

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

At a meeting of the **Cabinet** held at County Hall, Morpeth on Tuesday, 26 April 2022 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

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

CABINET MEMBERS

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

OTHER MEMBERS

Bowman, L.	Stewart, G.
Flux, B.	

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Aviston, S.	Head of School Organisation
Denyer, L.	Deputy Monitoring Officer
Hadfield, K.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Hunter, P.	Interim Senior Service Director
Kingham, A.	Interim Joint Director of Children's Services
McEvoy-Carr, C.	Executive Director of Children's Services and Adult Social Care
Murfin, R.	Interim Executive Director of Planning and Local Services
O'Farrell, R.	Interim Executive Director of Place and Regeneration
Reiter, G.	Interim Joint Director of Children's Services
Taylor, M.	Interim Executive Director for Communities and Business

Ch.'s Initials.....

Willis, J.

Development
Interim Executive Director of
Finance and S151 Officer

116. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Seymour.

117. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Renner Thompson disclosed an interest in item 3 on the agenda (Outline Business Case for The Replacement School Buildings for Astley High and Whytrig Middle Schools) and advised that he would leave the room whilst the matter was discussed.

Councillor Renner Thompson left the room.

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

Outline Business Case for The Replacement School Buildings for Astley High and Whytrig Middle Schools

The report requested Cabinet's approval of the Outline Business Case (OBC) to provide new school buildings for Astley High School and Whytrig Middle School.

An outline capital allocation for investment in Education had already been made within the Council's medium term capital programme. The Outline Business Case sought to confirm the estimate of capital required for the proposed scheme, being £37,097,847 (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix A, along with the report of the FACS OSC circulated at the meeting).

The Leader welcomed the report and the progress which was now being made on it. He stressed that consultation would continue and thanked officers for their work. Members received a full presentation from Mrs Aviston on the detail of the report.

Councillor Watson asked for clarification on the two figures which were mentioned in the report. Mrs Aviston advised that Cabinet was being asked to note the allocation of £40m capital in the MTFP though the outline business case did say that the scheme could be delivered for £37m. The higher figure was being asked for until market testing could be done to ensure there was sufficient in the budget. The detailed design and final business case would come back to Cabinet.

Councillor Riddle asked about access issues with the National Trust and about the potential for compulsory purchase order. Mrs Aviston confirmed that the issue was around sight lines and that efforts had been made to negotiate with the National Trust. Legal advice had been sought regarding compulsory purchase, but this was not a quick solution.

Councillor Wearmouth commented that no planning applications had been submitted yet and there would be many opportunities for the public to feed into the consultation process.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Cabinet note the allocation of £40,942,222 capital funding in the Council's medium term financial plan 2022-2026 to deliver the scheme to provide new school buildings for Astley High School and Whytrig Middle School which are both local authority-maintained schools. The scheme is planned to be completed by Spring 2025;
- (b) Cabinet approve the commencement of procurement using a Design and Build Procurement strategy in order to deliver the project which will begin in January 2023 with the publication of the OJEU notice;
- (c) Cabinet note the Final Business Case will be approved by Cabinet prior to the award of contract to the preferred contractor in Spring Term 2023 following the procurement process as set out in the Outline Business Case within Appendix 1 of the report; and
- (d) the report of the FACS OSC be noted.

Councillor Renner Thompson returned to the room.

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

Adopting a New Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

The report outlined the process of designing a new agreed syllabus for Religious Education.

The report was presented by Councillor Renner Thompson. He advised that the syllabus chosen provided flexibility to remodel some of the options within it to incorporate some local religious history, which was important.

Mrs McEvoy Carr confirmed that the syllabus met legal requirements and was suitable for Northumberland schools in terms of required standards. It would be rolled out across the Authority with full adoption planned for September 2023.

Councillor Watson asked whether there were any implications for the schools' library service. Members were advised that teachers were provided with all the teaching materials they needed online.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Cabinet note that a revised Locally Agreed Syllabus has been created and formally approved by Northumberland Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education;
- (b) County Council be formally recommended to adopt the approved Locally Agreed Syllabus; and
- (c) officers be authorised to recommend the revised Locally Agreed Syllabus to Northumberland maintained schools for implementation from September 2022.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....