

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Cabinet** held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham on **Wednesday 12 October 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, C Hood, S McDonnell, J Rowlandson, E Scott, A Shield, J Shuttleworth and M Wilkes

1 Public Questions

There were no public questions.

2 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest in relation to any items of business on the agenda.

4 Medium Term Financial Plan(13) 2023/24-2026/27 [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 (for copy of report see file of minutes).

In moving the report Councillor R Bell, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance informed Cabinet that the report outlined the significant and escalating financial challenges the Council faced in balancing its budget next year and across the next four years. The challenge and uncertainty faced

was unlike anything the Council had faced in many years which made budget planning very challenging. When the budget for the current financial year was approved in February there was concern about the ongoing impact of the pandemic and uncertainty about future local government finance settlements. While these issues remained of significant concern they had been overshadowed recently by the impact of high inflation especially in relation to fuel, energy and transport costs and also wage costs which were already significantly above original forecasts. The council was also facing huge and significantly increased demand on social care budgets, particularly the budget for looked after children and significant cost pressures in the home to school transport budgets.

In seconding the report Councillor A Hopgood, Leader of the Council informed Cabinet that the updated MTFP forecasts showed an even more challenging position than the initial forecasts considered in July. The significant unavoidable cost pressures being experienced included inflationary increases in pay, energy, waste and transport contracts, national living wage increases and enduring costs and demographic pressures in looked after children and home to school transport budgets.

Resolved:

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

5 Concessionary Fares (ENCTS) Budget [Key Decision: REG/09/22]

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth which outlined a proposal to redirect funding during 2023/24 to sustain public transport services, subject to annual review (for copy of report see file of minutes).

In moving the report Councillor E Scott, Portfolio Holder for Economy and Partnerships reported that she was acutely aware of the problems which had beset bus services as a result of the pandemic. Bus services were a lifeline to residents in County Durham and this proposal would support bus companies to keep running services which may be at risk of being cut.

In seconding the report Councillor J Shuttleworth, Portfolio Holder for Rural Communities and Highways informed Cabinet that local bus services were vital for local residents.

Resolved:

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

6 Director of Public Health Annual Report 2022

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Corporate Director of Adult and Health Services and the Director of Public Health which presented the 2022 Annual Report of the Director of Public Health for County Durham (for copy of report see file of minutes).

Councillor C Hood, Portfolio Holder for Adult and Health Services welcomed the independent annual report from the Director of Public Health which introduced the concept of building blocks of good health, which all impacted on the chances of living a long and healthy life.

Councillor A Shield, Portfolio Holder for Equalities and Inclusion was pleased to receive the Director of Public Health's statutory annual report for 2022 which contained many examples of the work being carried out to make individuals lives healthier, fairer and protected and a reminder of how personal health and wellbeing underpinned everyone's life.

Resolved:

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

7 Road Safety Strategy 2022-2032

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth which sought approval to adopt the Road Safety Strategy 2022-2032 (for copy of report see file of minutes).

Councillor E Scott, Portfolio Holder for Economy and Partnerships welcomed the Road Safety Strategy 2022-2032 which would provide a foundation for additional road safety programmes to be designed, implemented and evaluated. The Strategy would also see targeted road safety education, training and campaigns in schools, colleges, communities and neighbourhoods.

Councillor J Shuttleworth, Portfolio Holder for Rural Communities and Highways supported the implementation of the new Road Safety Strategy 2022-2032 and its delivery plan. Councillor Shuttleworth welcomed the inclusion of rural riding campaigns aimed at leisure bikers and measures to highlight the dangers of illegal and inappropriate speeding in communities.

Resolved:

That the recommendation in the report be approved.

8 Health and Wellbeing Board Annual Report 2021-22

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Corporate Director of Adult and Health Services, the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services and the Director of Public Health which presented the Health and Wellbeing Board Annual Report 2021-22 for endorsement (for copy of report see file of minutes).

Councillor C Hood, Portfolio Holder for Adult and Health Services was pleased to present the Board's Annual Report for 2021/22 which outlined the achievements partners had made during that time.

Councillor T Henderson, Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services was pleased that the Annual Report for 2021/22 included a reference to several new initiatives under Starting Well.

Resolved:

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

9 Humanitarian Support in County Durham

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change which provided an update on County Durham's support for vulnerable individuals and families under Government schemes to assist refugee resettlement, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, Afghan resettlement and relocation programmes and the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme and to confirm the Council's future approach (for copy of report see file of minutes).

Councillor A Shield, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Equality and Inclusion informed Cabinet that the report brought together a useful and an impactful summary of the work going on within the Council, working with partners across an important but sensitive area. County Durham had always been and would always be a welcoming place for people seeking sanctuary and a place of safety.

Councillor J Rowlandson, Portfolio Holder for Resources, Investment and Assets informed Cabinet this was an inciteful but sobering report which demonstrated how the impacts of conflicts around the world brought challenges to County Durham.

Resolved:

That the recommendations in the report be approved.