

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Cabinet** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Wednesday 19 October 2016 at 10.00 am**

Present:

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

Cabinet Members:

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

Also Present:

Councillors J Clare, R Crute, M Dixon, D Freeman, B Graham, G Holland, A Hopgood, J Lindsay, J Shuttleworth, A Surtees, O Temple, M Williams and S Zair

The Leader advised that the report on Schools PFI Refinancing scheduled for the private part of the meeting would now be considered in public. Copies of the report were available for the press and public.

1 Public Questions

There were no public questions.

2 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations made.

4 Durham Key Options Lettings Policy Changes [Key Decision: RED/08/16]

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services which updated on the outcomes of the recent consultation on the proposed changes to the Durham Key Options Lettings Policy. Approval was sought to implement the policy changes as set out in the report (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

5 County Durham Partnership Update

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships which updated on issues being addressed by the County Durham Partnership (CDP) including the board, the five thematic partnerships and all areas action partnerships (AAPs). The report also included updates on other key initiatives being carried out in partnership across the county (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

6 Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Review of Support Provided for skills development within County Durham

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships which presented the key findings and recommendations of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Review Group report on support provided for skills development within County Durham (for copy see file of minutes).

Councillor R Crute, Chairman of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee presented the report to Cabinet, and provided detail on the scope of the review and its findings. He thanked Members, officers, partners, and everyone who had been part of the working group.

Cabinet Members thanked Councillor Crute and the scrutiny group for the review work, and would provide a response to their findings in line with the recommendations in the report.

Resolved:

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

7 An Opportunity for Every Care Leaver

The Cabinet considered a report of the Interim Corporate Director, Children and Young People's Services which updated on the action being taken by the Council to ensure Care Leavers have the opportunity to achieve their aspirations and fulfil their potential. The report highlighted ongoing barriers to the successful progression into Apprenticeships (and employment) for some Care Leavers (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the recommendation in the report be approved.

8 Public Health Annual Update Report

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Interim Corporate Director, Adult and Health Services and the Interim Director, Public Health which highlighted the last 12 months work undertaken by Durham County Council's public health team and provided details of areas of priority going forward (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the recommendations contained in the report be approved.

9 Durham County Cricket Club - Financial Support

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Local Services and the Corporate Director, Resources which informed of developments in relation to securing the future of first class county cricket in the county. The report also provided an update on the finances of Durham County Cricket Club (DCCC), a change in their articles of association and subsequent restructure of the Club in response to a financial rescue package agreed with the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB). The report also sought agreement to the Council converting its outstanding loan balance into equity in the form of redeemable preference shares in the new Community Interest Company (CIC) that will run the Club going forward as part of the rescue package to secure the future of DCCC (for copy see file of minutes).

The Leader advised that he had offered the opportunity for group leaders or their representatives to attend the meeting to submit questions to cabinet on the report. Councillor N Foster responded to the questions raised by both Councillor Holland on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group, and Councillor John Shuttleworth of the Durham County Council Independent Group. Councillor Holland asked about the different business models, assurances on the financial position going forward, and advised that he hoped Cabinet would give support to preserve the cricket club as an international venue. Councillor Shuttleworth advised that he could not support this during the current financial climate when the council was reducing its services which included closing care homes and leisure centres.

Cabinet members spoke at length about the issues facing the club, the history behind its set up which involved both the former county council and Chester-le-Street district council, and the economic boost and profile that international cricket brings to county Durham and the north east as a whole. It was emphasised that the county council had not been asked for any additional finance, and that the support requested was to change its outstanding loan balance into preference shares. Members noted that the only way to possibly recoup some or all of the investment already made by the council would be to convert to shares, as by pulling support now from the club the finance would be lost. Cabinet members welcomed the change in the governance arrangements of the club, commented that there was too much to lose for county Durham if they no longer supported the club as by continuing to have international cricket played in the county was so important for county Durham and its economy.

Resolved:

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

10 Schools PFI Refinancing

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director, Resources which sought approval for delegated powers to be utilised to enter into a debt refinancing arrangement for the Council's Public Finance Initiative (PFI) covering Schools (for copy see file of minutes).

Councillor Napier responded to the questions raised by Councillor Temple about the budgeted costs of the finance package, early redemption costs, and the percentage benefits and risks involved.

Resolved:

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

11 Exclusion of the public

That under Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely discussion of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

12 Refinancing of Newcastle International Airport

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director, Resources which noted the exercising of emergency delegated powers to agree the debt refinancing arrangements for Newcastle International Airport (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the recommendations in the report be approved.