

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

At a Meeting of **Cabinet** held in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Spennymoor on **Wednesday 12 February 2014 at 10.00 am**

**Present:**

**Councillor S Henig (Leader of the Council) in the Chair**

**Members of the Committee:**

Councillors J Brown, N Foster, L Hovvels, O Johnson, A Napier, M Nicholls, M Plews, B Stephens and E Tomlinson

**Also Present:**

Councillors J Armstrong, A Batey, P Conway, M Dixon, B Graham and A Surtees

### **1 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **2 Declarations of interest**

Councillor E Tomlinson declared an interest in item 10, as a Board Member of Durham Tees Valley Airport.

### **3 General Fund Medium Term Financial Plan, 2014/15 to 2016/17 and Revenue and Capital Budget 2014/15 [Key Decision: CORP/R/13/02]**

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Corporate Director, Resources and Assistant Chief Executive which provided comprehensive financial information in order for Cabinet to agree a 2014/15 balanced revenue budget, an outline Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP (4)) for 2014/15 to 2016/17 and a fully funded capital programme for recommendation to the County Council meeting on 26 February 2014 (for copy see file of minutes).

Councillor J Armstrong, Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Management Board advised that the scrutiny committees had considered in depth the budget proposals put forward by Cabinet. He advised of the drop in sessions for members and the meetings which had been held which had been supported by officers, and having considered whether there were any alternative options to propose the members were confident that the policy changes would successfully deliver the reductions, and congratulated cabinet colleagues on the difficult decisions it needed to make to deliver its reduced budget.

Cabinet members spoke of the continuation of the unprecedented financial reductions being imposed on the Authority, and how further reductions in service were consistently becoming harder to find. Cabinet would continue to lobby the government on the unfair distribution of funds, following the eradication of the equalisation block, and they urged all members to do so too. The consultation exercise which had been undertaken with the public and stakeholders had shaped the recommendations being proposed to full Council.

**Resolved:**

That the recommendations contained in the report be approved.

**4 Housing Revenue Account Medium Term Financial Plan 2014/15 to 2016/17 and 2014/15 Budget  
[Key Decision: CORP/R/13/02]**

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Corporate Director, Resources and Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development which sought approval of the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2014/15 to 2016/17 and the 2014/15 budget (for copy see file of minutes).

**Resolved:**

That the recommendations contained in the report be approved.

**5 Proposal to close Roseberry College and Sixth Form with effect from 31 August 2014  
[Key Decision: CAS/06/13]**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director, Children and Adults Services which provided detailed information in relation to the future of Roseberry College and Sixth Form from 31 August 2014, and to consider the views of stakeholders. The report further sought agreement to close Roseberry College and Sixth Form with effect from 31 August 2014 taking account of the Local Authority's duties as prescribed in the Education and Inspections Act 2006, to secure sufficient school places, and to secure good outcomes for all children and young people in their local areas (for copy see file of minutes).

Representations were made by Mr B Oliver, Chairman of the governing body on behalf of the governors of the College. He advised how the school and governing body had been aware of some difficulties at the school which they were addressing, that the governors were disappointed at the way in which the proposed closure had been handled, that there were inaccuracies in the report, and that there had been no declarations by officers in the meeting of a conflict of interest. He went on to explain that not only was the education of pupils going to be severely affected,

however the college was also a focal point in the community with much and varied activity. He requested on behalf of the pupils, parents, school and governing body that the college be kept open.

Laura Wolfe, a parent of pupils at the school emphasised the impact that the college closure would have on her son and other pupils, many of whom would have to move part the way through their course and the continuation of this elsewhere would be unlikely. She urged Cabinet to keep open the college in order to minimise the impact on the pupils and alleviate any stress on them from such a move.

The Corporate Director, Children and Adult Services acknowledged the impact on those pupils who were mid course and that the authority would work closely with pupils and other schools to minimise this. The academies are also working with the Authority and have already helped the successful transitional to a new school of many pupils. The college had 67% of surplus places which could not be sustained.

Cabinet members spoke of the inspection results over the last three years being only satisfactory, that the pupil numbers at the college had already been falling well before the proposals for closure came forward, that the lower pupil numbers at the college brought less finance and the impact of this no longer supported the delivery of a wider curriculum. Members were of the view that all pupils through the county should have a first class education and this would not be possible at the college.

**Resolved:**

That the recommendations contained in the report be approved.

**6 Seaham New Housing Masterplan  
[Key Decision: R&ED/08/13]**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Economic Development which provided detail in relation to the procurement of a dedicated masterplan to guide planning, design and delivery of a number of specific sites, located to the north-west of Seaham town centre. The report further outlined the assessment and principles underlying the delivery of the sites and provided information in relation to the way in which land would be released for development to optimise the potential for capital receipts and the achievement of wider economic and environmental benefits for Seaham (for copy see file of minutes).

**Resolved:**

That the recommendations contained in the report be approved.

**7 County Durham Partnership Update**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which provided an update on issues being addressed by the County Durham Partnership (CDP) including summaries from the Board, the five Thematic Partnerships and all Area

Action Partnerships (AAPs). The report also included updates on other key initiatives being carried out across the county (for copy see file of minutes).

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

**8 Welfare Reform Update**

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Corporate Director, Resources and Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development which presented the Authority's current understanding of the impacts of welfare reform and to use this understanding to further enhance the council's support to the affected households in County Durham (for copy see file of minutes).

**Resolved:**

That the recommendations contained in the report be approved.

**9 Evaluation of Selective Licensing at Wembley**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Economic Development which outlined the background to the Selective Licensing Scheme in Wembley, Easington Colliery, designed to address issues in the Private Rented Housing Sector. It further summarised the evaluation of the Selective Licensing Scheme to determine whether the area should be re-designated at the expiry of the current term in February 2014 (for copy see file of minutes).

**Resolved:**

That the recommendations contained in the report be approved.

**10 Durham Tees Valley Airport - Deed of Variation of Pensions Admission Agreement**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director Resources which informed of a delegated decision by the Corporate Director Resources, made under urgency provisions to agree the sealing of a Counter Part Deed of Variation of a Pensions Admission Agreement in relation to staff employed at Durham Tees Valley Airport (DTV) (for copy see file of minutes).

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.