

## NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

### CABINET

At a meeting of the Cabinet held at County Hall, Morpeth on Tuesday 10 October 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.	Director of Law and Governance
Hadfield, K.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Hunter, P.	Director of Strategy and Communications
Kingham, A.	Executive Director for Children, Young People and Education
Neilson, S.	Executive Director for Place and Regeneration
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)

### 32. MINUTES

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 12 September 2023, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

### 33. REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

#### Environmental Policy Statement

The report proposed the adoption of an overarching Environmental Policy Statement by Northumberland County Council to demonstrate the high priority being given by the Council to environmental matters, such as Climate Change, Nature Recovery & Biodiversity, Heat and Renewable Energy, Sustainable Waste Management, Travel and Transport, Water Quality, Parks & Green Spaces and Safeguarding Public Health. The Environmental Policy Statement covers the 4-year period from 2023/24 to 2026/27, after which time it will be reviewed and updated. It will clearly identify and communicate how the diverse range of environmental policy and service delivery activities undertaken by the Council are all part of its commitment to maintain, protect and enhance the environment. It is intended that the Environmental Policy Statement will then be used to help support improved public awareness, engagement and active participation on these important environmental matters (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix A).

The Leader introduced the report highlighting the key points of activity.

Councillor Pattison commented on the very valuable contribution made by the 140 volunteers who worked for Coast Care in the AONB. New volunteers were always welcome

Councillor Wearmouth commented that this was a very interesting report. The Council was putting resources in to ensure that the County stayed as beautiful as it currently was. Councillor Stewart commented that businesses also had a role to play in investing in the County.

Councillor Riddle commented that farmers were custodians of the countryside and he reminded members about the great asset which was the National Park, as well as the AONBs. He supported the report which set some clear targets and confirmed members' commitment to both the natural and built environment.

Councillor Horncastle highlighted the financial commitment of almost £63m for this initiative, including £1m into the Housing Revenue Account to improve housing, £0.5m on the parks enhancement programme and £3m for the Lynemouth Bay remediation scheme. It showed the Administration was serious.

#### **RESOLVED** that:-

- (a) Cabinet maintain its commitment to tackling climate change and to the development of a new Climate Change Action Plan which will set out the actions, work programme and targets that will be progressed over the period 2024 to 2026;
- (b) Cabinet adopt the Environmental Policy Statement and continuously strive to meet the on-going commitments contained within the statement (Appendix A) and the actions and targets (Appendix B) to the report;

- (c) the Environment Policy Statement be widely communicated and publicised to help raise public awareness, engagement and active participation on environmental matters across the county and
- (d) Cabinet note the 'Potential Areas of Additional Environmental Activity' outlined in section 5.4 of the report. It is intended that these additional areas of activity will be subject to further development and, where appropriate, any associated budget implications will be considered as part of this year's MTFP budget setting process. Widely communicate and publicise the Environment Policy Statement to help raise public awareness, engagement and active participation on environmental matters across the county.

#### **34. REPORT OF THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES**

##### **Building our Data Capability - Data Academy Pilot**

The report outlined the need to develop our data skills and capabilities and sought approval for the proposed establishment of a 'Data Academy' and associated use of unallocated Apprenticeship Levy to fund (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix B).

The report was introduced by Councillor Wearmouth and he highlighted the key points.

The report was supported by members.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet approve the awarding of a pilot programme in data skill apprenticeships to the apprenticeship provider 'Multiverse' with a Government Levy spend of £0.6m (excluding VAT).

#### **35. 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 C).

The report was introduced by Councillor Ploszaj which was focussed on giving people cleaner options for travel. The scheme would be complete in two phases and was fully funded by Transport North East. It was due for completion by March 2024.

**RESOLVED** that

##### **Ponteland to Callerton Phase 2**

- (a) Cabinet approve the revised phase 2 approach and approve the additional funds of £0.518 million to deliver phase 2 and progress to scheme completion; and
- (b) Cabinet approve the inclusion of £0.518 million to the Capital Programme in 2023-24.

## **36. REPORT OF THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES**

### **Corporate Performance – Quarter 4 2022/23 Outturn**

The report provided a summary of the progress against the Council's three Corporate Plan priorities using the Council's performance at the end of Quarter 4, 2022/23 (Q4) (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix D).

The report was presented by Councillor Wearmouth. The report provided detail on how the Council was performing in the delivery of its three key priorities and he highlighted some of the key performance issues.

Councillor Stewart referred to the amazing work done by the Council's teams but it was unfortunate that some staff received abuse from the public in carrying out their work. He made a plea to the public to treat staff with courtesy.

Councillor Pattison commended the work of Northumberland Communities Together which had helped so many vulnerable people during the pandemic and which had gone on to be a dedicated and proactive team providing much needed support to the most vulnerable. They had dealt with 11,833 referrals from 2022 to 2023 and overseen distribution of grant funding of £4,798,710. The Leader agreed and drew members' attention to the performance data on tackling inequalities detailed on page 12.

Councillor Jones welcomed the work done on using local suppliers and NCT. She thanked the officers involved for this significant piece of work which showed the Council's performance in its key areas.

Councillor Renner Thompson referred to the achievements made in education, but also in early years settings, increased breast feeding rates, and lower rates of childhood obesity.

The Leader acknowledged that there were some challenges and areas where the Authority wanted to do better such as the delivery of affordable housing, and work was ongoing to do this in a difficult market.

### **RESOLVED that:-**

- (a) Cabinet note the progress against the three Corporate Priorities as summarised in the report; and

- (b) Cabinet agree to progress against the three Corporate Priorities at end of Quarter 4 2022/23 being reported to Full Council at its November meeting.

**37. REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR LOOKING AFTER OUR COMMUNITIES**

**Food & Feed, Safety & Standards Service Plan 2023/24**

The report presented to the Cabinet, for its consideration the Food and Feed, Safety and Standards Service Plan for 2023/24 (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix E).

The report was presented by Councillor Stewart. He drew members' attention to the key points. 98.6% of the County's food businesses had a food hygiene rating of satisfactory to very good (3 to 5 stars), which compared favourably with both the national average of 96.9 % and regional average of 98.1%. He thanked the staff and businesses in the County who played their part.

The Leader remarked that he wanted to see the Produced in Northumberland scheme developed even further and work would begin on this soon.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet receive and adopt the Food and Feed, Safety and Standards Service Plan for 2023/24.

**CHAIR**.....

**DATE**.....