

## DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Cabinet** held in the **Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham** on **Wednesday 13 July 2022** at **9.30 am**

### **Present:**

**Councillor A Hoggood (Leader of the Council)**

### **Cabinet Members:**

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

### **Apologies:**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor James Rowlandson and Councillor Elizabeth Scott

### **Also Present:**

Councillor Chris Hood

### **1 Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

### **2 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **3 Declarations of Interest**

As School Governors of Forest of Teesdale Primary School, Councillors Henderson and Shuttleworth declared an interest in agenda item 4 and would leave the meeting during consideration of the report.

Councillors Henderson and Shuttleworth withdrew from the meeting.

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

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 (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

**Moved** by Councillor Bell, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and **Seconded** by Councillor Sexton, Portfolio Holder for Adult and Health Services.

**Resolved:**

That the recommendation in the report be approved.

Councillors Henderson and Shuttleworth re-joined the meeting.

Cabinet agreed that Agenda Item No. 8 – Storm Arwen review be considered as the next item to allow the presenting officer to leave the meeting.

## **5 Storm Arwen review**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change on the response to Storm Arwen which included an improvement plan for managing future incidents (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

Councillor Shuttleworth, Portfolio Holder for Rural Communities and Highways informed the Cabinet that the review had provided the opportunity for those involved in the response to Storm Arwen to have a voice in the learning going forward. In compiling the report and action plan the Council had listened to individuals, community groups and Members of the Council who had provided feedback, along with partners from the emergency services, the resilience forum and Northern Powergrid.

Councillor Wilkes, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Climate Change considered that officers of the County Council at all levels did an incredible job during Storm Arwen to help residents.

**Resolved:**

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

## **6 Treasury Management Outturn Report 2021/22**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which provided an overview of the Council's Treasury Management Outturn performance for 2021/22 including borrowing activity, investment activity, treasury management and prudential indicators (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

Councillor Bell, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance thanked the officers for the comprehensive update on treasury management activity for the last year and for setting out the Council's position as at 31 March 2022. It was pleasing to note that the Council remained in a strong financial position and had fully complied with all of the requirements of the treasury management policy and strategy agreed by County Council in February 2021.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

**7 2021/22 Final Outturn for the General Fund and Collection Fund**

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 also 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 and achievement of Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) (11) savings targets in 2021/22 (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

Councillor Bell, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance informed Cabinet the report continued to demonstrate that the Council had strong financial resilience and exercised prudent financial management.

Councillor Hopgood, Leader of the Council thanked officers for the comprehensive overview of the Council's financial performance for 2021/22. Managing the budget for one of the biggest councils in the country was challenging and soaring inflation and increased bank base rates had added another layer of complexity to forecasting. The Council continued to focus on delivering its ambitions and priorities, making investments in excellent public services and delivering improvements.

**Resolved:**

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

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

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 (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

Councillor Bell, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance informed Cabinet the Council was seeking clarity, stability and additional financial support from government. However, the Council was obliged to plan for the worst and hope that by year end things would improve.

Councillor Hopgood. Leader of the Council informed the Cabinet that the challenges facing the Council for next year would be extraordinarily difficult to manage and re-iterated that this was not the budget but an update on the development of the budget.

**Resolved:**

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

## **9 UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth 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 (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

Councillor Henderson, Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services informed Cabinet that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund was a key component of the Government's policy to level up. The Joint Administration was keen to ensure that County Durham benefitted fully from this, maximising the impacts for the residents of County Durham.

Councillor Wilkes, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Climate Change informed Cabinet that the Council would ensure the investment was directed into improving areas such as job prospects and employment, helping to lead the green revolution and building the County's economy.

**Resolved:**

That the recommendations in the report be approved.