

DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET SINCE LAST OSC MEETING AND FORTHCOMING CABINET DECISIONS - DECEMBER 2023 TO 16 JANUARY 2024

DECISION	CABINET DATE/DECISION
Cabinet Papers – 12 December 2023	https://northumberland.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=140&MId=2257
Budget 2024-25 – Draft Engagement Document	12 December 2023 RESOLVED that the Draft Budget Engagement Document be agreed as the basis for consultation with residents, business and partners on the 2024-25 Budget proposals.
Budget 2024-25 and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2024-2028	12 December 2023 RESOLVED that: (a) Cabinet review and note the revisions to the assumptions (and the risks) within the 2024-25 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan; (b) Cabinet note that further work is required to refine and finalise the Medium-Term Financial Plan; (c) Cabinet note that the revenue implications of the Capital Programme are still to be updated; and (d) Cabinet note that there are still budget balancing measures required to be identified over the term of the Medium-Term Financial Plan and that it is intended that budget balancing measures for the two years 2024-25 and 2025-26 are agreed at the full Council meeting on 21 February 2024.
Setting of the Council Tax Base	12 December 2023 RESOLVED that Cabinet approve the council tax base for 2024-25 as detailed within Appendix A, equating to 112,185.46 Band D equivalent dwellings. This is an increase of 2,033.16 Band D equivalents from 2023-24.
Risk Management Report Update	12 December 2023 RESOLVED that: (a) Cabinet agree the contents of the report in accordance with its responsibility for ensuring effective risk management throughout the organisation; and (b) Cabinet note that this report will be presented to the next meeting of Audit Committee as a source of assurance in its role of monitoring the effective development and operation of risk management and risk-related issues across the County Council, and as part of its ongoing

	evaluation of the framework of governance, risk management and control within Northumberland County Council's accounting group boundary.
Financial Performance - Position at the end of September 2023	<p>12 December 2023</p> <p>RESOLVED that:</p> <p>(a) Cabinet approve the re-profiling to the Capital Programme of £55.961 million from 2023-24 to 2024-25 to reflect estimated expenditure levels in the current financial year; and.</p> <p>(b) Cabinet note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the projected overspend on services of £0.593 million and the assumptions outlined in this report. • the projected net overspend of £0.949 million after accounting for outstanding inflationary pressures and the utilisation of the Exceptional Inflation Reserve and contingency. • 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 N; and • the details of capital project reprofiling shown at Appendix O.
Q2 Corporate Performance Report	<p>12 December 2023</p> <p>RESOLVED the progress against the three Corporate Priorities as summarised in the report be noted.</p>
Summary of New Capital Proposals considered by Officer Capital Strategy Group	<p>12 December 2023</p> <p>(1) Blyth Relief Road</p> <p>(a) Cabinet authorise the allocation of £0.561 million from the 2023-24 budget allocation for the Salt Barns project to the Blyth Relief Road project. Then subsequently reallocate £0.561 million from the Blyth Relief Road project to the Salt Barns project in 2024-25; and</p>

	<p>(b) Cabinet authorise the amendment of the Medium-Term Financial Plan spend profile for the Blyth Relief Road as set out in Table 2.</p> <p>(2) Kylee House New Recreation Area</p> <p>(a) Cabinet approve spend of £0.271 million for a recreation area and secure walls to the High Dependency Unit at Kylee House. Note the spend is externally funded by the Department for Education (DfE); and</p> <p>(b) Cabinet authorise the amendment of the capital programme as outlined in the spend profile in Table 1.</p> <p>(3) Kylee House New Media System</p> <p>(a) Cabinet approve spend of £0.043 million for a new media system at Kylee House. Note the spend is externally funded by the Department for Education (DfE); and</p> <p>(b) Cabinet authorise the amendment of the capital programme to include the proposed spend in 2023-24</p>
<p>Adaptations for Disabled People</p>	<p>12 December 2023</p> <p>RESOLVED that:-</p> <p>(a) Cabinet approve the revised version of the Council's discretionary housing grants policy attached as the Annex to the report, which adds to the existing policy two new elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a scheme under which non-means-tested grant of up to £6500 (a figure which may be revised to take account of changing costs) will be offered to fund the cost of urgently-needed adaptations for people with a rapidly-progressing health condition that is expected to result in their death; • the transfer to the adaptations budget of funding responsibility for ceiling track hoists, which are currently funded through the Council's equipment loan service, and an amendment to the discretionary grant policy to enable the full cost of this adaptation to be covered by grant, so that people who need it will still not be required to contribute towards the cost, regardless of their financial means; <p>(b) the Executive Director for Adults, Ageing & Wellbeing be requested to prepare a future report on the options for further changes to the discretionary housing grants policy, at a point when the future level of costs chargeable against the capital grant from the</p>

	<p>Government for adaptations and other social care capital costs can more confidently be predicted; and</p> <p>(c) Cabinet confirm the inclusion of the additional Disabled Facilities Capital Grant funding of £290,484 in 2023/24 to the Council's capital plan, and note that a small further addition to the national total of this Capital Grant is expected in 2024/25, though the allocation of 2024/25 funding between local authorities has not yet been confirmed.</p>
<p>Outcomes of the Tender for New School Buildings for Astley High and Whytrig Middle Schools</p>	<p>12 December 2023</p> <p>RESOLVED that:-</p> <p>(a) Cabinet note the outcomes of the tender process and agree to delegate the final award of contract to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council;</p> <p>(b) Cabinet agree to issue an early works instruction as an extension of the current preconstruction services agreement (PCSA) up to the value of £1.4m to prevent any increases in cost or delays in programme until the award of contract is complete in February 2024; and</p> <p>(c) Cabinet note the revised allocation of £50,427,220 capital funding (an increase of £13,282,200, £10,282,200 NCC borrowing, which is subject to Full Council approval) to amend the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan 2024-28 to deliver the scheme.</p>
<p>Education, SEND and Skills Report 2022-23</p>	<p>12 December 2023</p> <p>RESOLVED that:</p> <p>(1) Cabinet agree that Members provide scrutiny and challenge to the service responses and developments detailed in the Education, SEND and Skills Annual Report for 22-23 as appropriate;</p> <p>(2) Cabinet receive and review the annual report and recognise the performance given the continued challenges in bouncing back from the impact of the pandemic;</p> <p>(3) Cabinet note the education achievements of our children, young people, and residents across Northumberland in 2022/23; and</p> <p>(4) Cabinet note the valuable support provided to all learners within:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Early Years Settings and Schools · Special Education Needs support and service

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Virtual School · Learning and Skills Service · School Organisation and Resources
<p>Northumberland Leisure and Wellbeing Procurement and Provision</p>	<p>12 December 2023</p> <p>RESOLVED that:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Cabinet acknowledge that the delegated authority decision notice was approved on 14th November 2023 enabling the award of this contract to be made by the Executive Director of Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities to the successful operator, to deliver the Northumberland Leisure and Well-being Service; (b) Cabinet note and accept the report as a conclusion of the leisure procurement conducted in accordance with the Contract Concessions Regulations 2016; (c) Cabinet agree, in principle, that the Dave Stephens Centre and Blyth Beach Huts are packaged within a combined Community Asset Transfer to Blyth Valley Enterprise from 1 April 2024, and that the transfer is supported with a one-year revenue allocation of £50,000 and a £72,000 capital allocation to cover outstanding maintenance; (d) Cabinet agree that responsibility for the management of Northburn Sports and Community Centre is transferred to Northumberland County Council from 1 April 2024 with a two-year revenue contribution of £58,000 per annum; (e) Cabinet agree that responsibility for the management of Druridge Bay Fitness Centre is transferred to Northumberland County Council from 1 April 2024 with a two-year revenue contribution of £61,000 per annum; (f) Cabinet agree that responsibility for the management of Rothbury Sports Centre is transferred to Northumberland County Council from 1 April 2024 with a two-year revenue contribution of £48,000 per annum; (g) Cabinet agree to support Hirst Welfare Centre Trustees to commence management of the Hirst Welfare Centre from 1 April 2024 with a year one contribution of £250,000, a year two contribution of £180,000 and a year three contribution of £100,000 (funded from the Public Health Grant); and

	<p>(h) Cabinet note the preferred bidder and the outcome of the procurement exercise is Places for People Leisure Management Limited (PfPLM).</p>
<p>Merger of North and South Northumberland Coroner Areas</p>	<p>12 December 2023</p> <p>RESOLVED that Cabinet agree:</p> <p>(a) to the merger of the North Northumberland and the South Northumberland Coroner areas and to endorse the Business Case for the merger included on the agenda as a confidential appendix for submission to the Ministry of Justice;</p> <p>(b) that the name of the new service will be the ‘Northumberland Coroner Area’;</p> <p>(c) to authorise the Executive Director of Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Looking After our Communities to take all necessary steps to progress the Business Case including (but not limited to) making amendments or adjustments to the Business Case and to authorise the submission of the Business Case to the Ministry of Justice on behalf of the Authority; and</p> <p>(d) to authorise the Executive Director of Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Looking After our Environment, to take any further steps necessary to facilitate the merger of North and South Northumberland Coroner areas on behalf of the Authority.</p>
<p>PFI Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (FF&E) Responsibilities</p>	<p>12 December 2023</p> <p>RESOLVED that</p> <p>(a) Cabinet approve the removal of the FF&E element of the current NEFRA PFI contract, in order to realise efficiencies in the region of £1,375,750 from its proposed effective date of 1st April 2022 up to the expiration date of the contract in 2035/36 and delegates authority to the Chief Fire Officer to authorise the deed of variation to be entered into, to effect this variation; and</p> <p>(b) an earmarked reserve be created to facilitate an alternative more cost effective solution for FF&E ongoing repair, maintenance and parts, following the proposed withdrawal from the existing FF&E element of the current NEFRA PFI contract. The reserve will be created from the remainder from the efficiency saving of £1,375,750 after the existing savings target of £60k pa has been realised.</p>

Cabinet Papers - 16 February 2024	https://northumberland.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=140&Mid=2288
Planning Service Performance	<p>RESOLVED that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the recommendation from Scrutiny to consider investment in the enforcement team and the addition of a rolling fighting fund to support this work be accepted; (b) the recommendation from Scrutiny to also consider additional support for the Planning Department to deal with the increase in the number of planning applications and enquiries received be considered as part of the forthcoming budget process; and (c) a policy conference around the planning process and enforcement be set up.
Budget 2024-25 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2024-28 Update	<p>RESOLVED that the update be noted.</p>
Budget 2024-25 , Medium Term Financial Plan 2024-28 and 30 Year Business Plan for the Housing Revenue Account	<p>RESOLVED that:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cabinet approve the Housing Revenue Account 2024-25 budget as detailed within Appendix 1, which will reduce the balance on the HRA reserve from £28.175 million at 31 March 2024, to £19.193 million at 31 March 2025; and Northumberland County Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Tuesday, 16 January 2024 Agenda Item No Topic Decision 2 note the indicative budgets to 2027-28 which will reduce the balance of the HRA reserve to £13.708 million; 2. Cabinet note that from 1 April 2024, social housing rent will be increased by Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1.00% as per the previously agreed Rent Standard. The budget detailed in Appendix 1 assumes that rents will rise by CPI 6.70% plus 1.00% with recoverable service charges also rising by CPI plus 1.00% for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025; 3. Cabinet approve the increase of 7.70% for housing rents from 1 April 2024 in line with the Government rent standard; 4. Cabinet approve the increase of 7.70% for housing service charges from 1 April 2024; 5. Cabinet approve the Non-Recurrent Growth Item Hardship Fund of £0.350 million for 2024-25 to support NCC tenants who may, due to their income, not be eligible to receive any financial assistance through existing benefits (Housing Benefit/Universal Credit/Discretionary Housing Payment) (detailed in points 6.5 & 6.11);

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Cabinet approve that any unspent balance in relation to the Hardship Fund for 2023-24, can be carried forward as an earmarked reserve into 2024-25 (detailed in point 6.5) and added to the 2024-25 in-year budget allocation; 7. Cabinet note the indicative 30-year Housing Revenue Account business plan as detailed within Appendix 1; 8. Cabinet approve the estimated pay inflationary increase for 2024-25 of 4.00% totalling £0.447 million (detailed in point 6.10); 9. Cabinet approve the Non-Pay Inflation Schedule for 2024-25 totalling £0.280 million (detailed in point 6.10); 10. Cabinet approve the Recurrent Growth as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Housing Disrepair of £0.275 million from 2024-25 to cover the costs of housing disrepair mitigation and resolution; and note that the budget will be reduced by £0.150 million after 5 years (detailed in point 6.11). b) Additional staffing budget of £0.367 million from 2024-25 (detailed in point 6.11). c) Additional budget for consumable materials for void properties of £0.159 million from 2024-25 (detailed in point 6.11). 11. Cabinet note the Recurrent Saving in relation to the Introduction of phased Service Charges for Sheltered Housing tenants, with estimated additional income of £0.120 million in 2024-25 (50.00%), £0.180 million in 2025-26 (75.00%) and £0.240 million 2026-27 (100.00%) as agreed within the budget and MTFP 2023-24 (detailed in point 6.12); 12. Cabinet note and approve the expenditure plan relating to £41.434 million which has been set aside over the 4-year period 2024-25 to 2027-28 in the HRA Capital programme to invest in Affordable Housing. Details are set out in Appendix 1; and 13. Cabinet approve an amendment to the Housing Rent policy, to enable re-let of HRA properties at Formula Rent from April 2025 (detailed in point 6.29).
<p>Notification of the Estimated Collection Fund Balances 2023-24 – Council Tax and Business Rates</p>	<p>RESOLVED that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Cabinet approve the declaration of a surplus on the Collection Fund for the year ending 31 March 2024 in relation to Council Tax of £4.486 million to be distributed

	<p>to the Council and Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner in accordance with Council Tax regulations; the Council's share being £4.149 million;</p> <p>(b) Cabinet note the overall estimated surplus on the Collection Fund for the year ending 31 March 2024 in relation to Business Rates of £6.943 million; the Council's share being £3.471 million;</p> <p>(c) Cabinet note the distribution of the estimated Collection Fund surplus for Council Tax to the Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner of £0.337 million, and the distribution of the estimated Collection Fund surplus for Business Rates of £3.471 million to the Secretary of State; and</p> <p>(d) Cabinet note the inclusion of the Council's share of the estimated Collection Fund balances distributable in 2023-24 of £4.149 million surplus and £3.471 million surplus for Council Tax and Business Rates respectively, within the Council's budget 2024-25.</p>
<p>Summary of New Capital Proposals considered by Officer Capital Strategy Group</p> <p>(1) Greensfield Farm Alnwick</p> <p>(2) Lyndon Walk</p> <p>(3) Dene Park Windows</p>	<p>RESOLVED that:</p> <p>Cabinet approve the spend of £0.333 million to acquire 2 3-bedroom houses on the Wynyard Homes Greensfield Farm development in Alnwick. Note this will be funded using in year capital receipts and retained capital receipts within the Housing Revenue Account.</p> <p>(i) Cabinet approve the updated spend of the Lyndon Walk 13 bungalows proposal of £2.796 million. This will be funded from Housing Revenue Account reserves; and</p> <p>(ii) Cabinet approve the amendment to the Capital Programme for the updated spend as profiled in the report.</p> <p>(i) Cabinet approve the spend of £0.184 million to replace the windows at Dene Park House. Note that the funding for this project will come from the existing Property Stewardship Budget allocation within the Capital Programme; and</p> <p>(ii) Cabinet approve the amendment to the Capital Programme to reallocate £0.184 million from the Property Stewardship Budget to Dene Park House in 2023-24.</p> <p>(i) Cabinet approve the amendment to the Capital Programme to establish the Energy Central Campus</p>

<p>(4) Energising Blyth Programme – Energy Central Institute</p>	<p>Phase 2 (Energy Central Institute) as a defined project in the Capital Programme with a total budget of £15.421 million as profiled in the body of the report.</p> <p>(ii) Cabinet approve the proposal to accelerate capital spend of £1.404 million in advance of business case approval to drive forward project development inclusive of spend in 2022-23.</p> <p>(iii) authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Place and Regeneration to enter into a contract to the value of £1.060 million to appoint a multidisciplinary Design Team, subject to the appropriate procurement processes being followed.</p> <p>(iv) Cabinet approve the spend of £0.750 million to commence work on demolishing Keel Row Shopping Centre and 3-5/7-9 Bridge Street.</p> <p>(v) authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Place and Regeneration to enter into a contract for the demolition of Keel Row Shopping Centre and 3-5/7-9 Bridge Street, subject to the appropriate procurement processes being followed.</p>
<p>(5) Energising Blyth Programme – Technical Fit-Out and Equipment</p>	<p>(i) Cabinet approve the amendment to the Capital Programme to establish the Energy Central Campus Phase 1 – Technical Fit-Out and Equipment as a defined project with a total budget of £1.450 million as profiled in the body of the report.</p> <p>(ii) Authority be delegated, in accordance with the Local Assurance Framework, to the Council’s s151 Officer following consideration by the Energising Blyth Programme Board to approve the Full Business Case and report any capital implications to Capital Strategy Group for consideration in the Capital Programme.</p>
<p>(6) Woodhorn Lift Replacement</p>	<p>(i) Cabinet approve the spend of £0.121 million to replace the lift in the Winding House at Woodhorn. Note that this is funded from the existing Property Stewardship budget in the Capital Programme.</p> <p>(ii) Cabinet approve the amendment to the Capital Programme to reallocate £0.121 million from the Property Stewardship Budget to Woodhorn Lift Replacement.</p> <p>(iii) Cabinet approve the novation of the MEND grant and accept the Grant Funding Agreement Terms (subject to Legal review) from the Arts Council for the sum of £0.107 million.</p> <p>(i) Cabinet note the spend of £0.125 million for the refurbishment of the County Hall Print Room. Also noting</p>

<p>(7) County Hall – Print Room Refurbishment</p>	<p>that the refurbishment work commenced on 28 November 2023, and that this is funded from the existing Property Stewardship budget in the Capital Programme.</p> <p>(ii) Cabinet approve the amendment to the Capital Programme to reallocate £0.125 million from the Property Stewardship budget to County Hall – Print Room Refurbishment.</p>
<p>Ashington Regeneration Programme – Update, Funding and Site Acquisitions</p>	<p>RESOLVED that:</p> <p>(a) Cabinet approve the following in respect of site acquisitions and required funding:</p> <p>i) that the Council complete the acquisition of the Wansbeck Square site with vacant possession, as previously agreed in principle, at a market value of £1,365,000, plus Stamp Duty Land Tax.</p> <p>ii) that the Council complete the acquisition of the Woodhorn Road site with vacant possession, as previously agreed in principle, at a market value of £210,000 plus Stamp Duty Land Tax.</p> <p>iii) that the Council approves an allocation of up to £160,000 of revenue funding from the Council’s Regeneration Reserve Development Fund to pay for the holding costs which will be incurred, following acquisition of the Wansbeck Square and Woodhorn Road sites as set out in Section 6 of the report;</p> <p>(b) Cabinet note that following a competitive tender process, Identity Consult has been appointed as the Design Team to take forward ambitious plans for the redevelopment of Wansbeck Square and progress the designs for the Public Realm and Connectivity project, which will enable the creation of Grand Corner Gateway; and</p> <p>(c) Cabinet approve the development of a high-level business case to the North of Tyne Combined Authority in order to secure funding from the Northumberland Line Economic Corridor Investment Fund for the redevelopment of Wansbeck Square, with approval of the final bid submission delegated to the Council’s S151 Officer. The Accountable Body will monitor the use of funding subsequently awarded and ensure adherence to the Grant Agreement.</p>
<p>National Funding Formula & School Funding 2024-25</p>	<p>RESOLVED that:</p> <p>(a) Cabinet approve the proposals for the continuing implementation of the National Funding Formula for 2024/25 as agreed previously, in line with the recommendation of the Schools Forum meeting of 22</p>

	<p>November 2023 and the results of the subsequent consultation exercise held with schools;</p> <p>(b) Cabinet approve the transfer of up to 0.5% funding from the Schools' Block to the High Needs Block, in line with recommendation of the Schools Forum meeting of 22 November 2023 and the results of the subsequent consultation exercise held with schools; and</p> <p>(c) approval of the final formula values be delegated to the Executive Director of Children Young People & Education and Cabinet Member for Inspiring Young People in line with the principles agreed at Schools Forum on 22 November 2023, once the final budget allocations are released by the Department for Education in December 2023.</p>
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FORTHCOMING CABINET DECISIONS

<p>Adult Social Care: Extra Care and Supported Living Strategy</p> <p>To present the updated Extra Care and Supported Living Strategy</p>	<p>13 February 2024</p>
<p>Budget 2024-25, Medium Term Financial Plan 2024-28</p> <p>The report presents the updated Budget 2024-25 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2024-2028 to Cabinet (for recommendation to County Council) following the receipt of the provisional local government settlement which is due to be announced in December 2023. The report will also include an update on the deliverability of savings.</p>	<p>13 February 2024</p> <p>Council 21 February 2024</p>
<p>Corporate Fraud Policies for 2024-25</p> <p>To provide an update on the County Council's policies in relation to Corporate Fraud activity and seek approval for updated policies.</p>	<p>13 February 2024</p>
<p>North East Investment Zone</p> <p>The report provides an update on the North East Investment Zone. Cabinet are asked to note the regional proposals and asked to approve the inclusion of a Business Rates Retention Site.</p>	<p>13 February 2024</p>
<p>School Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for the 2025/2026 Academic Year</p> <p>This report informs Cabinet of the outcomes of the consultation on School Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for the 2025/26 Academic Year as required by the School Admissions Code 2021. Approval (determination) of these admission arrangements is also sought.</p>	<p>13 February 2024</p>
<p>Summary of New Capital Proposals considered by Officer Capital Strategy Group</p> <p>This is a summary of all of the reports discussed by the Capital Strategy Group on 20 December 2023</p>	<p>13 February 2024</p>
<p>Climate Change Action Plan 2024-26</p> <p>To replace the expiring Climate Change Action Plan 2021-23 and to set out our intended strategies for reaching our climate change targets across the next three years and beyond.</p>	<p>12 March 2024</p>
<p>Financial Performance 2023-24 – Position at end of December 2023</p> <p>The report will provide Cabinet with the revenue and capital financial performance against budget as at 31 December 2023.</p>	<p>12 March 2024</p>