

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

At a meeting of the Cabinet held at County Hall, Morpeth on Tuesday 30 May 2023 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

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

CABINET MEMBERS

Ferguson, D.	Renner Thompson, G
Horncastle, C.	Riddle, J.
Pattison, W.	Stewart, G.
Ploszaj, W.	Watson, J.

OTHER MEMBERS

Flux, B.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Binjal, S. (remote)	Monitoring Officer
Bradley, N.	Executive Director for Adults, Aging & Wellbeing
Hadfield, K.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Hunter, P.	Senior Service Director
Kingham, A.	Executive Director for Children, Young People & Education
McMillan, S.	Head of Economic Growth and Inward Investment
Murfin, R.	Director of Planning
O'Neill, G	Executive Director for Public Health (DPH), Inequalities & Stronger Communities
Paterson, Dr H.	Chief Executive
Willis, J. (Remote)	Executive Director for Resources & Transformation (S151)

1. APOLOGOIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor Wearmouth.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on Tuesday 9 May 2023, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

3. 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).

To implement the deal, it was necessary 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 updated Cabinet on the public consultation which the councils had undertaken in relation to these proposals and sought Cabinet approval to submit the attached consultation report to the Secretary of State as the next step in the process of establishing the new mayoral combined authority.

The Leader introduced the report paying tribute to his fellow Leaders and Chief Executives about how the process had been managed to date. He stressed the proposals did not mean that Northumberland would lose its ability to make its own decisions but they would allow greater sharing of expertise and support through cross council working. The prospects were good and absolutely the right thing for the Council to do. The consultation responses had shown that residents were in favour, with queries being raised about ensuring that Northumberland got its fair share.

A number of questions were raised by members including:-

- Councillor Horncastle queried whether the additional funding would help with the provision of specialist housing such as extra care and sheltered housing which were expensive to provide. The Leader agreed this was an important issue for the Authority and was hopeful that the additional funding would support this provision.
- Councillor Riddle welcomed the extra funding for the rural agenda and was sure it would be put to good use. The Leader agreed that rurality was a very important part of the deal and Northumberland would chair the Rural Board.
- Councillor Watson commented on the significance of tourism to the Northumberland economy and hoped that the County would continue to be advertised as well as the rest of the North East as a tourism destination. The Leader confirmed that the Council would continue to deliver tourism development and expected that there would be extra funding available to support that. He felt there was a need to look more seriously at the County’s tourism offer in terms of the breadth of

what was available across the County as a whole and not just along the coastline.

- Councillor Renner Thompson welcomed the £63m for adult education which would help upskill people to work in the new industries coming into Northumberland. This would sit alongside negotiations for trailblazer funding for the under 18s and he asked if the Leader would be continuing this negotiation going forward. The Leader commented that he was proud of what had been achieved recently in education. Northumberland had a lot of expertise to share and he looked forward to working with others to achieve even greater improvements.
- Councillor Stewart welcomed that Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service would remain as part of the Authority and thanked the staff for all that they did. He looked forward to working with others also. Maintaining identification with the County was very important and he was grateful to all those who had been involved in making that happen.
- Councillor Ferguson referred to the three key priority areas and asked how the deal would help the Authority achieve its aims in these areas. The Leader responded that these would continue to be reflected as part of the new combined authority. The other Leaders were aware of what they were and were supportive of them, and he felt sure there would be extra opportunities for support particularly in tackling inequalities. The sharing of expertise could only be a good thing.
- Councillor Ploszaj referred to the £900m transport funding included in the deal, which was an increase of £5m on current funding, £1.4bn for regeneration, and £5m for Ashington regeneration and high street renewal amongst other funding packages. He hoped the funding would help towns and villages to thrive and become great places to live, learn and work as well as driving prosperity and tackling inequalities.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the content of the report and the attached consultation report relating to the proposed creation of a new mayoral combined authority for the North East region be noted; (appendix 1);
- (b) Cabinet agree that the consultation that has been undertaken is sufficient for the purposes of the legislation and that the findings set out in the consultation report demonstrate that the statutory criteria (referred to in para 1.6 of the report) have been met;
- (c) Cabinet agree that the consultation report should be submitted to the Secretary of State so that the Secretary of State can:
 - (i) consider whether they are satisfied that the consultation has been sufficient and that the statutory criteria have been met; and
 - (ii) (if so satisfied) request Parliament to make an order to abolish the existing combined authorities and establish NEMCA;
- (d) Cabinet agree in principle to consent to the making of the necessary statutory order; and

(e) Cabinet agree that the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of Council, shall be authorised to take all steps necessary to implement the above proposals, including (but not limited to) finalising the terms of the consultation report which is submitted to the Secretary of State.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....