



## **RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**

The following is a record of the decisions taken at the meeting of **CABINET** on **THURSDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2008**.

These decisions will come into force and may be implemented from **6 OCTOBER 2008**, unless the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or its Sub-Committees object to any such decision and call it in.

### **Responses to the Draft Sustainable Community Strategy**

#### **Summary**

The Cabinet considered a Report of the Head of Policy and Improvement seeking agreement to the Council's response to the draft Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for the period 2008 to 2023, as attached at appendix 2. Principal authorities are statutorily required to develop, alongside their partners, a sustainable community strategy that provides a shared long term vision and high level plan for the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of communities within the area.

The County Durham Partnership has developed the draft SCS alongside the Local Area Agreement for 2008 – 2011, which is now regarded as the delivery mechanism for the most pressing priorities emerging from the SCS.

The long term vision for the Strategy is expressed as: 'A county where strong economic growth is matched with a community that believes in itself and aims high, and where everyone can achieve to their potential and enjoy a high quality of life.'

There will be a scrutiny role for Members in relation to the performance of the Partnership against the outcomes and targets it has set out and from 2009, the Comprehensive Area Assessment will provide independent and external evaluation of whether the Council and its partners are achieving these shared outcomes and an assessment of the impact on local people.

A proposed response on behalf of the County Council is attached at Appendix 2. There are also a number of suggested textual changes to improve readability or expand on specific points and some additional suggestions of 'some things we will do', which should be incorporated into the redraft of the summary and main document.

**Decision**

The Cabinet agreed the proposed response as attached at Appendix 2 of the Report.

**Raising Expectations: Enabling the System to Deliver****Summary**

The Cabinet considered a Report of the Corporate Director, Children and Young People's Services about Government proposals to transfer funding and commissioning responsibility for the delivery of education and training for young people aged 16-19 from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to individual local authorities from 2010 and seeking a decision on proposals for the development of a sub-regional grouping to deliver the commissioning responsibility.

In Spring 2008 the Government published its *White Paper Raising Expectations: Enabling the System to Deliver*. This set out the Government's proposals to ensure that all 16 and 17 year olds participate in education or training and to ensure that every adult has the chance to improve their skills for employment. The proposals will see the abolition of the Learning and Skills Council and the transfer of funding for the education and training of 16 – 19 year olds to local authorities. This will provide local authorities with the responsibility to commission, amongst other things, places at General Further Education (GFE) Colleges and Sixth Form Colleges.

From 2010 local authorities will have a duty to secure sufficient provision for young people up to the age of 19 (including learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities up to the age of 25 and young people in juvenile custody up to the age of 18). By 2013 local authorities will have a statutory duty to ensure full participation by all 17 year olds in education and training, rising to 18 year olds by 2015.

The Government now requires local authorities to come together to form a regional planning group in each of the 9 Government Office regions. These groups will agree an overall 16 – 18 commissioning plan for the region.

Durham County Council officers believe that the most appropriate proposal would have been for a commissioning group comprising all the Region's local authorities rather than dividing into sub-regional groupings, although this view is not shared by other authorities in the Region.

Given the significant movement between County Durham and both the adjacent conurbations it would not seem appropriate for the County to align itself entirely with one sub-region rather than the other. Thus, it is recommended that County Durham proposes it becomes a sub-region in its own right for this purpose. There are 2 models for this –

- Model “A” (where the Young People’s Learning Agency (YPLA) commissions General Further Education provision for the sub-region), or
- Model “B” (where the sub-region appoints a lead authority to commission GFE provision on their behalf). In both models the local authority would commission post-16 places in its own schools and in sixth form colleges.

It appears that the DCSF is keen that most authorities move rapidly to adopt Model B. This is, in principle, the model preferred by County Council officers. There are, however, substantial resource implications for the authority to manage this work, as additional capacity will be required within Children and Young People’s Services to plan and meet this responsibility. This will need to be considered in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Thus, it was recommended that the Authority volunteers to operate Model B, provided that there is an appropriate provision of resource for the authority from the LSC and/or DCSF to provide adequate capacity for the work involved.

#### **Decision**

The Cabinet agreed to:

- Authorise officers to propose to the Government Office North East and the DCSF that County Durham forms its own sub-region for the purpose of commissioning 16 – 19 education and training.
- Indicate its preference to adopt “Model B” to commission places in General FE Colleges, subject to appropriate provision of resource for the Authority from the LSC and/or the DCSF.
- Delegate to the Corporate Director, Children and Young People’s Services, the authority to prepare the detailed proposal to meet the requirements summarised in paragraph 5 of this report.

### **School Crossing Patrol Service Review**

#### **Summary**

The Cabinet considered a Report of the Acting Corporate Director, Environment about the changes in the management of the School Crossing Patrol Service (SCPS); a review of the SCPS; and recommending a number of policies to ensure that the optimum service can be provided. The proposed policies, which were devised following a thorough examination of the previous management system, set out a framework within the environment Quality Assurance system which will improve the management of the service considerably, and provide a cost effective service to the public. The policies will form the basis of improved procedures to ensure that all staff are adequately trained and supervised, that risks to staff and the public are minimised as far as it is practical, and that the service can be managed not only economically but effectively.

## **Decision**

The Cabinet approved the policies set out in the report and detailed in Appendices A to E thereto.

## **Part B Items during which the meeting was not open to the public (Consideration of exempt or confidential information).**

### **Independent Sector Domiciliary Care Review [Key Decision SHSC/A&CS/06/08]**

The Cabinet considered a Report of the Corporate Director, Adult and Community Services advising of the recommendations in the Business Case of the independent sector domiciliary care review.

The current Independent Sector Domiciliary Care contract has been in place since January 2005 with an extension running until 30 November 2008 pending a full review of the preferred provider strategy and an annual spot provider contract.

It was therefore necessary to carry out a new tendering exercise, so that new 3 – 5 year contracts can be put in place as soon as possible. The new contracts will need to reflect the changes likely to occur as a result of the government's vision for Transforming Social Care.

A number of options were developed, as set out in the full Business Case. Of these, a clear preferred option has emerged proposing 11 zones based around demand for the service, with more than 1 provider in each zone. Providers within a larger geographical zone would be required to work together and cover for each other. Prospective providers would not be awarded more than 4 zones each to allow for continued competition. However, it should be noted that this option is likely to mean significant numbers of service users needing to have a change of provider.

An implementation plan will be developed and a staff communication plan in relation will also be required.

## **Decision**

The Cabinet agreed the preferred option as set out and asked the Corporate Director of Adult and Community Services to develop and implement the necessary changes.

In addition the Corporate Director, Adult and Community Services was provided with delegated authority to let the contract once the tendering exercise has been completed

Lesley Davies, Acting Director of Corporate Services  
29 September 2008

