

CABINET MEETING – 12 OCTOBER 2023
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

MINUTES, PART I

Author(s):

Assistant Director of Law and Governance

Purpose of Report:

Presents the minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2023, Part I.

Action Required:

To confirm the minutes as a correct record.

Meeting of the **CABINET** held in **CITY HALL (COUNCIL CHAMBER)** on **THURSDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2023** at **10.00am**

Present: -

Councillor G Miller in the Chair

Councillors Chequer, Johnston, Price, Rowntree, Stewart and Williams.

Also present: -

Councillors F Miller and A Smith and Walker – Deputy Cabinet Members
Councillor Edgeworth

Part I

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 2 August 2023, Part I (copy circulated) were submitted.

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 2 August 2023, Part I, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest

The following declarations were made: -

| | |
|---|--|
| Agenda Item 6 – Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Review 2022-2023: Challenges of Adult Social Care in Sunderland | Councillor Williams declared an interest as Chair of Sunderland Care and Support Limited, a provider of adult social care. |
|---|--|

| | |
|--|--|
| Agenda Item 9 – Grant Funding for the Delivery of an agreed City Centre Events Programme for 2023/2024 | Councillors G Miller and Rowntree declared interests as Board Members of Sunderland Business Investment District. They indicated that they would withdraw from the meeting during consideration of the report. |
|--|--|

| | |
|--|---|
| Agenda Item 15 – Approval of the Funding, Delivery and Letting Arrangements for the New Sunderland Eye Infirmary on Riverside Sunderland | Councillors G Miller and Rowntree declared interests as Board Members of Siglion LLP. |
|--|---|

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Scott and P Walker.

Response from Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee Capital Programme First Review 2023/2024 (including Treasury Management)

The Assistant Director of Law and Governance submitted a report advising the Cabinet of the comments of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on a report of the Director of Finance detailing the outcome of the Capital Programme First Review 2023/2024 (including Treasury Management)

Councillor Stewart reported that the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee had received the report of the Director of Finance at its meeting held on 13 September 2023 and he was pleased to report that the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee accepted the contents of the Capital Programme first review including information on performance of the treasury management strategy and prudential indicators. The Committee were also satisfied with the detailed variations to the capital programme.

With no further comments from the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee, it was: -

2. RESOLVED that the comments of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee be received.

Response from Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee First Revenue Budget Review 2023/2024

The Assistant Director of Law and Governance submitted a report advising the Cabinet of the comments of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on a report of the Director of Finance detailing the outcome of the First Revenue Budget Review 2023/2024.

Councillor Stewart reported that the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee had received the report of the Director of Finance at its meeting on 13 September 2023 and he was pleased to report that the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee accepted the contents of the report including the various budget positions, contingency transfers and collection fund updates.

The Committee also thanked Members and Officers for the preparation and continued monitoring of the Council's revenue budget position.

With no further comments from the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee, it was: -

3. RESOLVED that the comments of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee be received.

Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Review 2022:2023: Challenges of Adult Social Care in Sunderland

The Assistant Director of Law and Governance submitted a report presenting the findings of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee's working group around the challenges facing adult social care in Sunderland.

Councillor Chequer advised that the commissioning and delivery of Adult Social Care services was a key responsibility for the Council and provided a number of services which allowed people to live independently and, importantly, the way they wanted to. The Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee had established a working group to look at some of the key challenges facing this sector including the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the report outlined their findings and recommendations.

The report highlighted a number of challenges facing adult social care including recruitment and retention, accessing social care, technological advancements and funding to mention a few.

There were a number of positive aspects to social care provision that came through strongly in the report. The first was around the dedication and commitment of the staff which was seen first-hand by Members during their investigations. The second was the standard of social care facilities across Sunderland, which impressed Members on the various visits that were undertaken.

Councillor Chequer highlighted that the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee working group reflected the challenges facing the sector. These included:

- Engaging with regional colleagues to learn from their experiences and raise the profile of social care in Sunderland;
- That stronger links be made with social care at the neighbourhood level, through the refreshed area arrangements, and Members be helped to champion the sector in their local communities;
- Looking at establishing a new front door to adult services to improve accessibility and the provision of information and advice around social care;
- That the Council should continue to embrace assistive technologies to support people to live for longer in their own homes.

Councillor Chequer commented that this was an extremely useful and worthwhile piece of work from the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, which highlighted the value and importance of adult social care. She thanked the committee for their time and effort in undertaking this piece of work, and the resulting recommendations.

4. **RESOLVED** that the recommendations of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee's working group into the challenges facing adult social care in Sunderland be accepted.

Performance Report Quarter 4 of 2022/2023

The Chief Executive submitted a report providing performance information in relation to Quarter 4 of 2022/2023.

Councillor Stewart advised that the report set out the progress made by the Council in delivering the City Plan, during the final Quarter of 2022/23. The report was set out under the three themes of the City Plan – Dynamic Smart City, Healthy Smart City and Vibrant Smart City.

Performance data was also provided for the set of ‘council’ or ‘organisational health’ indicators against which progress was monitored.

Having considered the report it was: -

5. RESOLVED that the performance information in relation to Quarter 4 of 2022/2023 be considered and accepted.

Feed and Food Law Service Plan 2023-2026

The Executive Director of City Development submitted a report informing the Cabinet of the Feed and Food Law Service Plan for 2023-2026.

Councillor Rowntree reported that the Council had a statutory obligation as the ‘Competent Food Authority’ to undertake food and feed enforcement in accordance with the Food Safety Act 1990. This activity was overseen by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) who required that local authorities adopted and published a service plan.

The plan set out how Sunderland City Council would provide an effective food law enforcement service to safeguard public safety in relation to food, drink and feeding stuffs produced, prepared or sold within the City. It was highlighted that to do this a programme of proactive and reactive interventions to feed and food businesses were carried out each year by Environmental Health Officers.

The pandemic had impacted significantly on the hospitality industry with long closures and restricted operation and as a result, the delivery of food inspections nationally was significantly affected. As a result, the FSA granted a total suspension of activities and a subsequent recovery plan to allow local authorities a period to focus activity on higher risk premises. This recovery plan, following Covid, ended in March 2023.

Councillor Rowntree explained that following the recovery plan a three-year service plan had been developed in line with the FSA’s Framework Agreement. It set out how Food Safety Enforcement would be undertaken, using a risk-based approach, in line with relevant Codes of Practice. The plan would be published and updated annually with statistical information on performance.

Upon consideration of the report, it was: -

6. RESOLVED that: -

- (i) the Cabinet receive the 2023-2026 Feed and Food Law Service Plan and refer it to the Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee for their consideration;
- (ii) the Executive Director of City Development be authorised, in consultation with the Clean, Green City Portfolio Holder, to make any amendments to the plan which were considered appropriate in the light of the comments from the Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee, and prior to the plan being referred to Council for approval; and
- (iii) ask that Council delegate authority to the Executive Director of City Development, in consultation with the Clean, Green City Portfolio Holder, to update the plan during its three-year term, on the basis referred to at paragraph 4.6 of the report.

Grant Funding for the Delivery of an agreed City Centre Events Programme for 2023/2024

Councillor Stewart took the Chair for this agenda item.

The Executive Director of City Development submitted a report seeking approval for grant funding to be awarded to Sunderland Business Investment District (the "BID"), on a matched funding basis for the delivery of a programme of City Centre events designed to drive footfall, city profile, economic impact and investment.

Councillor Price reported that the BID worked in close partnership with the Council, businesses and other partners with a vision to create a vibrant city centre with opportunities for everyone to participate in cultural events and activities to encourage residents to feel proud of the city and the place where they lived.

Working together to deliver events ensured a wider range of high-quality activity, distinctly 'Sunderland' events and allowed alternative funding opportunities to help to grow the city events programme. This was the second year that this joint arrangement had been proposed with Cabinet approval in July 2022 for £70,000 being match funded by the BID. Last year, the subsequent joint events programme had been estimated to bring in an additional 75,000 visitors to the City with an economic impact valued at £2.9m.

Subject to approval of this proposal, the future City Events programme would include a Food Festival, Summer Events, Halloween and Christmas Programmes in addition to animating the City during Stadium Concert and Sporting Events.

7. RESOLVED that the Executive Director of City Development be authorised to award a grant of a maximum sum of £0.1m to the BID for a programme of City Centre events to be agreed in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Vibrant City and the Director of Finance.

Construction Works for Three Major Flood Alleviation Schemes

The Executive Director of City Development submitted a report seeking approval to procure a contractor through the NEPO Framework for the construction works for three major flooding schemes at Caroline Street, Pallion and Deptford Terrace.

Councillor Johnston advised that the scheme consisted of highway drainage improvements at Caroline Street (Hetton), Pallion and Deptford Terrace. The works would protect 182 properties from internal flooding and would also bring some immediate relief to those residents affected by extreme weather conditions.

The estimated cost of the construction works was £3.625m which was fully funded through the Environment Agency's Grant Aid Funding. Cost estimates were based on similar schemes with 30% contingencies included for any unforeseen circumstances.

Councillor Johnston stated that if Cabinet agreed the proposal, the next steps would be to appoint a contractor off the framework with works commencing around December 2023 for an estimated 46-week period.

Councillor Edgeworth commented that Councillors Haswell and G Smith welcomed the work of the team on this in Pallion and that the scheme would be welcomed by residents; it was hoped that the works would move forward quickly.

Councillor Williams also welcomed the scheme and was pleased to see that it was fully funded by the Environment Agency, however she urged officers to make every available effort to pull in more funding for future works.

8. RESOLVED that: -

- (i) the Executive Director of City Development be authorised, in consultation with the Dynamic City Portfolio Holder and Director Finance to procure and appoint a contractor/contractors for the required construction works for three Major Flooding Schemes; and
- (ii) it be agreed that the funding for the full scheme be included within the Council's Capital Programme and the resultant variation to the Capital Programme be approved.

Sunderland Development Plan

The Executive Director of City Development submitted a report updating the Cabinet on the preparation of the Sunderland Development Plan and seeking approval to consider future options for plan preparation through the forthcoming Core Strategy and Development Plan (CSDP) Review.

Councillor Johnston stated that the Development Plan was at the heart of the planning system and national policy required Plans to be kept up-to-date and reviewed at least every five years.

The Development Plan for Sunderland was currently being prepared in three parts, based on the approach which was agreed in 2015. The first two parts of the Development Plan had been adopted (the Core Strategy and Development Plan and the International Advanced Manufacturing Park Area Action Plan (IAMP AAP)). The final part of the development plan to be prepared under the current approach was the Allocations and Designations Plan (A&D Plan).

It was highlighted that a number of factors had resulted in the recommendation to Cabinet for the Council to adopt a more integrated approach going forward. Work on the evidence base for the draft Allocations and Designations Plan had commenced in early 2020, culminating in an early draft of the Plan (Regulation 18) being published for consultation between December 2020 and February 2021. However, due to limited resources and competing priorities, it had not been possible to progress the preparation of the Allocations and Designations Plan to the original timetable which had been proposed. As a result, some of the evidence on which the Allocations and Designations Plan was based had already become out-of-date - or would do so prior to an Examination in Public taking place - and would therefore need to be updated.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) required local planning authorities to review the policies within their adopted Development Plan at least every five years. The Council would therefore be required to review the policies of the adopted Core Strategy by the end of 2024. The Government had also recently consulted on substantive changes to national policy which would affect the Development Plan making process.

It was considered to be a more effective use of available resources to consider future options for plan preparation on a more integrated basis through the forthcoming CSDP Review. This would also allow for the new Development Plan to be prepared in accordance with the proposed changes to national policy.

Councillor Johnston advised that it was proposed that the IAMP AAP would remain a separate standalone Development Plan, as this covered development in two local planning authorities.

The Council was required to publish a Local Development Scheme setting out how the Development Plan would be prepared and provide a timetable for its preparation. It was the intention that the Local Development Scheme would be updated as soon as possible to establish and publish the new timetable for Plan preparation.

Councillor F Miller acknowledged the importance of IAMP but emphasised the need for housing development and queried how this process would impact on housing. The Executive Director of City Development commented that this was a reason for reviewing the Plan and that the growth of the city was a driver for pushing on with the revised Plan.

The Cabinet therefore: -

9. RESOLVED that: -

- (i) the integrated approach to Development Plan preparation set out within the report be approved, and therefore the draft Allocations and Designations Plan and associated evidence base be revoked; and
- (ii) the Executive Director of City Development be authorised to revise, update and publish the Local Development Scheme as necessary, in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Dynamic City.

Moving Traffic Enforcement and Parking Services Review

The Executive Director of City Development submitted a report seeking approval for the Council to implement a number of changes to parking charges as a result of a service review in accordance with the parking strategy.

Councillor Johnston advised that parking charges helped to reduce congestion and supported the shift towards sustainable and active travel. This contributed to the Council's low carbon and net zero objectives to deliver a healthy, dynamic and vibrant smart city.

The Council extended the Free After Three parking offer during 2021 to provide short-term support to businesses and social distancing during the pandemic. It was proposed to resume parking charges at St. Mary's, Sunnyside and Broughton Street car parks as well as city centre on-street pay and display locations. This would bring charging periods broadly in line with private operators in the city centre.

It was proposed to retain the Free After Three scheme at five car parks on the periphery of the city centre. These parks were within a 10-minute walking distance of the core centre and provided 260 parking spaces. This would provide a balanced approach to sustainable travel objectives whilst continuing to support the city centre economy.

Councillor Johnston highlighted that parking charges had not been reviewed since 2018 and it was proposed to increase all locations by 10p per hour to encourage greater take up of active travel and public transport.

It was also proposed to introduce a £3 charge on Sundays and Bank holidays at all city centre surface car parks. The £3 charge would broadly align against existing public transport costs to bring a balanced approach. It was further proposed to extend on street parking charges from Monday to Saturday to all days. This would discourage excessive parking in the core city centre on a Sunday.

Cabinet was recommended to agree the recommendations in this report and to allow for a period of transition with the proposals being introduced from January 2024.

Councillor Johnston reminded Members that Cabinet had approved the adoption of Moving Traffic Enforcement powers at the November 2021 meeting. Four sites had been identified and a six-week consultation exercise was currently being undertaken in line with statutory requirements. Officers would apply for powers during October 2023 as part of the Department for Transport Tranche 3 applications.

Enforcement would commence around April 2024 with a six month “warning notice” period for drivers contravening the restrictions to bring greater awareness. Penalty charges would be £70 with a 50% discount if paid within 21 days. Drivers would have the opportunity to appeal to both the Council and Traffic Penalty Tribunal in line with parking and bus lane appeals processes.

Members would be updated with progress on the application and adoption of the enforcement powers.

Councillor Edgeworth referred to the Moving Traffic Enforcement powers and commented that local ward members and residents were concerned that the implementation of these was quite some time away and the situation at the Mayfair Building on Durham Road needed to be addressed sooner rather than later.

Councillor Edgeworth also asked Cabinet to think again regarding parking charges; he wanted the city centre to grow and thrive but residents were saying that it was easier to drive to Washington and the MetroCentre or to get a bus into Newcastle than to come into Sunderland. He suggested that the proposals should be paused and consultation carried out with individual businesses and residents.

Having fully considered the report it was: -

10. RESOLVED that the Executive Director of City Development be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Dynamic City, to implement the review of parking charges, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report, in accordance with the parking strategy.

Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006

At the instance of the Chair, it was: -

11. RESOLVED that in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 the public be excluded during consideration of the remaining business as it was considered to involve a likely disclosure of exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraph 3). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

(Signed) G MILLER
Chair

Note: -

The above minutes comprise only those relating to items during which the meeting was open to the public.

Additional minutes in respect of other items are included in Part II.