



## RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The following is a record of the decisions taken at the meeting of **CABINET** held on **Wednesday 13 July 2022**. The decisions will come into force and may be implemented from **Monday 25 July 2022** unless the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or its Committees object to any such decision and call it in.

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### **Proposal to close Forest of Teesdale Primary School on 31 August 2022 [Key Decision: CYPs/03/2022]**

#### **Summary**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services which sought approval to close Forest of Teesdale Primary School on 31 August 2022, taking account of the Local Authority's duties as prescribed in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to secure sufficient places and to ensure good outcomes for all children and young people in the local area.

Forest of Teesdale Primary School has the lowest pupil numbers of any school in County Durham and serves the least populated part of the county. There is currently one child on roll although that pupil is not currently being taught on site. The most recent Ofsted inspection of 8 October 2018 judged the school to be 'Good' but the nature of the improvements required, meant that a follow up inspection should have taken place within 18 months. However, the COVID-19 pandemic delayed the follow up inspection. The Ofsted report identified some improvement priorities relating to curriculum enrichment and consequently the collaboration with the other small schools in what was created to be an 'Upper Dales Federation', was necessary to maintain appropriate standards of provision and an appropriate curriculum for all children. Whilst the Federation has worked in terms of enriching the curriculum and providing greater social opportunities for all pupils across all schools, parents/carers have not chosen to enrol their children at Forest of Teesdale Primary School.

At a special meeting of the Upper Durham Dales Federated Governing Body held on 11 January 2022, Governors voted unanimously for consultation to commence as soon as possible to close Forest of Teesdale Primary School.

It was agreed by the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services on 9 February 2022, to use delegated powers to agree the start of a proposal to close the school on 31 August 2022. Following the completion of the initial consultation process, the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services approved the issuing of a statutory notice proposing to close Forest of Teesdale Primary School on 31 August 2022. The statutory notice was issued on 5 May 2022. During the 4 week statutory representation period, no comments were received. The Cabinet, as the decision maker, considered a range of factors as part of the statutory process which were detailed in the report.

## **Decision**

The Cabinet agreed to close Forest of Teesdale Primary School on 31 August 2022.

## **2021/22 Final Outturn for the General Fund and Collection Fund**

### **Summary**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which provided information on the final revenue and capital outturn for the General Fund for 2021/22 and the final outturn for the Council's Council Tax and Business Rates Collection Fund for 2021/22. The report detailed the use of and contributions to, earmarked, cash limit and general reserves in year and at year end together with the closing position regarding balances held at 31 March 2022. The achievement of Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) (11) savings targets in 2021/22 were also reported.

The financial impact of COVID-19 in 2021/22 was significant and complex which has made forecasting the Council's outturn position even more challenging than usual during the year. The longer-term financial impact of the pandemic into the current year and beyond remains uncertain at this stage. The risk in this regard will be considered and assessed in MTFP Cabinet reports going forward.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the Council has had to implement a range of national support schemes at short notice such as the various Business Rates Grants Support Schemes; the Council Tax Hardship Support Schemes; Test and Trace Payments; the Winter Support Payments Scheme; Infection Control Schemes and Contain Outbreak Management schemes. In addition, the Council has implemented a range of supplier relief schemes and has addressed increased demand for support to vulnerable households whilst trying to accommodate new ways of working in response to the pandemic.

In 2021/22 service grouping budgets overspent by a net £14.110 million.

Within this there was net additional expenditure and loss of income associated with the COVID-19 outbreak of £20.372 million, offset by COVID-19 related underspends of £5.904 million in year (relating to the closure of facilities and disruption to normal activity as a result of the pandemic), resulting in a net COVID-19 additional expenditure of £14.468 million charged to service groupings. Excluding this COVID-19 related net expenditure, which was funded corporately from the government grant funding received in year, the service grouping underlying cash limit position was an underspend of £0.358 million.

The government provided non ringfenced funding to local authorities in 2021/22 for the additional costs incurred as a result of COVID-19. The funding allocated to the Council for 2021/22 was £15.560 million.

The Council submitted returns for support under the government's Sales Fees and Charges Income Guarantee Scheme for three months to 30 June 2021. The scheme required councils to bear the first 5% of any qualifying income loss after which the government provides a grant for 75% of subsequent losses. The Council claimed circa £2.650 million from the scheme for 2021/22, bringing the total COVID-19 funding support from government to £18.210 million for 2021/22, which is £3.742 million more than the net COVID-19 costs incurred.

Throughout the year it has been difficult to forecast the outturn position for 2021/22 and a wide range of assumptions had to be applied in formulating the quarterly forecast reports in year in relation to expenditure and income due to uncertainty around the ongoing impact of COVID-19 restrictions following the initial lifting restrictions at the beginning of quarter two and the changes implemented in December following the outbreak of the Omicron variant.

There will potentially be a range of interventions required by the Council and ongoing impacts post pandemic that will have an as yet unquantified financial pressure. The Cash Limit and General Reserves will potentially be required to meet any shortfalls in the funding that ultimately arises in this regard whilst longer term strategies are implemented.

Budget pressures relating to inflationary pressures in the energy, transport, and waste management markets have been managed during 2021/22 within the general contingency budget but this position will need to be kept under review as forecasts would indicate that significant overspends will manifest in these budgets in 2022/23. A further corporate risk relates to pay inflation in 2022/23. Broader inflationary pressures will need to continue to be managed within service cash limits in 2022/23 and into future years.

The MTFP(12) report to Council on 23 February 2022 highlighted ongoing budget concerns for the Council with a forecast savings shortfall of £29.987 million over the 2022/23 to 2025/26 period, with the delivery of further savings becoming ever more challenging to achieve.

A separate report to the Cabinet meeting sought to update those forecasts and show a deterioration (increased deficit) across the period 2022/23 to 2025/26.

The final revenue outturn position for 2021/22 is a net service grouping cash limit underspend of £0.358 million and additional s31 government grant income received plus an underspend on other corporate budgets totalling £11.067 million. This includes surplus COVID-19 grant funding of £3.742 million, underspending against corporate contingencies (the pay award was 0.25% less than budgeted in 2021/22 for example) and additional investment income due to unbudgeted dividends received in year and higher level of cash balances being held as significant government grant funding was paid in advance of expenditure being incurred. The total net underspend is £11.425 million which represents 2.48% of the revised net expenditure budget of £461.251 million.

The year-end underspend position has enabled the creation and replenishment of £11.332 million of earmarked and cash limit reserves as part of the final account's closedown process.

Total general, earmarked and cash limit reserves (excluding school reserves) reduced by a net £10.258 million in 2021/22, from £271.685 million at 31 March 2021 to £261.427 million at 31 March 2022. This is less than what was forecast at quarter 3 and reflects the receipt of government funding in March where expenditure will be defrayed in 2022/23.

The general reserve at 31 March 2022 is £25.898 million, which is broadly in line with the position at 31 March 2021 – a slight reduction in year of £0.255 million – and within the Council's general reserves policy of retaining a balance of between 5% and 7.5% of the net budget requirement, which in cash terms is between £23.336 million and £35.005 million. The £25.898 million balance at 31 March 2022 equates to 5.55% of the 2022/23 net budget requirement.

During the year, a review of all reserves enabled the realignment of £14.9 million of cash limit and earmarked reserves enabling the investment of earmarked reserves in council priorities. This included a £10 million transfer into the Cabinet Priorities Reserve supporting one off investment priorities and £4.9 million to replenish corporate reserves as factored into MTFP(12) and the 2022/23 budget agreed by Council on 23 February 2022.

At year end a further review of reserves has enabled a number of adjustments to be made as part of the final accounts' closedown. A new Budget Support Reserve has been created to offset the overspends manifesting in 2022/23 as a result of inflationary pressures, alongside transfers into the Climate Change Earmarked Reserve, the corporate ERVR Reserve (in anticipation of further staffing reductions across MTFP13) and the Culture Reserve.

In terms of the capital programme, the final capital outturn position for 2021/22 is an underspend of £15.911 million, which is 10% of the revised capital budget of £158.979 million agreed by Cabinet in March.

In 2020/21, the government introduced regulations identifying that the financial impact of any 2020/21 in year Collection Fund deficit for council tax and business rates must be spread over three years. Across the three years 2021/22 to 2023/24, the government provided 75% grant support for the 2020/21 in year deficit position.

The final outturn for the Council Tax Collection Fund is a deficit of £5.772 million after accounting for the second instalment of the phasing of the 2020/21 deficit (£1.907 million). Durham County Council's share of this net deficit is £4.867 million. The outturn position is broadly in line with the Quarter 3 forecast presented to Cabinet in March.

The final outturn for the Business Rates Collection Fund is a net deficit of £10.007 million after taking into account the 2020/21 undeclared surplus of which Durham County Council's share (49%) is £4.903 million.

The £7.823 million Council's share of the in year business rates deficit, (excluding the surplus brought forward from 2020/21) is offset in the General Fund by the receipt of additional Section 31 grants of £9.166 million, leaving a net in year surplus of £1.343 million at year end, which is an improved position compared to the Quarter 3 forecast.

The in year collection of Council Tax and Business Rates increased from 2020/21 as a result of re-instating of formal recovery action from June 2021.

In 2021/22 the Council delivered MTFP(11) savings totalling £5.312 million, which was 100% of the target for the year. As at 31 March 2022, since 2011, the Council has delivered over £248 million in savings / budget reductions to balance its budgets.

## **Decision**

The Cabinet noted:

- (a) the final revenue outturn underspend of £11.425 million which represents 2.48% of the revised net expenditure budget of £461.251 million;

- (b) the net decrease in the Cash Limit Reserves of £4.208 million during 2021/22 (following General Fund funding of CYPS in year Cash limit overspend), with closing Cash Limit Reserves of £11.565 million. These sums will continue to be held as Earmarked Reserves and be available for Service Groupings to manage their budgets effectively;
- (c) the closing General Reserve balance of £25.898 million, which is within the council's general reserves policy of retaining a balance of between 5% and 7.5% of the net budget requirement;
- (d) the closing balance on Earmarked Reserves (excluding Cash Limit and Schools Reserves) is £223.964 million, which includes the creation and replenishment of earmarked reserves at year end;
- (e) the closing balance on Schools Reserves of £34.276 million;
- (f) the outturn position for the Collection Funds in respect of Council Tax and Business Rates.
- (g) the amount of savings delivered during 2021/22 of the MTFP(11) period.
- (h) the emerging inflationary pressures that have been managed within contingencies during 2021/22 and the requirement to manage via reserve and service cash limits going forward.

The Cabinet approved:

- (a) that the capital budget underspend of £15.911 million is carried forward into 2022/23;
- (b) that service groupings continue to regularly review capital profiles throughout 2022/23, reporting revisions to Cabinet as necessary.

**Medium Term Financial Plan(13), 2023/24 – 2026/27 and Review of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme  
[Key Decision: CORP/R/22/01]**

**Summary**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which provided an update on the development of the 2023/24 budget and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP(13)) covering the period 2023/24 to 2026/27. The report also considered a review of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2023/24.

The Council is continuing to operate in a period of significant financial uncertainty brought about by a combination of the ongoing impact of the pandemic, the inherent low tax raising capacity due to the low tax base, and significant budget pressures in social care brought about by National Living Wage increases and enduring demographic pressures in Children's Social Care and in waste services alongside other unfunded pressures arising from the present high levels of inflation impacting on energy and fuel costs in particular plus uncertainties surrounding the pay award that will ultimately be agreed. The financial outlook for the Council will continue to be extremely challenging for the foreseeable future.

There continues to be significant uncertainty in terms of future financial settlements for local government and how available funding will be shared between local authorities. Local authorities continue to be provided with one year financial settlements, which provide little financial certainty and security and given the timing of these announcements in late December, provides little time to react for local authorities.

Local authorities desperately need early notification of how much, if any, additional government support will be provided in 2023/24 to offset the significant financial pressures faced by the sector due to the present high levels of inflation. It appears at this stage however that there will not be early notification of funding levels for 2023/24, leaving local authorities to plan for the worst i.e. no further funding being made available.

Although it was anticipated that in the 2022/23 local government finance settlement that the Fair Funding Review (FFR) would be implemented, it is now expected that the implementation of the findings from the FFR, may now be delayed until at least 2024/25. To date there has been no consultation documents released relating to the FFR, which would seem to confirm that it is now unlikely that this will be implemented in 2023/24. In addition, the government is presently reviewing Business Rates, the outcome of which could impact on the utilisation of business rates as a funding mechanism for local government.

The lack of clarity in relation to the quantum of future financial settlements and the FFR is exacerbated by uncertainties in relation to future council tax referendum levels, the distribution of the Improved Better Care Fund, the impact of the cost cap and fair cost of care requirements in adult social care, the future of short term funding provided to local authorities for adult and children social care pressures and the ongoing impact of the pandemic upon council services and especially council income.

This level of uncertainty is making financial planning extremely challenging and requires the Council to be flexible and adaptable in its financial planning. In this regard the strong financial position of the Council will ensure that it is well placed to react effectively to any outcome.

At this stage, the Council is prudently planning on the basis that the Council will only receive additional core funding uplifts of £0.9 million in 2023/24 and that from 2024/25 the Council will lose £8.8 million of funding due to the combined impact of the outcome of the FFR but also from the forecast impact of further government funding reductions for local government to contribute to the recovery required to the national finances.

As consideration begins on the budget plans for 2023/24, in line with previous practice, the MTFP Model has been reviewed and the financial forecasts for the next four years updated. Financial plans have been updated to take into account the impact of inflation upon council costs with the consumer price index forecast to peak at 10% by the end of 2022 and also the Low Pay Commission's latest forecast for the 2023/24 increase in the National Living Wage of 8.6%.

The latest forecasts indicate a funding gap / savings requirement of £55.0 million will be required to balance the budget over the 2023/24 to 2026/27 period. Savings are forecast to be required in all years of MTFP(13) as budget pressures and the impact of funding reductions outstrip the Council's ability to generate additional income from business rates and council tax. The forecasts assume the Council will apply the maximum increases in its Council Tax it is allowed to across each of the next four years, in line with government guidance.

The achievement of an additional £55.0 million of savings over the next four years will be extremely challenging and should not be under-estimated – more so given the savings that the Council has been required to achieve in the last ten years. The emphasis since 2011/12 has been to minimise savings from front line services by protecting them wherever possible whilst maximising savings in management and support functions and by targeting increased income from charging. This is becoming much more difficult however, as the scope for further savings in managerial and back office efficiencies is becoming exhausted following the delivery of £250 million of savings up to 31 March 2023.

The total savings required at this stage for 2023/24 to balance the budget amount to £21.9 million, although it must be recognised that this figure could change significantly depending on whether the government provide much needed additional resources to the sector in 2023/24 and whether the Council experiences further additional financial pressures due to demand, loss of income or due to the impact of inflation.

Savings of £0.275 million for 2023/24 were approved in MTFP(12) relating to the relocation of the council HQ. Regardless of the outcome of the business case to review the new building on The Sands, which ultimately led to the Cabinet decision to seek to sell the building and reprovide HQ facilities on Aykley Heads and in Stanley, this saving required reprofiling in line with the expected occupancy of the new History Centre.



This saving has been deferred until 2026/27 in the latest MTFP(13) forecasts. This results in a savings shortfall over the MTFP(13) period of £54.7 million.

The MTFP(13) forecasts assume that there will be a 2.99% Council Tax increase in 2023/24 and 2024/25, in line with MTFP(12) planning assumptions, and 1.99% increases per annum thereafter. The 2.99% increases for the next two years include an assumed 1.99% council tax referendum limit core increase and 1% for the adult social care precept.

A challenging financial position is also forecast for the Council in 2024/25, where the savings required to balance the budget in that year is forecast to be £16 million. The budget position for 2025/26 and beyond is also likely to require the Council to continue to seek savings where increasing base budget pressures, especially in social care and waste, cannot be financed from increases in Council Tax and from business rate yields. This is a symptom of the Council's low tax raising capacity and the flaws in the current funding mechanisms for local authorities like Durham.

Savings plans will need to be developed for consideration for 2023/24 and in future years. Having plans in place will enable the Council to react to the outcome of the 2023/24 local government finance settlement, which is expected to be announced in December 2022. If required, the Council will be able to utilise the MTFP Reserve to balance the budgets as required whilst savings proposals are implemented. The current available balance in the MTFP Reserve is £15.2 million. The use of reserves to balance the budget is not a sustainable position and is only recommended where there is a need to smooth in more sustainable budget solutions.

The Council is the only local authority now in the North East to have retained entitlement levels for Council Tax support within the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) in line with that which applied under the national Council Tax Benefit regime prior to 2013/14. This policy has protected vulnerable residents at a time when welfare reform changes and more recently the pressure on household incomes from cost of living increases have had a significant adverse impact. The Cabinet agreed that the current LCTRS is retained and remains unaltered for a further year into 2023/24. The Council will need to formally adopt this policy at Full Council prior to 11 March 2023.

## **Decision**

The Cabinet:

- (a) noted the updated MTFP forecasts and the requirement to identify additional savings of £54.7 million for the period 2023/24 to 2026/27, but also noted that this forecast could change significantly based upon outcome of future government funding settlements, the Fair Funding Review and the ongoing impact of the pandemic, demand for services and inflationary pressures upon the council;

- (b) noted that at this stage a forecast £21.9 million of savings are required to balance the 2023/24 budget;
- (c) agreed the high level MTFP(13) and 2023/24 budget setting timetable contained in the report;
- (d) agreed the approach outlined for consultation on the 2023/24 budget and MTFP(13);
- (e) agreed the proposals to build equalities considerations into decision making; and
- (f) agreed that Cabinet recommend to Full Council that the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme should remain unchanged for 2023/24.

## **Storm Arwen review**

### **Summary**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change which reviewed the response to Storm Arwen and presented an improvement plan for managing future incidents.

Storm Arwen hit the north of the United Kingdom on the afternoon of Friday 26 November 2021 and caused extensive damage across northern England.

More than one million homes lost power as falling trees and poles brought down power lines, with over 100,000 homes experiencing several days without power. The strong winds also caused structural damage to buildings and transport was disrupted with rail services cancelled, roads blocked by fallen trees and overturned vehicles and snow accumulations across the Pennines. In County Durham, the electricity distribution network proved to be particularly susceptible to storm damage. Over 14,890 utility customers were affected by a loss of power. The outages affected all parts of the county and many residents were without power for several days before power was restored to all properties on Thursday 9 December 2021. The initial impacts of the storm were felt overnight on 26 and 27 November 2021. Emergency and council services responded to calls overnight and commenced clean-up operations as soon as it was safe to do so the following day.

County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum (LRF) implemented its multi-agency incident procedures on the morning of Saturday 27 November 2021 to coordinate response to storm damage incidents. Alongside the local emergency service response, Northern Powergrid (NPg) commenced operations to assess and repair damage to the power distribution network, in order to restore power to its customers as quickly as possible.

On Saturday 27 November, the Council's response was coordinated internally via normal emergency response procedures. However, with large numbers of communities still without power on Sunday 28 November, the Council escalated its response in line with the corporate emergency plan, by standing-up a senior officer coordinating group and calling up more customer support staff.

Initially it was understood that most properties should have been reconnected by midnight on Saturday 27 November and then Sunday 28 November. However, by the beginning of the following week it was clear that it would take days to get many customers onto temporary generated power, and potentially weeks to rebuild and repair parts of the power distribution network.

Given concerns about the duration of the power outages and uncertainty about when power would be restored, on Tuesday 30 November the Council requested that the LRF establish a strategic coordination group (SCG), which led to the declaration of a major incident on Wednesday 1 December. The council submitted a request for Military Assistance to Civil Authorities (MACA) which was approved by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) on Thursday 2 December.

Agencies worked together with local communities to contact and visit vulnerable people, and to provide affected residents with help and support ranging from welfare centres, hot meals, food, stoves, heaters and support supplies and where required, arranging alternative temporary accommodation. The Council also assisted with welfare and hardship payments while people waited for compensation claims to be processed.

As with previous incidents and the response to Covid-19, community, voluntary and faith groups across the county were outstanding in rallying-round and providing rapid and spontaneous support, which ranged from checking on isolated people, providing food and supplies, to opening-up community centres, halls and churches to provide places for shelter, company and warmth. Given the duration and widespread nature of the outages, community, voluntary and faith groups responses were invaluable in helping people affected by the storm.

A number of de-briefs and reviews of the response to the storm have been commissioned and undertaken including national reviews by the Department for Business, Energy, Innovation and Science (BEIS) and The Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem) and by County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum (CDDLRF). In addition, the Council undertook its own review, which consisted of seeking the views and experiences of officers who responded to the incident; elected Members; local community organisations and parish councils which responded to the incident; and the general public. The different elements of the review were summarised in the report.

To include an element of external challenge and peer review, the Council engaged with Durham University and Cornwall Council in the de-brief.

The views of Safer and Stronger Overview and Scrutiny Committee were also sought on the de-briefs and review with a special meeting of the Committee held on 20 May 2022 to consider the proposed improvement plan. A number of common observations and conclusions emerged from the review which were detailed in the report. Based on the de-briefs and feedback received, an improvement action plan has been developed, with improvement actions suggested against the following themes:

- 1) Review and expand the community resilience offering across the county;
- 2) Improve incident planning and preparedness through emergency planning, training and exercising processes including the role of Members;
- 3) Review emergency response resources and establish qualifying criteria for future incidents;
- 4) Review of communication and information sharing during incident response following the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP);
- 5) Develop a protocol for the activation and use of council staff during an incident;
- 6) Review strategic, tactical and operational decision making and governance.

## **Decision**

The Cabinet:

- a) noted the contents of the report and the feedback from the different elements of the review;
- b) noted the comments from the Stronger and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 20 May 2022;
- c) approved the improvement plan outlined in the report;
- d) within this, agreed to support the expansion of community resilience support across the county and the provision of improved training for elected Members and officers on emergency planning;
- e) agreed to share the report with NPg and the LRF to inform their own reviews and multi-agency planning.

# UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan

## Summary

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth (Interim) which provided an update on the approach and progress made so far in the development of an Investment Plan for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). The report sought approval for the submission of the UKSPF Investment Plan for Durham.

In April Government announced the prospectus and initial funding allocations for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which will replace the previous European funding arrangements. The county has a conditional UKSPF allocation of £30,830,613 and an additional £2,803,077 allocation for Multiply – a new adult numeracy programme. Funding is available across three financial years 2022/23 to 2024/25.

To secure the UKSPF allocation, an Investment Plan must be developed and submitted to Government by 1 August 2022. An Investment Plan for Multiply needs to be submitted by 30 June 2022. These Investment Plans should be developed in conjunction with a range of local partners and for UKSPF should specifically include the active engagement of the county's six Members of Parliament. The existing, well-established County Durham Economic Partnership has been broadened to incorporate wider representation to reflect the nature of the Fund, this CDEP+ group has guided and provided insight into the development of the Investment Plan.

Through the CDEP+ arrangements a programme of active engagement with a broad range of local and regional stakeholders has been undertaken to develop the Plan. A robust evidence base has been developed to identify local challenges and opportunities, which has been used to inform and prioritise activities that should be funded using UKSPF. This includes building a key statistical data set, analysis of feedback from the recent Big Econ-versation and mapping priorities with the County Durham Vision and the emerging Inclusive Economic Strategy. This has been used to inform the prioritisation of investment priorities and activities that will delivery maximum impact and meet local needs.

UKSPF can be used to deliver activities under three investment priorities, Communities and Place, Supporting Local Businesses and People and Skills. However, activity under People and Skills is not due to start until 2024/25, with ESF due to cease in December 2023, this will create a significant funding gap and service disruption in employability support to those residents furthest away from the labour market. This also directly impacts on the County Council, as a recipient of EU funding to deliver these services across the County.

Durham County Council, as lead authority, will be the accountable body for this funding, and will be responsible for the ongoing management of allocation, including assessing and approving applications, processing payments and day to day monitoring.

### **Decision**

The Cabinet:

- a) noted the approach and progress that is being made to develop investment plans for UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the emerging priority areas;
- b) noted the implications and risks to the Council as EU funding comes to an end and give further consideration on how to ensure an effective transition arrangement from EU funding and UKSPF;
- c) delegated authority to the Council's Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer and Leader to approve the investment plan's submission to Government before the deadline of 1 August 2022.

Helen Lynch  
Head of Legal & Democratic Services  
15 July 2022