

24 February 2016

Report from the Cabinet



Purpose of the Report

To provide information to the Council on issues considered by the Cabinet on 13 January and 10 February 2016 to enable Members to ask related questions.

Members are asked to table any questions on items in this report by 2 pm on 23 February 2016 in order for them to be displayed on the screens in the Council Chamber.

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1. Medium Term Financial Plan 2016/17 to 2019/20 (MTFP6) and 2016/17 Budget
Key Decision: CORP/R/15/02
Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council – Councillors Simon Henig, and Alan Napier
Contact – Jeff Garfoot 03000 261945

We have considered a report of the Corporate Director, Resources and Assistant Chief Executive which provided an update on the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP(6)) 2016/17 to 2019/20 and the 2016/17 Budget following the Government's Local Government Finance Settlement announcement on 17 December 2015, whilst also providing initial feedback from the budget consultation process.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer's November 2015 Spending Review confirmed that funding cuts to local government would continue until 2019/20. The majority of unprotected government departments will face government grant reductions of 6% over this period whilst local government would see a cash reduction of circa 53% (real term reduction of 56%).

The Spending Review indicated that the grant reduction for local government in 2016/17 would be higher than forecast, with the total reduction in Revenue Support Grant (RSG) for the council between 2016/17 and 2019/20 forecast to be £85m. Overall it was forecast that savings of circa £135m would be required between 2016/17 and 2019/20 bringing the total savings required since the beginning of austerity in 2011/12 to almost £290m.

The Spending Review indicated that the council tax referendum limit for 2016/17 would be 2% with no indication of the offer of a Council Tax Freeze Grant. The Spending Review also announced however that local authorities providing adult social care services would be able to raise an additional 2% above the referendum limit on the understanding that the sum raised would be invested in adult social care through an adult social care precept.

The provisional local government financial settlement was received on 17 December 2015. The main points are as follows:

- (i) In 2016/17 RSG will reduce by £23.1m to £77.1m. This is in line with previous Council forecasts.
- (ii) After taking into account the transfer of specific grants into RSG the reduction in RSG between 2016/17 and 2019/20 will be circa £75m as compared to our original forecast of £85m.
- (iii) Although the core RSG allocations have been announced the council is still awaiting a range of specific grant allocations particularly in relation to Public Health.
- (iv) The government confirmed provisional allocations for an increased Better Care Fund (BCF). The initial allocation of £2.4m will be received in 2017/18 increasing to a forecast £23.1m in 2019/20. The increased BCF will be part funded by a

reduction in the New Homes Bonus (NHB). The government has announced a three month consultation on changes to the NHB Scheme. At this stage therefore it is not clear what reduction the council will face in NHB to part finance the increase in BCF.

- (v) It is apparent that the council will face a slightly higher forecast reduction in Core Spending Power than the national average. The government however has taken steps to attempt to ensure the financial settlement is “fairer” than was the case in the period 2011/12 to 2015/16.

Overall the settlement is slightly better than was reported to Cabinet in December 2015. Total clarity will not be available until all specific grant allocations are received, but it is clear that the council will face significant challenges in achieving savings over the next four years which are still expected to be in excess of £100m.

The draft Council Plan and Service Plans for 2016/17 to 2018/19 continue to be developed within the context of the financial settlement and budget planning, and will be presented to Cabinet in March once the budget has been set.

Decision

We have:

- (i) Noted the 2016/17 Budget and Medium Term Plan update in relation to the Local Government Finance Settlement announced on 17 December 2015.
- (ii) Noted the requirement for the council to submit an ‘Efficiency Plan’ should it wish to secure a four year settlement 2016/17 to 2019/20.
- (iii) Agreed the intention for the Council to contact the DCLG by the 15 January 2016 deadline to advise that the 2% council tax social care precept flexibility will be taken up subject to a Full Council decision.
- (iv) Noted the current 2016/17 savings requirement of £39.979m which is forecast to be offset by the utilisation of £7m of the Budget Support Reserve.
- (v) Noted the forecast savings requirement over the 2016/17 to 2019/20 period of £123.7m.
- (vi) Noted the fairer process adopted in the provisional finance settlement for both Revenue Support Grant and the additional Better Care Fund allocation.

- (vii) Noted the initial feedback from the MTFP(6) budget consultation process

2. Day Care Review

Key Decision: CAS/03/15

Cabinet Portfolio Holder – Councillor Lucy Hovvels

Contact – Jane Robinson 03000 267368

We have considered a report of the Corporate Director, Children and Adults Services which presented findings following a review of County Durham Care & Support (CDCS) in-house day service; reported the outcome of a consultation on a proposed re-design and made recommendations for further reshaping of the services.

In house day services in County Durham provide care and support to a wide range of adult service users, including older people, those with physical disabilities and people with a learning disability. The need to promote more person centred approaches within communities and maximise value for money, while meeting Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) requirements, prompted an initial review of CDCS day services in 2012-13. The review scrutinised services delivered in some of the larger day centre venues and focused on demand and occupancy, as well as the suitability of buildings.

In September 2012 the Cabinet approved the closure of five venues, with service users being accommodated in alternative CDCS day services, including community locations. Seventeen in house venues remain within the CDCS establishment. Remaining venues also began to offer services to a variety of service user groups, e.g. those with learning disabilities alongside older people, or people with physical disabilities. These changes allowed CDCS to contribute to MTFP savings requirements from 2013-14, as well as to avoid significant future liabilities in respect of repair and maintenance of day service building stock. It was acknowledged at the time of the Cabinet decision that further work would be carried out on in house day services to monitor the changing picture on demand, attendance, staffing requirements and building stock. The Cabinet report outlined that further reviews of the viability of in house day services would be undertaken.

Demand for day services continues to fall. Over the last three years (Nov 2012 – Nov 2015) the number of recorded day service sessions delivered overall (independent sector and CDCS) has fallen from 41,392 sessions to 27,677 sessions per four week period, approximately a 33% drop.

For CDCS day services, the drop in demand has been even more pronounced. Over the same three year period, the number of in-house day services sessions has dropped from 18,344 to 6,294 per four week period; a drop of approximately 66%.

To address the issue of decreasing service user demand; the need to be more community inclusive; and improve value for money, the report proposed that in house day services should be reshaped. Savings would allow the

Children and Adults Service (CAS) to meet the MTFP savings requirement of £1.59m in 2016 – 17.

The report proposed that twelve day services would be decommissioned in order to achieve the £1.59m MTFP savings target for 2016-17 and to contribute to the further MTFP savings from 2017-18. Decommissioning would be focused on venues where the majority of service users do not have specialist needs and can therefore comfortably access opportunities outside of CDCS. Where service users do have specialist needs, an alternative CDCS service able to meet these needs is available in the local area and this can be comfortably accessed by those remaining with the in house service. Some internal service user moves, within CDCS, would therefore be required for those with specialist needs.

Services to be decommissioned would be:

Bracken Hill Centre, Peterlee	Chester-le-Street Pathways
Bede Day Centre, Barnard Castle	Harmire Unit, Barnard Castle
Silver Street, Spennymoor	Ebony Woodwork Unit, Consett
Annfield Plain Pathways	Bishop Auckland Pathways
Proudfoot Centre, Bishop Auckland	Consett Pathways
Crook Pathways, Crook	Stanhope Pathways

Five venues would be used to deliver specialist day services, with a service being maintained across Durham localities to accommodate easy access for service users in terms of transport:

- Durham Pathways, Pity Me
- Spennymoor Pathways, Spennymoor Leisure Centre
- Newton Aycliffe Pathways, Aycliffe Leisure Centre
- Peterlee Pathways, Peterlee
- Stanley Pathways, Louisa Leisure Centre

CAS would retain the three day services co-located in Leisure Centres as these venues have received significant investment to enable them to meet complex service user needs. These sites are also at the centre of their local communities, offering significant social inclusion and opportunities to attendees.

The impact on service provision in rural areas of the County, e.g. Teesdale and Weardale, has been assessed and CAS have worked to ensure that a number of alternative services are available from the independent sector in these areas.

Reshaping of day services would mean a significant reduction in delivery venues within in house day services. A staffing restructure would take place ahead of the remodelling to five specialist services. Though a reduction in

services of the scale may therefore mean compulsory redundancies would be required, following a full HR consultation exercise, numbers would be kept to the minimum possible.

Proposals to decommission some services and focus the remaining five venues on providing day services for those with complex, specialist care needs have been the subject of a consultation exercise. The consultation was carried out from 22nd July to 4th September 2015 and was targeted at service users and carers at affected day services; both those who might move to the independent sector or community provision and those who would remain in reshaped CDCS services. Key messages from the consultation were included in the report. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken to identify and mitigate against any potential negative consequences resulting from the proposed changes to day services.

Decision

We have:

- Agreed to the implementation of the redesign of CDCS day services, meaning that CDCS would deliver specialist day services for those with the most complex needs only from the following venues:
 1. Durham Pathways, Pity Me
 2. Spennymoor Pathways, Spennymoor Leisure Centre
 3. Newton Aycliffe Pathways, Aycliffe Leisure Centre
 4. Peterlee Pathways, Peterlee
 5. Stanley Pathways, Louisa Centre

The following day services would be closed:

1. Ebony Woodwork Unit, Consett
 2. Chester-le-Street Pathways, Chester-le-Street
 3. Crook Pathways, Crook
 4. Proudfoot Centre, Bishop Auckland
 5. Annfield Plain Pathways, Annfield Plain
 6. Silver Street, Spennymoor
 7. Consett Pathways, Consett
 8. Harmire Unit, Barnard Castle
 9. Bishop Auckland Pathways, Tindale Crescent
 10. Bracken Hill Centre, Peterlee
 11. Bede Day Centre, Barnard Castle
 12. Stanhope Pathways, Stanhope
- Noted that further work will be carried out to monitor the changing picture on demand, attendance, staffing requirements and building stock. As the market changes, further reviews of the viability of in house day services will be undertaken and, as required, detailed proposals will be developed to ensure that CDCS day services are fit for purpose, represent value for money and are able to fulfil their strategic objectives.

3. Review of Youth Support
Cabinet Portfolio Holder – Councillor Ossie Johnson
Contact – Carole Payne 03000 268657

We have considered a report of the Corporate Director, Children and Adults Services which set out the outcomes of a review of the current youth service delivery model and described a Strategy for Youth Support.

The review and the Strategy have informed a new delivery model for a Targeted Youth Support Service which aims to deliver improved outcomes for young people aged 13 – 19 years in County Durham. Based on the review and the resulting strategy, the report sought permission to consult on the following:-

- Proposal 1:** A Strategy for Youth Support in County Durham
- Proposal 2:** Deploy Council resources according to need to deliver a Targeted Youth Support Service
- Proposal 3:** Ceasing the existing youth work support grant and the allocation of funding to each Area Action Partnership (AAP) to address local priorities linked to youth services.

The report proposed that the Council adopts the Strategy for Youth Support in County Durham and develops and implements a Targeted Youth Support Service designed to achieve the ambitions set out within it, so that the Council's resources can be demonstrated to impact on those in the greatest need of support. The proposed new service model will reduce the cost base of the service, increase contact with vulnerable young people and improve outcomes for vulnerable young people and their families.

Historically the youth support service (and its budget) was a distinct service however, since the introduction of the One Point Service in 2011, the provision of support for young people has formed an integral part of the broader early help offer delivered in and through the One Point Service. The proposals outlined in the report focused on the development of a new service delivery model. This model has been developed to reflect the reducing resources available to the Council and the need to develop services which are provided for those young people who need them most.

If approved, following consultation, these proposals will deliver MTFP 16/17 and 17/18 savings of approximately £1million. The majority of these savings would be delivered by 2017/18 and would be made up from a combination of the following:-

- The cessation of Youth & Community Centres funded by the Council and wherever possible the transfer of these centres as part of the Durham Ask.
- A reconfiguration of resource distribution towards a targeted model of service delivery and;

- The cessation of the non-recurring Youth Work Support Grant with an element of this funding redistributed to the Area Action Partnerships.

Historically, the main focus of council-funded youth services has been the provision of universal youth sessions which any young person aged 13-19 can access through attendance at youth clubs and projects across the County. The Council currently provides on average 204 weekly sessions of universal youth provision through 64 youth centres and projects across the County. Much of the provision is delivered in partnership with a range of voluntary and community sector partners in and through community centres. The provision is overseen by voluntary management committees who are supported by One Point Youth Workers.

The review has considered a range of factors that impact on outcomes for young people in County Durham. These were set out in paragraphs 32 to 52 of the report. The proposals put forward for consultation a result of the review are intended to improve service delivery and improve outcomes for young people, whilst reducing the cost base of the service.

Three proposals were identified following the review:

Proposal 1: A Strategy & Delivery Model for Youth Support in County Durham

A Strategy for Youth Support in County Durham has been developed as part of this review and this was attached to the report at Appendix 4. The Strategy sets out the Council's aim to ensure all young people negotiate their teenage years successfully and achieve their full potential. The Strategy acknowledges the need to ensure its youth support service raises young people's aspirations builds their resilience and informs their decisions in order to reduce their involvement in problematic risky behaviours which may lead to adverse outcomes. The proposed Strategy acknowledges that it is no longer sustainable or desirable for the Council to continue to provide a service that does not effectively target its support to those young people who need it most. This is supported by the analysis of outcomes for young people in County Durham. The proposed Strategy provides a framework for a targeted youth support service and a delivery model that will support the improvement of outcomes for vulnerable young people and their families across County Durham. The key elements of the proposed model were detailed in the report.

Proposal 2: Deploy Council resources according to need to deliver a Targeted Youth Support Service

Historically the youth support service has been configured to deliver universal provision, predominantly through open access youth clubs. There has been no rational approach to the distribution of resources; rather allocation has developed in an ad hoc manner. This review has shown that only a small

proportion of young people access these services, despite universal access being offered. At the same time, outcomes for vulnerable young people need to improve. It is proposed therefore, that Council resources should be redirected, according to need, so that a targeted youth support service can be provided. This will mean that universal, open access youth work will no longer be funded through the One Point Service budget.

The proposed model for Targeted Youth Support recognises that outcomes for young people can be affected firstly by a range of social issues within the family, home and community and secondly by issues which may affect their education and school life. In order to move to a rational basis for resource allocation, a methodology has been developed to measure need across the County, details of which were provided in the report.. This methodology has been used to assess an allocation of resources, so that resource is matched to need.

Proposal 3: Ceasing the existing youth work support grant and the allocation of funding to each Area Action Partnership (AAP) to address local priorities linked to youth services

The Youth Work Support Grant (outlined in paragraph 7 of the report) currently supplements the staffing allocation provided by the Council for the delivery of universal open access youth work sessions.

The total budget for the Youth Work Support Grant for financial year 2015/16 is £194,684. Current distribution levels range in grants from £430 up to £27,768. These amounts have not been based on a strategic assessment of need. No rationale is in place for the distribution of this grant other than historical arrangements that have evolved over time.

It is proposed that the 2015/16 grant budget of £194,684 will be reduced by a minimum of £56,000 in order to deliver the MTFP requirement. However, this amount is dependent upon the successful asset transfer of Youth and Community Centre buildings, as set out in paragraph 53 of the report. If all centres are not transferred the Youth Support Grant will be reduced further prior to distribution to AAPs.

Following the delivery of the MTFP saving, it is proposed to redirect the remaining Youth Support Grant to Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) to address local priorities.

There are 14 AAPs in County Durham. AAPs have been set up to give people in County Durham a greater choice and voice in local affairs. The partnerships allow people to have a say on services, and give organisations the chance to speak directly with local communities. AAP funding has enabled local support to be provided to a number of VCS organisations to deliver a variety of locally based programmes and initiatives for young people. The AAPs provide opportunities for community based organisations to apply for funding to deliver services and activities within each locality.

The proposed consultation exercise will run for 12 weeks, following which a full analysis will be undertaken. A further report will be provided to Cabinet in

autumn 2016 incorporating all of the information gathered during consultation and presenting final recommendations. The consultation process will involve a range of stakeholders who have an interest in this review and a range of consultation methods will be used to maximise involvement and participation levels from all interested parties.

Decision

We have agreed:

- (i) A public consultation commencing on the 2nd February 2016 for 12 weeks until 27th April 2016 which will present the proposals to all key stakeholders, paying particular attention to service users.
- (ii) That the consultation will seek the views and opinions of all key stakeholders on the following three proposals:-
 - Proposal 1:** A Strategy for Youth Support in County Durham
 - Proposal 2:** Deploy Council resources according to need to deliver a Targeted Youth Support Service
 - Proposal 3:** The cessation of the existing youth work support grant and the allocation of funding to each Area Action Partnership (AAP) to address local priorities linked to youth services.
- (iii) The presentation of a report to Cabinet in autumn 2016, making recommendations following consultation and including a full Equality Impact Assessment.

4. School Admission Arrangements Academic Year 2017/2018 Key Decision: CAS/02/15 Cabinet Portfolio Holder – Councillor Ossie Johnson Contact – Jane Jack 03000 265879

We have considered a report of the Corporate Director, Children and Adults Services which outlined the proposed admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for the 2017/18 academic year.

The School Admissions Code states that all schools must have admission arrangements that clearly set out how children will be admitted which must include oversubscription criteria. Admission arrangements are determined by admission authorities. The Local Authority (LA) is the admission authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools, while the Governing Body is the admission authority for Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools and the relevant Trust for an Academy or Free School. All admission authorities must agree admission arrangements annually. Where changes are proposed to admission arrangements the admission authority must first consult on those arrangements. There are no changes proposed to the current admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools that required

public consultation, other than it is proposed that some schools have a reduction in the admission number for the purposes of efficient and effective curriculum delivery. The proposed admission number for each Community and Voluntary Controlled School was detailed in Appendix 2 of the report and the admission numbers for Voluntary Aided, Foundation schools, Academies and free schools were included in the report for information.

All Governing Bodies/Trusts have considered and agreed to the co-ordinated admission schemes that will govern the administrative processes for the 2017/18 academic year (detailed in Appendix 3). These are unchanged from the previous year except that since a new School Admissions Code was published in December 2014 all admission authorities in Durham have followed advice issued by the Department for Education (DfE) in relation to the admission of summer born children outside of the normal year of entry. In September 2015, Schools Minister Nick Gibb MP announced the government's intention to give "summer-born" children (those children born between 1 April to 31 August for admissions purposes) the right to start in the Reception Class at a primary school at age 5 (the start of compulsory school age). Children usually start school in the September after they turn age 4 but parents of "summer-born" children can ask to delay entry to Reception for a year. It is up to the relevant admission authority to decide whether to agree the request. To date, there has been no public consultation on the admission of "summer-born" children. When this does start, the Council will respond to the consultation and if proposed changes to the School Admissions Code are agreed by Parliament, then the Council will reflect these in its own admissions policy.

It is a statutory requirement of all admission authorities that admission arrangements for 2017/2018 are determined by 28 February 2016 and these must be published on their website not later than 15 March 2016. The Local Authority must publish online, with hard copies available a composite prospectus for parents by 12 September 2016, which contains the admission arrangements for each of the state-funded schools in the Local Authority area to which parents can apply. The Local Authority will be in breach of its statutory duty if admission arrangements are not determined by 28 February 2016 and published on the Council's website by 15 March 2016.

Decision

We have agreed the following recommendations in respect of Community and Voluntary Controlled schools, when determining the admission arrangements for 2017/18:

- a. That the admission numbers as recommended in Appendix 2 of the report be approved
- b. That the admission arrangements, at Appendix 3 of the report be approved.

**5. North East Combined Authority: Devolution Deal
Leader of the Council – Councillor Simon Henig
Contact – Colette Longbottom 03000 269732**

We have considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which provided Cabinet with a progress report on the North East Combined Authority poll and outlined the decision making process for this Authority.

The North East Combined Authority (NECA) was established in April 2014 as a new body bringing together the seven Councils which serve County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland. It has responsibility for strategic transport for all seven local authorities. Members of this Council have been appointed to various key roles within the combined authority.

Following the 2015 General Election, the Government launched its 'Northern Powerhouse' Programme and the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the availability of devolved powers including potential funding devolution to combined authorities. For several months, the NECA Leadership Board were in intensive negotiations to achieve the best possible deal for the region and have signed a proposed agreement, subject to final agreement, subject to final agreement being conditional upon:

- The outcome of the Spending Review on 25 November 2015
- The legislative process
- Further public consultation
- Formal endorsement by the Leadership Board and Ministers early in 2016/17.

The devolution offer for NECA and its development going forward was acknowledged as a significant issue for County Durham because of boundary issues, some of which are unique to Durham compared to the other NECA constituent authorities. An issue which was controversial for all the constituent authorities was the Chancellor's stated condition that any deal must involve an Elected Mayor for the Combined Authority with effect from May 2017.

At a Council meeting held on 9 December 2015, Council recommended that there should be a poll of the residents of County Durham subject to Council agreeing to the funding of a poll from the Council's Revenue Contingency Budget. During week commencing 11 January, the Electoral Reform Society (ERS) began sending polling packs to residents. The deadline for responses was 8 February and the results are currently being analysed by ERS in readiness for a report on the results to Council at its meeting on 24 February 2016.

Extensive consultation has taken place at various stages. In terms of the legislative process, the Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill has progressed through the parliamentary processes and is due to receive the Royal Assent imminently. This legislation provides for the creation of Mayoral

Combined Authorities, and the move to such an authority by the NECA is an integral element of the proposed Agreement.

The legislation provides for the creation of a Mayoral Combined Authority if at least two Constituent Authorities as well as the Combined Authority affected, consent. Should any Constituent Authorities not consent to the creation of the Mayoral Combined Authority and provided the Combined Authority still wishes to proceed, the non-consenting Constituent Authorities will be removed from the Combined Authority through the Parliamentary process that provides for a new Mayor. Subject to the necessary consents being provided during February and March it is expected that the requisite legislation will commence Parliamentary processes in May/June 2016 and provide for mayoral elections in May 2017.

The NECA Leadership Board is planning to make its decision on the Devolution agreement by 24 March 2016 and an essential component of that decision making are the views of the constituent authorities.

The final decision on whether to agree to the deal is an executive decision and Cabinet should therefore decide this issue at its meeting of 16 March. The Leader of the Council expressed his intention to report on the results of the poll to Council on 24 February 2016 so that Council's view on the devolution deal can be taken having regard to the outcome of the poll. Cabinet can take these views into account when deciding whether to agree to the Devolution Deal at its meeting on the 16 March 2016.

Decision

We have agreed to the presentation of a report on NECA and an analysis of the poll to Council on 24 February 2016 so that Council can provide its views on the issue taking into account the outcome of the poll before Cabinet makes its final decision at its meeting on the 16 March 2016.

Councillor S Henig
Leader of the County Council

16 February 2016