

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

At a Meeting of **Cabinet** held in the **Council Chamber, Spennymoor Council Offices, Green Lane, Spennymoor** on **Wednesday 10 July 2019** at **10.00 am**

### **Present:**

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

### **Cabinet Members:**

Councillors J Allen, O Gunn, L Hovvels, C Marshall, A Napier, K Shaw, B Stephens and A Surtees

### **Apologies:**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor A Patterson

### **Also Present:**

Councillors J Clare, A Hopgood and L Maddison

### **1 Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

### **2 Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 12 June 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **3 Declarations of interest**

Councillor Napier advised of his declaration in relation to item 13, Redhills and withdrew from the meeting during the discussion of the item.

### **4 Medium Term Financial Plan(10), 2020/21 – 2023/24 and Review of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2020/21 [Key Decision: CORP/R/19/01]**

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Corporate Director of Resources and Director of Transformation and Partnerships which provided an update on the development of the 2020/21 budget and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP(10)). The report also considered a review of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2020/21 (for copy see file of minutes).

Cabinet members spoke of the uncertainty with financial settlements and that instead of receiving a comprehensive spending review covering a three year period it is expected that this will be delayed and there will be a one year settlement for local government. It was emphasised how difficult it was to operate with this financial uncertainty, on-going austerity and the significant budget pressures being faced, however the Council would continue with its financial planning. Lobby the government on these issues continues.

**Resolved:**

That the recommendations contained in the report be approved.

**5 County Durham Housing Strategy & County Durham Homelessness Strategy [Key Decision: REAL/02/18]**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services which advised on the comments received as part of the consultation on the Housing Strategy and Homelessness Strategy (for copy see file of minutes).

**Resolved:**

That the recommendations contained in the report be approved.

**6 Local Lettings Agency**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services which sought approval in principle to establish a Local Lettings Agency (LLA) within County Durham (for copy see file of minutes).

**Resolved:**

That the recommendations contained in the report be approved.

**7 Council Activity Report**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships which provided an update on work undertaken to support some of the Council's key priorities (for copy see file of minutes).

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

## **8 2018/19 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:

- (a) final revenue and capital outturn for the General Fund for 2018/19;
- (b) final outturn for the Council's Council Tax and Business Rates Collection Fund for 2018/19;
- (c) use of and contributions to earmarked, cash limit and general reserves in year and the closing position with regards to balances held at 31 March 2019.

(for copy see file of minutes).

Cabinet members thanked the Corporate Director of Resources and his staff for their quick turnaround of the outturn report.

### **Resolved:**

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

## **9 County Durham Youth Justice Plan 2019 - 2021**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services which presented the Youth Justice Plan for 2019/21 (for copy see file of minutes).

The partners were thanked for their involvement in producing the Plan.

### **Resolved:**

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

## **10 Treasury Management Outturn 2018/19**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which provided information on the treasury management outturn position for 208/19 (for copy see file of minutes).

### **Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

## **11 Review of the Council Tax Long Term Empty Premium Charges**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which outlined the opportunities, risks and issues associated with reviewing the Council's policy of applying a 50% premium on properties which have been unoccupied and unfurnished for more than 2 years, where Council's now have the power to:

- (a) apply a maximum 100% premium on such properties (from April 2019); along with
- (b) the power to apply a maximum 200% premium on properties which have been unoccupied and unfurnished for more than 5 years (from April 2020).

The report also sought permission to consult on changing the Council's policy of charging a 50% premium on long term empty homes from April 2020.

(for copy see file of minutes).

### **Resolved:**

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

## **12 Transport Asset Management Plan – Annual Update**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services which provided an update on the Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) (for copy see file of minutes).

### **Resolved:**

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

## **13 Redhills- Request for Funding**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services which set-out a request for financial support as match funding towards Redhills large-scale funding bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF). The report further considered the options and implications open to the Council in considering this request (for copy see file of minutes).

Councillor Joy Allen in responding to questions from Councillor Hopgood advised on the restrictions of a political organisation receiving funding, of the conditions attached to the granting of funding in order to provide assurance and accountability, and representation by the council on its steering group and a Board set up to run the centre once the project is complete.

**Resolved:**

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

**14 Street Lighting Energy Reduction Project – End Project Report**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services which provided an end project report on the Street Lighting Energy Reduction Project (for copy see file of minutes).

**Resolved:**

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

**15 Chester le Street Masterplan**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services which advised Cabinet on the comments received as part of the consultation on the Chester-le-Street Masterplan, and, requested that Cabinet adopt the Chester-le-Street Masterplan (for copy see file of minutes).

**Resolved:**

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

**16 High Needs Block Funding for SEND and Inclusion Support**

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Corporate Director of Children of Children and Young People's Services and the Corporate Director of Resources which provided an overview of spend and pressures on the High Needs Block (HNB) of the Designated Schools Grant (DSG), which provides funding for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and Inclusion Support services for children, young people and young adults. The report outlined initial areas of focus in work being done to seek to make the HNB more sustainable and refers to a number of proposals which require further consultation (for copy see file of minutes).

**Resolved:**

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

**17 Maintained Schools Budget Plans and Permission to Set Deficit Budgets 2019/20**

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services and the Corporate Director of Resources which provided an overview of maintained schools' initial budget plans for 2019/20, as agreed by the relevant Governing Bodies. The report highlighted where the Corporate Director, Resources will exercise his judgement in terms of approving the setting of deficit budgets, in accordance with the Council's constitution and the Scheme of Financing for Schools (for copy see file of minutes).

**Resolved:**

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

**18 Durham County Council Engagement with Children and Young People – As Citizens and Service Users Annual Update**

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services and the Director of Transformation and Partnerships which demonstrated the wide range of participation and engagement mechanisms used to understand the voice of the child and how this has influenced service provision and project development. It outlined the key messages from young people and how the Council has acted on them (for copy see file of minutes).

**Resolved:**

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

The Leader of the Council advised that this had been the last cabinet meeting that Margaret Whellans, Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services would attend prior to her retirement. She was thanked for her hard work and wished well in retirement.