

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

At a meeting of the **Cabinet** held at County Hall, Morpeth on Tuesday, 12 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.
Renner-Thompson, G.	Wearmouth, R.

OTHER MEMBERS

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

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Aviston, S.	Head of School Organisation
Bradley, N.	Service Director Adult Care
Hadfield, K.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
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
Roll, J.	Head of Democratic and Electoral Services
Taylor, M.	Interim Executive Director for Communities and Business Development
Willis, J.	Interim Executive Director of Finance and S151 Officer

Ch.'s Initials.....

One member of the press was present

111. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of Cabinet held on Tuesday 29 March 2022, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

112. REPORT OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PLACE AND REGENERATION

Blyth Relief Road

The report provided Cabinet with:

- An overview of progress to date on the development of the business case for a new relief road for Blyth which will significantly improve access to the town by all modes.
- A recommendation for the preferred route alignment to be taken forward to a public engagement exercise.
 - An update on the business case which includes emerging costs, benefits and programme for the scheme (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix A, along with the report of the CSEG OSC circulated at the meeting).

The report was presented by Councillor Ploszaj who detailed the main points of the report and welcomed the progress which was now being made. Mr O'Farrell advised that public consultation needed to start now so the scheme could be progressed. The proposed route was not as advantageous as the original option three, but would still significantly reduce traffic stress.

The Leader referred to the report from Scrutiny which welcomed the proposals. The County Council were contributing £4m to this scheme with the balance coming from Government.

Councillor Wearmouth commented that problems with the original route three meant it couldn't be adopted so an alternative plan had been put forward in order to get the scheme through. There had been a lot of support for this from Government and from the local MP Ian Levy.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the progress of the project to date be noted;
- (b) the revised Route 5 be confirmed as the preferred option to take forward to a public engagement exercise;
- (c) Cabinet endorse sign off by the s151 Officer of the Outline Business Case, noting the required County Council match funding commitment and future approval gateways as set out in paragraphs 13 to 15; and

(d) the report of the CSEG OSC be noted.

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

(1) Berwick Partnership Organisation

The report set out the findings of the meetings that had taken place with schools in the Berwick Partnership since April 2021 to discuss the organisational issues facing the partnership and identified potential models of organisation that could address those issues. The results of an informal survey with parents and the wider community in the area served by Berwick Partnership were also included in the report.

Cabinet was also asked to permit a first stage of informal consultation with wider stakeholders in the area served by Berwick Partnership schools to establish whether any models of organisation that may be brought forward at a later date for consultation should consist of only 3-tier models of organisation or include 3-tier and 2-tier (primary/secondary) models of education. Other key areas such as Special Educational Needs, post-16 and early years provision would also be included as part of this first stage of wider phase of consultation (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix B, along with the report of the FACS OSC circulated at the meeting).

A detailed presentation was made by Mrs Aviston and Councillor Renner Thompson detailed some of the background to the current position and how things had moved on from how the project had originally started as a new high school. This was an issue not just for the Partnership, but for the whole town and, this investment along with recent investments in the leisure centre and The Maltings, would make a significant difference.

The Leader stressed that the decision on the Partnership arrangements would be made by the stakeholders and he thanked Councillor Renner Thompson for his work on this. Officers, local members and the local MP were also thanked for their work and support.

Councillor Stewart asked who would make the decision regarding two or three tier. Mrs Aviston replied that this depended on the governance at each school. There were two academies in the partnership and the decision on these would be made by the Headteacher Board and ultimately the Secretary of State, as advised by the Regional Schools Commissioner. The remaining 15 schools would be a decision for Cabinet and officers would need to ensure that these two processes were aligned.

The Leader thanked officers for their work and to all those who had responded to the consultation thus far. FACS OSC had welcomed the dialogue and supported the recommendations. He commented that there

would never be 100% agreement but felt that a general consensus could be achieved.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Cabinet approve the first stage of a planned 2-stage informal consultation process with the wider stakeholders of the Berwick area on the following key areas:
 - (i) Whether any future models of organisation for schools in the Berwick Partnership should be based on a 3-tier organisation only or a 2-tier model of organisation;
 - (ii) The need for an improved SEND offer for the Berwick area;
 - (iii) The need for an improved Early Years offer for the Berwick Area;
 - (iv) The need for the development of a Post-16 and Post-18 provision in the Berwick area;
 - (v) Whether Belford Primary, Wooler First and Glendale Middle Schools should remain part of the Berwick Partnership or be included in the Alnwick Partnership;
- (b) Cabinet note the analysis of the outcomes of this first stage of informal consultation will be reported to Cabinet, and also a request to carry out the second planned stage of informal consultation on detailed proposals for individual schools within a wider school reorganisation of the Berwick Partnership may be included. Such proposals in the second planned stage of informal consultation may include possible school closures;
- (c) Cabinet note that local authorities do not have powers to propose or change the organisation of academies; therefore, any proposed changes to the organisation of Berwick Academy as part of a wider partnership reorganisation will need to be consulted on by the Trustees of the Academy and taken to the Regional Schools Commissioner for a decision;
- (d) should Cabinet approve a second stage of consultation, the outcomes presented to Cabinet may include a recommendation to permit the publication of statutory proposals in relation to relevant maintained schools; and
- (e) the report of the FACS OSC be noted.

(2) Specialist Dementia Service

The report informed Cabinet of current issues in relation to supporting people with challenging dementia needs, and sought Cabinet approval for a measure which could be adopted to help provide more capacity within Northumberland to assist adult social care clients with this level of need (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix C).

The report was introduced by Councillor Pattison and Mr Neil Bradley detailed the key points. The proposals were part of an overall look at dementia services in Northumberland and how services could be developed with partners to deal with and prevent dementia problems.

Members very much welcomed the report and its proposals.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Cabinet agree to a procurement exercise being undertaken for a Specialist Dementia Service in Northumberland, as set out in section 2 of the report on the basis of Option C as recommended; and
- (b) authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Well-being, to award the contract to the successful bidder if within existing budget.

114. REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS): Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2022-26

This report presented the final Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26 Plan prior to publication, following a period of consultation (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix D).

The report was introduced by Councillor Horncastle who detailed the key points of the report and the wide consultation process which had been undertaken.

Members commended the report and thanked Councillor Horncastle and the Fire Service for their work.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) final version of NFRS Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26 be approved prior to publication; and
- (b) the participation of Cabinet members in the consultation on the CRMP, and the amendment of the Plan following feedback, be noted.

115. 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 4 March 2022 (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix E).

The report was introduced by Councillor Wearmouth who highlighted the reasons behind the increased costs. Mrs Willis advised members that Project Board had considered a range of options but most of them would jeopardise the £2m funding from the LEP and there was the commercial risk to Advance to consider. Therefore, the recommendation was that the additional funding was provided as grant from the Council, which could be achieved by reprofiling funds intended for other projects. Members were supportive of the proposals.

Councillors Renner Thompson, Riddle and Watson abstained from the vote on this matter as Directors of Advance.

RESOLVED that:-

Bedlington Town Centre Redevelopment:

- Cabinet approve an increase in the NCC grant contribution towards the Bedlington Town Centre Redevelopment of £2,045,268 to be funded from the Strategic Regeneration Projects Budget within the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan 2022-26. Together with the existing approved budget of £2,718,490, this will take the total grant funding from the Council for this project to £4,763,758. The profiling for this additional grant contribution will be split between 2022/23 £1,454,690 and 2023/24 £590,578; and
- Cabinet approve a re-allocation of the Strategic Regeneration Projects Budget for the 2022/23 year from existing schemes that are in delay to fund this additional grant as per the table in paragraph 5.11 of the report.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....