safety for the Journey to School

The report provided an overview of activities delivered across Northumberland to support more people to walk and cycle for the school journey.

Sarah Rowell, Principal Transport Officer informed members that current data showed that 37% of children walked to school with 6% either walking or scooting, with 6% parking away from the school and walking the remainder of the journey. 20% used school transport or public transport and 30% had travelled to school in a car, with 2% of those sharing.

Mrs Rowell then shared a video which promoted support and active travel for school journeys.

Following the video, Ms Rowell informed members of Schools Go Smarter project run by the Authority, which supported schools across Northumberland to encourage a greater use of sustainable modes of transport and supporting more forms of transport, such as walking and cycling.

Schools Go Smarter

The Authority supported the Schools Go Smarter Programme with Northumberland schools to promote sustainable travel for the school journey. Sustainable travel was promoted through regional and national events, competitions and school activities.

Each term, a Schools Go Smarter newsletter was distributed to highlight upcoming events, areas of best practice and achievements of schools taking part in activities.

Activities supported by the Schools Go Smarter Programme included:-

- Walk to School Month; Walk to School Week; Bike Week; Bike Leader Training; Walk Once a Week
- Theatre in Education which focused on road safety and sustainable travel
- Bikeability which delivered practical cycle training to school children
- Each year Schools Go Smarter was celebrated and this year as part of Love Northumberland, Stannington First School and Allendale were joint winners
- Park and stride zones
- Schools were requested to develop a framework travel plan programme which was accredited every year

Covid had presented schools with significant issues, which included change to how pupils travelled to school, with some hesitancy to use school and public transport and school access issues relating to social distancing requirements.

She hoped members agreed that the Schools Go Smarter project offered a wide range of initiatives and was set up so schools could choose initiatives which they could take part in.

Feedback from schools showed that the programme met their needs and were well supported. Schools had also expressed their thanks for the additional support they had received during the Covid period.

Go Smarter Safe Routes to School

This was a joint programme between NCCs Highways Improvement Team and Schools Go Smarter, Go Safe Routes to School which aimed to improve road safety and reduce traffic management issues around schools.

School Streets was also introduced where appropriate as a solution to congestion issues outside schools. School Streets was considered as a solution to congestion issues outside schools and enabled the areas around the school to be closed to cars at the start of the day (residents were exempt) and pupils encouraged to walk, cycle or scoot to school. To date this had been implemented by 4 schools.

Road safety improvements had also been introduced around schools, where considered necessary, as part of the Local Transport Plan capital programme. These could include pedestrian crossing, improvements to footways and cycleways and introduction of traffic regulation orders to reduce vehicle/pedestrian conflict.

The Council also had a policy to introduce 20 mph speed limits outside all schools across the county.

Road Safety Education in Schools

The Council had introduced the Kerbcraft programme which focused on a 6 week course delivered to primary school pupils and safety awareness, through 'Be Bright, Be Seen'. Some schools also attended 'Safety Works' - an interactive programme.

The Big Northumberland Gear Change

The Authority had launched the campaign in April of this year which asked residents to think about the journeys they took and to consider swapping some car journeys to a more active form of transport.

The campaign featured inspirational stories and it was hoped that residents 'saw themselves' in those stories and felt motivated to make the small changes in their lifestyle that could make a difference to their physical health, their environment and mental wellbeing.

Funding continued to be sought, including the DfT Walking and Cycling Capability Fund.

Members raised the following:-

- The longstanding issue of a crossing point outside the Roman Catholic School in Alnwick.
- A request for data to show the overall effectiveness of the Go Smarter and Safe schools programmes.
- What trends had the travel plan and Modeshift STARS data shown over the years?
- The Northumberland Schools Plan.
- Parents should be educated about respectful parking.
- Cycle tracks in Ashington were fitted in where it was best, but they were not always safe.
- The suggestion of members using some of small schemes if agreed by the Business Chair to contribute to schemes.

- Thanks were conveyed to the officers for all their hard work.
- The 20mph schemes were only advisory and not enforceable. Perhaps this could be changed in policy through Council.
- Children's safety was paramount.
- 20 mph schemes were requested in Norham and Islandshires especially where there were main roads.
- Was the Council doing enough to engage with those schools and children who were not getting enough exercise?
- The police do not enforce these speed limits which weakness their significance.
- Were teachers cycling to school?
- How many Northumberland schools had park and stride schemes?
- Could more be done to create park and stride schemes and to speed up the roll out of safe streets?

Councillor Riddle, Portfolio Holder thanked Ms Rowell for the presentation and informed the Committee that he had asked for the 20 mph speed limits to be rolled out as quickly as possible. If there were any problems at a particular school, then vehicles with cameras could be deployed but because of the geography of the county, this could be difficult.

Rob Murfin, Interim Executive Director for Local Services and Planning informed members that whilst some schools wanted to get involved, others did not, and some were resistant. Every time a school was extended or built, or changed, the opportunity was taken to make a formal requirement that the school must go through the travel planning process and careful decisions had to be made on parking to ensure it was carefully balanced. The Planning Team was working its way through the schools and at some point, all schools would be covered by this those arrangements.

The following information was provided in response to questions from Members:

- Schools that signed up to Modeshift STARS, were required to have at least, annual travel surveys. As they developed through the accreditation, evidence was required to show how a shift towards more sustainable travel had been achieved. The data from rest of the county was a 'hands up' data survey which was voluntary data collection. The data would be shared with all members of the committee.
- For those children that could not walk or cycle to school, they were encouraged to cycle in school, eg in the playground
- The School Travel Plan encouraged teachers to cycle to school but that could not be enforced.
- It was suggested that Councillor Morphet email Ms Rowell regarding the numbers for the park and stride schemes.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

35. REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATOR

Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee Monitoring Report

The Committee reviewed its work programme for the 2021/22 council year. (Report enclosed with the signed minutes).

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator reported that:-

- The meeting scheduled for the end of December would be cancelled as there were no pre-scrutiny reports to consider.
- Fire and Rescue were due to give an overview of their service at the January meeting, however the Inspector's report would not be received, until mid-December therefore, that item would be deferred to February's meeting.
- January - Complaints Improvement Framework Report.
- The Trees and Woodland Policy would be brought to a future Scrutiny meeting.

Discussion took place regarding Storm Arwen and it was suggested that a de-brief report from officers should be presented to a future Scrutiny meeting with an external invite to Northern Powergrid.

The Council's contingency plans should be presented to Scrutiny with follow up meetings from other organisations regarding their contingency plans.

A member stated that contingency plans and preparedness should be in place to enable the public to communicate in any future storm/emergency situation.

Mr Murfin advised the Committee that Communications information was being prepared with the necessary contact information to enable people to report any problems. The emergency services, local services and waste collection were working the police and the post office, checking for vulnerable people. The Council had been proactive in reporting problems to Northern Powergrid.

Members were asked to contact the Scrutiny Co-Ordinator with suggestions for the work programme for future meetings.

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.

36. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair sought Members' agreement for future meetings to be moved to a commencement time of 2:00 pm.

RESOLVED - Members agreed that future meetings of Communities and Place OSC commence at 2:00 pm.

37. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:-

- (a) that under Section 100A 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 involved the likely discussion of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of the Schedule 12(A) 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 1 of Schedule 12A
10	3 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
AND	The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure because disclosure would adversely affected confidentiality requirements with external partners.

38. DESTINATION MANAGEMENT – STRUCTURE AND FUTURE FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

The report provided an overview of the current and proposed management arrangements for the strategic management and marketing of tourism in Northumberland and requested the development of a two year Partnership Agreement and associated funding allocation to provide a stable platform for the further development of Visit Northumberland (previously Northumberland Tourism). The report also requested that members note the current status of the DCMS Review of Destination Management and the potential implications for the county.

Councillor Watson, Portfolio Holder explained the importance of tourism in Northumberland and referred to the figures outlined in the report.

Nigel Walsh, Head of Cultural Services, explained the downturn in visitor numbers and the challenge to ensure growth was sustainable.

Whilst members welcomed the report, they questioned the timescale of the Partnership Agreement and the contribution to Visit Northumberland.

The Committee therefore **resolved** that the Cabinet be advised that the Committee supports the recommendations in the report, subject to the comment set out above.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____

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NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

HEALTH AND WELLBEING OSC

At the meeting of the **Health and Wellbeing OSC** held at NEW meeting space, Block 1, Floor 2, County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF on Tuesday, 05 October 2021 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

J Reid (Chair) (in the Chair)

MEMBERS

K Nisbet
R Dodd
G Hill
R Wilczek

L Bowman
D Ferguson
I Hunter

ALSO PRESENT

S. Eaton
R. Mitcheson
A. Rainey
C. Riley
L. Robson
D. Thompson
R. Wighan

Northumbria Trust
Northumberland CCG
Northumbria Trust
Northumbria Trust
Northumberland CCG
Northumberland Healthwatch
Northumbria Trust

OFFICERS

C Angus
C McEvoy-Carr

R Greally

Scrutiny Officer
Executive Director of Adults and Children's
Services
Assistant Democratic Services Officer

26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Homer.

27 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 18 August 2021 and 31 August 2021, as circulated, be agreed as a true record and be signed by the Chair.

28 FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

Ch.'s Initials.....

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Health & Wellbeing board held on 8 July 2021 and 12 August 2021, as circulated, be agreed as a true record and be signed by the Chair.

29 COVID/ WINTER PLAN

Presentations were provided by Laurie Robson, Northumberland CCG, Simon Eaton and Alison Rainey, Northumbria Trust.

Members were advised of the following:-

- In August there was a Regional Urgent and Emergency Care Network System Resilience planning event with partners.
- There were four areas that NHS England wanted prioritised; workforce sustainability, 111 clinical advice service, public communication to advise which services should be accessed, established shared principles that would underpin mutual aid and escalation.
- The presentation outlined how Primary Care Networks were being looked at and supported. PCN's were being supported through regular practice engagement such as dedicated GP comms mailbox.
- Face-to-face appointments were resumed when required and practices were supported with digital and telephone alternatives.
- Extended Access appointments were included in PCN to support the delivery of flu and Covid vaccine programme.
- PCN's were following national guidance and were focused on booster vaccines to vulnerable patients as well as vaccinating the younger cohort.
- PCN's used latest guidance to plan early and prepare key messages to be communicated to the public.
- Community pharmacies continued to offer vaccines in conjunction with PCN's.
- A key component to the Covid response was streaming patients and encouraging patients to access 111. It allowed patients to be directed to the correct level of care and signposted them to the right location. It was successful at protecting ED from over-crowding.
- Northumbria Trust had been identified as an ICP pilot for "further faster", the pilot was looking into increasing capacity in Clinical Assessment Service.
- In a hospital context attendance levels were back to levels recorded in 2019 however performance remains challenging for a number of reasons..
- Plans and considerations were outlined for the next 6 months. These included;
- The impact of Covid and other winter illnesses being monitored, continued infection control and patient flow maintained.
- The length of stay in general beds and the amount of general beds had been increased however there was a contingency to use elective

- beds if necessary.
- Paediatrics expected a 50-100% increase in RSV admissions over the winter.
- The health & wellbeing of staff was embedded throughout all plans. The staff had endured a difficult 18 months and that was to be recognised.

In response to questions the following information was provided:-

- Although the demonstrations against vaccinations nationally were disturbing it was assured that there had been very little demonstrations in the area and the amount of vaccine uptake in the region illustrated the confidence in the vaccine.
- Difficulties in getting appointments to see GP's was highlighted, it was stated that moving forward the norm was to be a mixture of phone/virtual/ face-to-face appointments. It was assured that the virtual appointments were not to "fob off" patients but were to meet the appropriate needs of the patients. It was suggested that there had been a lot of bad press towards GP appointments but it was important to note that GP's were available. It was stated that there were two tracks for the GP access issue; what was happening and what was being perceived. Primary Care was improving access to the correct service with the use of pharmacists etc. Important that GP's are used correctly for the appropriate care. R. Mitcheson was happy to look at individual GP issues if needed.
- It was suggested that there be a wider discussion about GP access as there was a lot of interest around the topic. It was felt that public engagement would be helpful for this discussion.
- It was acknowledged that there was going to be an unknown amount of pressure on the NHS services but was reiterated that plans had been put in place to ease the pressure as much as possible.
- Covid restrictions that were in place last year had helped with flu also and it was predicted that more people would be affected by the flu this year. Those who were receiving booster Covid vaccines would also have been offered the flu vaccine at the same time.
- It was stressed that Northumbria Trust had the lowest staff turnover in the trust. The trust was constantly recruiting and new medical students were starting their career in the Trust. Also new roles were being developed in the trust. The organisation was doing a lot for staff health & well-being such as acknowledging and appreciating the staff.
- It was advised that restrictions hadn't stopped and it was down to personal choice. If people felt uncomfortable at the proximity to others then they were encouraged to move chairs etc. if needed. It was reiterated that it was still important to look after themselves and others through sensible behaviour.
- 111 was to ensure patients get the correct care they need. Primary Care Services did not need to drastically change to fit with the society lived in. There were robust plans put in place to help and encourage the use of the system appropriately which would have helped with pressures in ED and GP's.

Members were reassured by the plans presented and felt that the Trust had acknowledged the pressures they would be facing in the winter.

30 HEALTHWATCH REPORTS

A presentation was provided by Derry Nugent, Northumberland Healthwatch. Information provided included the following:

The presentation outlined what Healthwatch Northumberland had achieved throughout 2020/21 including; enabling people separated from loved ones in care homes to share what it meant and how it could be better. Building solid relationships which enabled them to relay messages about vaccination programme. Over 8,000 people accessed the Healthwatch website for Coronavirus information.

The annual survey by Healthwatch Northumberland focused on the NE23 and NE61 postcodes. There was a 67% overall satisfaction rate. The main concerns raised from the survey were quality of care for care service providers, access to GP's, dentists and mental health services, recovery of cancer services.

The priorities for Healthwatch Northumberland in 2021/22 are as follows:

Health

- Access to primary care – dentists and GPs
- Mental Health services
- Sight loss

Social Care

- Care homes – new support forum
- Enter & View (when we can)

Communication

- Here to Hear
- Patient and service user voice in the ICS

The following comments were made in response to questions: -

- It was acknowledged that figures in relation to engagement could have been higher but it was noted that the figures were a picture across the piece and Northumberland Watch tried not to double count engagement figures. It was also noted that the engagement from the annual survey was not included in the report as the survey took place after the report.
- Mental health in young people was highlighted and it was recognised that the issues went down to nursery age level. However, the challenges of

capturing this data was highlighted.

- Northumberland watch had a certain remit defined by legislation which meant that they would not ask questions regarding income and the relation of income to mental health issues. It was suggested that Liz Morgan as an epidemiologist may have been able to provide data on how Covid has affected income and mental health.
- It was highlighted that there had been a lot of work with schools for mental health during the pandemic. The importance of differentiating between mental health support and emotional resilience. There were a lot resources available to support children and it was important that children were directed to the right service.
- It acknowledged that 33% of the participants were not satisfied with services was not something to be proud of but it was recognised that it was a self-selecting sample and just a snapshot of participants views.
- Due to the pandemic the engagement strategy was changed however this had not affected the demographic but strengthened the ability to engage with people. It was noted that Northumberland Healthwatch was still going out to engage face-face and were still answering phones.
- It was noted that there were many different avenues to give opinions on services and Healthwatch only receives a proportion of these. It was suggested that it would have been useful to triangulate information received from Healthwatch with over information received from different avenues to get a broader feedback.
- It was acknowledged that the public relied on information on the internet which was sometimes misinformation but it was assured that this misinformation was counteracted wherever possible.

Derry Nugent was thanked for the informative presentation.

31

HEALTH AND WELLBEING OSC WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Officer advised that there were a couple of changes to the work programme since it was published with the agenda:-

- In November a Covid and Vaccination update was to take place.
- End of life strategy, in agreement with CCG was to be presented in February.
- A review on the dissolution of the partnership was scheduled for March.
- The GP access presentation will be scheduled

Derry Nugent highlighted that Healthwatch was undertaking a survey relating to end of life strategy which was to be included in the presentation in February.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

32

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, 2 November 2021 at 1.00 p.m.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING BOARD

At a meeting of the **Health and Well-being Board** held in County Hall, Morpeth on Thursday, 14 October 2021 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT

Councillor B. Flux
(Chair, in the Chair)

BOARD MEMBERS

Bailey, M.	Sanderson, H.G.H.
Brown, S.	Simpson, E.
Lothian, J.	Syers, G.
Morgan, E.	Thompson, D.
Pattison, W.	Watson, J.
Riley, C (substitute)	

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

L.M. Bennett	Senior Democratic Service Officer
K. Bush	Specialty Registrar in Public Health
P. Hunter	Senior Service Director
R. Mitcheson	Northumberland CCG
L. Sprudd	Rise North East

20. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from R. O'Farrell, and P. Mead.

21. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board held on 9 September 2021, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair:

22. UPDATE ON THE EPIDEMIOLOGY OF COVID 19 AND ON THE NORTHUMBERLAND COVID 19 OUTBREAK PREVENTION AND CONTROL PLAN

Members received an update on the epidemiology of COVID 19 and the Northumberland COVID 19 Outbreak Prevention and Control Plan and COVID Deaths in Northumberland. (Presentation filed with the signed minutes).

Liz Morgan, Director of Public Health, gave a presentation to the Board and key points included:-

- National Overview
 - Infections increasing but hospital admissions remained relatively stable.
 - Deaths were decreasing for the first time since June 2021
 - More than 4 in 5 adults were fully vaccinated and more than 9 in 10 had antibodies.
 - Social Distancing had reduced over time but was now levelling.
- ONS Coronavirus (COVID-19) Study Infection Survey showed the percentages of people testing positive week by age group ending 2 October 2021. Rates were highest in secondary school pupils that week.
- NCC Dashboard showed figures for Northumberland up to 11 October 2021. Northumberland was currently in the top third of Local Authorities for case rates.
- Outbreak Control Plan
 - Efforts were being concentrated on more high-risk areas. The national framework was being followed including encouraging use of face coverings, improved ventilation, and testing.
 - Outbreaks had occurred in residential home settings, high risk settings and HMP Northumberland. Many cases had been associated with the Lindisfarne Festival in early September.
 - The contact tracing model was being extended and there was a national review of testing sites.
 - The NHS was very busy and pressurised but was not all due to COVID.
- COVID-19 Autumn and Winter Plans A and B. Plan B included additional measures such as mandatory face coverings in some settings, vaccine passports, and working from home.
- Vaccination Programme – 500,000 doses had been administered in Northumberland. Uptake was high in comparison with the rest of the region and England. It was still early days for vaccination of 12-15 age group.
- Vaccination of children and young people would be carried out by mixture of School Immunisation Teams, PCNs, local pharmacies, or walk in clinics.
- Phase 3 Autumn/Winter Boosters – Booster jabs would be offered to cohorts 1-9 and should take place no sooner than six months after the first dose.
- Next Steps – vaccination was being encouraged particularly in priority cohorts such as pregnant women and other high-risk groups
- Delivery of seasonal flu vaccinations
- Deliver 3rd doses to eligible immunosuppressed individuals.

The following comments were made in response to queries:-

- It had been hoped to co administer the flu and COVID booster jabs, however, logistically this was not always possible as COVID vaccine supplies were not arriving in line with flu vaccines. It was important not to

delay either jab. Practices were attempting to co administer where possible.

- The situation at HMP Northumberland was challenging and it was hoped that the vaccine uptake rate would improve. There was an important balance to be struck between security and the safety of staff and inmates.
- Walk in clinics were being made available at local pharmacies and at some practices.
- It was important to reinforce the positive messages about vaccination for children.

Members received a presentation about COVID -19 Deaths in Northumberland from Dr. Kathryn Bush, Specialty Registrar in Public Health. (Presentation filed with the signed minutes).

Key points included:-

- Northumberland pandemic deaths overview
 - The number of deaths within 28 days of a positive test peaked early in the pandemic and again over winter 2020/21. There were long periods of no deaths. Rates were beginning to rise again.
- Variations in death rates according to age and ward
 - Death rates were low in the younger age groups and higher in older age groups.
 - Details of death rates according to ward was provided along with case and death rates per 1,000 people.
 - The number of deaths in a ward was not necessarily linked to the rate of infection in that ward. Some wards may have an older population or be in a more deprived area.
- Excess deaths – The number of deaths from all causes, above what would have been expected during a given time period. This was calculated by comparing the average number of deaths over the same time period in the preceding five years.
 - The total number of excess deaths in Northumberland was 365. This figure was lower than expected and could be due to social distancing, use of PPE, the test and trace programme and vaccination programme.
- Breakthrough cases - Where infection had occurred in someone who was fully vaccinated against COVID19
- Breakthrough deaths – A death involving COVID19 that occurred in someone who had received both vaccine doses and had a positive PCR test at least 14 days after the second vaccination dose.
- These cases and deaths would increase as the number of people vaccinated increased. This was expected statistically and did not mean that the vaccine was ineffective.
- Positive cases were rising but deaths and hospital admissions were not rising at the same rate.

The following comments were made in response to queries:-

- Northumberland had a relatively stable population which enabled reasonable comparisons with other Local Authority areas to be made.
- Communications and Engagement policy and practice had been effective. The number of deaths in Northumberland was lower than predicted and this was because the public had complied with regulations. The vaccination programme had also worked to prevent deaths and reduce infection.
- There were some areas in Northumberland which had not done so well, particularly those which were more deprived, more care homes etc. It was important to understand this and consider what could be done about it.
- Lessons learned from the pandemic should be considered and it was noted that this was already planned by the Systems Transformation Board.

RESOLVED that the two presentations be received.

23. COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Members received a presentation updating them on current communications and engagement from Phillip Hunter, Senior Service Director. (Presentation filed with the signed minutes).

The following key points were made:-

- Local and national messages were being amplified and included the importance of handwashing, being vaccinated, how to access vaccination and testing etc.
- Ongoing work for the Communications Team included supporting the Outbreak Prevention and Control Wraparound Teams, Member and MP briefings, communication with the Cabinet Officer, supporting the Community Champions Programme and the BeatCovidNE campaign.
- Further development was ongoing with the Community Champions programme and further recruitment would take place. There were 38 active Champions reaching 7,196 individuals. Their locations were being mapped to identify areas to be targeted.
- The BeatCovidNE campaign encouraged 'Acts of Kindness' and had been widely covered by local TV, radio and newspapers. Awards to celebrate those who had gone above and beyond were due to be announced in late October.
- The next steps would include continuance of all above and supporting the vaccination programme and vaccination hesitancy work, along with further insight work across the North East.

The following comments were made:-

- The 12-15 age group was not a difficult group to reach but was a difficult group to convince about the need for vaccination. Further support in this area would be welcomed.

- NHS, nationally, was using its resources to target young people via social media.
- COVID-19 was no longer regularly in the news headlines.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

24. SEND REVISIT MAY 2021

Members were informed of the findings of the SEND Revisit from Ofsted and CQC and of the next steps to be taken.

Rachel Mitcheson, Northumberland CCG, provided the following presentation:-

- The Ofsted HMI Lead Inspector and CQC Inspector visited in May 2021 and focused on progress in three areas of weakness.
- Strengths highlighted during the inspection included:-
 - Collegiate approach to the delivery of SEND developments.
 - Revitalised strategy for children and young people with SEND.
 - Improved quality of Education Health Care Plans.
 - Strong waiting times for children and young people to receive support for mental health.
 - Good understanding of the importance of early identification and the graduated approach from SENCOs with needs being met more consistently across schools
 - Strong Parent Carer Forum providing challenge to the SEND Partnership.
 - Academic outcomes were improving and exclusions for learners with SEND had reduced year on year for three years.
- Outcomes of the inspection included:-
- Progress in addressing the previously identified areas of weakness.
 - Formal quarterly support and challenge visits from DfE and NHS England to cease.
 - Seismic change in leadership and culture since October 2018 inspection.
 - Context of judgement
- SEND Strategic Priorities
 - Working Together
 - Delivering the right support and the right time.
 - Inclusive education
 - Preparation for adulthood

The following comments were made:-

- This was a pivotal time for the system with opportunities for joint commissioning and co design. There were exciting times ahead.
- Very significant progress had been made and officers were thanked for their contribution to these improvements.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the contents of the report be noted
- (2) the next steps to be taken be supported.

25. NORTHUMBERLAND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY

Members received a detailed update on the progress of the Northumberland Physical Activity Strategy from Lee Sprudd, Strategic Director (North of Tyne) for Rise North East.

Members welcomed the report and a number of comments were made:-

- There were plans to make improvements to or rebuild leisure centres around the county. A new leisure centre had recently opened in Ponteland and another would open soon in Berwick. Good facilities were already available in Hexham and Ashington. Nationally, swimming pools were being closed down but in Northumberland they were being opened.
- It was recognised that it was unfortunate that some schools were reluctant to open up their facilities for the community. A lot of work and evaluation was ongoing to build evidence of the benefits of opening up these facilities. Some young people may feel more comfortable engaging in activities if they were in a familiar school environment.
- The potential cost to local groups of opening up school facilities could be a problem. Individual requests for support could be looked at outside the meeting. It was noted that it was important for a sustainable solution to be found.
- Discussions should be opened with Headteachers to encourage the opening of school facilities. It was also noted that it was crucial to provide encouragement to the public to use facilities offered.
- There were a number of strategic partners involved with the strategy as none of this work could be done in isolation. Physical activity needed to be built into systems such as the Local Plan and infrastructure.
- Private sector should be involved and some providers were being contacted. The stakeholder group met quarterly and its membership was continually under review to ensure that it included appropriate bodies.
- It was noted that the public's work and activity patterns had changed as a result of the pandemic.
- It was important to focus on obesity and mental health issues which had become more common during the pandemic.

RESOLVED that the Health & Wellbeing Board

- (1) The importance of the physical activity strategy taking a multi-agency approach in tackling the complexities around physical inactivity in the county be understood and acknowledged, and more public and third sector organisations be supported to connect with the strategy's aspirations and

be part of the solution.

- (2) The complexities associated with tackling inactivity and the excellent ongoing collaborative work with strategic stakeholders to implement the countryside physical activity strategy be recognised.
- (3) The immediate impact of implementing this strategy, targeting out most vulnerable communities hit hardest by the COVID 19 crisis be noted.
- (4) The significant benefits of using a preventative approach to tackle rising physical inactivity levels across the county against the wider health, social, educational and economic priority outcomes be noted. This aimed to ensure people were better prepared to live happy and fulfilling lives as members of more sustainable and resilient communities.
- (5) The benefits of developing place-based approaches and the current work ongoing in Berwick as a tool to reduce inequalities across the county be acknowledged.

26. HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD FORWARD PLAN

Graham Syers referred to ICS and STB Update scheduled for the next meeting and stressed the importance of the Health & Wellbeing Board dovetailing very well with system based place work. Over the next few months, consideration would have to be given to how what the Board perceived as the needs of the population and feed this in with wider partners. A full discussion at a future meeting once further information was available would be welcomed.

RESOLVED that the forward plan be noted.

27. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, 11 November 2021, at 10.00 a.m. in County Hall, Morpeth.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____

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NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Audit Committee held in the meeting space, Block One, Floor Two, County Hall Morpeth on Wednesday, 24 November 2021 at 10.15 a.m.

PRESENT

S. Watson (Chair)

COUNCILLORS

Cessford, T.
Jackson, P.
Oliver, N.
Scott, A.

Taylor, C.
Towns, D.
Wallace, A.

CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Topping, P. (part)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Binjal, S
Hunter, P.
Lally, D.
McDonald, K.
Stewart, A.
Todd, A.
Willis, J.

Monitoring Officer and Interim
Director of Governance
Senior Service Director
Chief Executive
Acting Chief Internal Auditor
Finance Manager
Democratic Services Officer
Interim Executive Director of
Finance and S151 Officer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Waddell, C.

Mazars

ALSO PRESENT

R. Wearmouth, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services
1 member of the press

24. MEMBERSHIP

RESOLVED that the change in membership from Councillor Dickinson to Councillor Murphy be noted.

25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor M. Murphy.

26. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 7 October 2021, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

27. REPORTS OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND SECTION 151 OFFICER

27.1 Arrangements for the Appointment of the Local Auditor (External Auditor)

Mr Waddell advised that he would leave the room while this item was discussed.

This report sought Council approval to opt-in to the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) Limited arrangements from 1 April 2023 for the five financial years commencing 2023-24 to 2027-28. (A copy of the report has been attached to the signed minutes).

Mrs Willis detailed the main points of the report for members and advised that although the arrangements would expire sometime in the future the process for the appointment of a local auditor beyond 2022-23 needed to commence imminently. The Council had two choices, regarding the appointment process:

- a. Directly appoint its own Local Auditor; or,
- b. Use a sector led body, the Local Government Association (LGA) to make the appointment.

Members were informed that it was the Interim Executive Director of Finance and Section 151 officer's view that the Council should opt into the national scheme for the appointment of local auditors. This approach would ensure independence in the appointment and also deliver better value for money to the Council. The County Council at its meeting in January 2022 would consider the report and agree the appointment arrangements.

The Chair commented that this appointment was a crucial role for the Council and asked if members had any comments or questions on the report.

Councillor Oliver stated that he felt that having an independent body making the appointment was a good approach which would show there was no due influence from any member or officer of the Council. He fully supported the proposals for all the reasons stated within the report.

Councillor Towns reiterated the comments made by Councillor Oliver. He commented that he felt uneasy around the associated risks if the Council chose its own external auditor, so welcomed the proposals. The value for money aspects of the proposed arrangements were also welcomed. He stated that decisions were made back in 2017 for the right reasons and keeping with a transparent approach to appointing the external auditors could only continue to be a positive move.

Members were advised that many other local authorities were using the Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited as an approved appointing body.

The Chief Executive clarified the background stating that in 2017 the Council, in collaboration with Newcastle and North Tyneside councils, appointed its own Local Auditor. Following the resignation of the Local Auditor in 2019 the Council then opted to seek the appointment of a replacement Local Auditor through the PSAA which resulted in Mazars being appointed.

Councillor Oliver moved to support the report's recommendations, which was seconded by Councillor Jackson. With a show of hands, it was unanimously agreed to support the proposals to be considered by Council.

RESOVLED that the report be recommended to Council.

27.2 Treasury Management Mid-Year Review Report for Period 1 April to 30 September 2021

The report provided a mid-year review of the activities of the Treasury Management function for the period 1 April to 30 September 2021, and performance against the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) 2021-22 - as approved by the County Council on 24 February 2021. The report provided a review of borrowing and investment performance for the period set in the context of the general economic conditions prevailing so far during the year. It also reviewed specific Treasury Management prudential indicators defined by the (CIPFA) Treasury Management Code of Practice and CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, (the Prudential Code), and approved by Council in the TMSS (copy attached to the signed minutes).

The report was introduced by Mrs Willis.

Councillor Oliver summarised comments he had made at a recent meeting of County Council regarding the spread of maturing debt, which he felt should be noted by this Committee. He had raised the point that in the next 40-50 year period around £1/4 million would become mature. He stated that if interest rates were to be high at that point of time, then this could place a large financial burden on the Council. He reported that assurance had been given at the Council meeting that the structure of borrowing would ensure a reasonable spread of maturing debt. This would guarantee that significant amounts of debt would not mature at a time when interest rates for refinancing the debt may be high.

RESOVLED that:-

(a) the report be received, and the Committee note the performance of the Treasury Management function from 1 April to 30 September 2021

(b) the report be recommended to Council.

P. Topping joined the meeting at this stage.

28. REPORT OF THE ACTING CHIEF INTERNAL AUDITOR

Key Outcomes from Internal Audit Repots (Issued July 2021 November 2021)

The purpose of this report was to advise Audit Committee of key outcomes from Internal Audit reports issued between July 2021 and November 2021 (Appendix 1). (A copy of the report has been attached to the signed minutes).

Mr McDonald presented the report and drew to members' attention the table detailing the main outcomes following the pieces of work carried out within the time period specified.

Mr Topping queried whether subject matter specialists had been called upon to assist when assessing assurance audits as some of the schemes were quite varied. Mr McDonald replied by confirming that up to this point they had not needed to seek any additional support although they would consider if appropriate at the time. The certification against the grants was normally quite straight forward in terms of using the grant conditions to see if all stipulations had been met, rather than the outcomes of particular funding.

The Chair noted that within Section 5 of the report no 'critical' or 'high' priority recommendations had been made following the five audit assignments. Regarding how a recommendation was made, Mr McDonald confirmed that the opinion classifications used in the Internal Audit reporting were a subjective process. The opinions given gave an overall assurance judgment which included the potential risk impact. Members were provided with a brief summary of how Internal Audit carried out audit reports and the many procedural steps in place in formulating key issues and priority of recommendations. It was noted that if there were any recommendations assessed as critical then it was hoped immediate action would be taken to ensure the organisation was not exposed to unacceptable risk. If any were deemed in the high classification that it was envisaged that action would be taken within a couple of months, medium six months and low would be any time after that.

Councillor Towns commented that the report stated that 3 out of 4 of the audits with an assurance opinion attached had all been deemed as 'Limited Assurance'. He felt that this was still an area of concern and should not be celebrated as the opinion framework defined limited assurance as weakness in the design of, or regular non-compliance with, key controls put the achievement of the organisation's objectives at risk in some or all the areas reviewed. He queried what was being done to improve these systems.

In response, Mr McDonald agreed that a limited assurance opinion highlighted there were risks and therefore was a concern. Internal Audit worked closely with management when carrying out audits and provided an open and honest dialogue on issues identified. As part of measures put in place by the Chief Executive, Mr McDonald stated that he regularly attended the Executive Management Team meetings. At those meetings, up and coming pieces of work, those finalised and those with opinion classifications would be regularly discussed, and all kept up to date on progress made. The arrangement was working well and enabled Executive Directors to monitor and manage action taken to implement recommendations set within audits.

The Chair questioned whether any monitoring was carried out to ensure agreed targets dates set within an audit report were adhered to. Mr McDonald confirmed that all recommendations were followed up. Occasionally, there were some good business reasons why things could not be carried out within agreed targets. When this happened, discussions would take place to understand the reasoning for this and a revised target may be agreed. If deemed targets had not been reached and no valid reason given as to why, then the issue would be escalated to the relevant Executive Director and further. If it was felt things still were not being addressed or risks borne that need not to be then it would be brought to the attention of the Audit Committee.

The Chair asked whether the Covid19 pandemic had affected the implementation of any recommendations within audits. Mr McDonald stated that initially a slowing of progress made had been seen within some service areas particularly during the lockdown arrangements when people were working from home. However, service areas were now getting back to normal. Mr McDonald stressed that once recommendations had been fulfilled evidence checks were made to ensure they had been implemented completely.

RESOVLED that the key findings from good practice identified in, and management action taken in response to the Internal Audit reports issued and the summary of other work undertaken by Internal Audit in this period, summarised in Appendix 1, be noted.

29. REPORT OF THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR

Audit Progress Update

Mazars provided the Audit Committee with an update on progress made in delivering their responsibilities as the Council's external auditors and also included, at Section 2, for information, a summary of recent national reports and publications (copy attached to the signed minutes).

Mr Waddell presented the report and drew members' attention to the main points.

Apologies were given for the oversight of not including information relating to the 19/20 Audit within this progress report. Members were advised that there were still two outstanding items to complete for this audit which were the Local Government Accounts and the Value for Money aspect. It was noted that now the order of accounts was complete the Local Government Account would be finalised. Regarding value for money the Section 151 Officer had recently provided additional information to Mazars. The additional information included legal opinion, which was currently being looked at, and a decision would be made as to any further procedures needing to be undertaken in order to complete the work. As previously discussed, outcomes were likely to be qualified but there was still some debate to be had particularly around the International point.

In terms of 2020/2021, the draft accounts from the Council had been received and audit work had commenced. The initial trail through had begun with a focus on the areas of highest risk which from an external auditor's point of view were around the potential risk of manipulation of the accounts, work on the valuation of property plant equipment and pensions.

The focus area on pensions was due to the estimation uncertainty and movement of asset values in the final quarter of the last year. There was also the complexity of Northumberland merging into the Tyne and Wear Pension Fund.

Mr Waddell reported that assurance had just been received from the Pension Fund Auditor and stated there were no specific issues for Northumberland other than there was a £260 million adjustment to the pension fund accounts due to the movement in the final quarter of the year. This resulted in an adjustment being needed to Northumberland's accounts. It was reported that because of Northumberland's size it would be substantial.

Regarding the timetable, it was still hoped that the fieldwork would be available for the January meeting of the Audit Committee.

Mr Waddell highlighted some of the national publications detailed within the report, including cyber and information security and the percentage of authorities publishing their 2020-21 audited accounts by the prescribed date.

The Chair asked if there were any questions or comments following the report.

Councillor Jackson commented on his frustration in the delay in signing off the final statement of accounts from the previous year. He asked when the audit would finally be completed. Mr Waddell advised that it was hoped to be completed in the very near future; however, there were outstanding queries with officers and certain areas where legal advice would need to be sought before the audits could be closed. There would also be the process to go through in terms of natural justice where issues highlighted, and any recommendations made, would need to be agreed with both members and officers subject to the nature of those findings and conclusions.

The Chair stated that the Audit Committee had been aware of the issues which had delayed the completion of the 2019/20 Final Statement of Accounts but hoped that the situation could reach a conclusion soon.

Councillor Wearmouth offered his assistance to the Audit Committee in arranging a presentation on cyber and information security as this issue fell within his portfolio. The presentation could cover the NAO's good practice guide for audit committees on cyber security arrangements and inform all on how the Council protects its data, devices, networks and software. The Chair thanked Councillor Wearmouth for the invitation.

In response to a query from Councillor Oliver, Mr Waddell explained why estimated figures were used within the final quarter of a financial year for

pensions. He advised that cash flow forecasts were used to enable accounts to be drafted and published, which often happened in December. Throughout the rest of the year the administering authority would continue to get updated valuation reports from the fund managers and from the global custodians to the period to the end of March. Therefore, this could result in the cash forecasts being significantly different depending on the asset return. In January to March of this year there was still volatility in terms of the market. This resulted in the returns and investments changing quite substantially and higher than predicted. A letter had been received from EY advising that the draft accounts were to be £261million different to those predicted. Therefore, subject to the share of assets, the pension fund net liability will have decreased. Work would need to take place on whether an updated letter from Actuaries would be needed.

Mrs Willis reported that the Council did not have the Actuaries updated reported at the time the draft accounts were published so an adjustment would be required. Council's initial understanding was that it would be a re-valuation adjustment affecting the balance sheet but would not affect the Council's revenue position.

Mr Waddell advised that the External Auditors believed that the adjustment needed would hit the re-measurement of the defined benefit liability but there would be no impact in terms of actual useable reserves. Mr Waddell confirmed that this news had just been received and the specific detail and correct procedures needed would be discussed with Council officers in greater detail once everyone had had a chance to read and comprehend the information.

The Chair thanked Mr Waddell for the progress update.

RESOVLED that the updated be received.

30. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED that the next meeting be scheduled for Wednesday, 26 January 2022 at 10.15 a.m.

31. 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

11 Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information).

Disclosure could adversely affect the business reputation or confidence in the person/organisation, and could adversely affect commercial revenue.

32. REPORTS OF THE ACTING CHIEF INTERNAL AUDITOR

32.1 Group Audit Committee: Advance Northumberland Internal Audit Plan Update

(A copy of the report has been attached to the signed minutes, and coloured pink).

Mr McDonald presented the report which advised Group Audit Committee on the 2021-2022 Internal Audit Plan covering Advance Northumberland Group of Companies (Advance) for the period covering October 2021 to March 2022. The Internal Audit Plan for 2021/22 originally consisted of two elements:

- Coverage from April to September 2021; and
- Potential / indicative coverage from October 2021 to March 2022.

RESOVLED that the recommendation, as detailed in the report, be agreed.

32.2 Risk Management Update

Audit Committee was provided with an update from Mr McDonald on progress with the development, implementation and embedding of risk management within the County Council; and the latest position of the corporate risks as agreed by Executive Team and considered by Cabinet portfolio holders in October 2021. (A copy of the report has been attached to the signed minutes, and coloured pink).

Members discussed the latest position of the corporate risks and the potential repercussions of those risks to the Council, elected members and officers.

RESOVLED that the report, be noted.

32.3 Strategic Audit Plan 2021/22 – Interim Monitoring Statement

Mr McDonald presented the Audit Committee with an interim (half yearly) monitoring statement in respect of the Strategic Audit Plan for 2021/22 (copy attached to the signed minutes and coloured pink).

RESOVLED that the recommendation, as detailed in the report, be agreed.

CHAIR.....
DATE.....

DIRECTORS' DECISIONS TAKEN FOLLOWING CONSULTATION WITH CABINET MEMBERS

(The public register, which contains the recorded details of these decisions, will be available in the Council Chamber on the day of the meeting).

The following is a list of Delegated Decisions taken since those reported to County Council on Wednesday, 7 July 2021.

(1) REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF IT

Procurement of Services for Backup and Recovery

A decision was taken on 9 December 2021 by the Director of IT, in conjunction with the Deputy Leader of the County Council, to proceed with contracting with proposed suppliers in order to secure appropriate backup and recovery services for the Council's critical information systems.

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Northumberland County Council

COUNCIL

DATE: 5TH JANUARY 2022

RE-ENDORSEMENT OF APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT CHAIR OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE AND INDEPENDENT PERSON AND APPOINTMENT OF ADDITIONAL INDEPENDENT PERSONS

Report of the Monitoring Officer

Cabinet Member: Councillor Wearmouth, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services

Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement of the continued appointment of Joe Jackson, the Independent Chair of the Standards Committee and Karen Milner, the Council's Independent Person under the relevant provisions of the Localism Act 2011 and to request that Council delegates to the Standards Committee the process of the appointment of two further Independent Persons.

Recommendations

- a) To endorse the continued appointment of the following for the remaining terms of their four year appointment;
 - i. Independent Chair - Mr Joe Jackson
 - ii. Independent Person - Ms Karen Milner; and
- b) To delegate to the Standards Committee in conjunction with the Monitoring Officer the appointment of two further Independent Persons.
- c) Should any consequential constitutional amendment be required to delegate this to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the advisory Member's Constitution Working Group

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the "How" priority included in the NCC Corporate Plan.

Key issues

The positions of Independent Chair of Standards Committee and Independent Person were appointed by Council following an open recruitment process in January 2020 for a

four year term with the recommendation that their appointments be reviewed after two years.

Background

1. The current composition of the Council's Standards Committee provides for an Independent Chair to preside over its meetings and to be a member champion for the promotion and maintenance of the Council ethical framework in respect of member conduct. While there is no statutory requirement for the Chair of the Standards Committee to be independent, the authority have previously determined that the position would benefit from such a status and the current incumbent, Mr Joe Jackson, was appointed in January 2020 for period of four years, which appointment has been renewed on three separate occasions. The position was exposed to an open recruitment process.
2. In addition to the position of Independent Chair the Council are required, by the Localism Act 2011, to appoint at least one independent person who has a role to play primarily in the assessment of complaints in conjunction with the Monitoring Officer as well as supporting the work of the Standards Committee. The current incumbent, Karen Milner, was appointed in this capacity in 2020 again, after an open recruitment process for a period of four years, to be reviewed after two years.
3. Other Councils regionally have more than one Independent Person and it believed to be prudent for Northumberland County Council to have two further Independent Persons. On the last occasion the recruitment process was undertaken by representatives of the Standards Committee together with the Monitoring Officer and it is requested that Council delegates the process to the Standards Committee in conjunction with the Monitoring Officer. Should Council resolve to do so, the process of advertising the vacant positions of two further Independent Persons can commence with the interview panel then comprising a small number of the members of the Standards Committee.
4. Members will be aware of Mr Jackson's work with the Standards Committee in the last number of years since his initial appointment to the position of independent Chair, and the Panel believed on his appointment in 2020 that his experience in the role will continue to benefit the work of the Standards Committee and the promotion of the elected members' ethical framework throughout Northumberland.
5. Ms Milner has assisted officers since her appointment with tasks given to her in a timely and thorough manner and has an extensive career background in the public sector principally with the former Learning and Skills Council and Skills Funding Agency. She believes that it is vital that people in positions of responsibility - such as elected members - should lead by example and set standards of behaviour for others to follow and ensure that they demonstrate the highest levels of integrity.

Implications

Policy	N/A
Finance and value for money	The Independent Chair and independent person will each be paid an allowance of £2,700 per annum which is already provided for within the Council's General Fund Budget.
Legal	These are as set out in the report
Procurement	N/A
Human Resources	The Council's recruitment and selection good practice standards was adhered to in the selection process
Property	N/A
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	The recruitment process was open to all sections of the community
Risk Assessment	N/A
Crime & Disorder	N/A
Customer Consideration	N/A
Carbon reduction	N/A
Wards	All

Background papers:

Localism Act 2011

Report sign off.

	Full name of officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Suki Binjal
Service Director Finance & Interim S151 Officer	Jan Willis
Relevant Executive Director	

Chief Executive	
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Richard Wearmouth

Author and Contact Details

Suki Binjal, Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer
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REPORT TO COUNTY COUNCIL

DATE: 5 JANUARY 2022

AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Report of the Monitoring Officer

Cabinet Member: Richard Wearmouth

Purpose of report

To create a new committee known as the Grievance Committee to hear and determine grievances raised by the Chief Executive and Chief Officers and also grievances made against the Chief Executive and Chief Officers.

Make consequential amendments to the Terms of Reference to the Staffing and Appointment Committee and the Employment (Appeals) Committee to clarify roles and responsibilities and comply with the Council's legal obligations.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Council:

- 1. Establishes a Grievance Committee.**
- 2. Appoints a Chair and Vice Chair to the Grievance Committee, nominations to be made by Group Leaders.**
- 3. Approves the Terms of Reference as set out in Appendix A to the report.**
- 4. Appoints 5 Members to serve on the Committee in accordance with the political proportionality of the Council, nominations to be made by Group Leaders.**
- 5. Approves the amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Staff and Appointments Committee and the Employment (Appeals) Committee, as set out in Appendix B,**
- 6. Delegates to the Monitoring Officer authority to review and make consequential amendments to other protocols and provisions of the Constitution to give effect to this resolution. This delegation to be exercised in consultation with the Advisory Constitution Working Group.**

Link to Corporate Plan

This report updates the County Council Constitution which is a key governance document in the NCC Corporate Plan 2018-2021.

Key issues

The Chief Executive and Chief Officers have a statutory and contractual right to raise a grievance to their employer. The County Council has grievance policies, but they do not make provision for a process to investigate, hear and determine such grievances for very senior officers.

Employment issues are non-executive functions of the Council and must be discharged by the Council, a committee, or a duly delegated officer. Given the seniority of the staff, the Council needs to make arrangements for a committee to discharge these functions on its behalf. The attached procedure takes account of the ACAS Code of Practice and the guidance provided in the JNC for Chief Executives of Local Authorities in England and Wales.

The existing Pay Policy Statement 2021 is at variance with the Terms of Reference of the Staffing and Appointments Committee and the Employment (Appeals) Committee in relation to the exercise of certain employment functions. The amended Terms of Reference attached as Appendix B seeks to clarify the various delegated functions to ensure that they are compliant with the Council's legal obligations and in accordance with the prevailing guidance.

Background

1. It is a term to every contract of employment that an employee should be able to raise a grievance with their employer.
2. The County Council has a grievance policy which applies to its staff. However, the procedures for resolving any such grievances do not properly take account of the seniority of staff.
3. In November 2020 the Council agreed to adopt the Model Disciplinary Procedure and Guidance set out in the JNC for Chief Executives of Local Authorities in England. The JNC also has a Model Code which covers how Councils should deal with grievances raised by and against a Chief Executive. The attached Terms of Reference take account of this and extend its provisions to Chief Officers. The definition of Chief Officer is set out in the terms of reference for each committee.
4. The procedure attached at Appendix A also reflects the guidance provided in the statutory ACAS Code for resolving workplace disputes.
5. The establishment of this committee and the clarification of the roles and responsibilities of the Staffing and Appointment Committee and the Employment (Appeals) Committee provides the Council with the necessary decision taking bodies to

ensure that it is able to resolve any workplace disputes that arise in accordance with its legal obligations.

6. The Council does not currently have a Grievance Committee or terms of reference of any other committee to discharge this function.
7. The JNC Model Code specifically sets out that the Members sitting on the Grievance Committee should be independent of any disciplinary functions and so it is recommended that a separate committee is formed.
8. The recommendation is for a committee of 5 members which is in accordance with the guidance in the JNC Model Code.
9. The County Council Procedure rules provide that the Council will appoint the chair and vice chair of committees. In the absence of such an appointment the meeting will elect a chair and vice chair for each meeting from its members.
10. A review of the constitution and the County Council's Pay Policy Statement approved in 2021 shows that the Policy and the Terms of Reference of the Staffing and Appointments Committee and the Employment (Appeals) Committee are at variance. Clarity is required as to the various delegations and functions of these committees to bring them into compliance with the County Council's legal obligations and to provide clarity to the Council's Scheme of Delegation.
11. The number of members and the political proportionality of these Committees also requires clarification to ensure that the Council observes the rules of political proportionality. The Staffing and Appointments Committee will continue to comprise 9 members and the Employment (Appeals) Committee will continue to be a panel of 5 chosen from a pool of 20.
12. The recommendation delegates to the Monitoring Officer the responsibility to make any consequential amendments to other parts of the Constitution to give effect to these changes in consultation with the Advisory Constitution Working Group.

Implications

Policy	The proposed amendments will align the Constitution with the latest guidance and legislation required to be followed in respect of the employment of the Council's Chief Officers
Finance and value for money	No direct costs will be incurred by updating the Constitution. Failure to make the required amendments could, however, result in adverse value for money implications for the Authority.

Legal	This accords with the Council's legal obligations – Local Government Act 1972 and Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The amendment of the constitution is a none-executive function
Procurement	N/A
Human Resources	These amendments make proper arrangements for employees to raise grievances and for the Council to properly discharge its employment functions through appropriate committees
Property	N/A
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	The arrangements provide for any employee with complaints which may include protected characteristics to raise these with their employer.
Risk Assessment	If the Council fails to investigate and determine grievance complaints in a timely manner, complaints can be made to an Employment Tribunal.
Crime & Disorder	N/A
Customer Consideration	N/A
Carbon reduction	N/A
Health and Wellbeing	These amendments make proper arrangements for employees to raise grievances and for the Council to properly discharge its employment functions through appropriate committees
Wards	All Wards

Background papers:

Section 101 Local Government Act 1972

Section 112 Local Government Act 1972

Local Government and Housing Act 1989

Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations 2001 and 2015

JNC for Chief Executives of Local Authorities in England and Wales

Report sign off.

Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	
Relevant Executive Director	
Chief Executive	
Portfolio Holder(s)	

Author and Contact Details

Suki Binjal
Director of Corporate Governance/Monitoring Officer
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21. Employment (Appeals) Committee

Terms of Reference and Powers

- (a) To discharge the Council's disciplinary functions as an employer, in relation to the Head of Paid Service and Chief and Deputy Chief Officers.

NB It should be noted that the arrangements at paragraphs (b) to (e) below apply to disciplinary action in relation to a Statutory Officer (defined as the Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer).

- (b) To consider and determine whether a Statutory Officer (defined as the Head of Paid Services, Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer) should be suspended (or continue to be suspended) either immediately, or following a preliminary investigation into their conduct, and to formally review any suspension after it has been in place for two months in consultation with the Independent Investigator and after taking into account any representations by the Officer. Suspension will not be appropriate in every case as this will depend on the nature of the allegations or seriousness of the issue and before suspending a Statutory Officer careful consideration should be given to whether it is necessary or if there are any suitable alternative ways of managing the situation.
- (b) The Monitoring Officer or, in the case of a conflict of interests, a Deputy Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Director of Human Resources and the Chair of the Committee may determine that a decision on the suspension of a Statutory Officer is required at very short notice and before the Committee can meet, if his or her continued presence at work poses a serious risk to the health and safety of others or to the resources, information or reputation of the Council. Any decision to suspend must be reviewed by the Committee as soon as it is practicable to do so.
- (c) To consider and determine disciplinary action short of dismissal in relation to a Statutory Officer in accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations 2001 (as amended) and JNC Model Disciplinary Procedure.
- (e) To make recommendations to Council regarding the dismissal of a Statutory Officer for capability, conduct or for some other substantial reason
- (f) To determine grievance appeals relating to the Chief Executive and Chief Officers (as defined in the terms of reference for the Grievance Committee).
- (g) To hear and determine disciplinary action in relation to other Chief and Deputy Chief officers (defined in S.2 (1) (b) (c) and (d) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989).

NB Composition: Members will be drawn from a panel of 20 members (to include 4 Cabinet Members) announced as such a panel at the commencement of the municipal year.

No dismissal of a chief or deputy chief officer shall be taken until the officer appointment procedure rules have been complied with.

22. Staff and Appointments Committee

Terms of Reference and Powers

- (a) To discharge the Council's functions of the employer in relation to the Chief and Deputy Chief Officers (to include the Chief Financial Officer and Monitoring Officer). Chief Officer is defined as the Head of Paid Service, the Monitoring Officer and any officer defined in S.2 (1) (b) (c) and (d) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (Deputy Chief Officer being defined in para (d)).
- (b) To consider, approve, or make recommendations to the County Council, in relation to any changes to the overall structure of the Council's workforce, and the number and designation of Chief Officer and Deputy Chief Officer posts.
- (c) To determine the terms and conditions relating to employees of the County Council to include the remuneration and terms and conditions of employment for the Head of Paid Service and Chief and Deputy Chief Officers.
- (d) To exercise the discretions available to the employer under the Local Government Pension Scheme and related legislation in relation to the Head of Paid Service and to Chief and Deputy Chief Officers.
- (e) To approve any voluntary severance, settlement or ex-gratia payments to be made to the Head of Paid Service or to Chief or Deputy Chief Officers.

NB: No offer of appointment may be made to a Chief or Deputy Chief Officer until the Officer Employment Procedure Rules have been complied with.

The Head of Paid Service may approve acting up arrangements in the case of the temporary absence of a Chief or Deputy Chief Officer but may not appoint any interim arrangement without the approval of the committee and compliance with the Officer Appointment Procedure Rules set out in the Constitution.

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Northumberland County Council

COUNTY COUNCIL

5 January 2022

Arrangements for the Appointment of the Local Auditor (External Auditor)

Report of Jan Willis, Interim Executive Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer

Cabinet Member: Councillor Richard Wearmouth – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To seek Council approval to opt-in to the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) Limited arrangements from 1 April 2023 for the five financial years commencing 2023-24 to 2027-28.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are requested to:
 - a. agree to accept the invitation to become an opted-in authority to the national scheme for the appointment of local auditors, which is managed by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) Ltd; and,
 - b. agree that the Section 151 Officer (or Deputy Section 151 Officer) completes the required paperwork in order to make the necessary arrangements.
- 2.2 note that the length of the compulsory appointing period covers the audits of the five consecutive financial years commencing 1 April 2023 (2023-24 to 2027-28).

3. Link to Corporate Plan

- 3.1 This report is relevant to the 'being efficient, open and work for everyone' priority in the Corporate Plan 2018-2021 "A Council that Works for Everyone".

4. Key Issues

- 4.1 The Council's Local Auditor, Mazars, was appointed by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) Limited on 22 January 2020. The term of the appointment covered the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2023. That is that Mazars would audit the accounts of the Council for financial years 2019-20 to 2022-23.

- 4.2 It is worth noting that the appointment of Mazars to Northumberland County Council is a statutory appointment so there is no contract between the Council and Mazars. The contract is between Mazars and the PSAA.
- 4.3 Although the arrangements expire sometime in the future the process for the appointment of a local auditor beyond 2022-23 needs to commence imminently.
- 4.4 The Secretary of State has confirmed PSAA in the role of the appointing person for eligible principal bodies for the period commencing April 2023.
- 4.5 On 22 September 2021 the Council's Chief Executive and Interim Section 151 Officer received correspondence from PSAA inviting Northumberland County Council to become an opted-in authority in accordance with the Regulations.
- 4.6 A decision to become an opted-in authority must be taken in accordance with Regulation 19, that is by the members of an authority meeting as a whole, which for Northumberland County Council means Full Council.
- 4.7 The closing date to give notice to PSAA of the authority's acceptance of the invitation is Friday 11 March 2022.

5. Background

- 5.1 The Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014 dissolved the Audit Commission and introduced a requirement for local authorities to appoint their own external auditor (or 'local auditor' as they are referred in the Act).
- 5.2 For principal local authorities like Northumberland, the new Local Audit Framework became effective from 1 April 2018.
- 5.3 The Council has two choices, regarding the Local Auditor appointment process:
 - a. Directly appoint its own Local Auditor; or,
 - b. Use a sector led body, the Local Government Association (LGA) to make the appointment. The LGA has created a company; Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) Limited which was approved by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government as an 'approved appointing body' for councils to use in procuring a local auditor.
- 5.4 During 2017 the Council went down the route of option a) above in collaboration with Newcastle and North Tyneside councils and directly appointed Ernst Young as its Local Auditor.
- 5.5 Following the resignation of Ernst Young in November 2019 the Council then opted to seek the appointment of a replacement Local Auditor through the PSAA and Mazars was appointed.
- 5.6 As well as ensuring that local audit arrangements for the County Council reflect those of the vast majority of other local authorities in the country, this

approach also ensures independence in the appointment of the Local Auditor as the County Council will take no part in the appointment process. It should also deliver better value for money to the Council on local audit fees and will reduce administrative time and costs for the County Council as the Council will not have to undertake and manage its own procurement process and ongoing contract management arrangements.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 Based on this, the Interim Executive Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer's view is that the Council should opt into the national scheme for the appointment of local auditors, which is managed by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) Ltd.

IMPLICATIONS ARISING OUT OF THE REPORT

Policy:	None.
Finance and value for money:	The PSAA sets the scale charge fee for the audit of the accounts. Any variation to the fee must be agreed by the PSAA in the first instance. The Council has always been required to budget for the audit fee and will ensure that any change to the scale fee is reflected in the budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan.
Human Resources:	None.
Legal:	The legal implications of the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 are set out in the report. The procurement and appointment of a local auditor by the PSAA will ensure that the Authority secures compliance with the legal requirements of the Act.
Procurement:	The PSAA procures the local auditor on behalf of the Council.
Property:	None.
Equalities:	None.
Risk Assessment:	No specific risks have been identified with the proposal to continue with the PSAA scheme for the appointment of a local auditor.
Crime & Disorder:	None.
Customer Considerations:	None.
Carbon Reduction:	None.
Consultation:	None.
Wards:	All.

Background Papers:

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015 (the Regulations)

Report sign off:

Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

	Name
Deputy Monitoring Officer/Legal	Helen Lancaster
Interim Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	Jan Willis
Executive Director	Jan Willis
Chief Executive	Daljit Lally
Portfolio Holder	Richard Wearmouth

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Northumberland

County Council

COUNCIL

DATE: 05 JANUARY 2022

REVIEW OF LOCAL AREA COUNCILS

Report of: Leader and Councillor Gordon Castle

1. Purpose of report

The report summarises the discussion and recommendations of the Local Area Council Chairs following a review of the current Local Area Council arrangements as requested by the Leader. Council is requested to consider and approve the recommendations within the report.

2. Background and Introduction

Local Area Councils ('LACs') form an important part of the decision-making structure. They have delegated responsibility for a range of functions where decisions are taken by local members, reflecting local circumstances.

The LACs have wider terms of reference than the previous Local Area Committees including a separate local planning authority decision role and recommending adjustments to budget priorities in relation to local transport plan issues within their area. They aim to empower citizens, strengthen communities, and improve services. They involve councillors for each particular area and their meetings are held in public and may move around venues in the area (pre-covid).

The five Local Area Councils are:

- North Northumberland
- Tynedale
- Castle Morpeth
- Ashington and Blyth
- Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley.

The LACs replaced Local Area Councils in May 2017. It was proposed that they would enable the Council to be more connected to its communities and would break up the existing centralised committee structure.

The LACs are timetabled to meet bi-monthly and set their own work programmes through a mix of "corporate" and local issues agreed at Local Area Council Chairs' meetings. The Local Area Council (Planning) Committees meet monthly to consider specific categories of planning applications as per the delegated scheme. These are separate to the above and are currently timed to meet concurrently when the bi-monthly dates coincide. In addition, there is a Local Area Council – North Northumberland (Right of Way) Sub-Committee meeting bi-monthly, although on separate days to the LACs.

Although principally set up to provide public engagement and some local decision making, their effectiveness is considered as mixed and variable. Whilst some meetings are well attended by public, particularly Ashington and Blyth, some others in the county are not well attended consistently. There are also operation issues which include timetable matters, overrunning of the statutory elements of Planning and inconsistency of agendas.

The Leader, at the Annual Council meeting in May requested a review of Local Area Councils be undertaken. Initial scoping was carried out by officers to aid discussion and LAC Chairs and Vice Chairs, at their meeting on 30 June were asked whether they wished to carry out the review themselves or allocate it to Scrutiny. Members agreed that LAC Chairs, rather than Scrutiny should carry out the review as they were involved in the process and had knowledge of the benefits and challenges faced in each particular area. Initial evidence was collected and, together with the comments made at that meeting, enabled the work to be scoped, terms of reference agreed and a work plan produced. A separate discussion was held with Planning Chairs and their recommendations are incorporated.

The current terms of reference of the Northumberland LACs, together with those of the area committees of similar authorities: Cornwall Council, Cumbria County Council, Durham County Council, Shropshire Council, and Wiltshire Council were considered. Although some operate exclusively as area planning committees, Cumbria and Wiltshire operate local committees with wide ranging terms of reference and, in the case of Wiltshire, a significantly extended membership to include several local stakeholders. Consideration of the terms of reference are part this review and will depend on recommendations agreed.

The Group considered allocated funding together with the political makeup of the above councils. It should be noted that at the time of writing, the AGMs of many of those Councils had either taken place or were scheduled and some of the figures provided may be subject to change. This review will also consider whether an allocation of a fixed budget may lead to greater local accountability and stakeholder participation.

The Group then agreed terms of reference of the Review and a Work Plan.

3. The Review

The Review was led by Councillor Gordon Castle and comprised of Councillors Grimshaw, Cessford, Hardy, Beynon and Swinburn and supported by Jackie Roll, Rob Murfin and Lesley Little.

A scoping exercise was carried out following the discussion at the Local Area Chairs' Briefing on 30 June. This exercise informed Members of the initial evidence collated from other authorities which, together with the comments made at that meeting, would aid Members in ensuring a robust examination was carried out.

Terms of Reference and a Workplan were produced to agree the areas for review, the desired outcomes and how other organisations, stakeholders and officers fitted into the process. The key drivers were, in summary, to learn from operational/stakeholder lessons and to look for opportunities to increase community engagement and transparency.

Terms of Reference of the Review

1. To investigate the current arrangements for LAC Meetings and highlight any issues of concern or best practice.

2. To report and make recommendations to Council

4. Key issues:

4.1 Venues:

LACs meet at various venues across the County (pre-covid). Covid apart, there has been some concern regarding the suitability of a number of venues, particularly where there is poor IT connectivity, parking, concerns around safety of travel to some areas during winter or inclement weather and confusion over the timing of meetings (considered separately). A key element of the review was to increase public engagement and participation in localised or specific community-based issues. It is the case however, issues with venue quality/location appear to deter greater attendance.

Where venues are available, they may be too small, have poor IT connectivity or have insufficient seating. The problem is compounded by the unavailability of school premises, as the timing of some planning meetings overlap the academic day. Parking can also be an issue at smaller venues. Where there is paid parking, there have been issues, Hexham for example, where meetings have overrun the time allowed or members arriving late and unable to find a parking space.

Members felt it was important to hold meetings in venues across Northumberland, but these needed to address the issues of concern above. Where agenda items/issues were of concern to specific communities, then a suitable venue in that area was preferred therefore some fluidity was required depending on agenda topics. It was noted that streaming or recording of the meetings was not possible in many venues.

RECOMMENDATION 1: A core list of suitable* venues be sourced and agreed for each sub area for LAC meetings**. These to be fluid according to the topics on the agenda. Other local venues be considered where appropriate.

*(*Suitability measures will include capacity, safety, IT provision, parking, location, accessibility etc. ** Planning LAC will use a centralised local venue consistently)*

4.2 Timing of Meetings

The timing issue occurs when the LACs and the LACs (Planning) meet on the same day. There can be occasions when the meetings are scheduled 2-3 hours apart, but problems have been experienced under the following two scenarios:

(a) The planning meeting finishes relatively quickly. This can result in members/officers/public waiting around for significant periods ahead of the start of the later meeting which causes complaints or lack of attendance from public. This is not an efficient or effective use of resources. Although scheduling can be amended prior to the despatch of the (Planning) agenda if there are few applications, this can cause some public confusion.

(b) Conversely, there is concern around the length of time some applications take to be determined, allowing for public speaking and debate. This has led to meetings overrunning past the start time of the following LAC meeting. Planning meetings cannot be “paused” for resumption at later date. There is often little time to set up for the following meeting and confusion and complaints from those waiting for the LAC meeting to start. During the agenda preparation process, consideration is given to how much time should be allotted to the meeting which often necessitates a change to the scheduled start time but again this is an estimate and can be very different on the day.

Whilst agreeing to a 6:00 p.m. start for LAC meetings to encourage more public participation, concern was voiced about Members and Officers travelling late in the evening in winter months. Whilst this may not pose a problem for the 3 urban LACs, it could be considered so for the North Northumberland and the Tynedale meetings which could be held in often remote venues accessed by minor roads.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Planning meetings to be held monthly at 2:00 p.m. and separate from LAC meetings which will be held bi-monthly on a separate date at 6:00 pm. At the Chair's discretion, an earlier or later start time be agreed and advertised in a timely manner.

RECOMMENDATION 2.1: The current temporary arrangement for a maximum of three substantive planning applications per LAC meeting be continued. A larger number of less controversial applications to be considered subject to Chair agreement.

4.3 Membership - Chairs and Vice-Chairs

Members considered whether there was a need to have two Vice-Chairs for each LAC and queried whether there was enough work to justify this. The Review Group were of the opinion that the Chair and one Vice-Chair could carry out the work of both LAC and LAC Planning meetings adequately. It was further suggested that the Vice-Chair could be more involved in engagement of residents and stakeholders and generating relevant issues for the agenda. This would save 5 x £3,645 Special Responsibility Allowances unless the Councillor already receives a higher SRA for another appointment.

Any implications for Special Responsibility Allowance would need to be considered by members and if agreed, considered by the Independent Remuneration Panel.
Delete ref to full Council

RECOMMENDATION 3: That each LAC have a Chair and one Vice-Chair, noting that if agreed, any implications for Special Responsibility Allowances would need to be considered by the Independent Remuneration Panel .

4.4 Attendance by officers

It was suggested that often, significant numbers of officers attend the LAC meetings in the off chance that they may be asked a question, and this was considered an inefficient use of resources, it incurred extra travel which was contrary to the Climate Change Emergency designation and some venues have limited capacity. Meetings however need to be adequately supported and specialist questions responded to. The virtual meetings had

allowed more officers to take part or be called on when needed to provide advice. This may not always be possible once meetings return to being held in person in various venues. However, contact could be made via mobile phone or message.

RECOMMENDATION 4: where appropriate, specialist officers keep the meeting durations free of other commitments and be available to respond via zoom, email/message to support those officers present. However, where a specific specialist subject or question is expected, such as a highway issue on a planning application, then the relevant officer(s) would attend the meeting. Chairs could request a certain appropriate officer to be present and this would be discussed at the pre-meeting.

4.5 Refreshments

Currently, tea, coffee and biscuits are provided at LAC meetings. This is funded by the Democratic Services budget and staff from Democratic Services transport and arrange the refreshments and wash up afterwards. Again, this is not considered to be an efficient use of resources, both staff and cost.

RECOMMENDATION 5: that refreshments no longer be provided at LAC / LAC Planning meetings.

4.6 Encouraging Increased Public Involvement

The Group discussed ways of increasing involvement of public and Town and Parish Councils and other organisations either to update on local issues or discuss issues affecting their particular area. It was noted that members of the public only attended LACs when there were contentious planning applications or issues on the agenda and more needed to be done to attract communities to become more involved.

Members considered whether an allocated budget would encourage more involvement in local schemes. Issues with the application process for Community Chest applications was highlighted with varying numbers of applications being received in different areas (dealt with elsewhere).

Consideration was given to co-opting representatives of local bodies or groups onto the LACs or issuing targeted invitations to meetings depending on issues to be discussed. The Group did however feel it would be beneficial for Town and Parish Councils to be contacted prior to the meeting for any local issues or questions (through the Chair) to be asked. It was also agreed that locality officers were well placed to suggest issues of concern or for discussion in their areas.

Members unanimously agreed that a 'Public Question Time' similar to that at Council be introduced. Questions would be requested in advance in order for the correct person to attend to answer or for a response to be prepared. Supplementary questions would be allowed, recognising that a written response may be required. The questions would be time limited and subject to agreement of the Chair as to their suitability. The session would be carefully managed.

Regarding Council services outwith Local Services, the Group felt that information sessions/ presentations from other services would help public have a greater understanding of how the Council works. This could be linked to one of the open training sessions.

The LAC is also considered an appropriate vehicle at which to discuss amendments to specific decision-making systems, and the public guidance to be made available to support their introduction. This was felt to also be a key opportunity to discuss new complaint/service request systems and to provide overview reporting on a quarterly basis.

RECOMMENDATION 6:

6.1 Representatives of local bodies, Partners and other organisations be invited as and when appropriate.

6.2 The Town and Parish Councils be made aware of the timetable of meetings and invited to submit issues for discussion or questions to the Chair for consideration, with emphasis on receiving the questions in advance.

6.3 A time limited Public Question time be introduced with clear procedures to follow.

4.7. Service Requests

Members expressed concern at the lack of response and information regarding requests and submitted schemes.

Local Services for example, receive a very large volume of service requests for various areas of the service. These are not always closed off or the resident/Town and Parish Councils or local member informed of progress or outcome. The Group agreed that it would be useful if a revised online system would identify where requests were in the system and inform all parties of the outcome of their request by use of a standard pro-forma report.

Members discussed whether there was a decision-making role for the LACs in considering service requests (subject to legislation and any technical evidence/officer advice). There could be incidents where a scheme may not be regarded as high priority from an operational perspective, but the LAC may concur that a specific request should be regarded as a priority. The LAC would make any such decision in the knowledge that other schemes may need to receive a consequential lower priority as a result.

The Group also felt that the LTP process was somewhat prolonged and criteria for decisions sometimes unclear. A revised system would not be a 'free for all' but a structured, strategic approach which clearly demonstrated those requests accepted, dealing with any urgent requests and those deemed unjustified, giving the criteria and reasons behind the decision. There was also a need to consider the financial viability of proposals and budgetary implications and how this would feed into the Capital Programme. Expectations had to be managed.

Members felt the LACs, as well as local members had a role to play in informing the LTP and decisions affecting their area, and this may increase public interest and participation.

Further, there needed to be collaboration and balance between ward members regarding schemes in their areas. An example was given of double yellow lines or resident parking displacing the problem to other streets. The LAC could consider the wider implications for their area, whilst taking account of professional advice.

It was agreed that the website could give much more information about relevant criteria, legislation and guidance which may reduce the number of service requests and queries from the public and Members. Case studies and worked examples on the website would give useful information.

It was also agreed that a monthly update of service requests be produced and easily accessed and that the Director of Planning and Local Services, Chair and Vice Chair of the LACs decide which schemes are to be referred to Committee and which can be decided by delegation.

RECOMMENDATION 7 that:

- (i) ***An online tracker and case closure system be devised which identifies prioritisation criteria and informs members and the public of:***
- ***Progress of the approved schemes within the system***
 - ***Urgent items agreed to be progressed***
 - ***Scheme requests which will not be supported and reasons why.***
- (ii) ***A factual report be prepared for consideration and seeking approval to the Director of Planning and Local Services, Chair and Vice Chair of the LACs to decide which schemes are to be referred to Committee and which can be decided by delegation with clear criteria and justification.***
- (iii) ***A programme of training be provided to all Local Area Councils in due course. Initially, identified subjects to include the evaluation of highway safety schemes (including speed controls) and highway design in relation to new developments.***

4.8 Local Events:

Members discussed the lack of contact with local members about events in their areas and several examples were given where residents had asked for information or objected to certain events about which the local member or Town and Parish Councils had no prior knowledge. There was no requirement on the SAG form to do so as neither local Members nor Town and Parish Councils were listed as consultative bodies. However, it was felt both courteous and essential that this be addressed urgently. It was suggested that the requirement be included in the Town and Parish Charter as part of the ongoing review. The Charter is reviewed as is custom at the start of each Administration and is currently being updated.

RECOMMENDATION 8: that the Charter reflects any changes to LACS.

4.9. Budgets

Members accepted that no new budget provision would be supported but discussed whether the current Community Chest and Member Small Scheme budgets could be administered differently to allow more flexibility. The Group were informed of the difference between the two schemes and considered a detailed briefing note providing information about the current operation, communication and promotion and application process of the Community Chest Scheme.

It was reported that the scheme worked better in some areas than others. The Community Chest Scheme worked well in the Tynedale area with a 5 Member Panel, and it was suggested this should remain.

In general terms the two schemes co-exist. However, in essence the schemes are seeking to achieve two different things with one in the main supporting the Voluntary and Community sector (Community Chest) and MLIS focussing mainly on Local Services schemes and issues. It was suggested that the MLIS lower limit of £2,000 could prevent a number of smaller groups benefiting from the scheme if they wished to apply for a smaller amount.

There is scope for both to contribute to the same outcome, although this did not happen very often and was highlighted as a potential issue in the 2018 audit. Where MLIS is mentioned in a Community Chest application, Members were reminded about excessive generosity from the Council and criticism of 'double funding'.

It was suggested that the only way the two schemes could work together more effectively is if they had a single overview and line management, however this would be difficult because of their orientation: one is very VCS and the other very Local Services and could have a major impact on capacity and resourcing.

It is essential that Members were aware of the Corporate Priorities on an annual basis and consider local priorities accordingly.

RECOMMENDATION 9 that

(i) The following changes to the Community Chest Scheme be considered:

- ***Discretion around 75% intervention rate and 5k upper limit for each LAC***
- ***Discretion to fund revenue, including staff costs, within defined limits, e.g., no more than 50%, must be additional cost and not a running cost, and within the 12-month limit.***
- ***Remove Help For You from the Scheme - since the change to organisations applying on behalf of a young person, interest has dropped off almost to zero.***
- ***No longer offer a certificate for every grant awarded and instead recognise a handful of exceptional projects in each area and build comms around them.***
- ***The application form be simplified and an online version be re-introduced.***

- **FAQ added to Website**
- **Include member responsibility to promote the scheme in the terms of reference for the LACs. Chair of each grant panel to report back to the LAC following each round. Short annual report for each LAC replacing an annual report for the whole scheme.**

(ii) Members be given a clear understanding of the criteria and limits of the two schemes.

(iii) Members receive regular reports of those benefitting from funding.

(iv) Any provisions introduced under Recommendation 9 (I-III) shall be reviewed 12 months after a 12-month period.

5. LAC Planning meetings

Discussions were held with Planning Chairs/Vice Chairs where several issues were raised.

5.1 Frequency/coverage of meetings

The LACs, when meeting as area planning councils are also mixed, with some areas considering very few applications.

Planning Applications Considered

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Ashington/Blyth	14	7	10	1
Castle Morpeth	34	32	38	12
Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley	10	10	5	0
North Northumberland	57	68	34	11
Tynedale	22	36	40	10

Members agreed that the LACs are an important part of transparent democracy in the planning process, but they should not be used for matters that are uncontroversial or raise no wider issues. Northumberland has the largest geographic area of any County and has the most planning committees. This process is transparent and is useful for addressing any subsequent LGO complaints. Some members suggested that the delegation scheme should allow more applications to be determined locally.

In order to aid the delivery of work programmes/performance and to allow the new Local Plan to guide the majority of decisions,

RECOMMENDATION 10:

(i) The current “Delegated Reports” approach continue after the pandemic. This will be circulated for Chairs and/or Vice Chairs along with Chief Planner (or deputy) for agreement as to whether the application will be delegated, or committee based.

(ii) Additional guidance to be provided to all members on suitable grounds for “calling in” applications

5.2 Timescale/duration of meetings

As reported earlier, often LAC Planning meetings become protracted, although the opposite could also be true causing confusion to the public.

RECOMMENDATION 11.1: The agenda be limited to three substantive applications per meeting unless the Chair decides otherwise. This would allow both single-item sessions for matters of high public interest and a larger number of minor schemes to be considered.

RECOMMENDATION 11.2: All Planning LAC meetings will be streamed on the County Council Youtube Channel. Recordings will be retained for public viewing for a period of two weeks

5.3 “No Business” Cancellations

Some Planning LAC meetings have been cancelled due to lack of suitable applications, and it was suggested that the time could be used beneficially such as for training sessions. Members felt they would benefit from a range of information session, for example planning appeals won and lost and the criteria / reasons leading to the decision; any changes to legislation or guidance or any other training aimed at improving their knowledge and experience.

RECOMMENDATION 12: The cancellation of meetings to be agreed with the Chair/Vice Chair which will allow consideration of possible alternate uses for the time slot such as training.

5.4 Public Speaking

Currently, the planning meeting arrangements allow 5 minutes for the supporters, 5 minutes for the objectors and 5 minutes for the local member to speak but at the Chair’s discretion agreed in advance, more than 5 minutes can be allowed for public speaking. It was agreed that this needed to be caveated that this was not an opportunity for the same issue to be raised again or concerns to be duplicated. Also, this time needed to be subject to an overall limit, and then only for the more **significant applications**. A similar extension would be offered to all parties in those circumstances.

RECOMMENDATION 13: that, at the Chair’s discretion be limited to 10 minutes total objector/supporter speaking, and then for only the most significant or locally controversial applications. No individual will receive more than 5 minutes speaking time. Any arrangement for an extension of the normal five-minute limit to be 24 hours agreed in advance of the meeting, and the specific arrangements introduced before the specific application is presented by officers.

5.5 Questions to Speakers/Applicant from members

Members agreed that sometimes a simple question can clarify an issue. This should not be an invite to “restate opposition” but to clarify the understanding of the Committee. This should always be through the Chair and used only where there is a clear need to clarify

a **precise** question. This can sometimes avoid a refusal if the applicant can provide simple information to clarify an issue or confirm they would accept a new condition.

RECOMMENDATION 14: that questions (not statements) from Members to speakers and/or applicants in order to clarify a precise point be allowed, through the Chair who must agree to such questions. This would be limited to no more than two minutes for the question and answer.

5.6 Enforcement and use of conditions

The Committee requested more direct involvement and training on enforcement matters.

RECOMMENDATION 15: That once the local Plan is adopted, direct training on Enforcement and Use of Conditions to initially be provided via the full review of the Northumberland Local Enforcement Strategy, and this will include new decision-making systems for expediency and action triggers.

5.7 S106 agreements and developer contributions

Members requested that the future planning reports have a clearly delineated section on developer contributions and apportionments. This was regarded as being particularly significant in terms of the type/size and tenure of affordable housing secured by s106. This element can be introduced when the Local Plan is adopted as a new system will need to be implemented

RECOMMENDATION 16 that once the Local Plan is adopted,

(i) future planning reports have a clearly delineated section on developer contributions and apportionments.

(ii) training be provided on this issue.

5.8 Training

Planning legislation and guidance is faced with almost continual change/turmoil, and there will be a particularly intensive period triggered by changes introduced by the new NPPF (with its emphasis on significantly improving design), the new Local Plan, the "First Homes" agenda, biodiversity net gain, climate change legislation and the looming Planning White Paper proposals. It was essential that Members were kept up to date with such changes.

RECOMMENDATION 17:

(i) Once per quarter, each LAC receive a short update/training session. This would supplement rather than replace the need for wider and mandatory training sessions and could be open to the public and Parish and Town Councils depending on the subject.

(ii) Further training on "management" of planning committees, including member tactics, discretion and options (such as requesting a deferral) can be delivered in closed sessions which could be delivered virtually to reduce costs.

5.9 Rights of Way applications

Currently, there is a Local Area Council – North Northumberland (Right of Way) Sub-Committee meeting bi-monthly, although on separate days to the LACs.

RECOMMENDATION 18: RoW applications to be considered at Planning meetings, except for the North Northumberland who will continue with their current RoW Sub-Committee due to the level of applications in that area.

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Appointments to Committees and Working Groups

5 January 2022

SECTION A – COMMITTEES

1. Appointments Committee - School Governors and Academies

Membership and Terms of Reference

4 Members (2:1:1 Min Gp place) **No change needed**

Quorum – 2

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
R. Dodd	S. Dickinson		J. Reid		
B. Flux					

2. Audit Committee

Membership and Terms of Reference

8 members was (4:3:1)

Change needed to 4:3:1 Ind Gp (already held by Ind Gp)

Quorum – 3 (must be at be at least 2 opposition members)

Chair: S. Watson

Vice Chair: D. Towns

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
T. Cessford	M. Murphy	C. Taylor			
P. Jackson	A. Scott				
N. Oliver	A. Wallace				
D. Towns					

Also:

2 Independent Members (non-voting) – P. Topping and S. Watson

3. Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Membership and Terms of Reference

10 Members was (4:3:1:1:1) (1 Con place to Ind)

Change needed to 5:3:1 Ind Gp, 1 LD

Quorum – 3

Chair: J. Reid

Vice Chair: M. Mather

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
G. Castle	E. Cartie	S. Bridgett	J. Reid	N. Morphet	
R. Dodd	B. Gallacher				
C. Hardy	M. Richardson				
M. Mather					

4. Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Membership and Terms of Reference

10 Members was (5:3:1:0:1)(Min Gp place to Ind member)

Change needed to 5:3:1 Ind Gp, 1 LD

Quorum – 3

Chair: D. Bawn

Vice Chair: L. Dunn

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
D. Bawn	L. Dunn	C. Taylor			M. Robinson
J. Beynon	M. Murphy				
P. Ezhilchelvan	A. Wallace				
P. Jackson					
N. Oliver					

5. County Emergency Committee

Membership and Terms of Reference

8 Members was (4:3:1)

Change needed to 4:3:1 Ind Gp

Quorum – 3

Chair: C. Horncastle

Vice Chair: G. Sanderson

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
B. Flux	S. Dickinson		A. Sharp		
C. Horncastle	L. Grimshaw				
G. Sanderson	E. Simpson				
R. Wearmouth					

6. Dismissal Advisory Committee

Membership and Terms of Reference

8 Members was (4:3:1)

No change needed 4:3:1 Ind Gp

Quorum – 3

Chair: G. Sanderson

Vice Chair: R. Wearmouth

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
B. Flux	S. Dickinson	S. Bridgett			
G. Renner Thompson	M. Purvis				
G. Sanderson	E. Simpson				
R. Wearmouth					

Also:

The Council's Independent Person – K. Milner

7. Disputes Panel - Fire and Rescue Service

Membership and Terms of Reference

8 members was (4:3:1) (Including two Administration members who have been trained in disputes procedures)

Change needed to 4:3:1 Ind Gp

Quorum – 3

Chair: G. Sanderson

Vice Chair: B. Flux

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
D. Carr	M. Murphy		J. Reid		
B. Flux	M. Purvis				
G. Sanderson	A. Wallace				
R. Wearmouth					

8. Employment (Appeals) Committee

Standing Chair: D. Towns

Membership and Terms of Reference

5 members to be drawn from a pool of 20 trained members (to include 4 Cabinet Members) (3:2)

Change needed to 2:2:1 Min Gp place

Members must be trained to be able to participate fully in the Staff Committee

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
D. Bawn	L. Dunn				
J. Beynon	M. Purvis				
T. Cessford	4 TBC				
D. Ferguson					
G. Renner Thompson					
J. Riddle					
G. Sanderson					
C. Seymour					
D. Towns					
R. Wearmouth					

9. Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Membership and Terms of Reference

19 Members

10 County Councillors was (6:3:1) (1 Min Gp place to Cons)

Change needed to 5:3:1 Ind Gp, 1 LD

Quorum - 5

Chair: W. Daley

Vice Chair: R. Dodd

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
D. Carr	C. Ball	C. Taylor			
W. Daley	L. Dunn				
R. Dodd	A. Scott				
C. Dunbar					
M. Swinburn					

T. Thorne					
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Also:

2 Parent Governors (voting) – two vacancies

3 Church Representatives (voting) – A. Hodgson, P Rickeard, Rev D Lennox

4 Teacher Union Representatives (non-voting) – J Sanderson, L Houghton, two vacancies

(all subject to satisfactory DBS clearance)

10. Fostering Panel

Membership and Terms of Reference

The membership is drawn from a pool of independent members, agency representatives, Social Workers and includes one County Councillor.

(1 County Councillor) T. Cessford

No change needed

Quorum: 5 (to include Chairman or Vice Chairman, 1 Social Worker and 3 Independent Members)

11. Governing Body of Netherton Park

Membership and Terms of Reference

*The Netherton Park Instrument of Management Order 1973 stipulates that the Governing Body shall consist of 12 persons, comprising eight local authority managers and four foundation managers **

** All Managers should not be older than 70 years of age*

4 members was (2:2)(1 Ind Gp to Lab)

Change needed to 2:1: 1 Min Gp place

Quorum: one third of the total number of managers i.e. 4, provided that at least one Governor shall be a Foundation Manager (Trustee) and at least one shall be a Local Authority Manager (Councillor).

Chair: L. Darwin

Vice Chair: A Trustee Manager

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
L. Darwin	K. Nisbet				
G. Sanderson	M. Richardson				

12. Health and Well-being Board

Membership and Terms of Reference

21 members

No change needed

Chair: B. Flux

Vice Chair: Board representative

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
B. Flux	E. Simpson				
W. Pattison					
G. Renner Thompson					
G. Sanderson					
J. Watson					

NCC Business Chair

Council Leader

Portfolio Holder Adult wellbeing and health

Portfolio Holder Children's Services

Portfolio Holder Healthy Lives

Labour representative

Executive Director Children's Services and Education

Executive Director of Commercial, Economy and Regeneration

Director of Public Health

NHS Northumberland CCG (x2 representatives)

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (x1 rep)

Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (x1 rep)

Newcastle Upon Tyne NHS Foundation Trust (x1 rep)

North East Ambulance Service (to be invited) (x1 rep)

NHS England (x1 rep)

Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Organisations (x1 rep)

Healthwatch (x1 rep)

Local Medical Committee (x1 rep)

Local Pharmaceutical Committee (x1 rep)

Children's and Adults Safeguarding Board (x1 rep)

13. Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Membership and Terms of Reference

10 Members was (5:3:1:1)

No change needed 5:3:1 Ind Gp, 1 LD

Quorum

Chair: V. Jones

Vice Chair: K. Nisbet

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
R. Dodd	L. Bowman	G. Hill	I. Hunter		
D. Ferguson	K. Nisbet				
C. Hardy	R. Wilczek				
C. Humphrey					
V. Jones					

14. Joint Consultative Committee

5 Members of the County Council

Membership is being looked at separately following last Council meeting

Employees of the County Council to be appointed by trade unions and professional associations.

Quorum: Two members from the Employers' side and three members from the Employees' side

Chair: P. Scott

Vice Chair: TU representative

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
B. Flux					
G. Renner Thompson					
G. Sanderson					
P. Scott					
R. Wearmouth					

15. Licensing Committee

Membership and Terms of Reference

15 Members was (7:5:1:1:1) (One Con place to Ind)

(same membership and chair/ vice chair as Licensing and Regulatory Committee)

Change needed to 7:5:1 Ind Gp, 1 LD, 1 Min Gp

Quorum - 4

Chair: I. Hutchinson

Vice Chair: C. Humphrey

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
J. Beynon	B. Gallacher	C. Taylor	A. Sharp		S. Lee

T. Cessford	J. Foster				
D. Ferguson	K. Nisbet				
C. Hardy	K. Parry				
C. Humphrey	A.Wallace				
I. Hutchinson					
C. Seymour					

16. Licensing and Regulatory Committee

Membership and Terms of Reference

15 Members was (7:5:1:1:1) (One Con place to Ind)

(same membership and chair/vice chair as Licensing Committee)

Change needed to 7:5:1 Ind Gp, 1 LD, 1 Min Gp

Quorum – 4

Chair: I. Hutchinson

Vice Chair: C. Humphrey

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
J. Beynon	B. Gallacher	C. Taylor	A. Sharp		S. Lee
T. Cessford	J. Foster				
D. Ferguson	K. Nisbet				
C. Hardy	K. Parry				
C. Humphrey	A. Wallace				
I. Hutchinson					
C. Seymour					

Local Area Councils

<p style="text-align: center;">NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND (13) Chair: G. Castle Vice Chair: S. Bridgett Vice Chair (Planning):C. Hardy</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">TYNEDALE (13) Chair: T. Cessford Vice Chair: TBC Vice Chair (Planning):A. Scott</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CASTLE MORPETH (13) Chair: J. Beynon Vice Chair: D. Towns Vice Chair (Planning): J. Foster</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CRAMLINGTON, BEDLINGTON and SEATON VALLEY(12) Chair: M. Swinburn Vice Chair: S. Lee Vice Chair (Planning): R. Wilczek</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ASHINGTON AND BLYTH (16) Chair: L. Grimshaw Vice Chair: D. Carr Vice Chair (Planning): B. Gallacher</p>
<p>● Alnwick (1) ● Alnwick (1) ● Amble ● Amble West with Warkworth ● Bamburgh ● Berwick East ● Berwick North ● Berwick West with Ord ● Longhoughton ● Norham and Islandshires ● Rothbury ● Shilbottle ● Wooler</p>	<p>● Bellingham ● Bywell ● Corbridge ● Haltwhistle ● Haydon and Hadrian ● Hexham Central with Acomb ● Hexham East ● Hexham West ● Humshaugh ● Prudhoe North ● Prudhoe South ● South Tynedale ● Stocksfield with Broomhaugh</p>	<p>● Choppington ● Druridge Bay ● Longhorsley ● Lynemouth ● Morpeth Kirkhill ● Morpeth North ● Morpeth Stobhill ● Pegswood ● Ponteland East and Stannington ● Ponteland North ● Ponteland South with Heddon ● Ponteland West ● Stakeford</p>	<p>● Bedlington Central ● Bedlington East ● Bedlington West ● Cramlington East ● Cramlington Eastfield ● Cramlington North ● Cramlington South East ● Cramlington Village ● Cramlington West ● Hartley ● Holywell ● Seghill with Seaton Delaval</p>	<p>● Ashington Central ● Bothal ● College ● Cowpen ● Croft ● Haydon ● Hirst ● Isabella ● Kitty Brewster ● Newbiggin Central and East ● Newsham ● Plessey ● Seaton with Newbiggin West ● Sleekburn ● South Blyth ● Wensleydale</p>
<p>Conservative – 8 Green - 1 Labour - 1 Independent Gp - 2 Liberal Democrat - 1</p>	<p>Conservative – 6 Green - 1 Labour – 2 Independent Gp - 2 Liberal Democrat – 2</p>	<p>Conservative - 9 Labour – 4</p>	<p>Conservative - 7 Labour - 2 Independent Gp - 2 Independent – 1</p>	<p>Conservative - 3 Labour – 12 Liberal Democrat - 1</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">59,523</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">59,611</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">61,073</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">59,093</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">75,963</p>

Petitions Committee

Membership and Terms of Reference

9 members was (5:3:1 Ind Gp place to LD)

Change needed to 4:3:1 Ind Gp, 1 LD

Quorum – 2

Chair: R. Dodd

Vice Chair: B. Flux

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
R. Dodd	C. Ball		J. Reid		
T. Cessford	B. Gallacher				
B. Flux	A. Wallace				
M. Swinburn					
R. Wearmouth					

17. Schools' Forum

Membership and Terms of Reference

No change needed

2 elected members (in an observer capacity):-

- (1) an elected member of the authority who has primary responsibility for children's services or education in the authority; and
- (2) an elected member of the authority who has primary responsibility for the resources of the authority.

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
G. Renner Thompson					
R. Wearmouth					

(In addition, there are 30 members comprising Schools members and Non-Schools members).

18. Staff and Appointments Committee

Membership and Terms of Reference

9 members was (5:3:1)

Change needed to 4:3:1 Ind Gp, 1 LD

Quorum – 3

Chair: G. Sanderson

Vice Chair: R. Wearmouth

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
B. Flux	S. Dickinson	D. Kennedy			
G. Renner Thompson	M. Purvis				
G. Sanderson	E. Simpson				
J. Watson					
R. Wearmouth					

Group Leaders are authorised to determine the size and composition of the Committee when making appointments, having regard to the post(s) being filled.

With the agreement of the Group Leaders, a Deputy Chief Officer appointment may be determined by a Chief Officer.

19. Standards Committee

Membership and Terms of Reference

Members: 9 Councillors (5:3:1) and 3 Parish Council representatives (Only one member of the Committee can be a member of the Cabinet).

Change needed to 4:3:1 Ind Gp, 1 LD

Independent Person – Mrs K. Milner

Quorum - 4

Chair: Mr J. Jackson

Vice Chair: B. Flux

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
T. Cessford	L. Dunn	S. Bridgett			
B. Flux	L. Grimshaw				
C. Seymour	A. Wallace				
G. Stewart					

D. Towns					
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20. Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Membership and Terms of Reference

4 members

(2:1:1 Min Gp place) **No change needed**

Quorum: ¼ of total number of members - 6

Chair: G. Renner Thompson

Vice Chair: A religious representative

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
G. Renner Thompson	L. Bowman			N. Morphet	
T. Thorne					

(In addition, there are 19 other members who have an education background and an interest in religious education).

21. Strategic Planning Committee

Membership and Terms of Reference

16 members was (7:5:1:1:1:1) (1 Con place to Ind)

Change needed to 8:5:1 Ind Gp 1 LD, 1 Min Gp

Quorum - 4

Chair: T. Thorne

Vice Chair: M. Robinson

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
L. Darwin	C. Ball	G. Hill	J. Reid	M. Swinbank	M. Robinson
R. Dodd	J. Foster				
B. Flux	J. Lang				
I. Hutchinson	A. Wallace				
G. Renner Thompson	A. Watson				
G. Stewart					
T. Thorne					

SECTION B – WORKING/LIAISON GROUPS

1. Climate Change Working Group

Membership and Terms of Reference

9 members: was (4:3:1:1 Con place to GP)

Change needed to 4:3:1 Ind Gp, 1 LD

Chair: G. Sanderson

Vice Chair: N. Morphet

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
C. Dunbar	B. Gallacher	S. Bridgett		N. Morphet	
C. Hardy	M. Murphy				
G. Sanderson	H. Waddell				
R. Wearmouth					

2. Constitution Working Group

Membership and Terms of Reference

9 members: (5:3:1)

Change needed to 4:3:1 Ind Gp, 1 LD

Chair: B. Flux

Vice Chair: R. Wearmouth

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
D. Bawn	S. Dickinson	G. Hill			
R. Dodd	E. Simpson				
B. Flux	A. Watson				
N. Oliver					
R. Wearmouth					

3. Food Poverty Working Group

Membership and Terms of Reference

9 members: (5:3:1)

Change needed to 4:3:1 Ind Gp, 1 LD

Chair: W. Pattison

Vice Chair: W. Daley

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
W. Daley	L. Grimshaw	D.Kennedy			
C. Dunbar	K. Nisbet				
V. Jones	E. Simpson				
W. Pattison					
G. Renner Thompson					

4. Local Area Councils' Chairs Briefing

Membership and Terms of Reference

Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Local Area Councils

No change needed

(Business Chair and Deputy Business Chair invited to attend)

*Portfolio holder attends in voting capacity when considering countywide Community Chest applications.

Chair: G. Castle

Vice-Chair:

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
G. Castle	A. Scott	S. Bridgett			S. Lee
C. Hardy	J. Foster				
T. Cessford	R. Wilczek				
One TBC	L. Grimshaw				
J. Beynon	B. Gallacher				
D. Towns					
M. Swinburn					
D. Carr					

6. Local Plan Working Group

Membership and Terms of Reference

6 Members (3:2:1)

Change needed to 3:2:1 Ind Gp

Chair: L. Darwin

Vice Chair: A. Wallace

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
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L. Darwin	L. Grimshaw			M. Swinbank	
I. Hutchinson	A. Wallace				
T. Thorne					

7. Member Services Working Group

Membership and Terms of Reference

9 Members (5:3:1)

Change needed to 4:3:1 Ind Gp, 1 LD

Chair: A. Sharp

Vice Chair: P. Ezhilchelvan

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
P. Ezhilchelvan	S. Dickinson		A. Sharp		
B. Flux	E. Simpson				
V. Jones	A. Watson				
C. Seymour					
P. Scott					

8. Northumberland Cycling and Walking Board

Membership and Terms of Reference

10 members

2 Elected members

No change needed

Chair: J Riddle

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
J Riddle				N. Morphet	

9. Risk Appraisal Panel

Membership

No change needed

Business Chair of the Council (**Chair**)

Leader of the Council (**Vice-Chair**)

Deputy Leader of the Council

Leaders of the Opposition Groups

Chief Executive
 Monitoring Officer
 Executive Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer

Plus relevant Cabinet Member dependent upon the project under discussion.

10. Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting Group

Membership and Terms of Reference

9 members (5:3:1)

Change needed to 4:3:1 Ind Gp, 1 LD

Quorum - 2

Chair: R. Dodd

Vice Chair: C. Ball

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
W. Daley	C. Ball	C. Taylor			
R. Dodd	E. Cartie				
C. Dunbar	J. Foster				
G. Renner Thompson					
T. Thorne					

11. Town and Parish Council Liaison Working Group

4 Members (2:1:1 Min Gp place) No change needed

Chair: I. Hunter

Vice Chair: K. Parry

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
G. Castle	K. Parry		I. Hunter		
M. Mather					

12. VCS Liaison Group

Membership and Terms of Reference

9 Members (5:3:1)

Change needed to 4:3:1 Ind Gp, 1 LD

Chair: D. Ferguson

Vice Chair: V. Jones

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
D. Ferguson	L. Bowman	D. Kennedy			
V. Jones	L. Dunn				
C. Humphrey	M. Purvis				
W. Pattison					
C. Seymour					

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Northumberland County Council

REPORT TO COUNTY COUNCIL

5 January 2022

Revised Executive Management Structure

Report of the Head of Paid Service and Leader of the Council

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to the implementation of the revised executive arrangements for Council.

Council Members were advised in September 2021 that Penna had been selected to support a review of the current executive and senior management arrangements. The first stage of the review covering the executive structure has been completed and the suggested Tier 1 structure is appended to this report (Appendices 1 and 2). The report also seeks approval to recruit to the Corporate Director Assurance/Statutory Monitoring Officer role on a permanent basis.

The second stage of the review is ongoing covering changes to Tier 2 and Tier 3 of the Council's management structures (including Director, Service Director and Heads of Service roles). The outcomes of the Tier 2 and 3 reviews will be reported through due Council process once completed.

1. Recommendations

To agree the following recommendations:

- 1.1 Agree the revised Tier 1 executive structure as detailed in Appendix 1, the Corporate Director Assurance/Statutory Monitoring Officer role on a permanent basis, and the Director role change in the People Directorate as Appendix 2 to this report.
- 1.2 Agree the changes to the underpinning People Directorate as set out in Appendix 2 of this report including the establishment of the Director of Adult Services (DAS) role. The Executive Director of People will continue to hold the formal role of Director of Children's Services (DCS). The statutory role of the Director of Adult Services, (DAS) is established at Band 16/17 and is subject to consultation under Tier 2. The current Executive Director Children's and Adult Services has been consulted about these changes.
- 1.3 Agree that the role of Corporate Director Assurance/Monitoring Officer is established at Band 16/17. This role includes the Statutory Monitoring Officer duties. The role will be externally recruited to on a permanent basis.
- 1.4 Agree that the three Executive Director roles as below are established Band 17/18. This equates to a reduction in one whole time equivalent executive role i.e. the vacant Executive Director HR/OD role. The work leads set out in Appendix 1 under each of the executive roles are indicative and subject to change on review by the Chief Executive in line with business need. The three roles will be subject to formal recruitment processes.
 - Executive Director Corporate Resources (Section 151 Officer)
 - Executive Director Communities
 - Executive Director Place Delivery
- 1.5 Agree the remuneration for all the identified roles as detailed above. The salaries for these posts are set at over £100,000 and need the formal approval of the full Council in line with the Council's Pay Policy Statement which states the following:

“Any appointment within the Council that attracts a salary package of £100,000 or more will be considered by Full Council before it is advertised. Members will be given the opportunity to vote on whether they agree with proceeding with the recruitment for the post. Salary package in this respect includes salary and any other fees, allowances, bonuses and benefits in kind that the post holder would routinely be entitled

to. This does not include the employers' pension contributions should the post holder choose to join a pension scheme.”

- 1.6 Authorise the Council's Monitoring Officer to make the necessary amendments to the Constitution to reflect the changes proposed to the Executive Management Structure set out in this report. The delegation will be exercised in consultation with the Council's Constitution Working Group.

2. Links to the Corporate Plan

In line with Section 4 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989, Northumberland County Council must ensure that it fulfils its duty to designate one of its officers as its Head of Paid Service.

The Head of Paid Service is required to report to the Council as appropriate with regard to the way in which the overall discharge by the Council of its different functions is coordinated, the number and grades of staff required for the discharge of these functions, the way in which these people are organised and managed, and the way in which they are appointed.

This report ensures that the Council is managed and governed in line with legislation and the structure of accountability is clearly set out transparently.

The revised proposed structure will align groups of services which will assist the management team to strengthen and focus oversight in specific service areas including commercial services, business development, and a renewed emphasis on tackling health inequalities.

The revised proposed service portfolios seek to improve strategic oversight of important programmes including climate change, service reviews and efficiency plans, and a strategic review of the Council's property and asset portfolios.

3. Background

- 3.1 Following a request by the Leader of the Council the Chief Executive is overseeing an externally supported review of the executive and senior management structures of the Council. Council was advised in September 2021 that Penna had been commissioned to support the Chief Executive with the review. Penna have undertaken forty interviews including all Cabinet Members, the opposition group

Leaders, and a number of senior staff. These interviews were undertaken on a confidential basis and have helped to shape the revised structure.

- 3.2 Penna have shared the findings relating to the Tier 1 roles and this report sets out a Tier structure which will enable the Council to move forward with recruitment to key roles to ensure stability and permanence at a senior level.
- 3.3 The review of Tier 2 and Tier 3 including Director, Service Director and Heads of Service roles, is ongoing and will be subject to a separate report which will go forward through the relevant Council processes when this ongoing work is completed by the Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service, supported by Penna.
- 3.4 The Council is required to appoint a Head of Paid Service in line with Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The incumbent Chief Executive, Daljit Lally, fulfils this role.
- 3.5 The new role of Executive Director People will encompass the statutory role of Director of Children's Services (DCS). A new statutory role of Director of Adult Services (DAS) will be created which will report into the Executive Director of People. This role of Executive Director People replaces the current Executive Director of Children's and Adult Services and will be filled by Cath McEvoy-Carr who has been formally consulted on the changes and has raised no concerns/issues.
- 3.6 The role of the Director of Adult Services (Statutory Director of Adult Services (DAS)) is established at Band 16/17 and will be subject to tier 2 consultation.
- 3.7 The Chief Fire Officer role remains as established and the incumbent Paul Hedley fulfils this role.
- 3.8 The role of Corporate Director Assurance/Monitoring Officer is established at Band 16/17. This role includes the Statutory Monitoring Officer duties. This role will be recruited to on a permanent basis
- 3.9 Northumberland County Council has recently adopted a revised interim executive management structure, and this will remain in place until all new appointments are made. Other than the roles

outlined within this report no further consultation is required under the Tier 1 Executive Structure Review.

3.10 The three new Executive Director roles as below are established at Band 17/18. This equates to a reduction in one whole time equivalent executive role i.e. the vacant Executive Director HR/OD role. The three roles will be subject to job evaluation and recruitment processes.

- Executive Director Corporate Resources (Section 151 Officer)
- Executive Director Communities
- Executive Director Place Delivery

3.11 The Chief Executive has consulted the Leader of the Council and Cabinet members and members of the Council's Staffing and Appointments committee in developing these proposals for an Executive Management Team, which can provide long-term stability and support to Northumberland County Council, to achieve its strategic priorities.

3.12 There was a history of some shared posts with Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, and these are based on historical integrated health and social care arrangements which operated under a partnership agreement. Most of these roles no longer exist following changes to those partnership arrangements.

3.13 Note that the roles of Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service and Chief Fire Officer remain as established and that the title of the Executive Director Children's and Adults Services will change to become the Executive Director People. All three incumbent officers remain in post as full-time employees.

3.14 The remaining joint role of the Director of Transformation and Consultancy will be reviewed as part of the review of Tier 2/3 senior management roles and any changes will be subject to formal consultation.

3.15 The proposed Tier 1 Structure will provide a contribution towards the management savings required from the 2022/23 budget, as will any savings identified from the Tier 2 and 3 review and the review of Tier 4 supervisory and management arrangements.

4 Issues for Consideration

- 4.1 Penna as part of its supporting work has undertaken a review of arrangements across a range of comparative local authorities. This has included a review of structures, salaries and responsibilities. The Chief Executive and Penna have shared the findings relating to the Tier 1 roles with the Cabinet and this report sets out a Tier 1 structure which will enable the Council to move forward with recruitment to key roles to ensure stability and permanence at a senior level.
- 4.2 The selection process for the Executive Director roles in section 1.4 of this report will include Members drawn from across the Council, and panels will be arranged subject to agreement to this report by full Council. Where appropriate the relevant recruitment and appointments will be carried out in accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules.
- 4.3 All additional roles are subject to evaluation through the Council's Job Evaluation (JE), as is the case for all County Council roles. In addition, market testing has been carried out by Penna based on current pay levels for existing senior officers in county and unitary roles. Based on that data, the bandings as set out are comparative and competitive salaries for the roles.

5 Proposed Job Descriptions and Gradings

The proposed job descriptions for the above roles have been drafted and evaluated using the Local Government Evaluation (LGE) job evaluation scheme. The grading of posts is as follows:

- Chief Executive: NJC Chief Executive
- Executive Director: NCC Band 17/18
- Director of Adult Services (DAS): NCC Band 16/17
- Corporate Director Assurance/Monitoring Officer NCC Band 16/17

All gradings for these posts will be published on the Council's website in line with the requirements of the Local Government Transparency Code (2015).

The salary bandings are as follows:

<u>2020/2021</u>		
<u>Scale Points</u>	<u>Pay</u>	<u>Pay Band</u>
64	92866	16
65	95681	16

66	98494	16
67	101308	16
68	111450	17
70	122595	17
72	133741	17
73	135077	17
77	146334	18
81	157602	18

6 Processes associated with Managing the Changes to the Executive Management Team Structure

All changes to the new Executive Management Team Structure will be managed in line with the Council's Management of Organisational Change Policy HRP-06-V1 and these new roles will be factored into that process. The relevant consultations have been undertaken under Tier 1.

7 Other Options Considered

Other options were considered specifically in relation to the creation of a DAS role. Such as

1. Do nothing – this option was discounted as this would not deliver any of the desired benefits including aligning groups of services to strengthen and focus oversight in specific service areas and of strategic programmes including climate change, service reviews and efficiency plans, property and asset portfolios.
2. The Exec Director People retaining the statutory DAS role within her current responsibilities – this option was discounted on the basis that additional capacity and focus is required in this area at a time when the service is experiencing a range of significant challenges.

Daljit Lally
Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service

Implications:

Policy: This policy is in line with Council policy. The Transparency Code will be amended as appropriate.

Finance and value for money: The posts will be recruited as described within the report. The Tier 1 Structure will provide a contribution towards the management savings required from the 2022/23 budget savings.

Legal: The Council has to ensure that it will follow relevant agreed workforce policies and also follow the Council's constitution in respect of recruitment and appointments. In particular the officers employment procedure rules

Procurement: Not applicable.

Human Resources: All contractual changes will be made accordingly and any permanent appointments made in due course will be subject to a formal appointment process in line with best practice.

Property: Not applicable.

Equalities: An Equality Impact Assessment has not been prepared for this change in establishment.

Risk Assessment: The risks within the paper are regarded as manageable if the proposed changes are made.

Crime and Disorder: Not applicable.

Customer Consideration: Strong leadership within the Executive Management Team will ensure improved services for the population of Northumberland.

Carbon Reduction: Not applicable.

Wards: The proposals are not related to any particular ward but cover the whole of Northumberland.

Background papers:

None.

Report sign off:

Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

Section 151 Officer	Jan Willis
Monitoring Offer	Suki Binjal
Human Resources	Leanne Furnell
Procurement	N/A
IT	N/A
Chief Executive:	Daljit Lally
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Glen Sanderson

Author and Contact Details

This report has been prepared by Daljit Lally, Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service.

E-mail: daljit.lally@northumberland.gov.uk

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**Corporate Director
Assurance
/Monitoring Officer**

Chief Fire Officer

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**Director
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**Executive Director
People**

**Executive Director
Communities**

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Adult &
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Social Care

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Customer Services
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Executive Director People

Director of Adult