



**Electoral division(s) affected:**

All

**Purpose of the Report**

To provide information to the Council on issues considered by the Cabinet at its meeting held on 13 March 2024 to enable Members to ask related questions by no later than midday 3 working days before the day of the meeting

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**Item 1 — Spennymoor - Long Term Plan for Towns – [Key Decision: REG/2024/002] - Councillor Elizabeth Scott, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economy and Partnerships and Councillor James Rowlandson, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Resources, Investment and Assets.**

We considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth which provided an update on the Government’s Long-Term Plan for Towns programme which was announced in October 2023 and sought to target funding to 55 towns across England including Spennymoor.

The report included details of the further guidance received in December 2023 together with the proposals for developing a Town Board and the development of a town plan.

**Decision:**

We:

- (a) noted the inclusion of Spennymoor within the Government's Long Term Plan for Towns Programme;
- (b) endorsed the process of seeking a chair for the Town Board through open recruitment; and
- (c) delegated approval of the submission of the Vision and Town Investment Plan to the Corporate Director of Regeneration Economy and Growth in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holders for Economy & Partnerships and Resources, Investments & Assets.

**Item 2 – Corporate Enforcement Policy [Key Decision No. NCC/2024/001] – Councillor Mark Wilkes, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Climate Change**

We considered a joint report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change which sought approval to adopt the revised Corporate Enforcement Policy from 1 April 2024 following internal review and wider public and partner consultation and grant delegated authority to relevant Corporate Directors in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to review and amend the Corporate Enforcement Policy as appropriate as and when required in the future.

**Decision:**

We:

- (a) Noted the contents of the report and the final Corporate Enforcement Policy accompanying the report as attached at Appendix 2;
- (b) Agreed to formally adopt the Corporate Enforcement Policy from 1 April 2024, subject to any further amendments; and
- (c) Agreed to delegate authority to relevant Corporate Directors in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to review and amend the Corporate Enforcement Policy as appropriate as and when required.

**Item 3 – Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2023/24 – Period to 31 December 2023 and Update on Progress towards achieving MTFP (13) savings – Councillor Richard Bell, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance**

We considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which provided the updated forecast revenue and capital outturn at 31 March 2024,

based on the position to 31 December 2023, an update on the dedicated schools grants and forecast schools' outturn as at 31 March 2024, based upon the position to 31 December 2023, the updated forecast for the council tax and business rates collection fund outturn at 31 March 2024, based on the position to 31 December 2023 and details of the updated forecast use of and contributions to earmarked, cash limit and general reserves in 2023/24 and the estimated balances that will be held at 31 March 2024.

The report also provided an update on the 2023/24 capital programme, other budget adjustments and proposed sums treated as outside of the cash limit in year and an update on progress towards achieving MTFP (13) savings in 2023/24.

**Decision:**

We:

- (a) noted the council's overall forecast financial position for 2023/24 and the continuing uncertainty associated with the outturn forecast resulting from the significant inflationary and demand led cost pressures;
- (b) agreed the proposed 'sums outside the cash limit' and transfers to and from general contingencies as set out in the report;
- (c) approved the revenue and capital budget adjustments outlined in the report;
- (d) noted performance against the various prudential indicators agreed by Council in February 2023;
- (e) noted the forecast use of earmarked reserves in year;
- (f) noted the forecast 2023/24 cash limit underspend of £2.479 million (net of CYPs) alongside the forecast contribution of £4.336 million to general reserves resulting in a forecast overall net council underspend in 2023/24 of £6.815 million;
- (g) noted the net unavoidable inflationary pressures which are forecast to be managed from the General Reserve;
- (h) noted that all reserves will be reviewed to ensure sufficient sums are available in the ERVR and MTFP Support Reserve to support the MTFP going forward;
- (i) noted the Dedicated Schools Grant and Schools forecast outturn position;
- (j) noted the position on the capital programme and the Collection Funds in respect of Council Tax and Business Rates; and

**Item 4 – Tree Management Policy and Inspections Review – Councillor Mark Wilkes, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Climate Change**

We considered a report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change which provided information on proposed revisions to the corporate Tree Management Policy and tree inspection procedures and sought endorsement of the resulting revised policy and procedures.

**Decision:**

We:

- (a) noted the content of the report.
- (b) endorsed the revised Tree Management Policy and proposed tree inspection procedures.
- (c) noted that a review would be carried out of budgets and resources and where they lie within the organisation to help ensure that safety works are adequately resourced and prioritised.
- (d) noted that further reports would be submitted to Neighbourhoods and Climate Change Management Team and Corporate Property Board outlining the results of the inspection regime and potential resource implications.
- (e) agreed to an internal audit of the revised tree risk management strategy after 12 months of complete implementation.

**Item 5 - Public Space Protection Order – Durham City – Councillor John Shuttleworth, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Rural Communities and Highways**

We considered a report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change which provided an overview of the powers, benefits and risks available under a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO).

The report also sought agreement to undertake a public consultation on the introduction of a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) to help control:

- (a) Begging
- (b) Urinating or defecating.
- (c) The use of intoxicating substances

**Decision:**

We:

- (a) Agreed that a full public consultation exercise be undertaken to:
  - (i) gather evidence relating to the activities and behaviours to determine the need for a PSPO in Durham City
  - (ii) gauge the level of public support and opinion on the merits of introducing a new PSPO in Durham City.
  - (iii) seek views on whether any other behaviours and activities should be included in a PSPO for Durham City.
- (b) delegated the finalisation of the consultation proposals and the management of the consultation process itself to the Corporate

- Director for Neighbourhoods and Climate Change in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Rural Communities and Highways.
- (c) agreed that a report would be presented for further consideration following the outcome of the consultation exercise to determine whether to introduce a PSPO in Durham City.

**Item 6 - New Business Units South Church Enterprise Park, Bishop Auckland – Councillor James Rowlandson, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Resources, Investments and Assets**

We considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth which sought approval to progress the development of speculative business units on land owned by the council at South Church Enterprise Park, Bishop Auckland, as part of the Stronger Towns Programme.

**Decision:**

We:

- (a) agreed to progress the scheme of new business units, apply for all statutory approvals, and go out to competitive tender for a construction partner.
- (b) delegated authority to the Corporate Directors of Regeneration, Economy and Growth and Resources in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Investment and Assets, to enter into the construction contract should it be achievable within the council funding envelope set out within this report.

**Background Papers**

Cabinet Agenda and Reports

[Cabinet Agenda and Reports - 13 March 2024](#)

Councillor A Hopgood,  
Leader of the Council  
19 March 2024