

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

At a meeting of the Cabinet held at County Hall, Morpeth on Tuesday 12 September 2023 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

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

CABINET MEMBERS

Horncastle, C.	Riddle, J.
Jones, V.	Stewart, G.
Pattison, W.	Watson, J.
Ploszaj, W.	Wearmouth, R.
Renner Thompson, G.	

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Bradley, N.	Head of School Organisation Executive Director for Adults, Aging & Wellbeing
Gerrard, S. Hadfield, K.	Director of Law and Governance Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Hunter, P.	Director of Strategy and Communications
Kingham, A.	Executive Director for Children, Young People and Education
McMillan, S.	Head of Economic Growth and Inward Investment
O'Neill, G	Executive Director for Public Health (DPH), Inequalities & Stronger Communities
Paterson, Dr H. Willis, J. (remote)	Chief Executive Executive Director for Resources & Transformation (S151)

26. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the following meetings of Cabinet, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair:-

- (a) Tuesday 11 July 2023
- (b) Tuesday 20 July 2023.

27. REPORT OF THE LEADER

BEST: Delivery Partner Delegated Decision

The report sought delegated authority for the Council's Executive Director of Transformation and Resources to enter into a contract for the BEST Delivery Partner in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix A).

The report was presented by the Leader. He advised that members would be kept informed of progress.

RESOLVED that the Executive Director of Transformation and Resources be authorised, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, to enter into a contract for the BEST Delivery Partner.

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

Financial Performance 2023-24 – Position at the end of June 2023

The report informed the Cabinet of the current financial position for the Council against the Budget for 2023-24 (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix B).

The report was presented by Councillor Wearmouth who drew members' attention to the points which needed to be noted, as well as the recommendations to be agreed.

The S151 Officer advised members that there was a change needed to recommendation one to reflect that this was a decision for Cabinet to make following the recent review of the Constitution, and that a recommendation to Council was not needed.

RESOLVED that:-

(a) Cabinet :

- Approve the use of £1.855 million from contingency to partly fund the shortfall in the expected cost of pay awards for 2023-24.
- Approve the re-profiling to the Capital Programme of £15.902 million from 2023-24 to 2024-25 to reflect estimated expenditure levels in the current financial year.
- Approve the transfer of £1.556 million from the Public Health main grant reserve to provide additional services to reduce poverty and health inequalities.

(b) Cabinet note:

- the projected overspend on services of £4.115 million and the assumptions outlined in the report.

- the projected net overspend of £4.471 million after accounting for outstanding inflationary pressures and the utilisation of the Exceptional Inflation Reserve and contingency. The financial monitoring process is a continuous process, and it is not unusual to predict an overspend in the first formal monitoring report as pressures in the system are recognised and realised. Services are now taking appropriate action to bring the budget back into balance and corporately work is underway to ascertain if rising interest rates will ensure a favourable return to the Council and improve the position further. An updated position for the 6 months to September 2023 will be presented to Cabinet on 12 December 2023.
- the supplementary estimates at Appendix A and the required changes to the budgets.
- the delivery of the approved savings at Appendix B.
- the use of the contingency shown at Appendix L.
- the use of reserves shown at Appendix M.
- the virements requested by services shown at Appendix O.

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

Loan to Whittingham, Callaly and Alnham Parish Council

The report provided details of a potential loan facility to Whittingham, Callaly and Alnham Parish Council (WCAPC) of £4,435 towards the capital reserve (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix C).

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve a loan facility of £4,435 to WCAPC subject to the following:

- WCAPC agreeing to the proposed terms and conditions; and
- NCC's Legal Team completing a legal agreement with WCAPC in advance of any loan drawdown by WCAPC, containing the terms and conditions set out within the report.

30. 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 (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix D).

30.1 Family Hub grant

Members welcomed this funding from the Government, which had had a huge impact on families in all areas of the County. The Leader suggested that members be kept updated on progress.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- a) Approve the receipt of the capital element of the Family Hub grant of £0.063 million in 2023-24 and £0.059 million in 2024-25 and update the capital programme; and
- b) Grant delegated authority for the Executive Director of Children, Education and Young people to enter into contracts for the appropriate items of capital expenditure as and when they are identified up to the approved total budget limited.

30.2 Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management schemes

Members welcomed the proposals.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve the updated expenditure of £0.118 million and the amendment of the budget allocations within the Capital Programme for Otterburn Surface Water Flood Alleviation Scheme and Red Row Surface Water Flood Alleviation Scheme.

30.3 Lilidorei Play Village – Additional funding from Department of Levelling Up, Communities and Housing (DLUCH)

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve the inclusion of the £0.500 million funding already received from DLUCH and update the Capital Programme.

30.4 Levelling Up Funds – Hexham to Corbridge and Bedlington East to West

The Leader welcomed this initiative which would support the Administration's emerging Environment Policy. Councillor Riddle commented that the funding from the Government was testament to the Administration's commitment to investment in cycling and walking.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- a) Accept the funds from the Levelling up Fund Tranche 2 of £14.712 million;
- b) Approve funds in line with the costs outlined in the table set out in paragraph 9.5; and
- c) Approve the reallocation in the Capital Programme of £2.000 million from the existing allocation for Local Cycling and Walking Programme.

30.5 Queen Elizabeth II Memorial Garden, Bedlington Cemetery

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- a) Approve capital expenditure totalling £0.043 million for improvements to the West Bedlington Cemetery Garden of Remembrance; and
- b) Approve the reallocation in the Capital Programme of £0.027 million from the existing Parks Enhancement Capital Programme and £0.017 million from Cllr Malcolm Robinson’s Members’ Local Improvement Scheme Funds.

30.6 Telecare Digital Switch

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve the allocation of £0.547 million from the Adult Social Care Capital Grant in the Capital Programme to implement the capital project.

31. REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CARING FOR ADULTS

Additional Market Sustainability and Improvement Grant

This report presented outline proposals for the use of additional grant funding announced by the Government on 28 July 2023, and requested delegated authority to resolve details to ensure that the grant can be spent effectively (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix E).

The report was presented by Councillor Pattison and she drew members’ attention to the key points of the report.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Cabinet endorse the overall approach to the use of the additional Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund (MSIF) set out in paragraphs 6.28 to 6.30 of the report; and
- (b) the Executive Director for Adults, Ageing & Wellbeing be authorised to agree detailed allocations of expenditure within that overall approach, and to manage the overall resources available from the MSIF and the Adult Social Care Discharge fund flexibly to as to maximise the benefits for people with care and support needs, subject to consultation with the Cabinet Member for Caring for Adults, and the Executive Director of Transformation and Resources.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....