

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Special Meeting of **Cabinet** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Wednesday 22 January 2014 at 10.00 am**

Present:

Councillor S Henig (Leader of the Council) in the Chair

Members of the Committee:

Councillors J Brown, L Hovvels, O Johnson, A Napier, M Nicholls, M Plews, B Stephens and E Tomlinson

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Neil Foster

Also Present:

Councillors J Armstrong, P Conway, M Dixon, J Gray, C Hampson, K Hopper, R Lumsdon, K Shaw, J Shuttleworth, P Stradling, A Surtees, R Todd, J Turnbull and M Wilkes

1 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2 Medium Term Financial Plan 2014/15 to 2016/17 (MTFP (4)) and 2014/15 Budget Key Decision: Corp/R/13/02

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Corporate Director Resources and Assistant Chief Executive which provided an update on the Medium Term Financial Plan MTFP (4) 2014/15 to 2016/17 and the 2014/15 Budget following the Government's Local Government Finance Settlement announcement on 18 December and feedback from the budget consultation process, that ended on 7 December 2013 (for copy see file of minutes).

The Leader advised of the opportunities available to other members of the Authority feeding in their comments on the budget setting process. This included the Special Joint Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, and Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 27 January where the report would be considered. Feedback from the scrutiny meeting would be given to the Cabinet meeting on 12 February, and final recommendations would be considered by full Council on 26 February.

Cabinet members spoke of the continuation of the scale of the funding cuts that are being imposed on the authority from central government. The settlement which had been received late for another year left very limited time for the proposals to be formulated. It was pointed out that still some information on the settlement is awaited, some of which may impact on the precept levels of a parish council if already set.

Representations continue to be made to central government through ANEC, and by the Authority. The Leader of the Council had been involved in the representations that had been made to the Local Government Minister, and representations would continue to be made on the unfair share of cuts being imposed on Durham and the North East, through the erosion of the equalisation block. In reality this meant that the basic level of service being provided for in County Durham would be less than in some other parts of the county.

The Leader and Deputy Leader and the whole of Cabinet complimented finance officers for their accurate financial forecasting for the whole of the medium term financial planning since 2011/12 (MTFP 1), and asked that their thanks be conveyed to those involved.

Members commented upon the consultation events that had been held which had attracted high levels of public participation, the feedback from which had been analysed and was being used to formulate the proposals going forward.

Resolved:

That the recommendations contained in the report be approved.

3 Implications for Durham County Council of the Government's policy programme

The Cabinet considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which provided an update on the major policy developments and announcements on the Government's policy programme and analysed the implications for the council and County Durham following the last report (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

4 Revised equality policy and approach

The Cabinet considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which provided information on the revised equality policy and the streamlined corporate approach to equality planning and performance management (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the recommendations contained in the report be approved.

5 Annual Report of the Director of Public Health

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Corporate Director of Children and Adults Services and the Director of Public Health which presented the 2012/13 annual report of the Director of Public Health for County Durham, the first of which, produced under the new NHS arrangements which transferred some public health functions to local authorities (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the recommendations contained in the report be approved.

6 NHS and Public Health Reform

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Corporate Director, Children and Adults Services and Director of Public Health, County Durham which provided an update on recent developments related to the NHS and public health reform (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the recommendations in the report be approved.