



## RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The following is a record of the decisions taken at the meeting of **CABINET** held on **Wednesday 18 November 2020**. The decisions will come into force and may be implemented from **Monday 30 November 2020** unless the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or its Committees object to any such decision and call it in.

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### **Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2021/22 and Council Tax: COVID-19 Hardship Fund Payments [Key Decision: CORP/R/20/05]**

#### **Summary**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which sought approval to recommend to Council the continuation of the current Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) for a further year into 2021/22, which would continue the protection afforded to all claimants in line with what their entitlement would have been under the former Council Tax Benefit system. The report provided information on the current and forecasted expenditure in terms of the Government's COVID-19 hardship fund, and sought approval for the allocation of the remaining COVID-19 hardship fund grant to continue to support vulnerable residents, and, sought approval of the updated Discretionary Council Tax Reduction (COVID-19) policy in line with agreement on the allocation of the remaining COVID-19 hardship grant fund.

Durham is one of a small minority of councils to continue to offer the same level of support to all claimants as was available under the former Council Tax Benefit scheme. There are currently 58,250 LCTRS claimants in County Durham, of which 22,050 (38%) are pensioners and 36,200 (62%) are working age. 28,940 (80%) of working age claimants currently receive 100% LCTRS discount, with LCTRS support forecast to be circa £61.9m in 2020/21.

The rollout of Universal Credit (UC) is scheduled to be completed in 2024 and is already in payment to a significant number of people in Durham. As of September 2020, there were circa 18,250 LCTR claimants receiving UC, just over 50% of the working age LCTR caseload. The council is around four times more likely to receive a report of a change in circumstances when a working age LCTR claim is based on UC, than when it is not.

Regular monthly recalculations of UC and LCTR, most frequently caused by changes in earnings, are leading to multiple bills being issued to households.

This has resulted in residents not being able to easily keep track of their Council Tax liability, leading to difficulties for households when managing their finances and personal budgeting.

The Council will need to keep track of the impact of the continuing roll out of UC. After many years of continued improvement, the in-year council tax collection rate reduced slightly in 2018/19 to 96.65%, and further still in 2019/20 to 96.37%. The current year has seen a further significant reduction year on year also but that in most part is due to the impact of COVID-19. Consideration of whether to extend the current scheme into 2021/22 takes account of a number of key factors and changing the scheme at this stage means additional council tax revenues (or pressures) would need to be built into the medium term financial plan (MTFP) projections. No changes to the scheme were factored into the MTFP(11) projections reported to Cabinet on 14 October 2020.

The coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on the LCTRS working age caseload, which increased dramatically in the first quarter of 2020/21 as an unprecedented number of new claims were received by working age customers adversely affected by COVID-19. At the peak in May 2020 the working age LCTRS caseload was almost 3,000 higher than in January. The total value of LCTRS awards is expected to be around £5m higher in 2020/21 than in the previous year.

In March 2020 the Government announced a £500m hardship fund, of which Durham was allocated £6,964,443, to provide support to economically vulnerable people and households during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government announced that it was their 'strong expectation' that the funding would be used to give all working age LCTRS recipients a further reduction in their 2020/21 council tax bill of £150, or a reduction of their liability to nil if their liability was already below £150 after LCTR.

On 4 May 2020, under a delegated decision taken by the Corporate Director of Resources, the Council adopted a policy which provided an enhanced scheme, offering a reduction of up to £300. This was affordable in Durham as the LCTRS does not have a minimum payment level, and as a result 80% of residents were already receiving LCTR and have no council tax to pay. To ensure that the COVID-19 hardship funding was used to support the most vulnerable in the county, £1m of the grant received was set aside to supplement the council's Welfare Assistance Scheme in the coming year, aimed at anti-poverty and community resilience measures, leaving £5,964,443 of grant to provide additional support to residents through LCTR hardship top ups.

It is estimated that by the end of 2020/21, as a result of administering payments to support the reduction of council tax bills by up to £300 for working age residents receiving LCTR, the Council will have applied around £4.2m of the COVID-19 hardship funding, leaving approximately £1.8m of grant unspent.

One option for using the remaining COVID-19 hardship funding is to continue to offer some additional support to working age LCTRS recipients in 2021/22. The estimated cost of this would be £2.4m should we make a payment of up to £150, £1.7m for payments up to £100 and £900,000 for payments up to £50.

When accounting for expenditure of the COVID-19 hardship funding there is no absolute requirement to spend all or even most of the money on help with council tax. Unspent hardship funding could be spent in other ways which supports economically vulnerable residents.

Support for foodbanks, advice services, or local welfare schemes are all examples of potential funding beneficiaries. Local authorities could even use the funding to help cover the increased cost of the scheme due to COVID-19. This report recommends that the remainder of the Covid-19 hardship fund is retained and carried over to 2021/22 and that the council continues to make LCTRS hardship top up payments to LCTRS claimants in 2021/22 at a rate of up to £100. In doing so the Council would be ensuring that the grant allocation is fully expended for the purposes for which it was intended and would be tapering off support to financially vulnerable households, who have received up to an additional £300 of support this year.

## **Decision**

The Cabinet:

- (a) resolved to recommend to Council that the current Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme is continued into 2021/22, which will retain the same level of support to all working age council taxpayers on low incomes as was the case under the previous Council Tax Benefit Scheme;
- (b) agreed that the extension to the Scheme be initially for a further year only and be kept under continuous review with a further decision on the scheme to apply in 2022/23 to be considered by Cabinet in summer 2021 and Full Council by 11 March 2022;
- (c) agreed to ensure full use of the COVID-19 Hardship Fund allocation to support vulnerable residents experiencing financial difficulty by extending the existing top up arrangements into 2021/22, making a maximum payment of £100 to eligible residents in receipt of Council Tax Reduction next year;

- (d) approved the Discretionary Council Tax Hardship Reduction (COVID-19) Policy which has been updated to incorporate the extension of the scheme into 2021/22 as outlined in the report.

## **Council Tax Base 2021/22 and Forecast Deficit on the Council Tax Collection Fund as at 31 March 2021 [Key Decision: CORP/R/20/03]**

### **Summary**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which determined the council's tax base for domestic properties liable to pay council tax, which is an important component in the council's budget setting process for 2021/22 and to report on the estimated collection fund surplus as at 31 March 2021.

Regulations made under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires each billing authority to calculate its 'council tax base' for the following financial year. The council tax base is a measure of the county council's 'taxable capacity', for the purpose of setting its council tax. Legislation requires the council to set out the formula for that calculation and that the tax base is formally approved by Cabinet.

In determining the council tax base for 2021/22 the following issues must be factored into the calculation:

- (a) The impact of exemptions and discounts being applied to properties within County Durham;
- (b) Forecast impact on the tax base as a result of changes in the incidence of Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) claims, which is a discount rather than a benefit payment and therefore reduces the tax base;
- (c) Forecast impact on the tax base as a result of the changes made to the Long Term Empty (LTE) property council tax premium, offset by estimated impact of the new section 13A(1)(c) policy;
- (d) Forecast impact on the tax base as a result of growth (i.e. new build) or reductions (e.g. demolitions or increases in the incidence of other council tax discounts and exemptions) for 2021/22; and
- (e) Provision for non-collection of council tax due to bad debts that need to be written off.

This year, COVID-19 is making it more difficult to accurately forecast a tax base for next year. The pandemic has had a significant impact on the local economy which has resulted in an increase in unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, and a subsequent increase in the incidence of LCTRS claims.

The council experienced a 4% increase in claims for LCTRS in quarter one, followed by a steady reduction in the number of claims across quarter two as the national lockdown came to an end.

New LCTRS claims received in August and September were in line with “normal” levels, though the underlying position is that there are many more LCTRS claims in payment currently than were anticipated when the tax base was set last year. There are concerns that there will be a further wave of new LCTRS claims in quarter three when the furlough scheme comes to an end and as lock down restrictions potentially impact on employment.

New house building has continued throughout the pandemic period, though not quite at the rate that would have been expected previously but there is still a steady stream of new assessments being added to the rating list, which is expected to continue into 2021/22.

Taking all these matters into account the council tax base for the financial year 2021/22, based on the current position and prudent assumptions around the incidence of discounts and exemptions across the coming eighteen months plus prospects for new builds, has been calculated to be 141,623.2 band D equivalent properties, a small decrease of 118.8 (0.08%) on the council tax base for 2020/21.

This is the first time since the LCTRS was introduced that that the tax base for the following year has been lower than the current year and this will reduce the council’s tax raising capacity, resulting in a MTFP / budget pressure next year of circa £0.2 million. Prior to the pandemic impacts it would have been expected that there would be an increase in tax raising capacity of between £1 million and £1.5 million from increases in the council tax base.

As at 30 September 2020 the council tax collection fund is forecast to have a deficit of £4.816 million at 31 March 2021. Durham County Council’s share of this deficit would be £4.034 million.

The council would usually declare its council tax collection fund position for budget setting purposes based on the quarter two forecast and inform the two principal precepting bodies to the Collection Fund - County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority and Durham Police, Crime and Victims’ Commissioner – of the amounts they would need to take into account next year.

Regulations have changed for 2021/22 and whilst previously the shares of the declared Collection Fund Surplus or Deficit would need to be absorbed by the relevant bodies in the following year, the Government have amended the regulations to allow this pressure to be spread over three years.

Given the uncertain and fluid position currently and that COVID-19 can still have a significant impact on the council tax collection fund outturn it is felt that it is too early to declare the collection fund position for budget setting purposes. The council plans on declaring the final position later in the year. The statutory deadline for declaring the forecast position is 15 January. The quarter two position has been shared with the two principal precepting bodies to the Collection Fund.

## **Decision**

The Cabinet:

- (a) approved the council tax base for the financial year 2021/22 for the county, which has been calculated to be 141,623.2 band D equivalent properties;
- (b) noted the impact on individual Town and Parish council tax bases and the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme grant allocations for the financial year 2021/22;
- (c) noted the forecasted council tax Collection Fund position at 31 March 2021 and agree that the final position for budget setting purposes will be declared later in the year;

## **Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2021/21 – Period to 30 September 2020 and Update on progress on achieving MTFP(10) Savings**

### **Summary**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which included information on the updated forecast revenue and capital outturn for 2020/21; the updated forecast for the council tax and business rates collection fund position at 31 March 2021, and, the updated forecast use of earmarked, cash limit and general reserves and estimated balances to be held at 31 March 2021.

The report also sought approval of the budget adjustments and proposed sums outside of the cash limit, and, provide Cabinet with an update on progress towards achieving MTFP(10) savings.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the council, partners and local communities have been working tirelessly to respond to the pandemic and to put steps in place for recovery. The financial implications of COVID-19 are significant and complex which makes forecasting the council's outturn position even more challenging than usual. The financial position of the council will need to be monitored very closely over the coming months to ensure that steps can be taken to maintain spending within available budgets and to reallocate resources as required.

For these reasons, the estimates set out in the report are subject to change as year end approaches and depending on the impact, extent and duration of local and national restrictions going forward.

It is forecast that service grouping budgets will overspend by £51.974 million. This overspend position arises from additional expenditure and loss of income associated with the COVID-19 outbreak.

The government has provided four tranches of funding for local authorities for additional costs incurred as a result of COVID-19. This funding is allocated based upon formulae and to date the council has received £45.6 million. Of this, £1.1 million was to cover costs incurred in 2019/20. This leaves funding available of £44.5 million to be applied in 2020/21.

The government has announced an 'Income Guarantee Scheme' to provide financial support for lost sales, fees and charges income. The details of the scheme were published on 23 August 2020. The scheme requires councils to bear the first 5% of any qualifying income loss after which the government will provide a grant for 75% of subsequent losses. A number of areas of income loss such as commercial income and rental income are not covered by the scheme. In addition, any underspends generated in the areas in question must be utilised to offset any lost income.

The council will be required to submit three returns for the Income Guarantee Scheme. The first return for the period to 31 July 2020 was submitted on 2 October 2020 for a total of £3.6 million. At this stage, the council has not received confirmation that this submission has been agreed. An initial estimate is that the council may be able to claim circa £6 million from the Income Guarantee Scheme, although this is subject to further work and the extent of the claims that are made and paid.

The government has also indicated that the financial impact of any Collection Fund deficits for council tax and business rates can be spread over three years. It is important to note that these deficits are not being funded by government and will form part of the council's taxbase calculation going forward – negatively impacting the funding the council receives from council tax and business rate income. At this stage, after netting off additional Section 31 grant for extended business rate reliefs, the council is forecasting its share of the in year Collection Fund deficit at £3.9 million. This position could further deteriorate if the county experiences further job losses or business failure over the coming months and is being kept under close review, particularly as we enter the winter period and depending on the extent of local restrictions that are imposed.

After taking account of estimates of cost, lost income and additional government funding, it is forecast that the council will overspend by £0.901 million, representing 0.19% of the net expenditure budget of £466.237 million.

This position is caveated at this stage because of the wide range of assumptions that have been made in relation to expenditure and income over the remainder of the financial year and the significant uncertainty that exists. In terms of service grouping cash limits, the projected revenue outturn is a forecast cash limit underspend of £3.126 million (0.67%). The cash limit position excludes COVID-19 related issues which are considered to be outside of the control of budget managers.

In terms of sums outside the cash limit there is a forecast overspend of £4.027 million which is forecast to result in a reduction in the General Reserve from £23.9 million to £19.9 million. This position will be kept under careful review, especially in relation to the possibility of additional costs and loss of income linked to the ongoing impact of COVID-19.

Total earmarked and cash limit reserves (excluding school reserves) are forecast to reduce by £46.291 million in 2020/21, from £204.697 million to £158.406 million. This mainly results from the utilisation of £23.715 of the Office Accommodation Capital Reserve to fund the new council headquarters and the utilisation of the £17.5 million held in earmarked reserves in relation to Tranche 1 of the government COVID-19 Support Grant. The updated projected capital outturn is £145.755 million.

The estimated outturn for the Council Tax Collection Fund is a deficit of £4.816 million after taking into account the in year position and deficit brought forward from 2019/20. Durham County Council's share of this forecasted deficit is £4.034 million. The estimated outturn for the Business Rates Collection Fund is a deficit of £43.652 million after taking into account the in year position and the surplus brought forward from 2019/20. Durham County Council's share (49%) of this estimated deficit is £21.389 million, before accounting for the receipt of compensating Section 31 grant for extended business rate reliefs and discounts.

For MTFP(10), the council has delivered quarter two savings of £7.194 million which is 90% of the £8.010 million target. Since 2011, the council has delivered over £241 million in savings.

## **Decision**

The Cabinet:

- (a) noted the council's overall financial position for 2020/21 and the uncertainty associated with the outturn forecast resulting from the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak as set out in the report;
- (b) agreed the proposed 'sums outside the cash limit' for approval;
- (c) agreed the revenue and capital budget adjustments;
- (d) noted the forecast use of earmarked reserves;
- (e) noted the forecast end of year position for the cash limit and general reserves;

- (f) noted the additional costs and income loss faced as a result of COVID-19 which is offset by additional grant funding provided by government;
- (g) noted the position on the capital programme and the Collection Funds in respect of Council Tax and Business Rates;
- (h) noted the amount of savings delivered during quarter two of the MTFP(10) period.

## **Mid-Year Review Report on Treasury Management for the period to 30 September 2020**

### **Summary**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which provided information on the treasury management mid-year position for 2020/21 including the Council's treasury position, borrowing activity, investment activity, treasury management and prudential indicators.

The Council held £348 million in borrowing and had £263 million cash balances invested at 30 September 2020. During the half year period no additional borrowing was taken out as the council held sufficient cash balances to fund its expenditure. Investments have been undertaken in line with both the CIPFA Code and government guidance which require the Council to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield.

During the half year period to 30 September 2020, the Council has complied with Treasury Management Indicators relating to interest rate exposure, maturity structure of borrowing and sums invested for more than one year. The Council has also complied with Prudential Code Indicators which relate to the capital programme and how much the Council can afford to borrow.

### **Decision**

The Cabinet:

- (a) noted progress with the Treasury Management Strategy 2020/2;
- (b) agreed that the overall counterparty limit for Money Market Funds is increased to £125m, with the maximum exposure to a single Money Market Fund increased to £25m.

# Mainstream Primary and Secondary Formula Funding 2021-22

## Summary

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which updated members on the Government announcements about mainstream primary and secondary formula funding for 2021/22 and recommended that the council continues to use a transitional formula next year, which will align the local formula with the National Funding Formula.

The Schools Block is part of the Dedicated Schools Grant and is the main source of funding for mainstream primary and secondary funding formula, which provides the bulk of funding for these schools. Mainstream primary and secondary funding formulas are set locally by each local authority. There is a single formula for both primary and secondary schools regardless of whether they are a local authority maintained school or an academy. Funding regulations limit the discretion of local authorities to set local formulas and requires that the majority of funding is distributed through pupil-led factors. Information about funding for 2021-22 was released on 20 July 2020 and this confirmed that Councils will still be required to set local formulas in 2021/22.

Nationally, core school funding, which includes the Schools Block will increase by £2.2 billion next year with funding for the Teachers Pay Grant (TPG) and Teachers Pension Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG) becoming part core funding. The estimated funding available for schools in Durham in 2021-22 is £348 million, which is an increase of £28 million compared to 2020-21, with £14 million of this relating to the TPG and TPECG funding that now forms part of the Schools Block.

There have been changes to how deprivation funding is allocated through the National Funding Formula (NFF), however, much of the increase in national funding has been used to increase factor values in the NFF by 3%. The TPG and TPECG funding that has been rolled into core funding has been used to increase the basic amounts per pupil by a further £180 per primary pupil and £265 per secondary pupil. The minimum per pupil funding guaranteed through the formula has increased to £4,180 per primary pupil and £5,415 per secondary pupil in 2021/22, compared to £3,750 and £5,000 in the current year.

Funding in the NFF for small primary schools in sparsely populated areas, known as sparsity funding, has been substantially increased. The Minimum Funding Guarantee has been made more generous and local formulas can now guarantee an increase of 2.00%.

The council has used a transitional formula in recent years, to smooth the transition from the local formula to the National Funding Formula (NFF). The NFF is still expected to replace local formulas in the future and dictate allocations to individual schools.

The transitional approach adopted over recent years will see the local formula in Durham align with the NFF in 2021-22.

An equality impact assessment has been undertaken which has determined that the formula does not differentiate according to any of the protected characteristics except age, which is to recognise differences in the provision required by pupils of different ages. The average funding per pupil for faith schools is less than that for other schools, but this is a result of differences in the proportions of pupils with additional needs.

## **Decision**

The Cabinet:

- a) Noted the updated position in terms of the mainstream primary and secondary funding formula for the financial year 2021/22;
- b) Agreed to the alignment of the local formula as closely as possible to the National Funding Formula in 2021/22.

## **Regional Adoption Agency – Full Business Case**

### **Summary**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services on the full business case for the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) – Adopt Coast to Coast, which sets out the partnership model agreement reached by Durham, Cumbria and Together for Children/Sunderland to work collaboratively to develop and deliver their respective adoption services under the leadership of the Regional Adoption Agency Head of Service whose joint appointment all have agreed.

The Council has responded to the Government requirements to move to RAAs where its aspiration is to have fewer organisations recruiting and assessing adopters and having organisations that are operating at much greater scale. This intention was set out in the Education and Adoption Act 2016 which introduced power in March 2018 for the Secretary of State to require local authorities to carry out their adoption functions jointly.

Significant work has been undertaken since the last report to Cabinet in December 2018 which sought approval for further work to develop a hosted model. A number of practical issues were raised about the hosted model due in the main to the large geographic footprint of the proposed Coast to Coast Adoption Agency.

Following discussions with the Department for Education (DfE) it was agreed to look at alternative models that were being developed nationally. This time period has enabled the Local Authorities to explore a newer RAA Model that provides a better fit for Adopt Coast to Coast.

The Partnership Model is one which the respective Local Authorities believe enables the necessary collaboration to achieve the vision set out by the Government. Adopt Coast to Coast as a Partnership Model will be delivered through a Hub and Spoke structure. The Hub will initially be based in County Durham and has been kept deliberately small and cost effective. It will consist of the RAA Head of Service and a Communications and Marketing Officer and will have access to a number of support services such as Performance and Finance which will be provided in kind from each of the three partners. The Hub costs will be shared equally by each Local Authority. There will be three spokes; Cumbria, Durham and Together for Children. The staff in the spokes will continue to be employed by their existing organisations and work together to achieve the shared vision for Adopt Coast to Coast:

“children will achieve their full potential within a loving and secure family, and everyone affected by adoption will receive a high-quality innovative and sustainable service”

The RAA Head of Service has been appointed and took up the post on 1 September 2020. The line management of the RAA Head of Service will be undertaken by Head of Children’s Social Care, Durham. To meet the Government’s deadline for go live (early Spring 2021) there has been a significant investment of time in developing an agreed model of practice for Adopt Coast to Coast. The modelling has had the advantage of the learning from the RAAs that have gone live both regionally and nationally. The detailed proposals are set out in the Full Business Case which will require agreement by the DfE.

## **Decision**

The Cabinet approved the Full Business Case for establishing Adopt Coast to Coast Regional Adoption Agency with Cumbria County Council, Durham County Council and Together for Children / Sunderland City Council.

## **Overview and Scrutiny Review of GP Services in County Durham**

### **Summary**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which presented the Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s review report focusing on GP Services in County Durham.

During 2018/19 the Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee was engaged in a number of applications to review, merge or close General Practitioner (GP) branch services across County Durham.

As part of these consultations, members received representations from patients, GP practice staff and councillors regarding the potential cumulative impact of these proposed changes and decided to undertake a review of the provision of and access to GP services across County Durham. The review examined the extent of GP coverage across County Durham including practice numbers, staffing structures and skills mixes, GP appointment capacity and demand including non-attendance rates. The effectiveness of GP service provision as reflected in inspection ratings was considered, as well as patient satisfaction with GP services.

Colleagues from the clinical commissioning groups explained existing and future workforce and demographic pressures which may impact upon access to GP services as well as setting out plans to address workforce pressures including the recruitment and retention of GPs and other health professionals. The role of public health, health promotion and ill health prevention together with planning policies and transport initiatives in ensuring that GP services are sustainable and accessible was also assessed.

The Review made a series of recommendations which aim to improve the sustainability and accessibility of GP services across County Durham. Since the review was undertaken we have been impacted by the greatest medical emergency in our generation and the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in major changes to the way in which general practice services are delivered. A number of these changes support recommendations arising from this review including the increased use of technology to facilitate remote consultations and appointments. This experience will hopefully provide reassurance to patients that alongside face to face services, an increase in the use of such technology can be an effective, efficient and safe way of accessing GP services. The review identifies nine recommendations for the Council, CCG, NEAS and CQC to consider and address through partnership working. In addition the report recommended that a review of progress with the report is undertaken six months after consideration by Cabinet and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

## **Decision**

The Cabinet:

- a) Endorsed the recommendations contained within the review report and agreed to work in partnership through the Health and Wellbeing Board to deliver the identified improvements.
- b) Agreed that a review of the progress made against the recommendations contained within the report will be undertaken within six months.

## **Director of Public Health Annual Report 2020**

### **Summary**

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Corporate Director of Adult and Health Services and the Director of Public Health County Durham which presented the 2020 Annual report of the Director of Public Health for County Durham.

Under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, one of the statutory requirements of the Director of Public Health is to produce an annual report about the health of the local population. The local authority has a duty to publish the report. The report provides examples work undertaken on the seven priorities that were set out in the 2018 annual report, and has an in-depth focus on giving every child the best start in life and promoting good jobs and places to live, learn and play. It also introduces a new evidence-based Approach to Wellbeing that has been developed and will be used to help empower our communities and build their resilience. In the year ahead the Council will continue to work closely with partners and communities to protect and improve the health and wellbeing of people in County Durham. As ever, reducing health inequalities is a core principle that will guide the work.

### **Decision**

The Cabinet:

- a) Received the 2020 annual report of the Director of Public Health, County Durham.
- b) Agreed to publish the annual report.

**The Cabinet resolved to exclude the press and public by virtue of paragraph 3 Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 during discussions on agenda item 16.**

## **Marginal Viability Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) – Newton Aycliffe Housing Growth Report**

### **Summary**

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth and the Corporate Director of Resources which sought agreement from Cabinet on the proposed approach to bringing forward Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) supported housing development in Newton Aycliffe that will make more land available for housing.

## **Decision**

The Cabinet agreed the recommendations outlined in the report.

Helen Lynch  
Head of Legal & Democratic Services  
20 November 2020