

## **Cabinet**

**Monday, 25 January 2021**

**Present:** N Redfearn (Elected Mayor) (in the Chair)  
Councillors G Bell, C Burdis, S Cox, S Day, P Earley,  
R Glindon, M Hall, C Johnson and B Pickard

**In Attendance:** S McKenzie (Young Mayor)  
D Hodgson (Business Representative)  
R Fry (Voluntary and Community Sector Representative)  
R Layton (North Tyneside Joint Trades Union Committee)  
D McNally (Age UK)

**Apologies:** J Hutton (Northumbria Police)

### **CAB187/21 Introduction**

Mrs Norma Redfearn, Elected Mayor, welcomed everyone to this virtual meeting of North Tyneside Council's Cabinet.

### **CAB188/21 To Receive any Declarations of Interest and Notification of any Dispensations Granted**

No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.

### **CAB189/21 Minutes**

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 November 2020 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

### **CAB190/21 Report of the Young Mayor**

The Young Mayor informed Cabinet that due to the pandemic both she and the Member of UK Youth Parliament had missed the first 6 months of their usual activities and at the invitation of the British Youth Council and North Tyneside Council each had agreed to continue in their respective roles until 2022 to make sure they got the most out of this experience and to give them ample time to really make a difference in delivering their pledges.

The Young Mayor reported on the following activities in which she and Young Cabinet Members and/or Youth Councillors had been involved:

- Chairs were very focused on achieving the aims of the new committees which would be collaborating with adult decision makers, the elected cabinet member, and senior officers responsible for that topic.
- The Young Mayor had been involved in making a short video which was included in the Council's advent calendar and had been shared with people in the borough.
- Youth councillors and some young people from the SEND Youth Forum had taken part in this year's Council budget consultation.

- Youth councillors who had received a new laptop or other electronic devices for Christmas had offered to share their unwanted laptop with those who did not have them and suggested there could be a collection of donations organised for those in need of pens, pencils and other stationery.
- The Environment Committee had requested youth councillors' support for a new Council Anti-Idling campaign due to begin soon to advise car drivers about switching off their car engines while waiting for people to pick up which had been a particularly serious problem outside many of the borough's schools.
- Youth councillors had met with Newcastle University students and senior officers of the Council as part of the consultation on plans for the new improved North Shields Gateways.
- Covid had prevented the Young Mayor from taking part in person at this year's Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January, but she had still contributed by making a video about this year's theme of Being the Light in the Darkness.
- The Young Mayor had met with the International Young Mayor's Association and had almost completed her work on the website, they were now looking to plan a virtual international young people's conference to be held in the very near future. Youth Councillor Daniel McTiernan had taken a highly commended place in the competition to design a logo for the Association.
- The Young Mayor's Association had been looking at how each council was handling free school meals.
- The Young Mayor had started the Healthy Habits Ambassador programme which was coordinated by the YMCA.

The Elected Mayor thanked the Young Mayor for the report and congratulated both her and Member of the UK Youth Parliament on their extended term of their respective roles, she also commended her on the excellent work and projects she, Young Cabinet Members and Youth Councillors had been involved with.

### **CAB191/21    2020/21 Financial Management Report to 30 November 2020**

Cabinet considered the fourth monitoring report outlining the 2020/21 financial position.

It provided an indication of the expected revenue and capital financial position of the Authority as at 31 March 2021. The reported position was expected to change over the coming months as the response and recovery to Covid-19 continued.

The report covered the forecast outturn of the Authority's General Fund and HRA revenue budget including management mitigations where issues had been identified; the delivery of 2020/21 approved budget savings plans; an indication of the impact of Covid-19 on Collection Rates; an indication of the impact of Covid-19 on the Collection Fund; the implications of Covid-19 on the Authority's cash position; and an update on the Capital Investment Plan, including details of variations and reprogramming, that were recommended for approval.

In terms of the General Fund Revenue Account, the forecast overall pressure was estimated at £1.510m against the approved net budget. This was made up of a forecasted pressure of £0.127m on normal activities and £1.383m relating to the impact of Covid-19. This was after a forecasted transfer to reserves of a £12.719m surplus relating to Section 31 grants. A surplus was forecasted as a result of the compensation provided by Government for the

losses being felt by the Authority on Business Rates following the changes Government had made to retail and nursery reliefs in their response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The surplus would be held in reserve and utilised to support the Collection Fund deficit that would be faced in 2021/22 due to these measures. An additional £1.841m was also forecast to be transferred to reserves relating to growth received from the North of Tyne Combined Authority following the Authority's participation in a business rates pool in 2019/20. At this stage it was anticipated that this funding would be held in reserve to support businesses and residents from the impact of Covid-19 during 2021/22 and in future years

The £0.127m pressure in the services was driven mainly by Health, Education, Care & Safeguarding (HECS) reflecting the continued pressures in Children's Services of £5.761m and Adult Services of £0.768m. This was before inclusion of the contingency based budgets, which were held and reported with Central Items, that had been created by Cabinet as part of the 2018/19 budget setting process to reflect the on-going pressures in social care being felt locally and nationally.

Included in this projection was £4.862m of pressures in Corporate Parenting and Placements, £1.311m in Wellbeing and Assessment and £1.135m in Integrated Disability & Additional Needs. The drivers for these pressures continued from 2019/20 as outlined in the report.

It was anticipated that the outturn forecast for normal activities would improve over the course of the financial year as planned remedial actions began to impact on both expenditure and income.

With regards to the impact of Covid-19, the main drivers behind the £1.383m shortfall were also within HECS where £13.107m was for increased costs to the Authority of supporting the market (£7.195m), impact on savings targets (£1.877m), increased costs for children in care (£1.496m), lost income within School Improvement (£0.830m), Public Health (£0.597m), additional demand (£0.494m), additional staffing costs, PPE, and supplies and services within Integrated Services (£0.346) and other miscellaneous losses (£0.272m).

Significant Covid-19 related pressures existed in Environment, Housing and Leisure, (£8.208m) due to loss of income in areas such as Sport & Leisure and Highways & Transport and in Commissioning & Asset Management through income lost within Catering (£3.404m).

Current indications were that the Covid-19 funding received to date did not cover all anticipated costs/loss of income.

The report outlined the revenue grants which had been received during October and November 2020.

The total planned deficit for schools 2020/21 was £6.689m. These budgets had been revised, mainly following discussions with schools showing deficit balances, to an expected deficit of £6.681m. After the first monitoring period of the year, this position was forecast to be £5.734m, an improvement of £1.022m. The Authority had been working with schools for a number of years with regard to the long-term strategic issue of surplus secondary places and the associated financial pressures which continued to be compounded by rising employment costs. As anticipated, 2019/20 was the fifth year of balances decreasing

following a long-term trend of rising balances in North Tyneside and the overall projected balances for 2020/21 continued this trend.

In July twelve schools had been identified as expecting to be in deficit during 2020/21, including two schools in structural deficit. Following the allocation of falling rolls and headroom funding in July, another school had now been moved out of deficit and another three schools were being considered for this funding, to be agreed at Schools Forum. Before any adjustments relating to this agreement, the total balances of these deficit schools were expected to total £12.516m.

The High Needs Block had ended 2019/20 with a pressure of £4.542m. The forecast of the budget position for 2020/21 indicated an anticipated in-year pressure of £3.625m reflecting a further rise in demand for special school places.

The Housing Revenue Account was forecast to have year-end balances at 31 March 2021 of £4.955m; assuming all identified Covid-19 related PPE costs and General Fund-related services delivered through the HRA were covered. These balances were £0.048m lower than budget which had been set at £5.003m. The lower than forecast balances related to combination of factors as set out in the report.

At 30 November 2020, there were 3,199 tenants of North Tyneside Homes on Universal Credit with arrears totalling £2.683m. This was up by 625 and £0.473m from the beginning of the year when there were 2,574 tenants on UC with arrears of £2.210m, and up from the end of September when there were 2,972 tenants on UC with related arrears of £2.525m. A team was working proactively with tenants to minimise arrears and this position would be closely monitored as the year progressed to identify any adverse impacts on the budget position.

The approved 2020-2025 Investment Plan totalled £264.157m (£74.875m 2020/21) and was detailed in the Annex. The Annex also set out delivery progress to date, planned delivery for 2020/21, reprogramming and other variations identified through the Investment Programme Governance process.

Regular monthly monitoring of the Investment Plan had resulted in proposals for reprogramming of £3.000m in 2020/21 and variations of £6.239m across the life of the plan, of which more details were set out in the Annex to the report. The revised Investment Plan stood at £68.816m for 2020/21 and to the end of November 2020 spend of £24.505m had been incurred which represented 35.61% of the revised plan.

The report also outlined progress against the 2020-2024 Our North Tyneside Plan. The area under most financial pressure was Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding.

In Adult Social Care, in common with most local authorities, and in line with the national picture, North Tyneside had seen costs continuing to rise. In Children's Services, good progress continued to be made on engaging with children in the early years of life to ensure that they were ready for school. Safeguarding vulnerable children and maximising their educational attainment remained key priorities.

Over recent years, there had been an increase nationally in demand for children's residential placements but with no corresponding increase in central government funded provision. As such, the levels of looked after children (LAC) and children who required

supervision after leaving care continued to generate a significant financial pressure. Data for LAC levels suggested that, whilst fluctuating, there was a general trend of a steady increase in numbers, but there were a wide range of levels of care provided, with more complex cases now being faced.

Cabinet considered the following decision options: either to agree the recommendations as set out in Section 1.2 of the report, or alternatively to disagree with the proposals.

**Resolved** that (1) that the forecast budget monitoring position for the General Fund, Collection Fund, Schools' Finance and Housing Revenue Account as at 30 November 2020 be noted;

(2) the receipt of £14.178m new revenue grants be approved;

(3) the Authority's Investment Plan spend of £24.505m to 30 November 2020 and the financing of the Plan to the end of the year be approved; and

(4) the variations of £6.239m and reprogramming of £3.000m for 2020/21 within the 2020-2025 Investment Plan be approved.

(Reasons for decision: It is important that Cabinet continues to monitor performance against the Budget, especially given the current level of financial pressures faced by the public sector.)

#### **CAB192/21    Calculation of the 2021/22 Council Tax Base for North Tyneside Council**

Cabinet considered a report which provided an explanation of how the proposed North Tyneside Council Tax Base for 2021/22 had been calculated and requested approval of the calculation for 2021/22.

The 2021/22 Council Tax Base was based on the North Tyneside Council Local Council Tax Support Scheme remaining at the same level as had been set in 2020/21.

The detailed Council Tax Base calculation for North Tyneside for 2021/22 was attached as Appendix A to the report, together with an explanation of the specific elements that formed part of this calculation. Within this calculation, adjustments had been made to reflect the effect of exempt properties, disabled relief, discounts and premiums.

Applying the adjustments had the effect of adjusting the total number of properties to a common base for each band, in terms of full year equivalents.

The Council Tax Base Regulations ensured that the Council Tax Base for an area took into account the effect of disability reductions in respect of dwellings which fell within Band A. They introduced an additional 'alternative valuation band' to allow Band A properties to qualify for a disabled reduction. Previously, properties adapted to meet the needs of a disabled person were charged at a rate equal to the next lowest valuation band, so for example a qualifying Band D property would be charged at a Band C rate, but this had not applied to Band A properties. Instead of paying the normal Band A charge (six-ninths of the Band D) a qualifying Band A property was now charged five-ninths of the Band D charge. For the purpose of the Council Tax Base calculation it was now necessary to show Band A properties which qualified for a disabled reduction as if it were an additional valuation band. Deductions were then made for exempt dwellings and the estimated impact of the Council Tax Support scheme for 2021/22.

In order to arrive at the Council Tax Base calculation for 2021/22, the number of dwellings within each of the Council Tax Bands, A – H, had been converted to their Band D equivalents, using the appropriate proportions. The result of this calculation for 2021/22 was to produce a total number of properties prior to an allowance for non-collection and contributions in lieu of 62,134.

The next stage of the Council Tax Base calculation involved making a deduction for the non-collection of Council Tax. This non-collection element of the calculation was made in respect of the amounts that were legally due, but which, for varying reasons, may not be collected. The assumed Council Tax collection rates for North Tyneside had improved significantly since 1993/94, when the assumed collection rate was 95%. The assumed North Tyneside Council Tax collection rates for each year from when Council Tax had been introduced in 1993/94 were detailed in the report.

A fundamental issue for the Council Tax Base calculation was the assumed percentage Council Tax collection rate to apply. The Authority's performance on Council Tax collection had been improving for many years, reaching a peak of 99.20% in setting the Council Tax Base for 2012/13. However, since 2013/14, a lower collection rate of 98.50% had been proposed and agreed. This lower rate of 98.50% had been set to reflect the estimated impact of the Council Tax Support Scheme, the estimated impact of other Welfare Reform changes and changes to Exemptions and Discounts applied from 2013/14.

Council Tax in year collection had reduced in 2020/21 due to the impacts of Covid-19 which had seen a reduction in income for some residents. There had been an increase in residents of working age claiming Local Council Tax Support and this may rise further as the furlough scheme came to an end. As at the end of November 2020 the in-year collection for 2020/21 was 0.64% lower than at the same point in 2019/20. This was only however an approximate indicator of the assumed Council Tax collection performance, given the significant time lag effect between in year and ultimate Council Tax collection performance.

Having considered various issues in relation to the collection rate for 2021/22, which were detailed in the report, it was proposed that an assumed Council Tax Collection Rate of 98.00% was set as part of the 2021/22 Council Tax Base calculation. This was a reduction of 0.5% on the collection rate set in 2020/21. This was felt prudent as the risk of setting a Council Tax collection rate too high was that this could result in a deficit position for the Council Tax element of the Collection Fund, which in turn would have to be funded by the Authority's General Fund. This calculation was reviewed on an annual basis.

The final stage of the Council Tax Base calculation involved adding an estimated amount in respect of contributions in lieu of Council Tax to be made to the Authority, which was expressed in terms of the number of Band D equivalent properties. For 2021/22 this figure for North Tyneside Council which related to Ministry of Defence properties was 50 Band D equivalent properties.

The 2021/22 Council Tax Base for the whole of North Tyneside after the allowance for non-collection and payments in lieu was 60,941 Band D equivalent properties. This equated to a decrease of 929 Band D equivalent properties compared to the 2020/21 figure as it was primarily impacted by additional costs of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme and a reduction in the assumed long-term collection rate.

Cabinet considered the following decision options:

Option 1 – to set the 2021/22 Council Tax Base for North Tyneside Council using an assumed Council Tax collection rate of 98.00% and note the Council Tax Support Scheme.

Option 2 - The only available option following the Authority's decision to leave the Local Council Tax Support scheme at the same level as 2020/21, was to amend the assumed Council Tax collection rate. The current collection rate of 98.50% was proposed to reduce to 98.00%. An increase in the collection rate would increase the Council Tax Base and a reduction in the collection rate would reduce the Council Tax Base. The impact of different Council Tax collection rates was shown in Table 3 in the report. There were no increases shown as this was not felt viable in the current economic situation.

**Resolved** that the report on the calculation of North Tyneside's Council Tax Base for 2021/22 be noted, and the assumed Council Tax collection rate for 2021/22 be set at 98.00% and therefore the amount calculated by North Tyneside Council as its Council Tax Base for 2021/22 shall be 60,941 Band D equivalent properties.

(Reasons for decision: The proposed 98.00% Council Tax collection rate is felt to be prudent for the reasons set out in paragraph 1.5.13 of the report. The impact of Covid-19 has been unprecedented and long-term collection will undoubtedly be impacted as some residents may become subject to debt relief orders which ultimately will lead to a small increase in debts being written off as uncollectable.

The risk of setting a Council Tax collection rate too high is that this can result in a deficit position for the Council Tax element of the Collection Fund, which in turn will have to be funded by the Authority's General Fund. This collection rate is reviewed as part of the annual Council Tax Base calculation, and the 98.00% collection rate will be reviewed in determining the Council Tax Base for 2022/23.)

### **CAB193/21 North Tyneside Tenancy Strategy 2021- 2025 Consultation Exercise**

Cabinet received a report seeking approval to undertake a consultation exercise with relevant stakeholders on the draft North Tyneside Tenancy Strategy 2021-2025.

North Tyneside's existing Strategy covered the period between 2013-2018. Since then, new legislation and significant welfare reform changes had been introduced. These changes meant that affordable and secure homes were a greater priority for those households where renting was the only option available to them.

A review of the existing Tenancy Strategy was required to ensure the document clearly set out the Authority's expectations to registered providers of social housing on the type of tenancies to be awarded in the Borough.

It was a requirement of any Tenancy Strategy review that the Authority must carry out a consultation exercise with registered providers of social housing within North Tyneside. The Authority wished to extend the consultation to include residents.

The engagement plan would meet both the statutory requirements and the Authority's recognised corporate standards for consultation. Due regard would be given to the on-

going restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The consultation responses would be collated and analysed with recommendations being brought back to a future Cabinet meeting so that an informed decision could be taken to approve the Tenancy Strategy 2021 – 2025.

Cabinet considered the following decision options:

Option 1 - approve the consultation exercise on the draft Tenancy Strategy to include statutory stakeholders and residents.

Option 2 - reject the request for the consultation cohort and exercise to be undertaken on the draft strategy, it being noted that in doing so the Authority could be at risk of failing to meet its duty in formulating and publishing a Tenancy Strategy, that was kept under review and amended or replaced from time to time.

Option 3 - request further information prior to approval of the consultation cohort and exercise on the draft Tenancy Strategy being received.

**Resolved** that the consultation exercise with relevant stakeholders on the draft North Tyneside Tenancy Strategy 2021 – 2025 be approved.

(Reason for decision: It is a statutory requirement that local authorities publish a tenancy strategy. When amending or replacing the strategy, the Authority must consult with registered providers of social housing who operate in the Borough. The Authority wishes to increase the consultation cohort to include residents who may either already be a social housing tenant or who may become a social housing tenant in the future.)

### **CAB194/21 Supporting the Ambition for North Tyneside through Housing Growth**

Cabinet received a report on the progress made in 2019/20 in supporting the Ambition for North Tyneside through Housing Growth and an update on how delivery in 2020/21 had been impacted by several challenges outside of the control of the Authority including the global pandemic.

The Mayor and Cabinet had clearly stated their policy intention in the Our North Tyneside Plan that the Authority would deliver “more quality affordable homes.”

180 new affordable homes had been delivered in North Tyneside in 2019/20 across the following workstreams:

- 22 new build homes through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), including Bonchester Court and Beadnell Court in Battle Hill ward.
- Bringing back 8 long-term empty properties into use as affordable housing.
- Working with Registered Providers (RPs) to deliver 13 new affordable homes at Charlton Court, Monkseaton (now known as Cedartree Court).
- Delivering 114 new homes through planning obligations.

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- The North Tyneside Trading Company (Development) Limited had successfully acquired 13 new homes from the open market to be let at an intermediate affordable rent.
- Specialist Housing - Aspire Healthcare had delivered a new 10-unit independent supported living scheme in Whitley Bay.

The unprecedented impact of the global pandemic had significantly reduced the delivery of affordable homes in 2020/21. The programme now expected to have delivered 90 new homes in North Tyneside which was considerably less than planned due to the unprecedented circumstances of Covid-19 resulting in delays to delivery on some sites, a breakdown of these was provided in Appendix 2 to the report. Delivery plans for 2020/21 included:

- The HRA Housing Growth Delivery Programme would deliver 12 new homes in 2020/21, including schemes at Edwin Grove and Bawtry Court. Further homes would be delivered at The Cedars and Charlotte Street.
- The Authority continued to work in partnership with Registered Providers to provide affordable homes. The delays associated with the Covid lockdown had hampered delivery this year and therefore no affordable homes had been delivered by RPs in North Tyneside.
- The Authority would continue to focus on tackling empty homes and where possible bringing them back into use as affordable dwellings. Several approaches to tackling empty homes would be considered including providing advice and assistance to homeowners and continuing to work in partnership with the National Landlord Association. The Authority would continue to use the Repair and Manage programme to refurbish long-term empty homes and take ownership of them until all costs had been repaid. This approach would deliver at least 6 affordable homes in 2020/21.
- The number of affordable homes delivered through planning obligations had fallen from 197 in 2018/19 to an expected 50 in 2020/21. This was due to delays caused by the Covid19 lockdown and the planning permissions for the large sites at Murton Gap and Killingworth Moor not yet submitted. Additional affordable homes would continue to be secured through Section 106 requirements in the future as further planning applications were submitted by developers.
- It was anticipated that the North Tyneside Trading Company would acquire 22 homes in 2020/21. Several opportunities would be explored by the Company to continue to support the Authority's Affordable Homes Programme and it was anticipated that the Company would increase their asset base to around 100 homes by the end of 2021/22. Rental income would continue to be received from the properties owned by the Company and reinvested back into the stock or used to further increase the number of affordable homes.

The report outlined the various challenges to delivery including the market conditions facing private housebuilders; the impact of Covid-19; and Government policy, particularly the proposed replacement of S106.

To increase affordable housing delivery, a new ten-year delivery programme had been identified and was attached as Appendix 4 to the report. The 10-year plan would aim to invest circa £50m and deliver around 350 new affordable homes by 2031. Specifically, the plan would aim to build at least 300 new council homes and bring back at least 50 empty properties into use as affordable homes.

With work underway or approval in place on five schemes (Bawtry Court, Edwin Grove, The Cedars, Charlotte Street and Wellfield Avenue), approval in principle was sought for the development on a further 8 sites identified in Table 1.5.5a. All the sites would require feasibility studies on them to assess their suitability for development and would require planning to be approved. This would include consultation with ward members and residents.

Any changes or revisions to the plan would be shared with the Strategic Property Group and ward members on a regular basis, with further Cabinet approvals being sought where required.

Delays by the developers to bring forward planning applications including the strategic sites at Murton Gap and Killingworth East, plus the uncertainty caused by the Covid-19 pandemic continued to pose a challenge to the delivery of the Affordable Homes Programme (AHP).

Whilst the new ten-year HRA delivery plan would help address this shortfall, it was also recommended that the Authority aligned the AHP to the Local Plan deadline of 2032 and increasing the target accordingly. This would provide greater certainty on delivery timescales with several large-scale planning applications due to come forward in the next few years.

With an extended target date and a plan to increase direct building by the Authority, it was appropriate that the current target of 3,000 was increased. It was recommended that a new target of 4,000 was agreed by 2032. This was a challenging target but reflective of the Authority's commitment to delivering high-quality affordable homes across the Borough.

An indicative delivery programme to 2032 was included in Appendix 3 to the report.

Cabinet considered the following decision options: In relation to the Affordable Homes Programme:

Option 1 – To receive and note the update on the progress of delivering the Affordable Homes Programme detailed at 1.2(1) of the report; and agree the recommendations detailed in paragraph 1.2(1b) and 1.2(2) of the report

Option 2 - To receive and note the update on the progress of delivering the Affordable Homes Programme detailed at 1.2(1) of the report; and reject the recommendation detailed in paragraph 1.2(1b) and 1.2(2) of the report.

**Resolved** that (1) in relation to the development of the sites identified in the 10-year delivery plan 'Supporting the Ambition for North Tyneside through Housing Growth':

- a) the principle of development by the Authority of the sites identified within section 1.5.5 of the report be approved; and
- b) the Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Head of Resources and Head of Law and Governance, be authorised

to undertake all necessary work to bring forward the development of the sites as identified in section 1.5.5 of the report.

(2) in relation to the Affordable Homes Programme:

- a) the progress made in 2019/20 and the delivery plan for 2020/21 be noted; and
- b) the increases in the delivery target within the programme from 3,000 to 4,000 affordable homes by 2032 in line with the Authority's Local Plan be agreed.

(Reasons for decision: It will support progress on delivering the Elected Mayor and Cabinet's commitment to deliver more quality affordable homes.)

### **CAB195/21    Ambition for Education - Education Strategy for North Tyneside 2020 - 2024**

Cabinet received a report seeking approval for the priorities set out the Ambition for Education – Strategy for North Tyneside 2020-2024 and agreement to continue to support the work of the North of Tyne Education Challenge, which set out the Authority's vision and priorities for ensuring that all children and young people in North Tyneside had access to a high-class education in order to achieve their full potential.

Central to the Authority's ambition for education was a desire to equip all students with the knowledge, skills and resilience needed to contribute to an unknown future and the world of work which may not be fully understood.

The report covered the following areas:

- A recap and update on the work associated with the Education Review;
- A summary of the 'Ambition' for Education strategy document which outlined the current priorities the Authority believed to be most important to its children and young people;
- The scope of the Post 16 Review of provision across the borough;
- A summary of the aims of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Inclusion strategy; and
- The current financial position of the Authority's schools, including some of the pressures and challenges faced.

North Tyneside had an Education system to be proud of. A strong performer regionally and nationally, this reflected the hard work done by Head Teachers and their teams, governing bodies, Elected Members, Authority staff and children and young people.

Whilst there were some areas of North Tyneside in the 10% least deprived areas nationally, there were other areas of significant deprivation. Although the Authority's overall outcomes remained favourable compared to national averages, the learning and progress gaps between many disadvantaged students and their peers were wider than those seen nationally. Such gaps were forecast to have increased significantly as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Tackling this and mitigating effects would be the overriding priority for all services that supported education in North Tyneside.

The success of the partnership to date was evident in improved indicators, including overall attainment figures versus national averages, Ofsted judgements, reductions in exclusions

and reductions in financial deficits; however, there was a great deal of work still to do to work towards the ambition of 'Making North Tyneside an even greater place for children and young people to thrive; where all can access a high-class education with a culture of inclusion and achievement.'

The Authority's 'Ambition for Education in North Tyneside' document set out the priorities and targets for education from 2020 to 2024. It built on the vision provided by 'Our North Tyneside Plan' and the 'Children's and Young People's Plan' and the Authority's targets aligned with the 'North of Tyne Education Challenge' and 'Joint School Improvement Strategy'

The priorities for the Authority's Ambition for Education were:

- Ready for School and Learning: Focusing upon the importance of early language development and the continued focus upon developing key reading and speaking skills. In North Tyneside, statistics for reading in the primary phase compared favourably to national averages. However, gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged counterparts varied markedly.

The Authority would work collaboratively to improve early language acquisition and reading attainment across the borough. By 2024, through targeted solutions, gaps in speech, language and communication attainment at the end of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) would be reduced, gaps in reading achievement would be closing and the Authority aimed to see significant and sustained improvement in reading attainment. In Reception, 10% of pupils were very overweight and 25% had excess weight. By Year 6, these figures increased, so that 21% of pupils were very overweight and 35% had excess weight. The Authority would work to reduce the increase in the proportion of pupils who were classed as very overweight or who had excess weight by the end of Year 6.

- Achievement for All: Working together to develop a culture of inclusion where the achievement of the most vulnerable children and young people was prioritised to level up outcomes and work tirelessly and determinedly to close achievement gaps.

To facilitate a culture of 'Achievement for All' across North Tyneside through ambitious expectations for student progress, work would be carried out to improve academic transition practices and continue on the 'keeping children in school agenda.' The Authority aimed to see a reduction in the spike of exclusions seen at Year 7 and Year 8 across the borough following transition from primary to secondary school, the Authority would see improvements to the progress of key stage 2 pupils within the middle school system and despite more recent inspections against the new inspection frameworks, a high proportion of schools would remain rated Good or better by Ofsted by 2024.

- Ambition and Employability Skills: The Authority would continue to reduce the proportion of young people who were NEET, including minimising the impact of COVID-19 on these statistics.

The Authority would ensure there were an appropriate range and quality of progression pathways for young people leaving school and further education, an

increased entry to EBacc and strength and depth across a suite of subjects and qualifications.

It would work closely with North of Tyne and local business forum to create pathways appropriate to pupils needs and interests. This included a review of Post 16 provision across the borough.

- Leadership, Recruitment and Retention: The Authority would utilise the economy of scale across the North of Tyne Combined Authority footprint to ensure access to high quality, cost effective skills training for current and aspiring school leaders.

School leaders would be confident and competent to manage change and manage the impact of extended school closure, and any future surge of COVID-19 and there would be clear well supported and well signposted pathways for future leaders to become exceptional, inclusive leaders of the future.

- Emotionally Healthy Schools: Identifying the Authority's commitment to working with schools and colleges to tackle the increase in mental health and wellbeing issues and to promote positive mental health and wellbeing support for all.

Mental health conditions affected about 1 in 10 children and young people and it was estimated that 75% of mental health problems in adult life, excluding dementia, started before the age of eighteen. Pre-COVID-19 had seen an increase in Education Health and Care Plans, approximately a quarter of which were accountable to Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.

The Authority would work to develop resilience, confidence and independence, and reduce the level of mental ill-health in children and young people. There would be strong commitment from all stakeholders to embed a strong emotionally healthy culture and to provide robust support for school communities of North Tyneside post-COVID-19.

At the forefront of the development of the Authority's 'Ambition for Education' was recovery from the impact of COVID-19, this was instilled within the priorities and targets of the Authority's strategy. The Authority must adapt its practices to respond to the ongoing presence of COVID-19 within the community and work with schools to recover from the potential impact of an extended period of school closure.

The Authority aimed to continue to have all North Tyneside schools open, to ensure the continuity of learning throughout the remainder of this period despite any further partial or full closures. The Authority would have effective procedures in place to control infection and manage any localised COVID-19 outbreaks. Schools would have a secure understanding of the term 'blended curriculum' and of the impact of extended school closure on pupils attainment levels, allowing the Authority to work collaboratively to target intervention and catch up programmes, particularly in specific groups of pupils who had been greatly impacted by school closures and periods of self-isolation.

The North of Tyne Cabinet had agreed its priorities for an Education Challenge proposal as Ready for School; Achievement for All; and Leadership, Recruitment and Retention. As part of this, the North of Tyne Cabinet had also agreed six Ambitions, which were:

- Making sure every young person is ready for school;
- Making sure all schools North of Tyne are Good or Outstanding;
- Aiming to make sure no one is left behind;
- Developing and delivering a universal mental health offer to all schools;
- Creating a North of Tyne Teacher Deal; and
- Creating a North of Tyne Leadership Deal.

The appointment of a Strategic Lead for Education across the North of Tyne had led to the development of a Joint School Improvement Strategy that identified key actions that the Authority, as part of a Combined Authority, would take to work collectively to improve the outcomes of children and young people across the region.

Priorities and actions within the Joint Improvement Strategy aligned with the Authority's 'Ambition for Education' to gain the economies of scale and synergy required for success. The Joint Improvement Strategy, attached as Appendix 4 to the report, had been agreed by the Combined Authority Cabinet in July 2020.

Cabinet considered the following decision options: to accept the recommendations as set out in paragraph 1.2 of the report, or alternatively, to not approve the recommendations.

**Resolved** that (1) the priorities set out within the Ambition for Education, which will be important to secure future success for the Authority's children and young people, be agreed; (2) the Post 16 Review which the Authority is leading on be noted; (3) the work undertaken with the partnership in producing the SEND Inclusion Strategy be noted; (4) the work undertaken with schools in relation to SEND provision be noted and approval be given to enter pre-publication consultation with schools, parents and other interested parties in relation to the amendment of the structure of provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs; (5) the continued financial challenges faced by schools and the joint work to deal with those challenges be noted; (6) the work of the North of Tyne Education Challenge continue to be supported; and (7) Cabinet receive further reports as required.

(Reason for decision: It reflects the priorities agreed by the Elected Mayor, Cabinet Member, Head Teachers and Chairs of Governing Bodies.)

### **CAB196/21 North Shields Town Centre and Fish Quay Master Plan**

Cabinet received a report seeking approval for the final version of North Shields Town Centre and Fish Quay Masterplan, appended to the report, as a framework for the regeneration of the town centre and Fish Quay following a programme of consultation and engagement undertaken over the Summer/Autumn 2020.

Achievements to date, including three schemes that had been delivered by the Authority's development company were as follows:

- Northumberland Square Phase 1: the development of new housing at Northumberland Square to create 28 new homes.

- Northumberland Square Phase 2: plans were currently being refined by the Authority's Trading Company to convert the vacant properties at 11-12 Northumberland Square into luxury apartments.
- Unicorn House: work was ongoing to refine a final scheme and to progress demolition works. The scheme would deliver circa 28 new family homes.
- The Wooden Dolly: the statue had been returned to Northumberland Square following its restoration.
- Heritage Action Zones (HAZ): Historic England had confirmed that the Authority's bid for £900,000 to this fund had been successful.
- North Shields Fish Quay (Western Quay): the Authority continued to work with the Port of Tyne and the Fish Quay Development Company to ensure that the longer-term economic objectives for the Fish Quay were achieved and that it remained a viable economic asset that contributed to the Authority's objectives.
- Tyne Brand Site: the Authority was currently working with the new owners to refine a site assembly and delivery strategy for the site which would see it developed to a high standard in terms of design for residential purposes with some potential for ground floor commercial activities.

As a listening Authority the views of residents, businesses and other interested parties on the draft Master Plan had been taken into consideration to help the Authority shape its thinking prior to producing a final version of the plan. However, ahead of formal consultation taking place, a series of discussions with external partners and interests had been undertaken.

A full breakdown of the responses to the formal consultation was set out in the report. Overall, the consultation responses received across all platforms were broadly positive and generally gave support to the proposals contained in the Master Plan. Given the overall support for the proposals, its alignment with Authority and local and national planning policy in respect of town centres, it was not proposed to undertake any further consultation or engagement. However, where individual projects were subject to planning applications, these would be subject to their individual consultation where residents / businesses would have the opportunity to comment on the specific details of a scheme.

Since the commencement of the formal consultation and engagement, the Authority had continued to refine the Master Plan to ensure it gave the best possible outcome in terms of its environmental, social and economic impact whilst providing value for money for the public purse.

Since commencing the consultation, the Co-op store, located on Bedford Street, had been placed on the market for sale as the business had decided to withdraw from the town centre. This included the main Co-op store together with two smaller retail units which faced onto Railway Terrace. Given the layout of the store combined with current market conditions it was considered unlikely that the premises would be acquired and reoccupied for retail purposes. This had provided the Authority with an opportunity to review how it delivered the Transport Interchange and the Town Square.

It was now proposed that by acquiring and demolishing the Co-op and associated units together with two other property interests (owned by New River Retail) the Authority would be able to develop both a transport interchange serving buses in the town centre together with a public square.

This new approach would avoid the need for significant property acquisition and relocation costs for existing businesses as well as negating the need for a Compulsory Purchase Order. It would also remove cost and risk associated with the demolition of the properties around Railway Terrace, Nile Street and Bedford Street which were located above the metro tunnel and would also enable the developments to be brought forward sooner saving around 18 months in delivery time. As such this approach would deliver the same outcomes for the town centre but at significantly less cost to public purse in a shorter timescale than previously proposed. This approach to retain those properties at Railway Terrace aligned with some of the comments the Authority received to the consultation.

No other major changes were proposed to the Master Plan as all the other projects were supported and were policy compliant. The Master Plan was a strategic document which reflected the Authority's aspiration for the town centre. As individual projects were refined and progressed towards delivery, design details would be finalised and may be subject to minor changes to reflect on-site or technical constraints.

The proposed next steps included:

- Refining a Delivery Plan for the Master Plan which would set out the timings, and funding for the projects contained in the Master Plan.
- Progress the delivery of those schemes contained in the Master Plan for which funding had been secured.
- Securing external funding for those elements of the Master Plan for which funding was not currently in place.

Cabinet considered the following decision options: either to agree the recommendations as set out in Section 1.2 of the report, or alternatively to disagree with the proposals.

**Resolved** that (1) the proposed changes to the North Shields Town Centre and Fish Quay Master Plan since August 2020 be noted;  
(2) the final version of the Master Plan as a framework for the regeneration of North Shields be agreed; and  
(3) the Chief Executive, the Head of Resources and the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development, in consultation with the Elected Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, be authorised to progress the delivery of the Master Plan including the acquisition of property interests, procurement of design and construction services for those projects identified within the Master Plan and for which funding has been secured.

(Reason for decision: The recommended option will enable the Authority to progress the regeneration of North Shields Town Centre and the Fish Quay.)

**CAB197/21    Date and Time of Next Meetings**

6.00pm on Monday 1 February 2021 (Extraordinary Meeting)

6.00pm on Monday 8 February 2021 (Extraordinary Meeting)

6.00pm on Monday 22 February 2021 (Ordinary Meeting)

**Minutes published on 29 January 2021.**

**The decisions contained within these Minutes may be implemented (unless called in by 3 Non-Executive Members for consideration by the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee) immediately following the expiry of the call-in period; i.e. 5.00pm on 5 February 2021.**