

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

CORPORATE SERVICES AND ECONOMIC GROWTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the **Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in the Meeting Space, Block 1 Floor 2, County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF on Monday, 6 September 2021 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillor D Bawn
(Chair in the Chair)

COUNCILLORS

L. Dunn
J. Beynon
P. Jackson

N. Oliver
M. Robinson
A. Wallace

OFFICERS

H. Bowers
D. Lally
S. McNaughton
R. O'Farrell

S. Nicholson

Democratic Services Officer
Chief Executive
Head of Economy & Regeneration
Executive Director Corporate
Services, Planning & Economy
Scrutiny Co-ordinator

1. Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Murphy and Ploszaj.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 2 August 2021, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman with the addition of Councillor Dunn to the attendance list.

In response to a question regarding a Whistleblowing report. Clarification would be sought at Chairman's Group.

3. FORWARD PLAN OF CABINET DECISIONS

Members were informed of two reports that would be presented to the Committee on 11 October: the Energising Blyth Programme (Energy Central Campus) and the Culture and Creative Zone pilot for Northumberland also on 11 October.

RESOLVED that the latest Forward Plan of key decisions be noted.

4. NORTHUMBERLAND LINE

The Cabinet report provided an update on progress on the Northumberland Line project in the last 12 months including the achievement of several significant milestone and an overview of the next stages of the project and their funding implications.

R O'Farrell, Executive Director Corporate Services, Planning and Economy introduced the report and the progress made. Morgan Sindell had been appointed as the main contractors for the station and structures construction. An application had been submitted for the Transport and Work Acts Order which gives powers for compulsory purchase. The public enquiry would start early in November. All but one planning application had been submitted for the stations and Network Rail had started preliminary works on the actual track works.

The report also referred to a raft of financial recommendations in relation to receipts of external funding and the reprofiling from the Medium Terms Financial Plan and sought delegation of approval to the Head of Paid Services or nominated Executive Director to execute all contracts relating to the Northumberland Line project.

Approval was also sought for the commencement of two procurement exercises – The Integrated Programme Management forecast and the Network Rail Asset Protection Agreement forecast.

Members were informed that one of the recommendations was that proposed station car parks would be free of charge for the first two years which would be reviewed thereafter.

Following questions from Members; it was established that:

- Plans would be available for Bebside and Newsham Station online on the planning portal.
- The review of the car parks would be carried out by the Economy and Regeneration Team with detailed surveys of the use of car park and residential streets which would inform a decision.
- Work was ongoing with the Bus Service Improvement Programme and local cycling and walking corridors that would feed into stations.
- In last 12 months and early study had been conducted to look at opportunities, working alongside colleagues from the North of Tyne Combined Authority. That work was now complete, and a report would be brought back to the committee. The County's new local plan would have an early review to look at the impact on the economic corridor on housing and on employment land and a proposal for £35 million had been submitted to Government.
- The lines would be managed by the DfT and the service would be absorbed into the Northern franchise.

- The local plan would consider local and the wider impact, eg housing. The suggestion of a community bus was a good idea and would be fed back to colleagues.
- A localised level of planning was going ahead, and a local transport initiative would be considered.
- The ultimate ambition was an integrated system which would allow a single ticket to be bought, ie smart card technology, however not everyone had the ability to access smart card technology. Earlier this year the Joint Transport Committee published plan and one of its key objectives was ticketing as a single point of contact.
- Projected costs were an ongoing concern
- Legislations required CPOs were a last resort, and negotiation had to be carried out until the last minute.
- The comment regarding extra room on trains for cyclists was acknowledged and a social value work steam was being looked at and work ongoing with the cultural team. The old stations on Bedlington platform were redundant and work was being carried out with Network Rail looking at a range of options.

Thanks were conveyed to all officers involved.

RESOLVED that Cabinet be advised that this Committee support the recommendations as outlined in the report and specifically to the proposal of the two years' free parking.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

The committee was asked to review and note the Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme and Monitoring Report for the 2021/22 council year.

RESOLVED that this information was noted.

6. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

(a) That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items on the Agenda as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act, and

(b) That the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure for the following reasons:-

Agenda Item Paragraph of Part I of Schedule 12A

9	3 - Contains information relating to business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that
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information).

AND The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the interest in disclosure because it contains confidential information which is subject to commercial Non-Disclosure Agreements and because disclosure could adversely affect the business reputation or confidence in the person/organisation and could adversely affect commercial revenue.

7. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

RESOLVED that the confidential minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC held on 2 August 2021, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman

Chair _____

Date _____