

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

At a meeting of the Cabinet held at County Hall, Morpeth on Tuesday 13 June 2023 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

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

CABINET MEMBERS

Ferguson, D.
Horncastle, C.
Pattison, W.
Ploszaj, W.

Riddle, J.
Stewart, G.
Wearmouth, R.

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT

Ball, C.

Lang, J.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Binjal, S. (remote)
Bradley, N.

Hadfield, K.

Hunter, P.
Jones, P.
Kingham, A.

O'Neill, G

Paterson, Dr H.
Willis, J. (Remote)

Monitoring Officer
Executive Director for Adults, Aging
& Wellbeing
Democratic and Electoral Services
Manager
Service Director, Policy
Service Director, Local Services
Executive Director for Children,
Young People & Education
Executive Director for Public Health
(DPH), Inequalities & Stronger
Communities
Chief Executive
Executive Director for Resources &
Transformation (S151)

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Renner Thompson and Watson.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on Tuesday 30 May 2023, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

6. REPORT OF THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES

Loan to Northumberland Community Bank

The report provided details of a potential loan facility to Northumberland Community Bank (NCB) of £50,000 towards the capital reserve (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix A).

The report was introduced by Councillor Wearmouth. Members were very supportive of this vital facility.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve a loan facility of £50,000 to Northumberland Community Bank subject to the following:

- NCB agreeing to the proposed terms and conditions;
- NCC's Legal Team completing a legal agreement with NCB in advance of any loan drawdown by NCB, containing the terms and conditions set out within this report; and
- Subsidy Control implications being investigated and satisfied.

7. REPORT OF THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES

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 (CSG) via email on 3 May 2023 (Copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix B).

RESOLVED that:-

7.1 Capita One EMS System Modules:

Cabinet approve the reallocation of £19,920 in 2023-24 from Craster Mast project to Capita One in relation to securing additional modules for the Capital One EMS system (Children's Services Education Management System) incorporated within the contract renewal for ongoing licencing, support and maintenance.

7.2 County Hall Solar PV Carport:

Cabinet approve an increase in the County Hall Solar PV Carport Project budget of £423,000 funded by an additional contribution from the European Regional Development Fund.

7.3 Great Northumberland Forest – Storm Arwen Restoration:

Cabinet approve the inclusion of an additional £1.500 million from the national Nature for Climate Fund within the capital programme for the Great Northumberland Forest.

7.4 New Hartley First School Classroom Modifications:

Cabinet approve the reprofiling and reallocation of Devolved Formula Capital (£14,267) and Energy Efficiency (£12,913) capital budgets to fund the increased capital requirement for classroom modifications at New Hartley First School.

7.5 Energising Blyth Energy Central Campus Phase 1- Learning Hub:

Cabinet approve the allocation from the Energising Blyth Acquisitions and Deliveries budget within the MTFP for the acquisition and construction works costs at the Commissioner's Quay Carpark (£0.555m) in 2023-24 in order to maintain a realistic contingency in the original Energy Central Learning Hub budget.

7.6 Prudhoe Waterworld Improvement Scheme:

Cabinet approve an allocation of £1.500 million (£0.250 million in 2023-24 and £1.250 million in 2024-25) from the Capital Contract Price Inflation contingency budget within the MTFP for improvements at Prudhoe Waterworld.

8. REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR IMPROVING OUR ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

Enhanced Pothole Repair Invest to Save Trial

The report sought approval to undertake an 'invest to save' trial of first-time patch repair of a proportion of actionable carriageway pothole defects, to quantify the costs and benefits associated with this alternative approach to one of the main revenue funded highway maintenance activities undertaken by the Council (Copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix C).

The report was introduced by Councillor Riddle.

Councillor Horncastle supported the trial, which he felt would provide the answers for a more permanent fix. He asked about improving the current inspection regime and whether anything could be learned from neighbouring authorities about how infilling work was done. Councillor Riddle responded that inspectors did inspect regularly to make sure work was to the expected standard and the Authority's roads were better compared to many others. The trial would not detrimentally impact the ongoing inspection and repair programme.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Cabinet approve the commencement of a 3-month 'invest to save' trial of first-time patch repair of a proportion of actionable carriageway pothole defects in the North and Tynedale Local Area Committee areas of the County; and

- (b) Cabinet approve the allocation of £492,600 in revenue funds from the severe weather reserve to fund the pilot scheme.

9. REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS

Ashington Regeneration Programme Establishment

The report update Cabinet regarding the establishment, development and delivery of the £30m Ashington Regeneration Programme, which would have a catalytic impact on the town's economy and drive forward the implementation of the Ashington Town Investment Plan.

The report also sought approval for the strategic acquisition of the Woodhorn Road site and the Wansbeck Square site from Advance Northumberland (Commercial) Limited to create the required development platform to enable implementation of the Ashington Regeneration Programme (Copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix D).

The report was presented by Councillor Ploszaj and Councillor Wearmouth welcomed this investment which came on top of other building blocks put in place by the Administration to make this happen.

Members welcomed this positive news for Ashington.

Councillor Ball, as one of the local members for the area, also welcomed the news but reminded members that it was not an overwhelming figure given current inflation. She urged the Leader to ensure that local people were involved in the programme, that there was communication, that start and end dates were known and that residents and businesses actually knew what was happening. There was a lot to celebrate in local heritage and facilities in the town. She also asked that local members were kept informed highlighting that two developments were happening in her ward and she was yet to find out the detail of these.

The Leader responded that this was a significant amount of funding and agreed that people did need to be involved. This was part of the plan going forward and the Project Board would be briefing members on a regular basis.

Councillor Ploszaj commented that £30m was just the start and this level of funding would attract other funding in due course as had happened in other areas. Communication events would be planned and he would make sure that local members were briefed properly.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Cabinet endorse the Ashington Investment Plan as the overarching strategy that will provide the context, vision and aspirations for delivery of the phased Ashington Regeneration Programme;
- (b) Cabinet agree the establishment of the Ashington Regeneration Programme with two initial phases associated with the Ashington High

Street Innovation Programme (HSIP) and Town Centre Renewal of Strategic Sites Programme;

- (c) Cabinet approve the associated financial profiles as set out in Appendix 1 whilst:
- endorsing the bid submitted to extend the HSIP Programme with a funding ask of £576,898 and acceptance of this additional funding into the Medium Term Financial Plan, if successful
 - approving an initial allocation of £1,000,000 in the Medium Term Financial Plan to be fully funded by the Government to develop plans for Wansbeck Square Strategic Site
 - approving an initial grant allocation of £600,000 in the Medium Term Financial Plan to be fully funded by the Government to develop plans for Portland Park Strategic Site
 - authorising the Executive Director for Place and Regeneration to enter into contracts up to the value of £1.6m for the development of the strategic sites and delivery of public realm capital works, subject to confirmation of associated funding being in place and the appropriate procurement processes being followed;
- (d) authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Place and Regeneration, in consultation with the s151 Officer, to purchase the Woodhorn Road site, at a value up to a maximum of £210,000 from funding already allocated in the Medium Term Financial Plan;
- (e) Cabinet approve the acquisition of the Wansbeck Square site, and delegate authority to the Executive Director for Place and Regeneration, in consultation with the S151 Officer, to acquire the Wansbeck Square site at a value up to a maximum of £1,365,000 with funding from the Strategic Regeneration Projects budget within the Capital Programme; and
- (f) Cabinet agree the associated programme management and assurance arrangements to support the programme's delivery as set out in the report.

10. REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Update and Northumberland Delivery

The report provided an update on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) programme and the UKSPF funded projects secured by Northumberland County Council to support levelling-up activity across the County (Copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix E).

The report was presented by Councillor Ploszaj.

Councillor Riddle commented this Fund would go a long way to replacing LEADER funding which was most welcome and the value of small rural businesses should not be underestimated.

Councillor Wearmouth commented that the Authority had been very successful in attracting inward investment into the County but he had been keen to tackle the successor to the LEADER programme to ensure support for rural businesses, which this provided.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Cabinet endorse the progress and content of the UKSPF Investment and Delivery Plans for the North of Tyne Area;
- (b) Cabinet welcome and endorse the Northumberland County Council-led UKSPF funded projects, described in this report and summarised in table 1, which secures over £7.085m to deliver a range of levelling-up activities and support for Northumberland's businesses and residents over 2022 – 2025; and .
- (c) Cabinet endorse the Inclusive Economy Community Partnership project, which, working with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), will build capacity and deliver activities in support of the inclusive economy, focused in our most deprived communities and, if successful, accept £0.4m capital and 1.15m revenue funding into the Medium-Term Financial Plan, as set out in paragraph 19 and annex A.

11. REPORT OF THE LEADER

Nominations to Outside Bodies

Cabinet was asked to agree its nominations to outside bodies detailed in Appendix F.

The Leader asked members to note that Advance Northumberland was in a stage of transition and current nominations would be replaced over the course of the next few months. A replacement nomination was also required for Councillor Pattison on Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust Governing Body.

RESOLVED that that the nominations detailed in the appendix be agreed, subject to it being noted that the position with Advance Northumberland was in transition and would change over the next few months, and that a replacement nomination was required for Councillor Pattison on Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust Governing Body. Name to be confirmed.

12. DELEGATED DECISIONS

The following delegated decisions were noted (Copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix G):-

- (1) **Decision Taken by the Executive Director for Resources & Transformation (S151): Energising Blyth Energy Central Campus Phase 1 - Learning Hub:Project Virement**

**(2) Decision Taken by the Executive Director, Regeneration & Place:
Energising Blyth Energy Central Campus Phase 1 - Learning Hub:
Contract Award**

CHAIR.....

DATE.....