

Cabinet

Monday, 24 May 2021

Present: N Redfearn (Elected Mayor) (in the Chair)
Councillors C Johnson, C Burdis, S Cox, S Day, P Earley,
S Graham, A McMullen and M Rankin

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

Apologies: Councillor K Clark, D McNally (Age UK)

CAB2/21 To Receive any Declarations of Interest and Notification of any Dispensations Granted

Councillor S Graham declared a registerable personal interest in agenda Item 9: Contributions Policy for Adult Social Care and Support Services (CAB9/21), as she has a family member in residential care and who was self-funded.

CAB3/21 Minutes

Resolved that the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 April 2021 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

CAB4/21 Report of the Young Mayor

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

- Youth Council Committees had continued to work well, drawing interest from other young people in the borough and recruiting new members.
- The Enterprise Education Committee had won the Young Enterprise North East Company of the Year final and as a result the young people would progress to the next stage of the competition which was the regional North East Yorkshire and Humber final. The competition was a chance for young people to set up their own business from scratch and compete against other teams. Their product was a children's book focused on educating young readers on serious topics such as the pandemic, mental health, and climate change.
- The Increased Opportunities Committee had completed the Free Flow Project and boxes sent out to schools with a poster and covering letter. The project aimed to change the current practice by sending each high school, middle school, and special school a free box of sanitary products with a poster to display with the recommendation that the products were readily available in female toilets.

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- The Equalities Committee had analysed their findings from the survey to students and were working with school improvement officers to look at developing training and support for teachers about the effects of everyday sexism on their students.
- The BAME Committee had completed their video with the Digital Voice Project, which was about young asylum seekers and refugees living in North Tyneside. The launch of the video and panel discussion was being planned and invitations sent out once the arrangements were confirmed.
- The Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Committee had consulted with the Authority's Director of Public Health and officer from Safeguarding and Children's Services about North Tyneside's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Strategy for the next five years, which was focused on supporting children, young people and their families to manage whatever life brought.
- Member of UK Youth Parliament Abi and the Young Mayor had joined a Head Teachers Briefing and gave a presentation about the six youth council committees, detailing what they had been working on and how they would like schools to help by supporting the various initiatives, which included passing on to students the outstanding I'm an NT Quaran-teen Survivor wristband and Z card as soon as possible; ensuring the Free Flow Products were in the girl's bathrooms; for schools to purchase the children's books, joining the Eco School Green Flag programme if not already done; sharing the BAME Committee's film with students and ensuring teachers took part in Equalities and Diversity Training. Also, by working with the school improvement team, it was hoped that schools would continue to improve what was offered to pupils.
- Youth Councillors had completed 3 sessions of the Reporters Academy Confidence Training. The workshops had covered Public Speaking, Research Techniques and Conducting Interviews, important in helping them to develop their personal and professional skills.

The Elected Mayor thanked the Young Mayor for her update and congratulated her and all the young people for their valuable work and achievements in the borough, regionally and nationally. These accolades were echoed by the Cabinet Members present.

CAB5/21 Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge Follow Up and Recovery and Renewal Remote Visit

Cabinet considered a report seeking approval for the proposed approach to carry out a Local Government Association (LGA) remote recovery and renewal challenge for North Tyneside, alongside the follow up remote visit from the Corporate Peer Review Challenge due to take place between 29-30 June 2021.

As part of the national sector-led improvement programme, the Authority had taken part in a LGA Corporate Peer Challenge from 18 – 21 June 2019 with experienced colleagues and had been led by a serving Chief Executive of a similar Authority and an Elected Mayor.

The Peer Team had presented feedback on 21 June 2019 to Cabinet Members and the Senior Leadership Team. The Peer Team had made six helpful recommendations for the Authority's future planning in a written report. The Peer Team written report, and resulting

action plan from the Authority, had been reviewed and agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 14 October 2019.

The Authority's COVID-19 recovery framework had been agreed by Cabinet on 29 June 2020 and set out an 18-month programme of work to move the Authority and Borough, through three phases of recovery from June 2020 to July 2021. An end of stage review, for phase 2 of the recovery programme, had been completed in March 2021. Eleven of the programme's remaining workstreams had been successfully closed as part of this review. The third and final phase of the Authority's recovery programme had six remaining workstreams; these mainly related to the reopening of services, in line with Government's COVID-19 Response, Spring 2021, Roadmap Out of Lockdown.

When COVID-19 national lockdown measures had begun in March 2020, the LGA had suspended the physical delivery of peer challenge work, including their peer challenge programmes. To continue to support councils during this period, the LGA had refocused their offer, adopting a new approach to the peer support offer, focusing on supporting the recovery and renewal of local government and communities.

All work had been undertaken remotely. Appendix 1 to the report showed the action plan and progress made, with the six peer review recommendations. All actions from each of the recommendations had been successfully completed, or, were in place, or, underway.

The follow up visit would help review and assess progress and development in response to the feedback and recommendations made by the peer team, in June 2019, specifically:

- Had the Authority fully considered the recommendations made by the peer team and delivered against the agreed action plan,
- identified any barriers or opportunities in progress, as result of the pandemic, and
- considered any changes in political leadership, as a result of local and Mayoral elections.

The LGA Recovery and Renewal Panel would: consider the Authority's response to the COVID-19 pandemic; review the current priorities for the Borough, as a result of COVID-19, and consider the longer-term impact of the pandemic, on the ambitions of the Authority for the Borough.

In doing so, the review would assess the progress made by the Authority's recovery programme in relation to Leadership of place, economy and supporting people; and Effective partnership working.

Considerations and planning post July 2021, included:

- Consideration of the Our North Tyneside Plan priorities and objectives for recovery.
- Understanding of, and plans to address, impact of the pandemic on socio-economic inequalities.
- Making the most of new ways of organisational working and new ways of serving our customers, through the Authority's customer service programme.
- Protecting recovery and planning for the future; understanding and addressing business and economic impact of the pandemic.

The LGA remote visit and review would take place over two days, 29 – 30 June 2021, and

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would involve remote meetings with a range of council leaders and teams. Table 1 in the report showed the draft schedule for the visit, agreed at the time the report had been produced, but might be subject to minor change, as final arrangements for the visit were established.

The Elected Mayor commented that it was fantastic to hear the Peer Team commend the successful regeneration across the Borough and to highlight how much this was valued by residents and partners.

Cabinet considered the following decision options:

Option 1: To note the progress made with the Authority's action plan (Appendix 1) and follow up visit by the LGA and agree the approach for a recovery and renewal challenge in June 2021.

Option 2: To note the progress made with the Authority's action plan (Appendix 1) and follow up visit and not agree to undertake a recovery and renewal challenge in June 2021.

Resolved that (1) the updated Action Plan in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved; (2) the planned follow-up visit in June 2021 be noted; and (3) a Local Government Association remote recovery and renewal challenge for North Tyneside, to take place in June 2021, be agreed.

(Reasons for decision: the action plan and agreement for a follow visit with the LGA was approved by Cabinet at its meeting of 14 October 2019.)

When COVID-19 national lockdown measures began in March 2020, the LGA suspended the physical delivery of peer challenge work, including their peer challenge programmes. To continue to support councils during this period, the LGA have refocused their offer, adopting a new approach to the peer support offer, focusing on supporting the recovery and renewal of local government and communities. All work is undertaken remotely.

The proposed approach and schedule for the recovery and renewal panel visit, has been designed with the LGA, lead Members and senior Authority officers.)

CAB6/21 North Tyneside Vehicle Access Crossing Policy

Cabinet considered a report seeking approval for a new North Tyneside Vehicle Access Crossing Policy.

North Tyneside Council was responsible for an extensive highway network and maintaining its roads and pavements was a key priority. This was underpinned by the Highways Asset Management Plan 2017 – 2032 (the 'HAMP'), previously approved by Cabinet.

The HAMP set out the Authority's commitment to good asset management practices in the way it managed the highway. One of the key objectives of the HAMP was to deliver the clear policy direction from the Elected Mayor and Cabinet to increase the commitment to seek the sustained improvement of footways across the borough. An important aspect of this was the effective management of vehicles crossing the footpath.

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Throughout the year the Authority received requests from residents seeking access to their property for their vehicles by 'dropping the kerb' to enable access to their property from the highway. The Highways Act 1980 made provision for residents and property owners to do this by making a request to the Authority in its role of local Highway Authority. Decisions therefore needed to be made by the Authority on whether to permit the construction of a vehicle access over a footway or verge. The decisions were made by assessing the applications against set highways criteria.

For a number of years, local highway authorities had managed applications for vehicle access crossings as part of daily business without recourse to a formalised policy. In North Tyneside, the Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure had delegated authority to make decisions on whether to permit a request for construction of a vehicle access crossing. However, local highway authorities were moving towards creating formal policies for the management of vehicle access crossing applications. This was considered best practice as it provided greater clarity for the customer, provided transparency over the criteria applied, ensured a consistent management approach, and promoted consistent decision making. As such, and in line with the aims and objectives of the HAMP, a vehicle access crossing policy had been developed which was attached to the report as Appendix 1.

The purpose of the new vehicle access crossing policy was to formalise the existing vehicle access crossing process and criteria for assessing applications in a policy document; ensure the right balance between on-road and off-road parking, and to preserve the character of the streetscape; and to improve the customer experience by providing clearer information on the application process and the assessment criteria.

The policy set out the legislative background, processes, assessment criteria and all other information key to the management of vehicle access crossings including:

- Legislative background in relation to vehicle access crossings
- Approvals required for a vehicle access crossing request
- Criteria used to assess vehicle access crossing applications
- Details of the application process
- Details setting out construction options, fees and payment process.

The intention was to publish the policy on the Authority's website and make it available in other formats. In addition, to simplify the application process and to improve the customer experience, the new vehicle access crossing policy would be supported by a new customer guide. This would include plain language guidance on the application process, useful contacts, frequently asked questions and visual illustrations to help explain the acceptable criteria. The customer guide was currently in development and was expected to be made available on the Authority's website during summer 2021.

Cabinet considered the following decision options: to accept the recommendations set out in paragraph 1.2 of the report; or alternatively, to not accept the recommendations and provide an alternative response to the report at the meeting.

Resolved that (1) the information presented in the report, be noted;
(2) the North Tyneside Vehicle Access Crossing Policy, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved: and

(3) the Cabinet Member for Environment consider any referral made to her regarding the review of a decision taken in relation to a vehicle access crossing application, and to determine the application following such a review.

(Reason for decision: in order to have a formal vehicle access crossing policy in place to ensure a consistent approach to managing applications and to assist customers through the application process.)

CAB7/21 An inclusive economy in North Tyneside

Cabinet considered a report seeking approval for an overarching approach to building a more inclusive North Tyneside, particularly using the local economy as a route to make that happen. It provided a framework for a range of projects and activities which aimed to make North Tyneside and its economy, more inclusive.

Following a peer review in 2018, a clear recommendation for the Authority was to develop and implement an inclusive economy strategy for the Borough. Building upon the good work already achieved and the commitments already made in promoting inclusivity and tackling deprivation, this strategy aimed to act on that recommendation and provide an approach in which North Tyneside could achieve some real gains in becoming an inclusive economy.

A great deal of international policy development had gone into thinking about inclusive economic growth. Focus had shifted to look at the quality of economic growth and not just its rate. This meant an economy that worked for and included everyone, where the benefits of the economy were spread, so that all communities flourished and grew equally.

The single biggest excluding factor in North Tyneside was deprivation. Around 1 in 10 residents lived in an area that was ranked as the most deprived in England and an estimated 18.7% of children in North Tyneside were living in poverty in 2018/19. This approach aimed to tackle that and respond to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, which had only served to heighten the gap. In addition, this approach would concentrate on supporting those 9 Protected Characteristics created by the Equality Act 2010.

This framework for change was organised across seven fundamental areas, key to promoting an inclusive economy; Education, Employment, Safety, Social equity, Housing, Connections and Environment.

Success in creating an inclusive economy would mean:

- Every resident had the right to a good education, closed the attainment gap between students from deprived and affluent areas and made sure that young people had the skills, experience and qualifications to take up quality training and jobs.
- Every resident had the right to employment in a safe working environment, with opportunities for progression, paid a fair wage and feeling valued.
- Every resident had the right to the feeling and experience of safety in their communities.
- Every resident had the right to social equity, including commitment to fairness, justice and equality from employers, education and training providers.
- Every resident had the right to good quality and affordable housing, providing a place

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to grow and learn throughout the life course.

- Every resident had the right to social and digital connections which maximised opportunities to fully participate in their communities.
- Every resident had the right to a sustainable environment, where the Borough's growing economy did not come to the detriment of the climate.

The strategy set out the challenges across each of these rights and how the Authority would achieve these successes as a Council, including current and proposed interventions and activities, links to existing strategies and policies and ways in which the Authority could work with partners and stakeholders to maximise its chances of being successful.

This framework had been developed in consultation with service areas across the Authority to make sure this approach was all encompassing. It was also linked with the ambitions of the North of Tyne Combined Authority and their statement for an inclusive economy.

The Deputy Mayor referred at the meeting to an amendment to the report in section 1.5.40, to reflect the revision by Cabinet of its strategy for education within the 'Ambition for Education' documentation, also to remove the reference to additional provision over weekends, this only related to school holidays.

Cabinet considered the following decision options: to agree this strategy and the proposed next steps, or alternatively, to not agree this strategy and seek more work on the issue.

Resolved that the approach towards developing an inclusive economy in North Tyneside be approved.

(Reason for decision: This strategy builds on policy decisions already taken by the Elected Mayor and Cabinet and forms part of the Action Plan agreed by Cabinet following the Local Government Association Peer Challenge of the Authority in 2019.)

CAB8/21 Exclusion Resolution

Resolved that under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and having applied a public interest test as defined in Part 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part of Schedule 12A to the Act.

CAB9/21 Contributions Policy for Adult Social Care and Support Services

Cabinet considered a report seeking approval to undertake public consultation on an amended North Tyneside Council Contributions Policy for Adult Social Care and Support Services.

The policy had recently been reviewed and highlighted some issues which needed further consideration by Cabinet and required public consultation to enable Cabinet to make informed decisions, as follows:

1. The delegation of responsibility for setting of fees and charges.
2. The pension age to be used in financial assessments.

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3. The Minimum Income Guarantee to be used in financial assessments.

The proposal to go out to public consultation would enable the Authority to consider local views from both individuals accessing services and from the wider general public when finalising the pension age and setting the rate for the financial disregard in the Contributions Policy. The outcome of the consultation would be brought back to the August Cabinet meeting for further discussion and final decision.

Cabinet considered the following decision options:

Option 1: To adhere to the Minimum Income Guarantee rates as set out by Department of Health and Social Care.

Option 2: To set a disregard rate based on Department of Health and Social Care Minimum Income Guarantee rates and add an extra 5%.

Resolved that (1) the Head of Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, the Head of Resources and the Head of Law and Governance, be authorised to set the rates of charges for Adult Social Care which will be reviewed on an annual basis; (2) public consultation be undertaken on an amended North Tyneside Council Contributions Policy including proposals to (a) review the amount the Authority would use as the minimum disregard in financial assessments and (b) change the pension age; and (3) Cabinet receive a further report in August 2021 at the conclusion of the consultation Period so that consideration can be given to the approval, or otherwise, of the amended North Tyneside Council Contributions Policy.

(Reasons for decision: The proposed delegated authority will allow the charges to be reviewed on a regular basis and updated in line with the rates the Authority pays for services in a timely and efficient manner.

The changes proposed under sections 1.6 and 1.7 may have significant impacts on those people accessing services. In order to demonstrate the Authority has followed due process before making a decision, it is necessary to seek their views.)

CAB10/21 Corporate Risk Management Summary Report

Cabinet considered a report which detailed the corporate risks that had been identified for monitoring and management by the Authority's Senior Leadership Team and relevant Cabinet members. The report also provided detailed information on each risk and how it was being managed.

Cabinet considered the following decision options: To consider the information provided for each of the corporate risks and endorse the outcome of the latest review by the Authority's Senior Leadership Team; and after consideration of the detailed information provided for the corporate risks, suggest changes to the corporate risks and their controls.

Resolved that the latest review of key corporate risks undertaken by the Senior Leadership Team be endorsed.

(Reasons for decision: Each of the corporate risks has undergone substantial review and challenge as part of the corporate risk management process. This is designed to provide

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assurance that corporate risks and opportunities are being identified and appropriately managed.)

CAB11/21 Date and Time of Next Meeting

6.00pm on Monday 28 June 2021.

Minutes published on Thursday 27 May 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 Friday 4 June 2021.