



RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The following is a record of the decisions taken at the meeting of **CABINET** held on **Wednesday 15 January 2020**. The decisions will come into force and may be implemented from **Monday 27 January 2020** unless the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or its Committees object to any such decision and call it in.

Selective Licensing Scheme [Key Decision: REAL/05/19]

Summary

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services which proposed a Selective Licensing Scheme (SLS) for privately rented homes in parts of County Durham. The scheme covers 64% of the private rented sector (PRS) in the county and, as this is over 20%, it is a legislative requirement to obtain Government approval. Prior to the application being made to Government, the Council is required to consult on the proposals and take account of that consultation. The percentage of PRS covered is subject to change as data continues to be analysed prior to consultation.

The County Durham Housing Strategy 2019 to 2024 has four objectives:

- (a) to provide housing advice, assistance and support for vulnerable people;
- (b) to improve access to housing;
- (c) to deliver homes to meet housing need and demand; and
- (d) to maintain and improve standards across County Durham's housing stock and the wider housing environment.

The fourth objective detailed above specifically includes raising standards in the PRS, developing an approach to selective licencing, addressing empty homes, improving energy efficiency of properties and supporting and maintaining communities. In County Durham the PRS is significant with a total of 56,232 properties representing 22.7% of the total homes in the county.

Whilst there are a number of good quality homes available in the PRS the current market is dominated by smaller terraced properties offering two to three bedrooms. Much of this stock is older, thermally inefficient and in need of repair or refurbishment. As a consequence, low demand in some communities exists. In addition, the lack of access to good quality housing is known to be a contributing factor to inequalities in health, educational attainment and disposable income (poverty).

There are many benefits linked to selective licencing including providing tenants with a greater choice of safe, good quality and well managed homes; and better community and cross tenure relations, reduced anti-social behaviour and help to stabilise and improve local neighbourhoods.

Management standards of PRS properties will improve through establishing clear minimum physical and management standards which can be controlled through the licencing framework. Proactive enforcement action will be taken against both unlicensed properties and/or where there are breaches to the licencing conditions. The SLS will make a significant contribution to a wider strategy of improving the county's towns and villages by improving both housing conditions and access to quality housing. Other initiatives including Registered Social Landlords (RSL) new development, Local Lettings Agency (LLA), Buy to Lease Scheme, Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO).

The key elements of the SLS in Durham are:

- 36,119 properties covering 64% of the PRS stock meet the Government criteria and will be included in the scheme;
- licence designed to promote good landlord practice and be capable of being enforced;
- mandatory licence application for every PRS property within the defined scheme;
- landlords must pass a 'fit and proper person' test in advance of receiving a licence;
- appropriate staffing structure in place to support scheme administration, inspection and enforcement;
- property inspection regime in place;
- support for landlords to comply with the licence; and
- enforcement in cases where appropriate.

Under the Housing Act 2004 Part 3 (Selective Licencing of other Residential Accommodation), the Council can designate an area, or areas, within which the SLS will operate. All private landlords operating within the designated area are required to obtain a licence from the Council for each property which is rented out. The conditions of the licence ensure that the property is managed effectively, and tenants will have added protection against poor landlords.

When applying, proposed licence holders will be required to prove that they are 'fit and proper persons' to hold a licence, and that they have satisfactory management arrangements in place including for dealing with anti-social behaviour.

There are areas within the county that do not form part of the proposal for selective licensing. At this point in time they do not meet the guidance criteria set out by the Secretary of State. Officers will monitor various datasets relating to these areas and, should any meet the criteria in the future, Cabinet will be asked to consider a separate application to the Secretary of State to extend the scheme in the county.

The report provided details of the proposed scope of the scheme, the costs of licencing, the operational structure of the scheme, and, the proposed timetable.

Decision

The Cabinet agreed to authorise:

- (a) the proposed areas to be designated within the SLS as detailed in the report;
- (b) the proposed licence fee of £390 to £590 (expected to be around £500);
- (c) the SLS service proposals outlined in the report;
- (d) to formally consult on these proposals over a 10-week period;
- (e) the commencement of work to prepare for the introduction of the SLS in advance of formal approval from the Secretary of State; and
- (f) to receive a further report detailing the results of the consultation exercise with a view to reviewing the proposals and submitting a formal application to the Secretary of State to set up a SLS in Durham.

Leisure Transformation [Key Decision: REAL/11/19]

Summary

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services which set out the case for change for the Council's leisure centre offer; proposing an outline programme which would include building new leisure centre facilities, refreshing existing buildings and ultimately progressing towards an extensive new programme of activities and amenities to work towards improving health/wellbeing outcomes and creating a prosperous leisure economy for County Durham.

The report sought Cabinet approval for an in-principle agreement to the approach and authority to move to the next stage of planning and implementation.

The Council has, over the last 18 months, undertaken a review of its leisure centre provision with a view to transforming the offer within the wider context of the existing physical activity infrastructure embedded in local communities. The transformation will work towards creating a healthier population, providing a higher quality offer for residents and be more cost effective in its delivery through increased footfall and better meeting the needs of families in County Durham.

A leading leisure transformation specialist (Alliance Leisure Services) has been contracted to work with the Council to maximise learning from other national sites of best practice and to provide independent scrutiny of the work required for County Durham to transform the offer to residents.

The work to date has identified the opportunity to maximise health gain and through a return on investment approach how to be more cost effective in delivery. Core areas of focus include:

- (a) introducing a range of new activities as well as building on existing ones to meet the diverse needs of families, across the life course, thus ensuring there is universal access for all as well as offering more targeted opportunities for the harder to reach segments of the population;
- (b) raising service standard and quality across the offer to maintain use for existing service users and significantly increase new service use.

Taking all of the learning above into account and in the context of the existing breadth of physical and sporting opportunities across County Durham, the report proposed that the leisure centre offer be transformed through five approaches to improvement, as set out below:

- (a) **Approach 1: Refreshing the existing offer:** This would take place in four of the existing leisure centres:

- Consett
- Newton Aycliffe
- Wolsingham
- Teesdale

Whilst Consett is a new centre and Newton Aycliffe has been recently refurbished, there are opportunities to refresh the offer and attract different and additional residents to access the opportunities available. Wolsingham would be transferred into Culture, Sport & Tourism management in September 2020 and will require some refresh work, whilst Teesdale would benefit from a refreshed 'look and feel' along with the introduction of the Thrive branding throughout the centre.

(b) **Approach 2: Refurbishment / new installations:** Five of the current leisure centres are to be refurbished and / or change their programme to introduce new activities. The five being:

- Abbey
- Freemans Quay
- Louisa Centre
- Peterlee
- Spennymoor

These centres will require a range of works from the installation of new equipment to substantial refurbishment to accommodate new and/or additional activities.

(c) **Approach 3: The replacement of Leisure Centres facilities.** This would impact on three current sites:

- Woodhouse Close
- Chester-le-Street
- Seaham

The current layout, condition and location of these centres requires consideration regarding the replacement of these facilities to maximise health and wellbeing benefits for the population of County Durham and the economic vibrancy of the leisure offer. Health impact assessments (HIA) would be undertaken on each of the proposed new locations to determine the maximum health gain opportunities and to ensure the transformed leisure offer would be seen as adding value to the wider physical activity infrastructure.

(d) **Approach 4: Retain a leisure offer and create greater links with other services and the community:** Two leisure centres would benefit from this approach:

- Meadowfield
- Shildon

There are opportunities to either expand service offers within these buildings and develop closer links with the community. This would make the buildings more viable from a cost effectiveness perspective and increase footfall due to the co-location of services and greater community involvement.

(e) **Approach 5: A partnership development.** One leisure centre has the opportunity to become part of another organisation's infrastructure:

- Riverside

To work in partnership with Durham County Football Association and other key users would improve opportunities for the population to gain access to increased coaching opportunities and increase uptake in the use of facilities overall.

The report proposed a move to a single operating model for all indoor leisure centres. This would be via contract negotiation and expiry of:

- Competition Line income share contracts;
- 1Life leisure management contracts.

There are three operating models in place currently: direct Council management, Council management with an income share partner and management via a contract. The move to a single model will require the early termination of the income share agreements and the insourcing of the leisure management contract. In order to deliver the transformation a capital budget of up to £62.8 million would be required. The report recommended that the forecast additional income generated from this investment of £1.63 million is utilised to finance £38 million of the required borrowing. The remaining £24.8 million of capital investment to be funded from the MTFP (10) and MTFP (11) capital programmes. In addition, a one-off revenue budget would be required to terminate the Competition Line income share agreements. This investment is forecast to generate an annual net saving. The report recommended that the one-off budget is funded from available surplus budget in 2020/21 with the forecast saving contributing to MTFP (10) savings. An additional 33.29 full time equivalent posts will also be created if this total transformation project is delivered as currently proposed.

This is a major investment programme and there will be opportunities for community engagement within the next phases of the process to ensure residents and members get the chance to further shape the proposals. Further advanced feasibility work will be undertaken before actual transformation can begin.

Decision

Cabinet agreed:

- (a) The in-principle to the overall programme of change for leisure centres, as set-out in the report:
 - (i) Noted that the detailed financial information and commercially sensitive information is provided in a corresponding exempt report.
 - (ii) That Capital investment of £62.8 million is included in MTFP(10) and MTFP (11) capital bids with £38 million being funded on a self-financing basis. The remaining £24.8 million being financed from the broader capital programme.

- (iii) A one-off revenue investment is utilised to buy out the Competition Line income share agreements. Funded from available surplus budget in 2020/21 with the forecast saving being utilised to support MTFP(10).
- (iv) Noted the VAT Partial Exemption impact of the programme.
- (v) That the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services, and the Corporate Director of Resources, in consultation with the portfolio holders for Economic Regeneration and Deputy Leader and Finance, be given delegated powers to approve:
 - (i) The transformation works for all refurbishment and realigning of services once detailed capital and revenue implications of individual projects are known.
 - (ii) The negotiated early termination of the Competition Line UK income-share agreements.
- (vi) That the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services and the Corporate Director of Resources present a further report on new build options once the advanced feasibility work is complete which will include the health impact assessment.

Roads and Street Works Permit Scheme [REAL/10/19]

Summary

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services which sought approval to implement the County Council of Durham Roads and Street Works Permit Scheme and to implement a new staffing structure.

In 2004 the Traffic Management Act (TMA) was introduced to tackle congestion and disruption on the highway network. The TMA provided local authorities with additional tools to coordinate street works including the power to introduce permit schemes as an alternative to the existing notice scheme detailed in the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA).

The primary benefits of a permit scheme are:

- (a) a reduction in both the number of highways works and their duration through proactive management of activities on the highway to minimise disruption to the travelling public;
- (b) an improvement in the quality and timeliness of information that is available to the public; and

- (c) more proactive and collaborative planning and working between all works promoters.

The anticipated reduction in disruption caused by street works may also support economic growth and reduce carbon emissions.

Unlike the notice scheme, permit schemes are optional. If a highway authority wishes to introduce a permit scheme it can do so with an order made by the Council's Chief Executive. In July 2018, the Secretary of State for Transport sent a letter to the Chief Executives of all highway authorities not operating a permit scheme including Durham County Council. It asked that they consider introducing a permit scheme by 31 March 2020. The letter also made the Chief Executives aware that the Secretary of State for Transport has powers under Section 3(2) of the Traffic Management Act to direct an authority to introduce a permit scheme. Following receipt of the Secretary of State for Transport's letter in July 2018, the 11 north east authorities not currently operating a permit scheme, met and adopted a collaborative approach to introducing permit schemes in each of their authorities.

To support all 11 north east authorities, Capita, a consultancy experienced in implementing permit schemes, was appointed to assist with the development and implementation of the scheme.

Development of the single permit scheme, which covers all highways maintained by the Council, is now complete with the scheme operation document 'The County Council of Durham Roads and Street Works Permit Scheme' having now completed its full three month public statutory consultation. The consultation was sent to all statutory consultees, including the DfT permit schemes specialist, and was placed on the Council's webpage for the general public to view and comment.

This consultation was completed on 7 November 2019. Comments made by consultees have now been considered resulting in minor adjustments to the document. The final 'The County Council of Durham Roads and Street Works Permit Scheme' is available to view upon request.

It is anticipated that the permit scheme will make a surplus of £150,523 in year one followed by a surplus of £241,323 in each subsequent year. If the anticipated surplus is generated it is proposed that it be used to fund any necessary future adjustments to the permit scheme staffing structure or other future operational costs. If there remains a surplus from permit fees appropriate adjustments shall be made to the fee structure in order to operate a cost neutral service in future financial years.

Cabinet's approval of the introduction of the permit scheme necessitates the implementation of a new staffing structure in readiness for commencement by 31 March 2020.

Decision

The Cabinet:

- (a) approved the Permit Scheme; and
- (b) approved the implementation of the new staffing structure as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report.

High Needs Block Funding for SEND and Inclusion Support

Summary

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services and the Corporate Director of Resources which provided an update on spend and pressures on the High Needs Block (HNB) of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and inclusion support services for children and young people. The report included an update on progress with work underway to make the HNB more sustainable and an overview on findings from a three-month public consultation on proposals for reviewing key areas of work that were considered by Cabinet in July 2019.

There are enduring pressures on the High Needs Block (HNB) of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) which provides funding for SEND and inclusion support services for children and young people. A combination of ongoing austerity across the public sector, implementation of the SEND Reforms (2014) which has increased support to cover children and young people from birth up to 25 years of age, and changing customer needs which are becoming more complex, means that there are insufficient resources to support children and young people with SEND and inclusion needs. This position is replicated in other local authorities and the Council has continued to feedback to the Government on spending pressures and request additional government funding for these services and local schools.

The current forecast means that expenditure is likely to exceed the High Needs DSG allocation by £9.3 million in 2019/2020 (19% higher than the HNB grant). The Government has confirmed a significant increase in HNB grant for County Durham of £8.4 million for 2020/2021 and in view of this the forecast HNB overspend for 2020/2021 is around £2 million. There is a growing deficit in the DSG account due to overspends on the HNB in recent years. The Department for Education (DfE) now require a report from any local authority that has a cumulative DSG deficit of more than 1% at the end of the financial year. For Durham this equates to £3.9 million. The latest forecast of the overall DSG deficit position at the end of the year is £4.4 million (£6.4 million relating to the HNB minus £2 million of other non-HNB reserves). This means that the authority will need to produce a recovery plan for submission to the DfE.

Despite the increase in Government HNB funding available for 2020/2021, forecasts show there remains insufficient resources to support predicted HNB expenditure in future years, and to bring the HNB deficit back into balance. To address this a five-year financial strategy is proposed with continued work on the HNB sustainability plan following the recent consultation period. This seeks to: reduce spending on HNB activity by around £1.5 million per year; try and ensure spending is kept to within the HNB resources available each year in future years; and recover the HNB deficit by the end of 2024/2025.

Key elements of the sustainability plan work relate to the following areas which were subject to consultation after the last report to Cabinet in July 2019:

- Centrally Managed Services
- Special Schools
- Top up Funding
- Targeted Funding
- Post 16 Funding
- Funding support to Partnerships of Schools
- Joint commissioning of therapies
- Joint commissioning of equipment, aids and adaptations
- Alternative Provision (AP) and the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)

Following Cabinet approval on 10 July 2019, the Council publicly consulted on outline proposals for the above areas of review, over three months between 17 July and 17 October 2019. The majority of respondents to the consultation were in favour of the Council adopting the following overall commitments and all but one of the proposals associated with the nine areas of review listed above:

- (a) To collectively support an education system within County Durham where inclusion of children and young people in their local schools is the norm, giving parents and carers confidence that their children's needs will be understood and met.
- (b) To offer a range of specialist learning provisions for some young people who have a high level of needs.
- (c) To make every effort to use all of the resources available to young people effectively and efficiently and to maintain spending within funding limits wherever possible.

While the Government has made additional High Needs Block funding available in 2020/2021, financial modelling has shown that this will be insufficient to cover the current overspend position and bring the accumulated HNB deficit back into balance. Therefore, in reviewing the key areas of service provision the Council will aim to achieve savings of circa £1.5 million per year over each of the next five years commencing from 2020/2021, while continuing to ensure that the right support is provided for children and young people across the County who have higher needs.

A report on progress made against the delivery of the work programme and proposed financial strategy will be reported back to Cabinet in Summer 2020.

Decision

The Cabinet:

- (a) Noted the updated forecast outturn position for HNB spend in 2019/20 along with the assumptions and forecast position for 2020/21 and beyond;
- (b) Noted the representations of the Durham Schools Forum and the outcomes of consultation with all schools on options for reducing spending pressures on the HNB;
- (c) Noted the findings of the public consultation which took place between 17 July and 17 October 2019 on the “HNB Funding for SEND and Inclusion Support”;
- (d) Agreed to the proposed five-year financial strategy for 2020/21-2024/25 outlined in the report;
- (e) Supported the development of a financial recovery plan, to be submitted to the DfE for approval, setting out how the Council plans to bring the DSG account back into balance by 2024/25;
- (f) Agreed to the proposals for developing key areas of work outlined in the report to be progressed in accordance with the findings of the public consultation; and
- (g) Agreed that the SEND and Inclusion Board (SIRB) oversee the implementation of the work programme to deliver the proposed changes and report the progress to Cabinet in summer 2020.

Local Lettings Agency

Summary

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services which provided an update on the Local Lettings Agency (LLA).

In July 2019, the Cabinet approved the establishment of an LLA for County Durham to help meet housing need, with firm proposals on the specific delivery model to be used, to be outlined in a further report. The Cabinet also agreed to delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services to lease properties from landlords on an individual basis for use in discharging the Council's duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act.

This further report to Cabinet detailed the proposed structure and governance of the LLA and recommended applying to Homes England for Registered Provider status, to allow the LLA to meet housing need.

Decision

The Cabinet:

- (a) approved the establishment of the LLA as a company limited by guarantee as proposed in this report;
- (b) noted that the LLA will apply to Homes England for Registered Provider status; and
- (c) delegated authority to the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services to enter into such ancillary agreements as are necessary to give full effect to the terms of this report.

County Durham Enhanced Engagement with Children and Young People

Summary

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services which sought agreement to implement a number of recommendations to enhance how the Council engages with children and young people.

The council uses a range of participation and engagement mechanisms to understand the voice of the child. The report provided information on further work carried out to enhance engagement with children and young people, including the development of a County Durham Youth Council and representation at the UK Youth Parliament.

Decision

The Cabinet:

- (a) agreed that DCC officers run annual elections to appoint Children and Young People representatives to a new County Durham Youth Council (CDYC) with CDYC electing two members to the UK Youth parliament;
- (b) agreed to set up a County Durham Youth Council Implementation Fund to support children and young people focused project delivery;
- (c) agreed to support the recruitment of an Engagement Officer, to be employed on a permanent basis from April 2020, to support the County Durham Youth Council and the UK Youth Parliament representatives;

- (d) agreed in principle to the development of a countywide awards programme to begin in Summer 2020 and for marketing and communications relating to the enhanced suite of engagement mechanisms proposed in the report.

WASPI Concessionary Travel Scheme

Summary

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services on the introduction of a discretionary travel concession to assist women who have been most impacted by the Government's State Pension Age (SPA) changes.

Government changes to the stage pension age have resulted in women born between December 1953 and November 1954 seeing their state pension age increase by 18 months, and, are considered to have suffered the greatest financial hardship as a result of the pension changes. The report proposed the introduction of a discretionary travel scheme for those women most impacted by the changes to the state pension age.

Decision

The Cabinet approved the introduction of a local concessionary travel scheme from 1 March 2020 for those women born between December 1953 and 5 November 1954 who have not already reached state pension age.

Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny committee's review of Durham County Council's proposed allotment policy

Summary

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which presented the key findings and recommendations of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee's review focusing on Durham County Council's proposed allotment policy.

The Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (ESC OSC) agreed in July 2017 to undertake a scrutiny review looking at Durham County Council's (DCC) proposed future allotment policy. The following terms of reference were agreed by the committee on 6 October 2017:

- (a) Examine and understand DCC's current allotment service and policy;

- (b) Examine and comment on DCC's future allotment policy including the proposed countywide tenancy agreement and consider the possible implications of introduction;
- (c) Consider the proposed options for the further devolved management of DCC's allotment estate to Town and Parish Councils where applicable or self-managed allotment associations;
- (d) Consider options for DCC's future management of non-allotment plots currently included in DCC's allotment portfolio;
- (e) Consider and compare DCC's proposed allotment policy with allotment policies implemented by other local authorities.
- (f) Comment on the proposed consultation arrangements for the policy.

The review group gathered evidence from officers, the Northern Region Allotment Association and Town and Parish Council representatives. The group also had the opportunity to speak to allotment tenants and relevant DCC members when they visited allotment sites at Gilesgate, Sherburn, Bowburn, West Cornforth and Langley Moor.

The executive summary of the review contains the review reports conclusions that relate to:

- (a) Subject to further close work with tenants a transition period for the removal of large animals no longer permitted in the proposed policy and tenancy agreement from DCC allotment sites;
- (b) Ensuring that animals housed on DCC allotment sites have the required welfare documentation including passports, licenses and microchipping;
- (c) Ensuring that the future management of DCC's allotment portfolio sites is the responsibility of one service team;
- (d) The future of allotment sites not used for purpose being determined by a review group of DCC officers with the future of each site determined on a site by site basis;
- (e) The opportunity to establish area allotment associations;
- (f) DCC entering into discussions with Town and Parish Councils to determine whether they are interested in managing DCC allotment sites in the future;

- (g) Recognising the contribution made by co-workers to the cultivation of a plot by acknowledging previous years of commitment while not registered;
- (h) Actively encouraging co-workers to register their interest in a particular allotment plot;
- (i) The feasibility of providing smaller sized allotment plots if there is demand;
- (j) The possibility of undertaking a rental review.

The review report contains eight recommendations that relate to the conclusions above. The service has provided a response to the review's conclusions and recommendations which was included in this report.

Decision

The Cabinet:

- (a) noted the recommendations contained in the review report:

Recommendation 1

- (i) That in relation to the requirements of the proposed policy and tenancy agreement concerning the housing of large animals no longer permitted on allotment plots, the five year period identified in the proposed transition arrangements should apply. In addition, that DCC ensures animals currently housed on DCC allotment plots have the required welfare documentation.

Recommendation 2

- (ii) That the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services ensures that all DCC directly managed allotment sites in the county are managed by one DCC service team.

Recommendation 3

- (iii) That the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services establishes a review group to undertake a complete review of Allotment sites not used for purpose and that the review group:
 - Considers each site on an individual basis;
 - Undertakes site based consultation meetings;
 - Considers whether tenancy agreements on retained sites are transferred to match the purpose for which the plot is used e.g. garage use;

- Ensures that the sale of sites is handled under the Land Disposal Policy subject to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government approval where the site is a statutory allotment.

Recommendation 4

- (iv) That the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services establishes area allotment associations where appropriate to take over day to day management and control.

Recommendation 5

- (v) That the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services undertakes discussions with Town and Parish Councils that have expressed an interest in taking over the management of allotment sites. Should any Town and Parish Council wish to take over the management of any current DCC allotment site then advice and support should be provided by DCC for an agreed period.

Recommendation 6

- (vi) That DCC, subject to legal advice, reconsiders the process for the allocation of plots to co-workers within the proposed policy by acknowledging their previous contributions whilst not registered. In addition, DCC needs to actively publicise the need for co-workers to register.

Recommendation 7

- (vii) That DCC, should there be demand, considers the feasibility of providing smaller sized allotment plots where appropriate.

Recommendation 8

- (viii) That DCC considers undertaking a rental review of all DCC allotment sites, however, as part of this review recognition is given to the health and wellbeing benefits associated with the cultivation of allotment plots. Should the rental review determine an increase in rent per allotment plot and that increase is significant, then DCC should introduce this increase via annual incremental increases.
- (b) agreed that the review report be shared with the County Durham Environment Partnership;
- (c) That a review of the progress made against the recommendations will be undertaken six months after the report is considered by Cabinet.

Humanitarian Support in County Durham

Summary

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Adult and Health Services which provided an update on County Durham's support for vulnerable refugees and sought approval to participate in the UK's global resettlement programme, following the conclusion of current resettlement schemes in 2020.

In 2015 County Durham pledged to support the UK's commitment to assist some of the world's most vulnerable refugees. County Durham welcomed its first refugee arrivals in 2016 and, since then, the county has supported 259 individuals in 56 family groups over eight separate phases. The programme is on track to deliver Cabinet's commitment to support between 250 and 300 vulnerable refugees by the conclusion of current resettlement programmes in 2020.

Pledges under the UK's key resettlement schemes for vulnerable refugees are scheduled to conclude in 2020. In summer 2019 the government announced its commitment to a long-term programme for refugee resettlement, consolidating key programmes into a global resettlement scheme from April 2020. County Durham's participation in a refugee resettlement programme, following the conclusion of existing resettlement schemes in 2020, would demonstrate the council's commitment to contribute to the UK's humanitarian assistance effort in a way which offers genuine support to vulnerable individuals and families in line with local circumstances.

Decision

The Cabinet:

- (a) noted progress on County Durham's commitment to assist between 250 and 300 individuals under the Vulnerable Persons' and Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Programmes.
- (b) agreed to participate in the UK's new global refugee resettlement programme over the next four years following conclusion of the current resettlement schemes in 2020, proportionate with the county's share of the national population, subject to:
 - (i) the government confirming future funding arrangements in line with the current programme; and
 - (ii) ongoing monitoring continues to demonstrate that the programme to resettle refugees can be effectively delivered in the county.
- (c) agreed that in the event it is considered that the programme cannot continue to be effectively delivered, the Director of Neighbourhoods and

Climate Change, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Social Inclusion and key partners, is delegated authority to determine whether the level of involvement should reduce or cease.

Health Protection Assurance Annual Report 2018-19

Summary

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Corporate Director of Adult and Health Services and Director of Public Health which provided an update to Cabinet on health protection assurance arrangements in County Durham from the implementation of the health protection action plan, which is overseen by the Health Protection Assurance and Development Group (HPADG).

In County Durham, new health protection assurance arrangements were established in August 2018 following a cross-organisational event. The HPADG was subsequently convened and oversees the implementation of a local health protection action plan. HPADG meets quarterly and seeks assurance on five main strands of health protection activity, in addition to data and communications which are threaded throughout:

- Screening programmes
- Immunisation programmes
- Outbreaks and communicable diseases
- Strategic regulation interventions
- Preparedness and response to incidents and emergencies

The report outlined the key achievements overseen by HPADG to date.

Areas for future development include the following:

- Improving uptake of certain vaccinations including shingles and pneumococcal
- Ensuring equitable coverage and uptake of screening and immunisations programmes
- Taking account of a national review of adult screening programmes, and a forthcoming national immunisations strategy
- Development of a sexual health strategy for County Durham
- Ensuring health protection and public health related emergency preparedness is assured during organisational change

Decision

The Cabinet:

- (a) noted the content of the report;

- (b) noted that local performance continues to be higher than England and regional averages and above target for most screening and immunisation programmes;
- (c) noted that the report provides broad assurance that effective processes are in place for each of the key strands of health protection activity;
- (d) noted that the DPH is seeking further assurance in relation to flu immunisation and the outcome of a national review of screening, and;
- (e) supported further identification and response to emerging health protection priorities.

The Cabinet resolved to exclude the press and public by virtue of paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 during discussions on agenda item 17, and by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 during discussions on agenda item 18.

Leisure Transformation [Key Decision: REAL/11/19]

Summary

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services which provided commercially sensitive information in relation to the detailed business planning.

Decision

The Cabinet approved the recommendations in the report.

North East First Credit Union Financial Support [Key Decision: CORP/R/20/01]

Summary

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Corporate Director of Resources and Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services which outlined details of financial support provided to North East First Credit Union (NEFCU).

Decision

The Cabinet approved the recommendations in the report.

Helen Lynch
Head of Legal & Democratic Services
17 January 2020