

## **Cabinet**

**Monday, 27 March 2023**

**Present:** Dame N Redfearn DBE (Elected Mayor) (in the Chair)  
Councillors C Johnson, C Burdis, K Clark, S Graham,  
J Harrison, H Johnson, S Phillips and M Rankin

**In Attendance:** C Quinn (Young Mayor)  
K Goldfinch (Business Representative)  
D McNally (Age UK, North Tyneside)  
R Layton (North Tyneside Joint Trades Union Committee)

**Apologies:** V Smith (Voluntary and Community Sector)

### **CAB106/23 Declarations of Interest and Notification of any Dispensations Granted**

Councillor K Clark declared a non-registerable personal interest in agenda Item 5: 2022-23 Financial Management Report to 31 January 2023 (CAB109/23), and agenda Item 7: Our North Tyneside Plan 2021-2025 Performance Report (CAB111/23), as she was a Director and Employee at Justice Prince CIC (Working Roots), which had contracts with North Tyneside Council funded to deliver community-based programmes.

### **CAB107/23 Minutes**

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the previous meetings held on 20 February 2023 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

### **CAB108/23 Report of the Young Mayor**

In his announcements, the new Young Mayor of North Tyneside, Cameron Quinn, referred to his pledge which was "To ensure that every young person in North Tyneside has the best possible start in life by creating a safe diverse and nurturing environment."

He also referred to the newly elected Member of Youth Parliament (MYP), Sharon Zeng, and her pledge was "To raise awareness about the importance of financial education in schools and informing students about their financial choices and career choices."

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

- Young Cabinet Members and Youth Councillors had been working together to achieve their plans and would be working on topics in the various committees.
- The Young People would continue with the Ready for Life Committee focusing on creating financial lesson plans to support students learning, the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Committee would continue with their focus on reviewing and circulating useful resources to young people.
- The Environment Committee would continue with the monthly Swap Shops in North Shields Customer First Centre and develop projects around cooking on a budget with tips about reducing waste and saving resources. The Committee would also be

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supporting the Young Mayor to develop an allotment or small garden project in schools which would link well to the Eco School award.

- A new Community Safety Committee had been created to focus on issues affecting young people. The Equality and Diversity Committee would continue to focus on accessible places and activities which was the pledge of former Youth Councillor and MYP candidate Daniel Taylor.
- The final amount collected from last year's Youth Council fund raising from North Tyneside Together was £723.67p, which was presented to 'Walking With' at the last Youth Council meeting. A new charity to fundraise in 2023-24 would be agreed at the next Youth Council meeting, which would be connected to Daniel Taylor's legacy.
- Preparations were being made for this year's Young People's Conference on Thursday 30 March 2023. 120 participants were expected from 10 schools across the borough with workshops on what it meant to be Ready for Life, and to explore what the barriers were to young people accessing places and activities. There would be an opportunity for decision makers to attend an event planned for the 8 June at North Tyneside Council's offices at Quadrant, to hear first-hand from young people what the issues were connected to these two topics.

The Elected Mayor welcomed the new Young Mayor to his first Cabinet meeting and thanked him for the update; she along with her Cabinet and the Authority's partner representatives looked forward to working with him and the young people on future projects.

### **CAB109/23 2022-23 Financial Management Report to 31 January 2023**

Cabinet considered the fifth monitoring report outlining the 2022/23 financial position. It provided an indication of the expected revenue and capital financial position of the Authority as at 31 March 2023.

The report covered the forecast outturn of the Authority's General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) revenue budget including management mitigations where issues had been identified; the delivery of 2022/23 approved budget savings plans; and an update on the Capital Investment Plan, including details of variations and reprogramming, that was recommended for approval.

The Budget for 2022/23 was approved by full Council at its meeting on the 17 February 2022. The net General Fund revenue budget was set at £163.512m, which included £7.257m of savings to be achieved in year.

The Authority's finances were complex in any year given the range of services that were delivered; the picture this financial year was even more volatile given the national and global economic challenges. At a Service level, before the application of planned contingencies and central funding, the gross pressure would be £22.872m. However, the budget for the year included contingencies of £6.752m and other central funding of £1.006m. As a result, the total forecast year-end pressure for the General Fund reduced to £15.114m. Table 1 sets out the initial variation summary across the General Fund, with a detailed commentary of variances included in Annex 1.

Included within the position for Central Items is £6.752m of contingencies. Whilst held in Central Items, its use was identified as: £3.116m to offset the pressures in Children's

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Social Care; £1.301m was supporting the under achievement of savings targets; and £2.325m to support the inflationary pressures being faced by the Authority. In September's report, a £0.316m saving was included reflecting the part year reversal of the national insurance increase along with a £4.927m of Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) savings following the conclusion of External Audit work into the methodology change; these items remained in the forecasts. In 2021/22 these savings were set aside in a new MRP reserve, which remained on the balance sheet, but it was likely that the in-year saving would be required to support the bottom-line position in 2022/23, so was currently included in the forecast position. Since the last report to Cabinet, the Authority had received a one-off contribution of £0.405m relating to the Levy Account surplus. This gave a total underspend for Central Items of £13.407m.

Table 2 added further detail to the information in Table 1. The top half of table 2 breaks down the forecast £15.114m pressure into the main factors of covid legacy, utility, other inflation, and other pressures. The covid pressures of £7.757m arose primarily from fees and charges income not yet returning to pre-pandemic levels and additional fixed term staff employed to cover increased demand or to enable front-line service provision to continue.

The lower half of Table 2 included details of funding set aside to support known pressures. As part of the 2022-2026 Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) agreed by full Council in February, £2.200m was set aside from the Change Reserve to support additional pressures in Home to School Transport (£0.400m), Special Educational Needs (£0.400m), additional children's social care provision (£1.200m) and for the development of the Customer Relationship Management programme (£0.200m). The £0.400m relating to Home to School Transport had now been allocated to Commissioning & Asset Management and was reflected in the services projected position, with the remaining £1.800m supporting the overall corporate pressure.

In addition, £2.000m was also set aside to create a Covid-19 Reserve as part of the 2022-2026 MTFP, this included £0.650m to support additional caseloads within Children's Services, £0.350m to support Home to School Transport and £1.000m to support reduced fees and charges income following the pandemic. The £0.350m relating to Home to School Transport had now been allocated to Commissioning & Asset Management and was reflected in the services projected position, leaving £1.650m to support the overall corporate pressure. Within the 2022-2026 MTFP, £0.150m was identified as planned use of the Insurance Reserve to support additional Repairs and Maintenance costs, as set out in Table 2. A further £1.300m of contingencies that had not been applied to specific service areas / central items, so could support the overall corporate position.

Following the on-going review of provisions, the Authority had been able to release provisions of £0.728m (of which £0.300m related to Special Guardianship Order costs). £1.925m of funding previously reported in July had now been allocated to help cover the cost of the Pay Award, which was now approved at £1,925 for every full-time equivalent employee. Despite this additional allocation, the cost of the pay award was higher than the funding set aside and was reflected in the overall forecast for the year, which was reflected in individual service areas (Table 2).

The Authority carried forward £2.962m of Covid-19 related central Government grants from 2021/22. Of this £1.562m has been committed and was reflected in the £15.114m position (Table 1). The remaining balance of £1.400m is available to support on-going

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Covid-19 legacy pressures and was reflected in the revised position (Table 2). Taking all of the above into account, the result was a forecast year-end pressure of £8.086m, which was an improvement of £0.539m since the previous Cabinet report.

The main service areas facing forecast overspends were those most exposed to the new, emerging pressures, which were impacting on top of the residual covid-impacts. Environment, which included Sports and Leisure activities, was experiencing income shortfalls from fees and charges, which continued to be at lower than pre-pandemic levels. That Directorate was significantly affected by energy costs, given it included streetlighting, leisure centres and customer first centres which were all energy intensive activities. In addition, higher inflation rates were significantly impacting on the waste management contract.

Children's and Adults' Services were forecasting significant pressures, as the impact of Covid-19 had seen the need to increase staffing levels to manage increases in both the complexity and volume of demand for services. This was also resulting in increased payments to external providers. This was not unique to North Tyneside and was being seen across the region and nationally.

Commissioning & Asset Management was forecasting overspends in catering supplies and the cost of Home to School Transport, with the cost of supplies and fuel rising rapidly in this period of high inflation.

The Resources directorate was experiencing overspends in Legal Services, associated with the level of locum solicitors dealing with a combination of increased demand and job vacancies, which was being addressed by a restructure that was underway, with increased resources included as part of the 2023/24 budget setting process. There was also an ongoing impact of the recovery of benefit overpayments in the Revenues and Benefits Service on the directorate position, although this had improved by £0.063m since the last report.

Finance officers were continuing to work with Cabinet, the Senior Leadership Team and other senior officers across the Authority to review Business as Usual activity as well as challenging and reviewing the current projected risks the authority was facing in a number of key areas: Children's Services – need and cost assumptions; High needs/SEND pressures; Adults Social Care – need and cost assumptions; Unachieved savings targets; Commissioning & Asset Management – Impact of schools' service level agreement reductions; Law & Governance Structure – use of locums; and Revenues & Benefits position – review of the level of benefits overpayments and subsequent recovery. The aim of this work would be to ensure actions were in place to bring the outturn forecast for normal activities in on balance and it was anticipated the position would continue to improve over the remaining months of the financial year as planned remedial actions begin to impact on both expenditure and income. However, at this stage of the year it was certain that some level of overspend would need to be supported from the Strategic Reserve, significantly reducing the level of un-ringfenced reserves the Authority had available. The recently agreed 2023/24 budget and MTFP included the replenishment of this reserve in the period through to 2026/27.

New savings of £4.720m were agreed as part of the Budget approved by full Council in February 2022 taking the total savings the Authority had had to find in the eleven years following the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) to £134.268m.

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The governance structure of the Efficiency Savings Programme included a monthly review of progress by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). In addition, in-year budget and performance progress meetings were held between officers and Cabinet Members to consider progress and actions being taken to deliver savings. The variations in relation to the savings were outlined in the section 1.5.3 of the report, with more detail included in the regular reports on this topic to Overview Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee.

The new savings of £4.720m were combined with £2.537m of brought forward targets that still required a permanent solution from previous years, meaning the overall target to achieve in 2022/23 is £7.257m. These savings were shown separately in section 1.5.3 and in Tables 1 and 2.

In terms of the efficiency savings programme 2022/23, Adults Services were projecting to achieve the full £0.950m target. Within the Children, Young People and Learning (CYPL) pressure of £14.635m reported earlier, £2.600m related to the non-achievement of savings targets. In the previous financial year these savings had been significantly impacted by Covid-19 and as such, achievement had been supported by Central Government Covid-19 grants. With these grants not available in 2022/23 and on-going demand-led pressures already impacting the service, current projections were for these CYPL savings to remain unachieved in 2022/23.

Within Commissioning & Asset Management, £0.400m of cross-cutting 2022/23 savings were held with £0.100m projected to be achieved and £0.100m of the Procurement saving. projected to be achieved to date by in year actions, with work on-going across the Authority to achieve the balance by the year end. The unachieved savings were included in the forecast pressure in Table 1. All savings in the other service areas were forecasted to be achieved.

Revenue grants received during December 2022 and January 2023 were set out in section 1.5.4 of the report (Table 4).

Schools were required to submit their rolling three-year budget plan by 31 May each year and as reported previously the total planned in-year deficit for 2022/23 is £5.533m. 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.

The first set of monitoring for the 2022/23 year is complete, with schools overall showing a £1.145m improvement against budget plans prior to the impact of pay award on staffing costs. The position with the pay award costs included is a deficit of £7.453m. This represents a decrease in balances of £1.920m.

The High Needs Block ended 2021/22 with a pressure of £13.511m. The forecast of the Budget position for 2022/23 indicated an anticipated in-year pressure of £4.416m reflecting continued demand for special school places, producing a cumulative deficit balance of £17.927m. The Authority submitted a final DSG Management Plan on 3 February 2023 to the Department for Education (DfE). This was to agree a package of reform for the Authority's high needs system that would bring the Dedicated School Grant (DSG) High Needs overspend under control. The Authority was required to demonstrate lasting sustainability, effective for children and young people, which included reaching an in-year balance within five years. The Authority engaged with partners across SEND to co-create

the DSG Management Plan. On 16 March 2023 the Authority received confirmation that the submission had been successful and an award of £19.5m of additional funding will flow over the next 5 years subject to compliance with specific conditions set out in the Safety Valve Agreement (link included within background papers). This included the requirement for the High Needs Block to move into an in-year surplus by 2026/27. £7.8m of additional DSG would be received in the current financial year, reducing the cumulative deficit on the High Needs Block, with the remainder paid over the period to 2027/28 if those conditions were met.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was now forecast to have year-end balances at 31 March 2023 of £3.316m. This reflected an in-year improvement against the budget of £0.248m, with £0.187m relating to a forecast under-spend against the budget which was set at £0.371m, and £0.061m relating to an improvement in brought-forward balances.

Universal Credit was fully implemented across North Tyneside on 2 May 2018. As of the end of January 2023, 4,086 North Tyneside Homes tenants had moved on to Universal Credit and a team was working proactively with tenants to minimise arrears. This position continued to be closely monitored to identify adverse impacts on the Budget position.

The approved 2022-2027 Investment Plan totalled £332.385m (£92.733m in 2022/23) and was detailed in table 20 of the Annex. The Annex to the report also set out in Section 4 delivery progress to date, planned delivery for 2022/23, reprogramming and other variations identified through the Investment Programme Governance process. An officer led review of the Investment Plan had resulted in proposals for variations of £1.521m and reprogramming of £6.938m in 2022/23, of which more details were set out in Section 4 of the Annex to this report. After total adjustments of £18.963m, the revised Investment Plan stands at £351.348m (£87.316m for 2022/23) and to the end of January 2023 spend of £53.366m had been incurred which represented 61.12% of the revised plan.

The Investment Plan continued to face significant inflationary pressure and Senior Officers within the Authority had undertaken a review of the expected financial impact on approved schemes with the relevant project managers. The review had confirmed that for the majority of schemes there had been an ability to re-profile planned works to future years given supply issues and rising costs. However, in some cases it was proposed to utilise the Authority's contingency allocation within the Investment Plan in order to maintain delivery plans. The use of the contingency was managed as part of the Investment Programme Board governance arrangements. The corporate risk register includes risks for such inflationary pressures to the investment plan and the position was monitored on an ongoing basis.

The 2021-2025 Our North Tyneside Plan (Council Plan) sets out the overall vision and policy context within which the Medium-Term Financial Plan and Budget are set. The Council Plan, "Building A Better North Tyneside", had five key themes. For each theme there was a set of policy outcomes which the Authority was seeking to deliver; these were detailed in the Council Plan. The Authority had plans in place to deliver all elements of the Plan and performance against delivery was carefully monitored. An update report on the progress of delivering the 2021-2025 Our North Tyneside Plan was included on the agenda for this meeting as a separate item.

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

**Resolved** that (1) the forecast budget monitoring position for the General Fund, Schools' Finance and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and as at 31 January 2023 (Annex sections 1, 2 and 3), be noted;  
(2) the receipt of £1.192m new revenue grants (as outlined in section 1.5.4 of the report), be approved;  
(3) the Authority's Investment Plan spend of £53.366m to 31 January 2023 and the financing of the Plan to the end of the year (Annex Section 4), be noted;  
(4) variations of £0.151m and reprogramming of (£6.938m) for 2022/23 within the 2022-2027 Investment Plan (Annex Section 4), be approved; and  
(5) the information on the Collection Fund (Annex section 6), be noted.

(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.)

### **CAB110/23 Procurement Plan 2023-24**

Cabinet considered a report seeking approval to the Authority's Procurement Plan 2023-2024 to proceed with the relevant procurement exercises throughout the financial year and award contracts in accordance with UK public procurement legislation to the most advantageous tenders.

The Authority continued to spend a considerable sum on third party goods and services. The Authority's constitution required that prior to any procurement commencing which exceeded £500,000 Cabinet approval must be obtained.

The Authority continued to spend a considerable sum on third party goods and services. The Authority's Constitution required that prior to any procurement commencing which exceeded £500,000 Cabinet approval must be obtained. Once the Authority's budget was approved by full Council on 16 February 2023 the third-party requirements of the Authority became known. The procurement exercised which would commence in the financial year 2023/2024 had been identified and are set out at Appendix 1 to the report. When procuring services, the Authority was obliged to consider how what was being procured might improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the borough and how it might secure that improvement as part of the procurement process. This was what was meant by 'Social Value'.

The Authority had sought Social Value within its procured contracts since the implementation of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012. However, by its adoption of the Procurement and Commercial Strategy the Authority had strengthened how it works with its suppliers in the joint delivery of Social Value. Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) suppliers were already obliged to deliver Social Value so as to minimise the impact they had on the environment and maximise benefits to the local economy. Through its Procurement and Commercial Strategy, the Authority ensured that it aligned itself with the private sector and by doing so ensured the joint delivery of Social Value within the Borough. Following the adoption of the Council Plan for 2021-2025, the Authority updated its Social Value priorities in March 2022 and these priorities were contained within the Authority's Procurement and Commercial Strategy for 2022-2025. A pilot exercise was being undertaken to help develop a process utilising the contract management toolkit as part of the procurement and contract management activity. The Authority's Social Value priorities and subsequent outcomes used to measure Social Value follow the priorities

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within the Our North Tyneside Plan: Thriving, Family Friendly, Secure, Caring and Greener.

Utilising the Social Value principles within the Procurement and Commercial Strategy, the Authority would continue to gain commitments from suppliers which align with the policy priorities of the Mayor and Cabinet. This would include a greener target embedded approach to support the Authority's target to be carbon net-zero by 2030. The Authority's tendering process would be streamlined, and better information would be provided to the market. Where appropriate, lower value tenders would be issued. The Authority was seeing an increase in the number of Small and Medium Enterprise's (SME's) and local suppliers that it procured with. The procurement exercises due to commence in 2023/24 would continue to give SME's and local suppliers the chance to work with the Authority, again enabling and encouraging smaller businesses. Working with the Business Forum and the North East Procurement Organisation (NEPO), bespoke workshops would be developed to support SME's. The principles set out in the Authority's Responsible Procurement Charter would be embedded in the tender requirements.

The relevant service area would develop tender packages and robust specifications to ensure that the Authority was protected in terms of financial and commercial risk. The duration of the contract would be considered to help shape new and emerging markets; lessons learned from any previous contracts would be considered when developing the tender package. Relevant existing frameworks would be explored if appropriate to the contract. Collaborative regional working would be explored if appropriate to the contract. The contract award criteria would be developed considering social value as appropriate.

Consultation prior to commencing a procurement exercise with the relevant Cabinet Members was key as this would ensure that the Authority Priorities were achieved through its contracting arrangements. The Authority's finance team would be engaged to identify any budgetary risks associated with the delivery of the service and any potential mitigations. The Authority's legal team would review the procurement process and the terms and conditions for each procurement to ensure the procurement complied with all UK procurement legislation and the Authority mitigated any commercial risk. Consultation and engagement with the market and any relevant associations would take place to ensure that the offer to the market was attractive and that a market existed to deliver the goods and services. An evaluation team consisting of subject matter experts and the procurement team would evaluate each bid received against the published award criteria and in accordance with UK public procurement legislation. Prior to award of any contract the evaluation result would be provided to the relevant Director to approve the award together with financial assurance that the contract value would remain within existing budgets.

Work was ongoing to develop a process utilising the contract management toolkit as part of the procurement and contract management activity. The Authority's Social Value priorities and subsequent outcomes used to measure social value follow the priorities within Our North Tyneside Plan: Thriving, Family Friendly, Secure, Caring and Greener. Social Value requirements had been an important aspect of the procurement process since the implementation of The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, and this had directly resulted in benefits for communities across the borough. It had proven a challenging task however, to ensure that the commitments made through the procurement



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process were upheld throughout the contract period. Work is currently being undertaken to ensure that Social Value is monitored and measured effectively through the Authority's contract management toolkit. The Authority's contracted suppliers would each have their own corporate social responsibility approaches; through contract management the Authority would work with them to help shape their social value objectives towards policy priorities of the Mayor and Cabinet.

Social Value gained for the Borough would be monitored and reported to Cabinet as a minimum on an annual basis. Appendix 2 of the report provided Cabinet with a Social Value Update for the period April 2022 to March 2023. Social Value commitments made by contractors and suppliers had been closely reviewed this year. Initially, historic Social Value offers were discussed with the Authority's suppliers and contractors, specifically where due to the pandemic, Social Value commitments had been delayed or cancelled. The Procurement/Commercial Team worked closely with both North Tyneside VODA and the North Tyneside Learning Trust to identify voluntary groups, schools and local organisations who could benefit as a result from the supply chain social value commitments.

Since March 2022, the updated Social Value Matrix had been piloted in 35 procurement projects across all service areas to ensure the measures were appropriate and enabled the Authority to engage with its supply chain and review feedback on the Authority's procurement process. Each of these procurement projects required at least one greener commitment to be made. The commitments made by the successful contractors were monitored across the contract period through a contract management toolkit. Recently Social Value presentations had been held with suppliers and potential suppliers which had encouraged suppliers to gain further knowledge of Social Value and to identify specific local organisations that they could help whilst potentially improving their Social Value responses when applying for tenders locally and nationwide. The Procurement / Commercial Team would continue to engage with the Authority's Contractors and Suppliers during the 2023/2024 financial year.

Cabinet considered the following decision options: to accept the recommendations set out in paragraph 1.2 of the report, or alternatively, to not approve the recommendations and to consider individual reports for each package of works and/or services. This may delay implementation of essential services and works being carried out.

**Resolved** that (1) the procurement of the goods and services as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;  
(2) the relevant Director in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member, Director of Resources and the Head of Law, be authorised to commence the procurements identified and award contracts to those bidders who submit the most advantageous tenders in accordance with UK public procurement legislation; and  
(3) the Social Value Update for the period April 2022 to March 2023 at Appendix 2 to the report be noted; and social value to be monitored and reported to Cabinet as a minimum on an annual basis.

(Reason for decision: The Authority has a duty to obtain value for money. Tendering the opportunities identified in the report will meet the priorities contained within the Procurement Strategy and the Our North Tyneside Plan.)

## **CAB111/23 Our North Tyneside Plan 2021-2025 Performance Report**

Cabinet received an update report on progress in delivering the objectives of the refreshed Our North Tyneside Plan 2021-2025 as set out in the 'Our North Tyneside Performance Report' at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Council Plan was refreshed in 2021 following the Mayoral Election on 6 May to reflect the policy priorities of the incoming administration. Following consultation with residents and key stakeholders, Full Council agreed the refreshed Our North Tyneside Plan 2021-2025 on 23 September 2021. The priorities and objectives in the refreshed Our North Tyneside Plan Performance built on the work carried over the last 9 years and addressed the key challenges to build a better North Tyneside. The report had been developed to monitor progress against the new priorities and objectives set out in the Council Plan.

This report when read in conjunction with Appendix 1 provided an overview of performance since the start of the plan and identified the agreed activities that the Authority would pursue in the future. In addition, it provided comparator information, such as national or regional performance, as there were several issues where North Tyneside was facing similar challenges as other parts of the country.

Some of the highlights of the Our North Tyneside Plan Performance Report were:-

- Delivery of the Affordable Homes Programme was on track and a 10-year Delivery Plan was agreed by Cabinet in February 2022. The number of long-term vacant dwellings was currently at its lowest level in seven years.
- In August 2022, Cabinet approved the Carbon Net-Zero 2030 Action Plan including over 150 actions to decarbonise the Authority's operations and the Borough as a whole.
- £8m funding had been secured from the Green Homes Grant Local Delivery Scheme to install low carbon heating, energy efficiency measures and renewable energy systems in homes with low-household incomes. To date over 800 measures had been installed in 700 homes so far.
- Regeneration work was well underway in North Shields including public realm improvements, a new integrated transport hub, and new town square. Planning permission had been granted for new family homes at the former Unicorn House Site and works were due to commence later in 2023. £1.7m in grant funding had been secured from the North of Tyne Combined (NTCA) to develop a Cultural and Creative Zone and work had commenced on the new Riverside Embankment Walkway to connect the town centre and Fish Quay. Planning permission for a new Ferry Landing on Western Quay was granted in December 2022. However, the Levelling Up Fund bid by NEXUS for that project was unsuccessful and alternative funding solutions were now being pursued. £19.13m of grant funding had been secured from Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) to fund the capital works at the transport hub, embankment walkway and gateways an additional £1.85m had been secured from DLUHC to fund the new town square.

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- In Whitley Bay, improvement works to the Northern Promenade were completed and £4.5m funding from the Active Travel Fund had been secured to provide a continuous segregated walking and cycling route between St Mary's Lighthouse and Tynemouth. In summer 2023, Master Planning activity would commence for Whitley Bay Town Centre.
- In Wallsend, engagement on the draft Masterplan was underway and a final version will be presented to Cabinet for approval in May 2023. £499,000 Museum Estate and Development Fund (MEND) funding had been secured for a range of improvements at Segedunum Roman Fort and Museum. An expression of interest had been submitted to the National Heritage Lottery Fund to secure £5m of funding for developments at Segedunum Roman Fort and Museum and a decision was expected in June 2023. The Round 2 Levelling Up bid to deliver public realm improvements along the High Street together with transport connections and enhancements to Segedunum was unsuccessful, however, there remained a final submission round in Autumn 2023 for which a revised bid would be submitted. Funding had been secured from the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) to fund project activity in and around Wallsend High Street including £1.28m capital grant for public realm and active travel work and £66,000 grant for revenue activity including events which would help drive footfall, shop front grants, business support and resource to be based within the town centre to support businesses to start-up and grow.
- In the North West of the borough, £75,000 of feasibility funding had been secured from NTCA for Northumberland Line Economic Corridor priorities. This included funding to re-design, scope and map a visitor/ heritage trail using the existing waggonways and heritage assets. Killingworth Lake concept plans had been developed and officers were now working to identify eligible funding streams to progress the proposals. Work was continuing with partners to secure investment and encourage more and better jobs to be delivered at Indigo Park.
- Beaches and warden managed parks in the borough continue to be recognised nationally for their high standards. Three beaches had retained their Blue Flags and Seaside Awards and this year eight parks were awarded Green Flag Awards, including Chirton and Redburn Dene Parks who secured this for the first time in 2022.
- In response to residents feeling increasingly concerned about community safety issues, a multi-agency North Tyneside Anti-Social Behaviour Task Force had been established to develop and deliver a shared plan to tackle anti-social behaviour as a partnership making a difference for residents, communities, visitors and businesses. The trend of anti-social behaviour reported to Northumbria Police was decreasing and the rate per population is now 19.3 per 1,000 residents, which was the lowest level in four years in North Tyneside.
- Support was delivered to low-income households across the borough through the Council Tax Support Scheme and Hardship Support Scheme. As well as a number of initiatives including the Holiday Activities and Food Programme, Household Support Fund and Poverty Intervention Fund to address health and socio-economic inequalities.

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- The education offer in the borough was strong compared to national and regional comparators, however an area of focus remained to close the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils, which had widened in North Tyneside, as it had regionally and nationally, following the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Authority was continuing to meet the social care needs of its residents and had seen an increase in demand for social care. Many residents were presenting with more complex needs as a legacy of Covid restrictions. The Authority's Carepoint Team was integrated with the NHS and had staff based at all local acute hospitals. This team had been key in ensuring that our hospitals had maintained bed availability over the winter and that A&E services had not been overwhelmed. The Authority's Reablement Service continued to be one of the highest performing in the country supporting its residents to regain skills and the confidence to return home after a stay in hospital.

**Resolved** that the progress made to deliver the updated objectives of the Our North Tyneside Plan 2021-2025, be noted.

### **CAB113/23 Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy and Corporate Equality Objectives Review**

Cabinet received a report seeking approval for the Authority's refreshed Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy; and Corporate Equality Objectives for the period April 2023 to March 2025.

The Authority's Equality and Diversity Policy sets out how North Tyneside Council seeks to ensure compliance with the 2010 Equality Act and Public Sector Equality Duty and achieve the Authority's aim that North Tyneside was a place where people felt safe and no one experienced discrimination or avoidable disadvantage because of their protected characteristics, background or personal circumstances.

The Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy and Corporate Equality Objectives Review sets out its commitment to achieving the main aim of the Act which was to eliminate discrimination and other prohibited conduct and to demonstrate how the Authority, when discharging its functions, would have due regard to the public sector equality duty and the need to: Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act; Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic under the Act and those who do not share such a characteristic; and Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

A protected characteristic under the Act was any of the following: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Policy was originally agreed in 2017 and in line with good practice was reviewed every two years in consultation with internal and external groups and individuals. As a review of the Policy was due, the opportunity was also taken to review the Corporate Equality Objectives. These objectives enabled the Authority to identify and publish the priority issues (in terms of policy making, service delivery and employment) is seeking to address in order to achieve the aims of the Act.

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This report sets out the findings from the public consultation on the draft policy and the review of the Authority's Corporate Equality Objectives and actions. Consultation on the Policy ran from 5 January until 21 February 2023. Details of the participating external groups were set out in section 1.5.2 of the report. Engagement within the Authority was undertaken with the Authority's four staff equality networks, the Cabinet Member for Inclusion, Employment and Skills, Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Corporate Equality Group (CEG), trades unions and employees who were all invited to share their views.

A variety of approaches were used to gather views in ways most appropriate to each stakeholder group. As a result of the Authority listening to the feedback from the consultation, which overall was very positive and constructive. As a result of listening to its Appendix 3 provided a summary of the responses received during the consultation and showed how they had informed changes to the wording of the policy as a result of the Authority listening to its residents.

In accordance with the requirements of the specific duties placed on the Authority under the Act the Authority must:

'prepare and publish one or more objectives that it thinks it needs to achieve to further any of the aims of the general equality duty.... at least every four years'.

The Authority's current Corporate Equality Objectives were agreed by Cabinet in February 2022. Given the good progress made against the key actions that underpinned each objective through delivery of the Authority's Embedding Equality Programme it was timely to undertake a review of the objectives in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Inclusion, Employment and Skills, SLT and Corporate Equality Group.

The proposed objectives for 2023-25 were:

- Improve North Tyneside Council's Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) process.
- Be a good employer and promote an inclusive workforce that feels valued.
- Ensure staff and elected members are kept informed about the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Improve the collection and use of both internal and external equality data.
- Ensure our buildings, services and communications are accessible.
- Improve engagement with North Tyneside's diverse communities.

Appendix 2 to the report compared the current objectives and those proposed for 2023-25, together with the outcomes identified for each objective. Delivery of the objectives, through the Organisational Business Plan (including Directorate Plans) and Embedding Equality Programme will enable implementation of the Policy. Performance would be reported on an annual basis to Cabinet through the Annual Equality and Diversity Review.

Authority's website, and promoted widely.

Delivery of the objectives, through the Organisational Business Plan (including Directorate Plans) and Embedding Equality Programme would enable implementation of the Policy. Performance would be reported on an annual basis to Cabinet through the Annual Equality and Diversity Review.

Both the Policy and the Annual Equality and Diversity Review would be published on the Authority's website, and promoted widely.

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Cabinet considered the following decision options.

Option 1: To approve the proposed Equality and Diversity Policy, and to the Corporate Equality Objectives.

Option 2: To approve the proposed Equality and Diversity Policy, but not to the Corporate Equality Objectives.

Option 3: To approve the Corporate Equality Objectives, but not to the Equality and Diversity Policy.

Option 4: Not to approve the Equality and Diversity Policy or Corporate Equality Objectives.

Option 5: To request changes to the Equality and Diversity Policy or Corporate Equality Objectives, prior to further consideration by Cabinet.

**Resolved** that (1) the Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy for the Authority at Appendix 1 to the report, be noted; and  
(2) the Corporate Equality Objectives for the Authority for the period April 2023 to March 2025, as set out in paragraph 1.5.3 of the report and detailed in Appendix 2, be agreed.

(Reasons for decision: The Authority's approach to equality and diversity underpins all of its decision-making including key plans and policies. Approval of the recommended option will ensure that the Authority has a current Equality and Diversity Policy that reflects both current legislation and the context within which the Authority is operating.)

The proposed Corporate Equality Objectives will enable implementation of the Equality and Diversity Policy and ensure compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.)

### **CAB114/23 Building a Better North Tyneside: The 2023-2028 Housing Strategy and Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028**

Cabinet received a report seeking approval for the Authority's refreshed North Tyneside Housing Strategy 2023-2028, and North Tyneside Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028.

The Housing Strategy builds on the success of the Authority's previous Housing Strategy for 2017-2021 'A Great Place to Live'. It was informed by current and emerging national and local policies; it considers the Authority's Equally Well Strategy, and the emerging policy aims from the most recent Housing White Paper. It also references evidence of housing need and demand from the 2021 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). The Authority's vision to 'Build a Better North Tyneside' and the 5 delivery themes were developed following extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, partners, and residents. Within each theme, a set of actions were identified, and a detailed action plan would be developed and reviewed by Cabinet and the Housing Sub-Committee on an annual basis. Details of the five delivery themes were set out in the report:

- Deliver more Affordable Homes and Support Regeneration Plans
- Prevent Homelessness and Improve our Specialist Housing Offer

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- Improve the Private Rented Sector and Tackle Derelict Properties
- Lead the Way – Greener Homes to Support Carbon Zero by 2030
- Support our Tenants and Residents and Improve Our Communities

The North Tyneside Homelessness Act 2002 placed a statutory duty on all local housing authorities to carry out a homelessness review for their area. This should be done in consultation with local partners and stakeholders, with the published homelessness strategy based on the results of that review and carried out at least every five years. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 introduced new legal duties for housing authorities focusing on the prevention and relief of homelessness, regardless of priority status.

The Authority recognised that it had a moral duty to tackle homelessness as it can have a detrimental effect on health, well-being, and community cohesion, as well as potentially increasing service costs for the Authority. Evidence demonstrates that investment in local homeless prevention services reduces the cost of mainstream homelessness services, which can cut across housing, health, criminal justice, and community safety.

The Authority's new strategic priorities had been identified following engagement and consultation with its Homelessness Forum and a wide range of stakeholders, Elected Members, officers, and third sector organisations who supported people when they experienced a 'housing crisis'. Following a review of its achievements, outcomes and future challenges that had been identified throughout the lifespan of the previous strategy, the refreshed strategy had been produced to align with recent legislative changes.

The Homelessness Prevention and Rough sleeping Strategy 2023-28 continued the vision to support the ambition to 'Build a Better North Tyneside' through three key themes:

**End Rough Sleeping:** This priority focused on rough sleeping in North Tyneside, with the aim being no-one was bedded down outdoors. The Authority would continue to improve its interventions to prevent rough sleeping in the first instance wherever possible. The last rough sleeper count in November 2022 identified one rough sleeper in the Borough. The Authority's offer included specialist support, which was available to the most vulnerable via a support officer. There were 173 referrals resulting in seven rough sleepers recorded in 2021/22. The Authority would continue to identify where rough sleeping is occurring, and review and revise its response accordingly. The accommodation offer for rough sleepers had been enhanced with the introduction of five properties through the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP). The Authority would consider any interim accommodation offers to achieve its aim of no rough sleeping in the Borough.

**Our Accommodation Offer:** This priority focused on temporary, supported, and permanent housing solutions to continue to prevent rough sleeping and support people facing homelessness. There had been an increase in the number of people accessing temporary accommodation since 2020. The Authority was committed to continuing to improve its offer and had expanded its current accommodation pathways to include a 'Somewhere Safe to Stay' service, the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme and the 'Sit-Up Service' to provide support to people who are rough sleeping.

**Collaborative Partnerships:** The Authority would continue to tackle homelessness within the Borough by strengthening its existing relationships with partner agencies and all organisations that contribute to early intervention to prevent homelessness within the

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Borough. This would include working regionally with other local authorities and exploring joint funding initiatives to further prevent homelessness. The Authority would also continue to work in collaboration with a wide range of partners to effectively communicate information to aid those in need and provide signposting to other organisations who can provide help.

The Authority would continue to work closely with its partners to develop an annual delivery plan that would be formed from the key actions within this Strategy. The plan would be reviewed and revised each year to ensure any legislative changes were included. The North Tyneside Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Partnership would be responsible for monitoring delivery with annual updates on the Authority's performance that would be shared with the Housing Sub-Committee and Cabinet.

A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) was a structured, solution-focused and action orientated approach to maximising the positive and minimising the negative health impacts of new initiatives. It aimed to identify and where feasible strengthen, the ways in which the proposal can promote and enhance health.

The Housing and Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping strategies provide high level strategic frameworks to 'Build a Better North Tyneside'. The impact of housing and homelessness on health were well established and the strategic actions would undoubtedly provide the opportunities for better health outcomes across the borough. A HIA was undertaken in consultation with Public Health colleagues, and this identified two actions that would be taken forward onto the scoping phase. The two key areas for further assessment were - Building 5,000 affordable homes and Improving the private rented sector and tackling derelict properties.

Further work would be undertaken to assess these areas in detail, specify the health impact to be assessed and the causal associations and develop a workplan to ensure delivery and identify the possible evidence required to help inform the recommendations and future action plans for these North Tyneside strategies.

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

**Resolved** that (1) the North Tyneside Housing Strategy 2023-2028 at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved; and

(2) the North Tyneside Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028 at Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.

(Reason for decision: This option will directly support the delivery of the Our North Tyneside Council Plan by providing a clear, strategic direction for housing and homelessness prevention activity within the borough for the next 5 years along with fulfilling our statutory duties around homelessness).

### **CAB115/23 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Monday 22 May 2023 at 6.00pm.



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**Minutes published on Thursday, 31 March 2023.**

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 Thursday 6 April 2023.

Monday, 27 March 2023