

23 October 2019

Report from the Cabinet



Purpose of the Report

To provide information to the Council on issues considered by the Cabinet on 11 September 2019 to enable Members to ask related questions.

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[Key Decision: CORP/T&P/19/01]
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1. **County Durham Vision Update 2035**
[Key Decision: CORP/T&P/19/01]
Leader of the Council – Councillor Simon Henig
Contact – Tom Gorman 03000 268027

We have considered a report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships which presented the latest draft of the County Durham Vision 2035 document for approval.

An extensive public consultation exercise was carried out where the vision was presented to AAP meetings and partnership meetings. A video and the vision document were made available on the council's website together with a questionnaire giving all the opportunity to comment on the vision. The consultation ran from 12 June to 31 July. Full details of the comments received following the consultation exercise, together with the partnership response were contained in the report. Following the consultation, changes were made and the revised draft was presented in appendix 3 of the report. A new branding strategy is required to replace the Altogether Better branding and options for this were presented in appendix 4 of the report.

Decision

We have:

- (a) Noted the public consultation feedback contained summarised within the report;
- (b) Agreed the latest draft of the vision for consideration and agreement by the County Durham Partnership prior to launch at the County Durham Partnership event on 25 October;
- (c) Agreed to develop a branding strategy for the new vision;
- (d) Agreed to review the delivery framework and monitoring arrangements for key strategies.

2. Welfare Reform and Poverty Issues **Cabinet Portfolio Holder – Councillor Angela Surtees** **Contact – Emma Gardner 03000 268054**

We have considered a report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships which provided an update on the implications of the government's welfare reform programme and its impact on the county. The report outlined the main changes introduced under the Welfare Reform Act 2012, and, the main policy developments which have taken place since the last update to Cabinet.

The Council has an overarching Poverty Action Steering Group to oversee and coordinate its approach to mitigate poverty and has developed a comprehensive network of statutory, voluntary and community organisations who work together to provide advice services across the county through the Advice in County Durham Partnership. The steering group has developed a new poverty action strategy which was outlined in appendix 3 of the report.

To achieve the best possible outcomes for residents experiencing poverty, the strategic aims of the strategy are:

- (a) To improve understanding of the types of poverty and its impacts on County Durham residents;
- (b) To increase employability, personal wellbeing and sense of worth for residents;
- (c) That residents receive the best support and advice available concerning their financial situation; and
- (d) That children, young people and families have the resources to meet their basic needs including accessing opportunities to take part in society.

To realise the strategy, the poverty action plan has been reviewed and revised in order to improve and develop service provision, and assistance to people in need.

Decision

We have:

- (a) Noted the progress being made by the council and its partners in addressing welfare reform and the wider poverty issues in the county;
- (b) Agreed the draft updated Poverty Action Strategy and Poverty Action Plan included in the report.

3. Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2018/19 Cabinet Portfolio Holder – Councillor Olwyn Gunn Contact – Gordon Elliott 03000 263605

We have considered a joint report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships and Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services which presented the final Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Annual Report 2018/19. This is the final report prior to transitioning to the new statutory partnership arrangement known as the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP).

The LSCB Annual Report 2018/19 demonstrates the extent to which the functions of the Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board, as set out in the earlier national statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (March 2015), have been effectively fulfilled. The report describes the work undertaken against the LSCB's 2018-19 priorities and describes local governance arrangements and links to

other strategic partnerships across County Durham. The report provides an overview of performance monitoring as well as providing a summary of the use of restraint in secure centres; Serious Case Reviews; Child Death Reviews; and the LSCB's provision of multi-agency training provision.

Decision

We have endorsed the 2018/19 Annual Report of Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board.

4. Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2018/19 Cabinet Portfolio Holder – Councillor Olwyn Gunn Contact – Helen Fergusson 03000 261663

We have considered a report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services which presented the Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report April 2018 – March 2019. The Annual Report was agreed by the Corporate Parenting Panel at its meeting on 19 July 2019. Following an inspection of Durham County Council's Children's Services by Ofsted in February/March 2016 the Council's transformation agenda has made significant improvements in relation to political oversight of Children's Services including the revised terms of reference of the Corporate Parenting Panel. This is the second Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Panel, following the changes to political oversight.

Decision

We have endorsed the Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report for 2018-2019.

5. Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2019/20 – to 30 June 2019 Deputy Leader of the Council – Councillor Alan Napier Contact – Jeff Garfoot 03000 261946

We have considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which provided information on the following:

- (a) forecast revenue and capital outturn for 2019/20;
- (b) forecast for the council tax and business rates collection fund position at 31 March 2020;
- (c) forecast use of earmarked, cash limit and general reserves and estimated balances to be held at 31 March 2020.

The report also sought approval of the budget adjustments and proposed sums outside of the cash limit.

In accordance with the council's constitution, Council agreed the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), which incorporates the revenue and capital budgets for 2019/20, on 20 February 2019. The constitution also states that the Chief Finance Officer must report to Cabinet on the overall council budget monitoring position on a quarterly basis.

This report provided a forecast of the revenue and capital outturn for 2019/20, based upon expenditure and income up to 30 June 2019. This is the first report on forecast financial performance against the 2019/20 budgets this financial year.

The 2019/20 projected revenue outturn a forecast cash limit underspend of £0.049 million plus an underspend on all other budgets of £1.138 million. This forecast net underspend of £1.187 million represents 0.3% of the net expenditure budget of £419.581 million. Total earmarked and cash limit reserves (excluding school reserves) are forecast to reduce by £8.769 million in 2019/20, from £209.069 million to £200.300 million. The projected capital outturn is £142.663 million. The estimated outturn for the Council Tax Collection Fund is a surplus of £0.132 million. Durham County Council's share of this forecasted surplus is £0.111 million, which will be available to support the 2020/21 budget.

The estimated outturn for the Business Rates Collection Fund is a surplus of £2.525 million Durham County Council's share (49%) of this estimated surplus is £1.237 million which will be available to support the 2020/21 budget.

Decision

We have:

- (a) noted the council's overall financial position for 2019/20;
- (b) agreed the proposed 'sums outside the cash limit' for approval;
- (c) agreed the revenue and capital budget adjustments;
- (d) noted the forecast use of earmarked reserves;
- (e) noted the forecast end of year position for the cash limit and general reserves;
- (f) noted the position on the capital programme and the Collection Funds in respect of Council Tax and Business Rates.

6. Commissioning Plan for Children and Young People's Services
Cabinet Portfolio Holders – Councillor Olwyn Gunn and Lucy Hovvels
Contact – Mark Smith 03000 267395

We have considered a joint report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services and Corporate Director of Adult and Health Services which presented the Durham County Council Children and Young People's Services Commissioning Plan for 2019-2021.

The purpose of the commissioning plan is to set out Durham County Council's key strategic commissioning priorities and activities for children and young people's services over the next two years. The plan also incorporates commissioning activity that is being undertaken jointly with Durham's Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs). The plan builds upon the vision set out in the County Durham Children and Young People's Strategy (2018/19 - 2020/21):

County Durham will be a great place for children and young people to grow up in and for Durham to be a place where all children are healthy, happy and achieving their potential.

The commissioning priorities and activities are structured across the four key aims developed within the above strategy:

- All children and young people have a safe childhood
- Children and young people enjoy the best start in life, good health and emotional wellbeing.
- Young people gain the education, skills and experience to succeed in adulthood.
- Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) achieve the best possible outcomes.

In addition, the plan incorporates commissioning priorities and activities developed through consultation within other strategic plans.

The plan incorporates activity that is underway to address the findings of the inspection of the local areas' effectiveness in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is specifically focused upon addressing the limitations in our understanding of the impact of local services and how these contribute to children and young people's outcomes alongside the need to join up commissioning activity across the local education, health and care system to secure the benefits of an integrated approach across County Durham.

The plan proposes that the performance and impact of commissioned services should be monitored through the development of service level impact and evidence statements and that these should be considered by the Integrated Steering Group for Children on a quarterly basis to identify areas of support and challenge and any remedial activity required.

Decision

We have received the Children and Young People's Services Commissioning Plan 2019-21.

7. A Digital Strategy for County Durham Cabinet Portfolio Holders – Councillors Andrea Patterson and Joy Allen Contact – Alan Patrickson 03000 268165

We have considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which provided an overview of the Customer First Strategy with three core objectives:

- To provide easy to use and effective ways for people to contact the council;
- To provide responsive and customer focussed services;
- To use customer feedback for learning and to improve services.

Since that time, and in delivery of the Customer First strategy, the Council's digital offer to its customers has seen dramatic improvement. The Council is now delivering an ambitious programme of Transformation with the overall objectives of:

- Redesigning services to better meet our customers' needs at reduced cost to the Council;
- Helping communities become more self-reliant and resilient;
- Moving partnership working from good to great;
- Becoming renowned for our skilled and flexible workforce and our employee engagement.

The new Digital Strategy sets out the Council's digital ambitions for the County. It provides a framework within which these ambitions can be delivered and aligns to the interlocking objectives of the Revised Council Vision and the Transformation Programme. The new strategy is set out under three main themes along with individual service specific ambitions set out by each service grouping. The three themes are:

- Digital Customer
- Digital Organisation
- Digital Communities

Decision

We have approved the adoption of the new Digital Strategy and the publication of the Digital Strategy on the Council's website.

Councillor S Henig
Leader of the County Council

15 October 2019