

## **NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **CABINET**

At a meeting of the **Cabinet** held at County Hall, Morpeth on Tuesday 17 January 2023 at 10.00 am.

### **PRESENT**

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

### **CABINET MEMBERS**

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

### **OTHER MEMBERS**

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

### **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Aviston, S.	Head of School Organisation
Bradley, N.	Director of Adult Social Services
Hadfield, K.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Hunter, P.	Interim Senior Service Director
Gardner, K.	Service Director Improvement and Innovation
Johnston, N.	Project Manager, Improvement and Innovation
Kingham, A.	Interim Joint Director of Children's Services
Liddell, J.	Senior Public Health Manager
Masson, N.	Deputy Monitoring Officer
McMillan, S.	Assistant Service Director
Morgan, L.	Interim Executive Director for Public Health and Community Services
Murfin, R.	Interim Executive Director of

Ch.'s Initials.....

O'Farrell, R.  
Reiter, G.

Taylor, M.

Willis, J. (remote)

Planning & Local Services  
Regeneration, Commercial &  
Economy  
Interim Chief Executive  
Interim Joint Director of Children's  
Services  
Interim Executive Director for  
Communities and Business  
Development  
Interim Executive Director of  
Finance and S151 Officer

## 75. MINUTES

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 13 December 2022, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

## 76. REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

### **Strategic Change Programme – Strategic Change Business Case**

The report presented to Cabinet the Strategic Business Case which set out opportunities for service improvement, the proposed programme of work and potential financial benefit; and presented the objectives of service transformation set out in the Business Case, the timescales, and anticipated benefits (financial and non-financial) (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix A).

The Leader introduced the report and went through the report from Scrutiny in detail. The proposals represented major change for the Authority and would take up to three years to complete. Potential savings were identified in the report and were significant. Professional support was needed to achieve the change, and this came at a cost. The buy in of staff was also essential and there had been a lot of effort to engage with staff in the last few months. The proposals would be aligned with other ongoing work on the Executive Team structure and the new Chief Executive was very supportive.

Councillor Riddle commented on the amount of work which had been done on this. Customer feedback and how this was captured by the Authority had been highlighted at the town and parish council conference the previous evening, and the changes proposed would go a long way to address some of those issues.

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (a) Cabinet approve the Strategic Change Business Case;
- (b) Cabinet approve the mobilisation of the Programme in line with the implementation timescales set out in the Strategic Business Case i.e., February 2023 – March 2025; and

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

**77. REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR EDUCATION AND INTERIM JOINT DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**School Transport Review Outcome Options**

This report was deferred.

**78. REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR EDUCATION AND INTERIM JOINT DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**National Funding Formula & School Funding 2023/24**

The report updated Cabinet regarding the National Funding Formula (NFF) and the implications for 2023/24 School Funding in Northumberland (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix C, along with the report of the FACS OSC.

Councillor Renner Thompson introduced the report. Final figures had now been received from Government and there had been a 5.6% increase in Schools Block funding and an 8.2% increase in High Needs Block. This substantial support took the Authority to mid table in the level of support being provided, which was good news.

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (a) Cabinet approve the proposals for the continuing implementation of the National Funding Formula for 2023/24 as agreed previously, in line with the recommendation of the Schools Forum meeting of 16 November 2022 and the results of the subsequent consultation exercise held with schools;
- (b) Cabinet approve the transfer of up to 0.25% funding from the Schools' Block to the High Needs Block, in line with recommendation of the Schools Forum meeting of 16 November 2022 and the results of the subsequent consultation exercise held with schools;
- (c) Cabinet approve the delegation of the approval of the final formula values to the Joint Interim Director of Children's Services in consultation Lead Member for Children's Services and Deputy Leader of the Council in line with the principles agreed at Schools Forum on 16 November 2022, once the final budget allocations are released by the Department for Education in December 2022; and
- (d) the report of the FACS OSC be noted.

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

**Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Service for Northumberland – Permission to Tender**

The report outlined the need to provide a drug and alcohol treatment and recovery service as part of the Council's statutory public health functions, and sought permission to proceed with a formal tender exercise (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix D, along with the report of the Health and Wellbeing OSC).

The report was introduced by Councillor Pattinson.

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (a) the Interim Executive Director of Public Health and Community Services be authorised to proceed with the commissioning exercise for a value of £21,818,608 as outlined in Key Issues section (the final paragraph);
- (b) officers be requested to bring back the outcome for Cabinet approval; and
- (c) the report of the Health and Wellbeing OSC be noted.

**80. REPORT OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND SECTION 151 OFFICER**

**Notification of the Estimated Collection Fund Balances 2022-23 – Council Tax and Business Rates**

The report advised members of the estimated year end balances on the Collection Fund in relation to Council Tax and Business Rates for the year ending 31 March 2023 (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix E).

The report was introduced by the S151 Officer.

Councillor Watson asked how the Authority compared nationally to other Authorities. The S151 Officer advised that Northumberland's performance compared very well with most other councils, and it was especially pleasing that there was not a significant overhang on the collection fund performance as the Council emerged from the pandemic.

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (a) Cabinet approve the declaration of a surplus on the Collection Fund for the year ending 31 March 2023 in relation to Council Tax of £2.948 million to be distributed to the Council and Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner in accordance with Council Tax regulations; the Council's share being £2.737 million;

- (b) Cabinet note the overall estimated deficit on the Collection Fund for the year ending 31 March 2023 in relation to Business Rates of £3.887 million; the Council's share being £1.944 million (which largely relates to the Covid-19 Additional Relief Fund announced by the government in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and for which the Council will be reimbursed through Section 31 (S31) grant);
- (c) Cabinet note the distribution of the estimated Collection Fund surplus for Council Tax to the Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner of £0.212 million, and the distribution of the estimated Collection Fund deficit for Business Rates of £1.944 million to the Secretary of State; and
- (d) Cabinet note the inclusion of the Council's share of the estimated Collection Fund balances distributable in 2023-24 of £2.737 million surplus and £1.944 million deficit, for Council Tax and Business Rates respectively, within the Council's budget 2023-24.

## **81. REPORT OF THE LEADER**

### **North East Devolution**

On 28 December 2022 HM Government announced a “minded to” devolution deal with the seven councils across the North East (i.e. Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland Councils).

The deal would see a significant shift of powers, funding and responsibility which would enable the Councils to pursue their ambitions for inclusive growth. In total, it would provide £4.2 billion of additional investment to the region over 30 years, including a £1.4bn investment fund alongside significant funding for transport, education and skills, housing and regeneration. This would enable investment into projects which reflected local needs and opportunities, making a real difference for residents, communities, and the local economy.

To implement the deal, the Councils would need to establish a new mayoral combined authority which covered the area of the seven Councils and replaced the two existing combined authorities in the region. The report set out the findings of a statutory review regarding these proposed governance changes and, if Cabinet were satisfied that the relevant criteria had been met, recommended that the proposals were subject to public consultation.

The Leader reported that all constituent councils were in agreement. The amount of funding on the table was much greater than under other arrangements and the existing North of Tyne Combined Authority had already received significant funding.

The Leaders were working well together, and he was comfortable that mayoral input would also work. The plan was for all members to be fully briefed on the issues and residents would be consulted through LAC meetings. The Interim Chief Executive advised that consultation would

commence online on 23 January for 8 weeks across all Authorities. Individual authorities could carry out additional consultation if they wished.

Members were advised that Newcastle and North Tyneside Councils had approved the proposals the day before.

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (a) Cabinet endorse in principle the “minded to” devolution deal (see Appendix 1, Annex A);
- (b) Cabinet agree with the findings of the governance review (Appendix 1), namely that the proposed creation of a new mayoral combined authority for the North East region to replace the existing combined authorities will improve the exercise of statutory functions across the region;
- (c) Cabinet agree that the North East Councils shall publish a scheme for the delivery of these governance changes (the current draft of which scheme is attached as Appendix 1, Annex B);
- (d) Cabinet agree that the North East Councils shall undertake public consultation in connection with the proposals contained in the scheme as described in section 8.3 and 8.4 of the report;
- (e) Cabinet agree that the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of Council, be authorised to take all steps necessary to implement the above proposals, including (but not limited to) making amendments to the draft scheme and the consultation exercise;
- (f) Cabinet note that a further report will be brought to Cabinet at the end of that consultation exercise; and
- (g) Cabinet exempt the decision from the Call In process pursuant to the Overview and Scrutiny Rules of Procedure, part 5.4, 15 (10) of the Constitution of the Council on the basis that the decision Cabinet is being asked to make is urgent.

## **82. DELEGATED DECISIONS**

The following delegated decisions, taken by the Executive Director of Finance and Section 151 officer in consultation with the portfolio holder, were reported. These had been taken in accordance with the Council’s finance and contract procedure rules (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix G):-

### **(1) WAN & Full Fibre Northumberland Business Case**

Approval of the Business Case to award a contract for the provision of Northumberland County Council’s Wide Area Network.

**RESOLVED** that the decision be noted.

### **(2) Decision to Award Wide Area Network Contract to Commsworld Ltd**

Approval of the Business Case to award the 20 year contract for the provision of Northumberland County Council’s Wide Area Network.

**RESOLVED** that the decision be noted.

**83. DELEGATED DECISION**

The following delegated decision, taken by the Interim Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council, was reported. This had been taken in accordance with the Council's finance and contract procedure rules (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix H).

**(1) Use of Adult Social Care Discharge Fund**

Spending from the Adult Social Care Discharge Fund in line with the plans as set out in the report.

**RESOLVED** that the decision be noted.

**84. 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:-

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Paragraph of Part I of Schedule 12A</b>
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13	3 -Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information).
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<b>AND</b>	The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the interest in disclosure because the Authority are not able to make this report public until such time as the third party involved is ready to publicly share the information.
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**85. REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR CLIMATE CHANGE, BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE**

**Northumberland Climate Change Update**

The report sought authorisation to accept grant funding with a view to delivery of the project in Northumberland from 2023-2025.

Members welcomed the funding and sought assurances that suppliers would be available to deliver the framework. Nick Johnston advised members that

this was a complex process, but essentially officers were working with NEPO to ensure there was a supply chain in place with local and national suppliers.

A question was asked about the level of the Admin and Ancillary costs identified in the report. Members were advised that this was the allocation set by the funding provider as a percentage of the overall funding, and included staff required to carry out the retrofit assessment, communications, engagement costs etc.

**RESOLVED** that the recommendations as detailed in the report be agreed.

**CHAIR**.....

**DATE**.....