

Durham County Council

At a Meeting of **Cabinet** held in the **Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham** on **Wednesday 15 June 2022** at **9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor A Hopgood (Leader of the Council) in the Chair.

Cabinet Members:

Councillors R Bell (Deputy Leader of the Council), T Henderson, S McDonnell, E Scott, P Sexton, J Shuttleworth and M Wilkes

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor James Rowlandson and Councillor Alan Shield

Also Present:

Councillors E Adam, J Blakey, C Hood, G Hutchinson and J Nicholson

1 Public Questions

There were no public questions.

2 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations.

4 Climate Emergency Response Plan 2022-24 (Key Decision: NCC/01/22)

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change which provided the second and final annual update on progress of the Council's first Climate Emergency Response Plan (CERP1).

The report also sought agreement for the adoption of the second Climate Emergency Response Plan for the period 2022-24 (CERP2) and to give formal consideration to the introduction of new targets in CERP2, net zero (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

Councillor M Wilkes was full of admiration for the huge amount of work carried out which had culminated in a milestone report which was clear, unambiguous, innovative, and forward thinking.

Councillor R Bell fully supported the proposals set out in the report and explained that there were a number of 'asks' from central government within the report, particularly around access to funding.

Resolved:

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

5 Levelling Up Fund: Round 2 (Key Decision: REG/05/22)

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth which provided an overview of the guidance and bidding requirements to access Round 2 of the Levelling Up Fund.

The report sought approval for the submission of five proposals across County Durham for the parliamentary constituencies of City of Durham, Easington, North Durham, North West Durham and Sedgefield. The report outlined each submission for Round 2 and identified a match funding requirement, including £10 million of Council funding to lever an initial £92 million Levelling Up Fund investment towards the five Levelling Up schemes with a total expenditure of £117 million (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

Councillor E Scott explained that Levelling Up was a flagship policy of central government which the County Council were keen to benefit from. The County Council were demonstrating its commitment by way of match funding and the bids supported employment, growth and would enhance the visitor economy.

Councillor R Bell thanked all staff and Councillors for engaging in what had been a significant and challenging effort. He wished the Council every success with the bids which would deliver real benefits for residents across the County.

Resolved:

The recommendations in the report be approved.

6 County Durham Partnership Update

The Cabinet noted a report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change which provided an update to Cabinet on issues being addressed by the County Durham Partnership (CDP). The report also included updates on other key initiatives being carried out in partnership across the county (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

The Leader of the Council informed Cabinet that the CDP report was full of good news and innovative projects and ideas. The Leader of the Council highlighted examples such as the innovative 'Econ-versation', the power of partnership working evidenced as part of the City of Culture bid, the work carried out in terms of Health and Wellbeing around reducing smoking prevalence and the work of the humanitarian partnership in providing a place of safety for those fleeing conflict in the Ukraine, Afghanistan and Syria.

Councillor E Scott added that the strength of the partnership and the hugely important work the partnership was reflected throughout the report and commended the 'Big Econ-versation', the inclusive and wide-ranging review of community engagement and the extension of the holiday activities with healthy food programme. Councillor Scott added that such initiatives and those highlighted by the Leader of the Council, demonstrated the inspiring nature of partnership working.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

7 Quarter Four, 2021/22 Performance Management Report

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which presented progress towards achieving the key outcomes of the council's corporate performance framework and highlighted key messages to inform strategic priorities and work programmes, the report also covered the performance to the end of quarter four, January to March 2022 (for copy of report see file of minutes).

The Leader of the Council informed Cabinet that inflation continued to rise steeply, and commentators had suggested that further increases were forthcoming in relation to energy prices. The Leader of the Council highlighted that many households were struggling with the cost of living and this had manifested across the quarter with increased welfare assistance payments, household support payments and test and trace payments. Occupancy rates in strategic employment sites stood at 95.5% with the NetPark site being fully occupied.

County Durham was very much open for business and attracting inward investment was an important priority for the Cabinet.

In other areas, the hospitality and leisure industry had shown signs of growth but would need to be monitored closely due to the cost of living pressures and ultimately people having less disposable income.

In terms of health and wellbeing, a multi-agency and partner approach was needed to tackle obesity and other health challenges. There had been a sustained reduction in the number of admissions to adult residential care as people chose to live more independently in their homes.

The Leader of the Council thanked the Corporate Director of Resources for the very comprehensive report and thanked all staff who went above and beyond to deliver services well.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

8 Cyber Security Strategy

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which provided an overview of the Councils cyber security arrangements and a proposal to adopt a new corporate cyber security strategy for Durham County Council (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

Councillor S McDonnell informed the Cabinet that the Council could not operate without ICT and its substructure. The Council faced thousands of cyber attacks daily, with hacktivists trying to access data, disrupt business and hold organisations to ransom. Once an organisation had been subject to an attack it took many years for them to recover from such attacks. The corporate cyber security strategy set out how risks were identified and managed, along with the necessary measures the Council needed to take in relation to cyber security.

Councillor R Bell thanked the team for their hard work and explained the very real risks of cyber attacks and what the Council had to do to combat them. Councillor Bell strongly recommended that all Councillors and staff comply with the strategy which represented a very important update in terms of cyber security.

Resolved:

That the recommendations contained in the report be approved.