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Northumberland County Council

Your ref:

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Tel direct: 01670 622610

Date: Thursday 26th August 2021

Dear Sir or Madam,

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **CORPORATE SERVICES AND ECONOMIC GROWTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** to be held in **Meeting Space, Block 1, Floor 2, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF** on **MONDAY, 06 September 2021 at 10.00 A.M.**

Yours faithfully

Daljit Lally
Chief Executive

To Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC members as follows:-

D Bawn (Chair), J Beynon, D Carr, L Dunn (Vice-Chair), P Jackson, M Murphy, N Oliver, A Wallace, C Taylor, M Robinson and W Ploszaj

Any member of the press or public may view the proceedings of this virtual meeting live on our YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/NorthumberlandTV>. Members of the press and public may tweet, blog etc during the live broadcast as they would be able to during a regular Committee meeting. However, the only participants in the virtual meeting will be the Councillors concerned and the officers advising the Committee.



Daljit Lally, Chief Executive
County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF
T: 0345 600 6400
www.northumberland.gov.uk



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
- 2)

Minutes of the meetings of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC held on 2nd August, as circulated, to be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

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.

NB Any member needing clarification must contact the Monitoring Officer at monitoringofficer@northumberland.gov.uk. Please refer to the guidance on disclosures at the rear of this Agenda letter.

4. FORWARD PLAN OF CABINET DECISIONS

(Pages 3
- 6)

To note the latest Forward Plan of key decisions. Any further changes made to the Forward Plan will be reported to the Committee. (Schedule enclosed as **Appendix A**).

5. NORTHUMBERLAND LINE

(Pages 7
- 16)

To provide an update on progress on the Northumberland Line project in the last 12 months including the achievement of several significant milestones and an overview of the next stages of the project and their funding implications. (Report enclosed as **Appendix B**).

6. WORK PROGRAMME

(Pages
17 - 20)

The Committee is asked to review and note the Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme and Monitoring Report for the 2021/22 council year. (Report enclosed as **Appendix C**).

7. URGENT BUSINESS

PART II

It is expected that matters included in this part of the Agenda will be dealt with in private. Reports referred to are enclosed for members and officers only, coloured pink and marked "Not for Publication".

8. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Committee is invited to consider passing the following resolution:

- (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 Items

Paragraph of Part I of Schedule 12A

9

3 - Contains information relating to 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

9. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

Confidential minutes of the meetings of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC held on 2nd August, as circulated, to be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

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

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 Cheviot Suite, Holiday Inn, Seaton Burn, NE13 6BP on Monday, 2 August 2021 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillor D Bawn
(Chairman in the Chair)

Carr, D.
Beynon, J.
Jackson, P.
Murphy, M.

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

ALSO PRESENT

Wearmouth, R.

Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder
for Corporate Services

OFFICERS

Angus K

Lally D
Greally R

Nicholson S
Taylor M

Willis J

Executive Director of HR and OD
and Deputy Chief Executive
Chief Executive
Assistant Democratic Services
Officer
Scrutiny Co-ordinator
Director - Business Development
(Care Services)
Executive Director of Finance
(Section 151 Officer)

14. 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 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) 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

5 3 - Contains information relating to business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

AND The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the interest in disclosure because of the commercially sensitive nature of the content.

15. NORTHUMBERLAND ENTERPRISE HOLDINGS LIMITED

Daljit Lally, Chief Executive presented this report to the Committee. Jan Willis, Executive Director Finance and 151 Officer and Maureen Taylor Director of Business Development and Communities were also in attendance to respond to questions from the Committee, together with Councillor Richard Wearmouth, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services.

Members supported proposals that would lead to income generation which could be either paid to the Council's general fund as a dividend or reinvested to support older and/or vulnerable residents or initiatives that prioritised the needs of residents in the county.

The Committee sought clarification on governance. It was agreed that a summary showing a breakdown of the annual figures since 2016/17 would be provided to the Committee, noting that the information must remain confidential. Members also agreed that that information be presented to the Cabinet, together with further recommendations regarding providing the Committee and Cabinet with a cash flow and profit and loss forecast, legal clarifications, and a suggested amendment to governance prior to determination of the report.

The Committee therefore **RESOLVED** to advise the Cabinet of the issues raised above and to consider the additional recommendations as agreed.

Chairman _____

Date _____

FORWARD PLAN OF FORTHCOMING KEY CABINET DECISIONS SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2021

| DECISION | PROPOSED SCRUTINY DATE | CABINET DATE |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| <p>The Northumberland Line To provide members with an update on the scheme development and approvals process for the Northumberland Line project. Members will be asked to confirm elements of project scope and the anticipated spend profile (inc. NCC and external funding). (W. Ploszaj / Stuart McNaughton - 07827 873139)</p> | <p>CSEG OSC 6 September 2021</p> | <p>7 September 2021</p> |
| <p>Seaton Valley Neighbourhood Plan To seek approval to formally 'make' the Seaton Valley Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan passed independent examination in May 2021. A local referendum held in the Parish of Seaton Valley on 29 July 2021 returned a majority vote in favour of using the Plan to make decisions on planning applications. The Council is now obliged by statute to make the Neighbourhood Plan unless it considers that doing so would breach European Union obligations. (C. Horncastle/S. Branningan – 107966 335508)</p> | <p>N/A</p> | <p>7 September 2021</p> |
| <p>Approval of the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2022/23 Since 1 April 2013 the Council is required to have its own council tax support scheme to provide assistance to council tax payers on low incomes. The scheme needs to be approved annually and assistance is by way or a reduction in the amount of council tax that is due. The Council Tax Support Scheme needs County Council approval. (R. Wearmouth/G. Barnes 01670 624351)</p> | <p>CSEG OSC 11 October 2021</p> | <p>12 October 2021 Council 3 November 2021</p> |
| <p>Northumberland Waste Management Strategy – Outcome of Kerbside Glass Recycling Trial</p> | <p>C&P OSC 6 October 2021</p> | <p>12 October 2021</p> |

| | | |
|---|---|------------------------|
| <p>To report the key outcomes of the kerbside glass recycling pilot scheme which has been in operation since November 2020 and to recommend the next steps for this scheme and the estimated costs for rolling-out a kerbside glass collection service across the county. The report will also highlight how the roll-out and timing for this enhanced glass recycling service will 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. (J. Riddle/ P. Jones 01670 623432)</p> | | |
| <p>Energising Blyth Programme (Energy Central Campus) This report seeks to update Cabinet and seek key decisions regarding arrangements to support the development and establishment of the Energy Central Campus. This project is one of the priority schemes in the Energising Blyth Regeneration Programme including projects supported by the Future High Streets Fund and Blyth Town Deal. (W. Ploszaj /R. Strettle – 07770642773)</p> | <p>CSEG OSC 11 October 2021 TBC</p> | <p>12 October 2021</p> |
| <p>Integrated Domestic Abuse Services for Northumberland – Permission to Tender To seek Cabinet's permission to go to the market to commission a range of services to enable the Local Authority to meet the duties of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (W. Pattison/ Lesley Pyle - (01670) 622724)</p> | <p>C&P OSC 6 October 2021</p> | <p>12 October 2021</p> |
| <p>School Organisation Plan 2021-2024 This report asks Cabinet and FACS to note the second iteration of the School Organisation Plan 2021-2024 for Northumberland, the first iteration being for 2018-2021. The report also asks Cabinet to approve the circulation of the plan to schools and academies for information and feedback prior to its subsequent publication. The report asks Cabinet and FACS to note that School Organisation Plans are</p> | <p>FACS OSC 7 October 2021</p> | <p>12 October 2021</p> |

| | | |
|--|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| <p>no longer required statutorily. However, Cabinet approval was given to publish a School Organisation Plan for Northumberland in 2018 in order to provide schools, parents, partner organisations and interested parties with an overview of the school system in the county and to highlight trends, plans and potential proposals in relation to schools. This latest version of the plan covers the period 2021 to 2024, but it will be subject to annual update in order to capture changing information or circumstances relating to schools and academies as appropriate. (G. Renner Thompson/S. Aviston – 01670 622281)</p> | | |
| <p>Education Infrastructure Contribution Policy This report asks Cabinet and FACS to note the update of the Education Infrastructure Contribution Policy. The policy was first approved by Cabinet in 2017 but has not been updated due to proposals by Planning Services to create an authority-wide contributions policy and by Government to overhaul the current system of securing developer contributions, neither of which have as yet been implemented.</p> <p>However, the report ostensibly requests Cabinet’s approval to increase the amount of contribution requested within the policy from developers in relation to Special Educational Needs infrastructure in order to reflect that the percentage of the population of school-age students in Northumberland with complex needs has risen from 3% to 4% since 2017. Cabinet and FACS are also asked to note that some minor non-material amendments have also been made to update the policy. (G. Renner Thompson/S. Aviston – 01670 622281)</p> | <p>FACS OSC 7 October 2021</p> | <p>12 October 2021</p> |
| <p>Transfer of redundant public toilet to Newbiggin Town Council To seek a resolution on the recommendation of the Local Area Council in response to a petition on the proposed transfer of a redundant public</p> | | <p>12 October 2021</p> |

| | | |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| toilet building to Newbiggin Town Council (J. Riddle/G. Gavin – 07500127242) | | |
| <p>Approval of the Council Tax Base 2022/23</p> <p>The Council is required to set its council tax base annually. The tax base must be set between the 1st of December and 31st January. The tax base is a measure of the Council's taxable capacity which is used for the setting of its council tax. Legislation sets out the formula for calculation.</p> <p>Cabinet has delegated authority to approve the tax base. (R. Wearmouth/G. Barnes 01670 624351)</p> | CSEG OSC 6 December 2021 | 7 December 2021 |



CABINET

7 SEPTEMBER 2021

The Northumberland Line

Report of: Rick O'Farrell, Interim Executive Director of Local Services and Regeneration

Report of Cabinet Member: Cllr Wojciech Ploszaj, Cabinet Member for Business

Purpose of report

To provide Cabinet with an update on progress on the Northumberland Line project in the last 12 months including the achievement of several significant milestones and an overview of the next stages of the project and their funding implications.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- Notes progress on the project since February 2020 including the achievement of a number of significant milestones.
- Confirms receipt of £17.1m Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline (RNEP) funding for the next stage of project.
- Approves an allocation of £21.15m from the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to support project development, including £4.05m from the Council's contribution.
- Approves the reprofiling to the budget within the Council's MTFP for 2021-22 of £19.0m to 2022-23 to reflect the anticipated expenditure levels of £15.52m in 2021-22.
- Confirms that proposed station car parks will be free of charge subject to a review after two years of operation.
- Delegates approvals to the Head of Paid Service or nominated Executive Director to execute all contracts relating to the Northumberland Line project, through to entry into service, subject to confirmation of associated funding being in place and the appropriate procurement processes being followed.
- Approves, subject to confirmation of funding, the commencement of two procurement activities that exceed £2m - The integrated Programme Management forecast at £6.6m

and the Network Rail Asset Protection Agreement forecast at £3m. Both figures are inclusive of VAT.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the “connecting” and “thriving” priorities included in the NCC Corporate Plan 2018-2021

Key issues

The approvals process for the Northumberland Line project has commenced with the submission of the planning applications for the proposed stations and footbridges and the application to the Secretary of State for an order under the Transport and Works Act 1992.

To date, the Department for Transport (DfT) has provided a total of £40.8m in Rail Networks Enhancement Pipeline (RNEP) match-funding towards the development of the Project.

The total cost of delivering the next stage of the council procured works (Work Package 1) is currently estimated at £21.15m.

The project programme anticipates that trains will Enter into Service on the Northumberland Line in December 2023.

BACKGROUND

1. The project is the reintroduction of passenger rail services between Ashington and Newcastle. The overall purpose is to stimulate economic regeneration in the areas surrounding the Northumberland Line by providing a reliable, rapid public transport connection from the larger towns along the route into Newcastle Central. The working objectives are:
 - Public transport journey times from Ashington to Newcastle of less than, or as close as practicable to, 30 minutes.
 - Existing freight paths to remain unaffected but with improvements in terms of efficiencies and journey time.
 - Six new stations at Ashington, Bedlington Station, Blyth Bebside, Newsham, Seaton Delaval and Northumberland Park.
 - Half hourly passenger service all day.
 - Safeguarding for future expansion of the route and services.

2. In February 2020, Cabinet approved progress of the project to the next stage of development through the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline (RNEP) Design Stage. Since then, several key milestones have been achieved, including:
 - Virtual hosting of an extensive public consultation exercise in the Autumn of 2020. A total of 1,024 responses were received with 92% of respondents supportive of the project.
 - Submission of an Updated Business Case (UBC) to the Department for Transport (DfT) as part of the Project SPEED process. The scheme continues to demonstrate high value for money.
 - Submission of the final outline design for the six stations to Network Rail for review and acceptance.
 - Submission of the planning applications for the proposed stations.
 - An application to the Secretary of State for an order under the Transport and Works Act 1992. The order (if made) will authorise compulsory acquisition of land and rights, temporary use of land, closure of level and other crossings, and diversion and closure of public rights of way.
 - Receipt of an additional £34.25M of RNEP funding to be split between Northumberland County Council, Network Rail and Northern to fund land acquisition, completion of detailed design, commencement of early works by Network Rail and passenger experience by Northern.
 - Secured several Contribution Agreements (CAs) which will ensure a contribution from the increase in land value, in anticipation of receiving planning permission for the Northumberland Line project, is captured by the council rather than all going to the developer.

Project Scope

Car parking charges

3. A decision on the preferred car park operating model is required to allow the specification of the car park requirements to be finalised. A range of options are being considered between the council and Northern Rail, as the franchise operator, as to which party operates and maintains the car parks. The ultimate operating model may be different for different car parks along the line due to the unique circumstances of each. This work will be finalised in September 2021.
4. The working assumption to date has been that the station car parks will initially be free of charge. This will align with existing policy elsewhere in south east Northumberland and provide the best possible opportunity to maximise the modal shift to rail for longer journeys. However, charging for car parking could offer a valuable revenue stream as well as encourage more sustainable travel to the station. Agreement is therefore sought to implement free parking from the outset of the service but to conduct a review of this policy after 2 years of service operation. A further paper will be taken to Cabinet or Council (as appropriate) at this time.

Project Finances

5. The total anticipated capital costs of reintroducing passenger services between Ashington and Newcastle are estimated to be £167m in 2019 prices.
6. As part of the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), the council has committed a total of £27.218m to the project and this was approved by the County Council in February 2021.
7. The total spend on the project to date is £14.13m and this is set out in Table 1 below, broken down by source of funding.

| Table 1 - Total Spend to Date (£m) | | | |
|---|-------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 2015/16 - 2019/20 | 2020/21 | Total |
| NCC | 2.59 | 5.32 | 7.91 |
| DfT | 1.5 | 4.72 | 6.22 |
| Total | 4.09 | 10.04 | 14.13 |

8. In November 2020, the project was presented to the Rail Investment Board (RIB) where approval in principle was agreed for the reinstatement of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. RIB authorised the release of a further £34.25m of Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline (RNEP) funding, split between Northumberland County Council (£17.1m), Network Rail (£16.85m) and Northern (£300k) to fund Work Package 1 which consists of land acquisition, completion of

detailed design and early purchase of long lead time signalling equipment. This funding was announced by the Secretary of State in January 2021.

9. The current assumed spend profile going forward is set out in Table 2 below and includes the confirmed and anticipated contribution from the DfT through the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline.

| | 2021/22 | 2022/23 - 2023/24 | Total |
|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| NCC | 4.05 | 15.26 | 19.31 |
| DfT ¹ | 34.58 ² | - | 34.58 |
| DfT ³ | - | 98.89 | 98.89 |
| Total | 38.63 | 114.15 | 152.78 |

10. In terms of spend profile, as shown in Table 3 below, it is anticipated that £9.1m will be spent once the Full Business Case is submitted and a further £6.4m by the end of 2021/22 financial year. To complete NCC's Work Package 1 a further £5.6m will be spent in financial year of 2022/23 with an anticipated completion date of Sep 2022. Therefore, the total cost of delivering NCC's Work Package 1 is currently estimated at £21.15m. Cabinet is therefore requested to approve an allocation of £21.15m from the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to support project development, including £4.05m from the Council's contribution.

| Work Package 1 (NCC) | Anticipated Date | Estimated Expenditure |
|---|------------------|-----------------------|
| Spend to FBC Completion | October 2021 | £9.1m |
| Spend on Work Package 1 to 31 st March | March 2022 | £6.42m |
| 2021/22 Total | | £15.52m |
| Spend from 1 st April to Work Package 1 Completion | September 2022 | £5.63m |
| Total | | £21.15m |

Project Programme

¹ RNEP Funding (Confirmed)

² This figure includes £0.28m of the current AiP stage (£5m RNEP) which is due to be completed by Jul 2021.

³ RNEP Funding (Awaited)

11. The project programme anticipates that trains will Enter into Service on the Northumberland Line in December 2023. There are several other key milestones along the way, and these are set out below.

| Milestone Date | Date |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| Stations' Contract Award | August 2021 |
| Full Business Case Submission | October 2021 |
| Transport and Works Act Order Inquiry | November 2021 |
| Final Planning Approvals | February 2022 |
| Completion of Detailed Designs | February 2022 |
| Construction Commences | May 2022 |
| Service Commences | December 2023 |

Project Procurement

12. The procurement of the stations' construction contractor is being finalised in accordance with Council Finance & Contract Procedure Rules. The contract award process for a framework to deliver the 6 stations, car parks & bridges/structures concluded at the end of July 2021 with Morgan Sindall identified as the preferred contractor. Bam Nuttall have been selected as the reserve contractor.
13. Reflecting the phased delivery of the project and emergent nature of funding, the framework agreement will have call-offs awarded for specific work streams aligned to the project programme and awarded as funding is confirmed, thereby protecting the Council's financial position.
14. Currently the call-offs & timings envisaged are:
- Pricing the construction costs for the DfT's Final Business Case in September 2021.
 - Early Contractor Involvement in the current Detailed Design phase through to January 2022 to ensure buildability and cost efficiency in the designs.
 - Enabling works ahead of construction as and when identified and supported by DfT funding award; and
 - The main construction phase forecast to commence in May 2022 once funding is confirmed.
15. One of the Council's most significant recent schemes, the stations construction phase is estimated at £48m (inclusive of VAT) and Cabinet endorsement is sought to delegate approvals to the Chief Executive or Nominated Executive Director to execute the relevant contracts up to the value of funding approved.
16. Rule 4.9.1(e) of the Council's Finance and Contract Procedure Rules requires Cabinet approval before commencing procurement of goods or services where the

value is over £2m. The current and future phases of the project contain the following procurements requiring Cabinet approval to commence:

- Stations construction (procurement authorised in February 2020) with a forecast value of £48m and due for conclusion 31 July 2021.
- The ongoing services of the Integrated Programme Management Office supporting the project's 'One Team' approach during the delivery phase. In addition to providing the Programme Management, this service incorporates scheme design conclusion & TWAO & land acquisition as well as construction commercial management. Services during current and past phases have been delivered by AECOM and services and commencing January 2022 with anticipated value of £6.6m (inclusive of VAT) through to scheme completion in December 2023; and
- The Network Rail (NR) Asset Protection Agreement (APA) covering NCC construction activities during the delivery phase of scheme. The APA is the instrument, mandated by the Office of Rail & Road, to ensure NR has oversight and validates schemes delivered by 3rd parties and which may affect the rail assets in NR ownership. Commencing in January 2022, the value is largely a percentage of the station contract and currently estimated at £3.0m (inclusive of VAT).

17. Subject to confirmation of the related DfT funding, Cabinet approval is sought to commence the procurement of the IPMO services and the Asset Protection Agreement above when the programme dictates.

IMPLICATIONS

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Policy | <p>The Corporate Plan 2018-2021 states:</p> <p><i>'.....the existing rail line from Ashington through south east Northumberland to Newcastle Central Station is a dormant asset. We will seize the opportunity to open it up as a new economic corridor by reintroducing passenger services unlocking commercial investment along its length.'</i></p> |
| Finance and value for money | <p>The current estimate of the cost of completion of the construction of the Project is £167m with a benefit cost ratio of between 2:1 and 4:1 depending on demand scenarios.</p> <p>There is a risk that market uncertainty, post COVID, could lead to price increases as contractors may become quite cautious in pricing. This will become clearer on receipt of the tender returns for the station construction contracts in June 2021.</p> <p>As part of the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), the council has committed a total of £27.218m to the project and this was approved by the County Council in February 2021. To date, £7.91m of this commitment has been spent.</p> |

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| | <p>To date, the DfT has provided a total of £40.75m in Rail Networks Enhancement Pipeline (RNEP) match-funding towards the development of the Project.</p> <p>The Council is working closely with the DfT on funding for the remaining stages of the Project and it is anticipated that DfT will contribute the remaining funds required following submission of the Full Business Case in Autumn 2021.</p> |
| Legal | <p>An application to the Secretary of State for an order under the Transport and Works Act 1992. The order (if made) will authorise compulsory acquisition of land and rights, temporary use of land, closure of level and other crossings, and diversion and closure of public rights of way.</p> |
| Procurement | <p>Rule 4.9.1(e) of the Council's Finance and Contract Procedure Rules requires Cabinet approval before commencing procurement of goods or services where the value is over £2m.</p> <p>Subject to Cabinet decision, approval will be delegated to the Head of Paid Service or nominated Executive Director to execute all contracts relating to the Northumberland Line project, through to entry into service, subject to confirmation of associated funding being in place and the appropriate procurement processes being followed.</p> |
| Human Resources | N/A |
| Property | <p>The £34.25m received through RNEP in January 2021 includes an allocation of £6.7m to allow for early acquisition of required land parcels for the main works. This will reduce risk to delay of the construction programme. Negotiations with key landowners are ongoing.</p> |
| Equalities | <p>(Impact Assessment attached)</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Critical Fundamental Principles which had a clear influence on the station designs included accessibility from local population centres via anticipated routes (walking/cycling/highway) as well as for Persons of Restricted Mobility (PRMs).</p> <p>Rail facilities at stations have been designed in line with the latest accessibility regulations and guidance.</p> <p>The provisions which authorise the closure of level crossings and their replacement with footbridges have been considered as part of the design work process.</p> |
| Risk Assessment | <p>The Northumberland Line project has a full governance structure in place which monitors and mitigates any risks to delivery through workstream level risk registers.</p> |
| Crime & Disorder | <p>Due consideration has been given to designing out opportunities for anti-social behaviour, track intrusion etc. at each proposed station location.</p> |
| Customer Consideration | <p>The introduction of a fixed link public transport service in the corridor will provide better journey time surety for journeys between the towns served in the corridor and the Regional Centre of Newcastle.</p> <p>Currently, all transport options rely on the car or bus in the corridor,</p> |

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| | <p>and this is becoming increasingly unreliable in terms of journey times, particularly in the peak periods.</p> <p>The introduction of a new rail service in the corridor introduces some new security issues that need to be mitigated, principally focussed on the presence of stations and the operation of rail services in the evening. The core proposition is that the new stations to be introduced along the corridor will be unstaffed. It is therefore anticipated that CCTV and alarm points will be provided at all the new stations as a minimum requirement. It is also envisaged that all rail services will have a conductor on-board the train.</p> <p>The introduction of a new rail service in the study corridor provides a new and alternative transport option for different groups of people to access employment and services, particularly linking areas of South East Northumberland with Tyne & Wear. Rail facilities at stations have been designed in line with the latest accessibility regulations and guidance.</p> |
| Carbon reduction | The service will commence with class 158 diesel rolling stock. At some point in time, it is likely that the service will move to a BEMU (Battery Electric Multiple Unit). This will be dependent on the wider rolling stock strategy for the North East area services. Current government policy is for there to be no 'diesel-only' rolling stock in operation post 2030. |
| Health and Wellbeing | The scheme effects modal switch from car and from bus to rail. As a result, some previous car users will now start and end their journey using active modes – i.e.: walk or cycle. Some previous bus users might now have a longer walk to access the nearest rail station. It is recognised that increased physical activity has an important role to play in terms of generating health benefits. |
| Wards | The following wards will be directly impacted by the proposed scheme: Bedlington East, Newsham, Hirst, Newbiggin Central and East, Ashington Central, Haydon, Sleekburn, Stakeford, South Blyth, Hartley, Seghill with Seaton Delaval. |

Report sign off.

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

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| | Full Name of Officer |
| Monitoring Officer/Legal | Michael Lennox |
| Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer | Jan Willis |
| Relevant Executive Director | Rick O'Farrell |
| Chief Executive | Daljit Lally |
| Portfolio Holder(s) | Wojciech Ploszaj |

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Northumberland County Council

Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Work Programme and Monitoring Report 2021-2022

1. Terms of reference:

- (1) To maintain an overview of the Council's Annual Budget and Budgetary Management via the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- (2) To review the state of Northumberland and the County Council's activity in delivering its Corporate Plan.
- (3) To maintain an overview of the Council's performance management arrangements; highlighting areas of poor performance and monitoring recovery delivery plans.
- (4) To maintain an overview of the Management Agreements in place between the Council and Advance Northumberland.
- (5) To monitor, review and make recommendations about:
 - Corporate Services: Organisational Development, Health and Safety, ICT Strategy, Corporate Governance, Financial Services, Procurement Strategy, Risk Strategy, Shared and Traded Services
 - Partnership development coordination with local organisations
 - Relationships with external bodies
 - Regeneration and Economic Development
 - Strategic Transport Network and Infrastructure
 - Employability, Skills, and removing barriers to work
 - Capital Programme and Asset Management
 - Support to VCS organisations and the Council's relationship with town and parish councils.

Reports to be scheduled:

Northumberland County Council
Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2021-2022

11 October 2021

Approval of the Council Tax Support Scheme 2022/23

The scheme needs to be approved annually and assistance is by way of a reduction in the amount of council tax that is due. The Committee's view will be sought prior to consideration by Cabinet and determination by Council.

8 November 2021

Budget 2022/23 and Medium Term Financial Plan 22/26

This report provides an update on the development of the 2022-23 Budget and the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) covering the period 2022 to 2026. This report also details 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. The Committee's view will be sought prior to consideration by Cabinet.

6 December 2022

Debt Recovery Update

To provide the Committee with information regarding the level of outstanding debt owed to the Council and to give assurance as to the efficiency and effectiveness of its collection and recovery policies and systems. The Write-Offs report will be circulated to inform that process.

Approval of the Council Tax Base 2022/23

The Council is required to set its council tax base annually. The tax base is a measure of the Council's taxable capacity which is used for the setting of its council tax. Legislation sets out the formula for calculation. The Committee's view will be sought prior to consideration by Cabinet.

10 January 2022

7 February 2022

Budget 2022/23

To invite members of all four OSCs to comment on the budget proposals for 2022/23.

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| 7 March 2022 | |
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| 11 April 2022 | |
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