

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a meeting of **Cabinet** held in the **Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham** on **Tuesday 4 June 2024 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor A Hoggood (Leader of the Council)

Cabinet Members:

Councillors R Bell (Deputy Leader of the Council), C Hood, S McDonnell, J Rowlandson, E Scott, A Shield, J Shuttleworth and M Wilkes

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ted Henderson

1 Public Questions

There were no public questions.

2 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2024 were agreed 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 North East Devolution - Combined Authority Borrowing Powers - (Key Decision: CEO/2024/001)

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive which sought consent to the making of regulations by central government to provide the new mayoral combined authority, NECA, with borrowing powers in line with the agreed devolution deal and the scheme which was subject to public consultation (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

In moving the report, the Leader of the Council explained that securing borrowing powers for non-transport functions was an important step to enable NECA to discharge its functions and deliver on its visions, policies, and priorities.

The intention for NECA to have such powers was set out in agreed scheme and had been subject to public consultation. The required regulations were due to be laid before Parliament in early July, however, the calling of the UK Parliamentary General Election meant that initial timescale was no longer achievable. It was important for each constituent authority to have the necessary consents in place so that the regulations could be progressed once Parliament had reconvened following the election.

Councillor R Bell, Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance seconded the recommendations.

Resolved:

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

5 Early Help Strategy 2024-2026

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Service and Chair of Children, Young People and Families Partnership Board which presented the updated Early Help Strategy 2024-2026 for endorsement (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

In the absence of the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services, Councillor Alan Shield, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Equality and Inclusion moved and welcomed the new strategy which set out a vision to support all families and children in County Durham to achieve their life goals in a safe, happy and healthy environment. It was recognised that all families required support from time to time to help their children thrive. The ambition was for every family to receive the right support, in the right place at the right time. The Early Help Strategy would provide for positive and trusting relationships with families and set out how the Council would work in partnership to achieve this.

In seconding the recommendations, Councillor Chris Hood, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Adult and Health Services commented that the refreshed strategy highlighted how local services could best work together with children and their families. The strategy demonstrated collaboration across services and importantly the coproduction of children, young people, parents and carers to ensure that the support required was accessible.

Resolved:

That the recommendation in the report be approved.

6 Update on the Corporate Asset Management Plan 2023-2025

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth which updated Cabinet on the progress of the corporate asset management since it was approved in April 2023. The plan set out priorities for further improvements which would inform the development of the next iteration of the CAMP to be presented in 2025 (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

In Moving the report, Councillor J Rowlandson, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Resources, Investments and Assets explained that the update highlighted the importance of the Council land and property portfolio and how it contributed to the success of the Council's ambitions. The CAMP agreed by Cabinet in 2023 provided space for the delivery of public services, the plan assists with job creation, housing and economic growth as well as income to invest in services. The Council and County had experienced changing economic, social and financial environments which underlined the paramount importance of strong strategic management of land and property. Strong governance models provided for assurance and clear decision making which were key in ensuring best value and transparency. The update to the implementation of the CAMP provides Cabinet with a clear understanding of progress and ambition for the future with a clear direction to support, ensure value for money and provide strong leadership for Council land and property.

Councillor R Bell, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance commented that an effective CAMP was essential to the effective management of scarce resources. Managing the operational estate effectively and ensuring best value for disposals and timely management of Council buildings were all key to the Medium Term Financial Plan. Councillor Bell seconded the recommendations in the report.

Resolved:

That the recommendation in the report be approved.

7 Exclusion of the public

Resolved:

That under section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 5 of Schedule 12A to the said Act.

8 Durham City Regeneration Milburngate Development (Key Decision: REG/2024/005)

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth and Corporate Director of Resources which provided an update on the current situation with the Milburngate development in Durham City (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

Councillor J Rowlandson, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Resources Investments and Assets moved the recommendations set out in the report. The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council both placed on record their thanks to all officers involved for their hard work in what was a significantly complex case.

Resolved:

That the recommendation in the report be approved.