

At a Meeting of the **CABINET** held in the **CIVIC CENTRE (COUNCIL CHAMBER)** on **TUESDAY 15 JUNE 2021** at **10.00 a.m.**

Present:-

Councillor G. Miller in the Chair

Councillors Rowntree, Chequer, Farthing, Johnson and Williams

Part I

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 23 March 2021, Part I (copy circulated) were submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 23 March 2021, Part I, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest

The following Councillor declared the interest detailed and withdrew from the meeting during consideration of the report:-

Item 11 – Housing Innovation & Construction Skills Academy – Progress Update

Councillor Farthing as the Council appointed representative on the Education Partnership North East (EPNE) (which is the group brand for Sunderland College, Northumberland College and Hartlepool Sixth Form College).

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Stewart and Walker.

Capital Programme Outturn 2020/2021 (including Treasury Management)

The Executive Director of Corporate Services submitted a report (copy circulated) on:-

- (i) the Capital Programme outturn for 2020/2021; and
- (ii) an update on the Treasury Management Borrowing and Investment Strategy outturn position for 2020/2021.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chair was pleased to note that, despite the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, over £96million had been invested in the city's priorities during the last year. He explained that much of this investment had been aimed at creating the conditions for growth in the city's economy. The attention of Cabinet Members was drawn to the investment in the infrastructure of the city which included:

- the construction of the SSTC3 link road from the Northern Spire to the city centre which was due to be opened to traffic later this year;
- continuing strategic acquisitions and developments to support the regeneration of the high street;
- progressing the development of Riverside Sunderland;
- making significant improvements to the highways network across the city including progress on new and improved roads to support the South Sunderland Growth Area,
- commencing the investment on the fibre and 5G network infrastructure rollout across the city;
- continuing the investment in the Enterprise Zone at the Port of Sunderland; and
- providing business improvement grants to support businesses.

The Chair highlighted the commitment to investment in the wellbeing of the residents of the City, helping them to remain in their own homes for as long as possible through the provision of disabled facilities grants. He highlighted the progress of the 5-year Housing Delivery Plan which would provide more affordable housing and bring homes into use.

The attention of Cabinet Members was drawn to the continued investment in Education and Skills through the schools' infrastructure programme of improvements, including completion of the new Harry Watts Academy and progress on the new Willow Wood Primary School due to be open to pupils in September 2021.

Cabinet Members noted that the report referred to variations in the 2020/2021 programme, including the re-profiling of expenditure and associated funding into 2021/2022 and beyond. The Chair explained this had been necessary due to external factors outside of the Council's control, the timing of projects being reviewed to ensure best value to the Council or to minimise the disruption arising from any works.

Turning to the Treasury Management aspects of the report, there had been challenges during the year due to the impact of Covid-19 on the economy and subsequently the returns available in the investment market. The Chair reported that borrowing rates from the Public Works Loan Board had fluctuated throughout the year but remained at historically low interest rate levels. He highlighted that the Council had sought to maximise the returns available and had achieved above the benchmark rate, whilst still adhering to the prudent policy agreed by the Council.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the inclusion of additional schemes or variations to existing schemes for 2020/2021 detailed at Appendix A, as a variation to the Capital Programme be noted;
- (ii) the overall Capital outturn position for 2020/2021 be noted; and
- (iii) the Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators outturn position for 2020/2021 be noted.

Revenue Budget Outturn 2020/2021

The Executive Director of Corporate Services submitted a report (copy circulated) detailing of the outcome of the Revenue Budget Outturn for 2020/2021.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chair was pleased to report a positive outturn position, despite the ongoing challenges to many services caused by the pandemic and the continued increasing demand and complexity within Social Care. He acknowledged that the impact of the pandemic had been huge, and commented on the significant amount of support that had been delivered by the Council to the City's residents and businesses during the 2020/2021 financial year. The Chair added that this support was very much ongoing into the current financial year, however the future impact and funding of cost pressures and income losses associated with the pandemic continued to be uncertain.

The attention of Cabinet Members was drawn to Appendix A of the report which related to the main areas of Portfolio variations. As reported during the year, the main pressures related to both Adults and Children's social care. A combination of responding to the pandemic to provide the support required and increasing demand and complexity continued to put pressure on social care budgets. Primarily due to the impact of the pandemic, the budgets of other front-line services of the council had also been under pressure during the year namely, waste disposal, bereavement services and homelessness services alongside significant shortfalls in income from parking, property rents and a number of other fee earning services. Overall, Directorate overspends amounted to £15.075 million, although this had been funded through Covid-19 support grant funding received from government during the year.

The Chair reported that contingency underspends, together with debt management savings arrangements and one-off grant income, had enabled a balanced outturn position. He advised that a specific resource of £19.615million had been earmarked to support a number of high priorities aligned to Covid-19 recovery activity within the city, which included:

- £2.000m to provide family and preventative support to address the challenges of recovering from the pandemic;
- £3.500m to deliver a range of street scene and open space projects, as well as a further £480,000 for environmental services staffing to keep the city clean;
- £4.100m to deliver the Smart Cities ambitions and to continue to tackle the digital divide;
- £1.700m to be provided to Together for Children to deliver a range of Covid-19 recovery activities; and a
- £1.200m funding commitment to support the Council's ambition to deliver Triathlon events in the city over a number of years in conjunction with British Triathlon.

Turning to the final outturn position, there was an under spend £0.264million which had been transferred to the Strategic Investment Reserve. The Chair thanked Portfolio Holders, Executive Directors and their teams in achieving a positive outturn position given the very difficult financial challenges the Council faced during 2020/2021.

Councillor Williams welcomed the report and was pleased that street scene, open space projects and environmental services staffing were a priority. Councillor Farthing also welcomed that provision for family and preventative support, to address the challenges of recovering from the pandemic, and provision for Together for Children to deliver a range of Covid-19 recovery activities had been prioritised.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the budget transfers, contingency and reserve transfers proposed within Section 3 and 5 of the report be approved; and
- (ii) the overall outturn position of the Council be noted.

Energy Efficiency Grant Funding

The Executive Director of Corporate Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which sought approval of the contracting arrangements for the delivery of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Phase 2 programme.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Rowntree reported that, in December 2020 partners across the City adopted the Low Carbon Framework that would drive down emissions and seek to make the City carbon neutral by 2040. She highlighted that the Council made a further commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030. In support of the above objective, the Council had recently been successful in seeking grant support of £2.2m from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. The focus of the scheme was to decarbonise heating systems in 8 Council-owned properties and the projects would achieve significant energy demand reduction, resulting in expected carbon savings of 375 tonnes per annum. In addition, the Council had also been allocated £1.75m under the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Phase 2 to carry out approximately 500 energy efficiency and low carbon interventions in 270 properties across a wide range of tenures on a city-wide basis. Interventions included loft and cavity wall insulation, low carbon heating sources, solar panels and external wall insulation. The attention of Cabinet Members was drawn to the grant under each scheme which needed to be utilised by 30 September 2021 and 31 December 2021 respectively. Existing procurement frameworks would be utilised to ensure a delivery method compliant with the funding requirements.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

4. RESOLVED that:

- (i) the receipt of funding for £2,219,000 for the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and £1,750,000 for Green Homes Grant Local Programme from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) be noted;
- (ii) the funding arrangements for delivery of the Project and the resultant variation to the Capital Programme be approved; and
- (iii) the procurement of contractors to deliver the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (Grant value £2,219,000) and the Green Homes Grant – Local Authority Delivery Phase 2 (Grant allocation £1,750,000) be approved.

Proposed Lease(s) at the Former Elemore Golf Course site, Easington Lane

The Executive Director of Corporate Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which sought approval to authorise the Executive Director of Corporate Services to grant leases at the former Elemore Golf Course site.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Rowntree reported that the site was currently vacant and following consultations through 'Let's Talk Sunderland' and 'Let's Talk Elemore', the Council was proceeding with plans to create a community asset that would provide usable green space that protected the natural habitat for future generations and allowed social enterprise to become mobilised on the Site.

Councillor Rowntree explained that, in order to support the proposals, the Council intended to grant leases directly, in accordance with the Community Policy, to a new Community or Community Sector organisation or to work with an existing specialised organisation to deliver the council's community objectives for the Site.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that the Executive Director of Corporate Services be authorised to directly grant leases at the former Elemore Golf site in accordance with the terms of the Council's standard Community Lease and in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Secretary and the Executive Director of Neighbourhoods.

Panns Quay Collapse – Emergency Work

The Executive Director of City Development submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update on the design and construction work carried out urgently to Panns Quay East after it collapsed on the 16 March 2021, and sought approval to the appointment of a contractor to complete the further reconstruction works to Panns Quay East.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Rowntree reported that the cost estimate for the works was £1.5M (which included £0.2M risk contingency) and that budgetary provision had been made through the Council's capital reserves. She explained that the key risks associated with the delivery area were adverse river conditions and lead in time for the steel sheet piles both of which would be managed under the contract. The direct appointment of the framework contractor would be in accordance with the Council's constitution and procurement regulations and the Cabinet report had been reviewed and approved by both Financial and Law and Governance teams. Councillor Rowntree advised that not undertaking this option had been rejected due to the absence of the original sheet pile wall that would inevitably result in further erosion of the riverside footpath area and further collapse of the remaining sheet pile wall within the vicinity, together with the increased risk of washout/destabilisation of the adjacent university building foundations and a more significant cost.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

6. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Executive Director of City Development be authorised, in consultation with the Dynamic City Portfolio Holder and the Executive Director of Corporate Services, to take all necessary steps to procure the delivery and completion of the reconstruction works to Panns Quay East after the collapse on the 16th March 2021, including the direct award of a contract to ARM Pipetek as Principal Contractor, and the award of any other necessary appointments to deliver the proposed works; and

- (ii) the funding arrangements for delivery of the proposed works and the resultant variation to the Capital Programme be approved.

Sunderland Heat Network – application for a Heat Networks Investment Project grant, and the appointment of a specialist team of consultants and contractors

The Executive Director of City Development submitted a report (copy circulated) which informed Cabinet of the outcomes from the work on the Sunderland Heat Network's Detailed Project Development and Outline Business Case.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Rowntree reported that the Council had been exploring the potential for a Heat Network as part of the City Plan and Low Carbon Action Plan objective to reduce the City's carbon footprint. She commented that, in parallel, mine source heat had been explored with The Coal Authority and desktop studies concluded that there was excellent potential to take heat from the former Wearmouth Colliery. Cabinet Members' attention was drawn to the recent Outline Business Case which concluded; there was a potentially viable City Centre Mine Source Heat Network, with Riverside Sunderland and the new footbridge providing opportunity to serve both north and south of the River Wear. However, the Outline Business Case also concluded; the scheme would only likely be viable as a public sector delivered scheme. Councillor Rowntree commented that an implemented scheme could save the City upwards of 4,100 tonnes of Carbon equivalent per annum, for context this was equal to over half of the Council's direct estate and added that the project would be a real milestone and true marker of the City's low carbon ambitions. Members were advised that discussions had been held with various potential 'customers', including Sunderland Royal Hospital, University of Sunderland and the Council (for City Hall and Riverside Sunderland), as well as some existing City Centre residential premises. All of these shared the Council's low carbon ambitions and were happy to keep talking about connecting to the scheme.

With regard to the next stage in development, Councillor Rowntree explained that it would get the scheme ready for delivery and included drilling of boreholes to prove the mine source heat, as well as preparation to bring an Operator on board. She advised that this was expected to cost up to £2.22million, including £1.6million for boreholes and £620k for specialist consultancy support and that the application to BEIS Heat Network Investment Project (HNIP) was for 100% grant funding. Members were advised that the application was being made based upon what was currently known about Government funding regimes for Heat Networks, in what was a fast-moving environment with policy and funding opportunities continuing to evolve and transition.

Councillor Rowntree drew Cabinet Members' attention to the factors upon which delivery was dependent, including:

1. Securing external funding to support financial delivery;
2. Proving the mine source heat through drilling of the boreholes and successfully proving the flowrates and temperature of the water;

3. Securing customers to make the scheme financially viable; and
4. Government bringing forward further decarbonisation policies in favour of low carbon heat.

Members noted that the final decision on whether to proceed with the actual scheme would be at the end of the next stage, which was anticipated to be September 2022, when more detail and further reports would be brought forward.

Councillor Rowntree highlighted the historic importance of the City's mining and industrial heritage which could not be overlooked in terms of its relevance to the project. Cabinet Members acknowledged that the work undertaken by miners that once helped Sunderland prosper in a carbonised economy, could go on to decarbonise the City economy and help the City prosper again, with Sunderland once again being a world leader and celebrating its heritage.

Councillor Farthing commended the report and requested that the City's mining and industrial heritage be recorded as part of Culture House. Councillor Williams welcomed the report and questioned the life span for the source. Catherine Auld explained that full technical assessments would be carried out as part of the ongoing development of the project.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:

7. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the outcomes from the work on the Sunderland Heat Network's Detailed Project Development and Outline Business Case be noted;
- (ii) the Executive Director of City Development in consultation with the Executive Director of Corporate Services and the Deputy Leader of the Council be authorised to submit a Heat Networks Investment Project (HNIP) grant application to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) for the next stages of the project and the delivery of Sunderland's Heat Network;
- (iii) the Executive Director of City Development in consultation with the Executive Director of Corporate Services be authorised to agree the detailed terms of any grant agreement for the HNIP funding, should the Council's application be successful;
- (iv) subject to the Council securing further grant funding from BEIS, the Executive Director of City Development be authorised, in consultation with the Executive Director of Corporate Services and the Deputy Leader of the Council to procure and appoint of all necessary technical and specialist advisors to develop the project in order to progress the detailed design, Full Business Case and preparations for delivery of the heat network;

- (v) the Executive Director of City Development, in consultation with the Leader/Deputy Leader of the Council be authorised to continue commercial discussions with the prospective off-takers of heat, including the negotiation of Heads of Terms for the long term supply of heat to key partners; and
- (vi) a further report to consider whether to progress beyond the commercialisation phase and deliver Sunderland's Heat Network including the proposed delivery model be received.

Development Management Supplementary Planning Document

The Executive Director of City Development submitted a report (copy circulated) which advised Cabinet of the outcomes of the consultation undertaken in respect of the Draft Development Management Supplementary Planning Document (DM SPD) and which sought approval for the adoption of the DM SPD.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Johnson reported that following the adoption of the Core Strategy & Development Plan, most of the Council's existing Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) were revoked - as they either were no longer necessary due to the detail included within the CSDP itself, or as they expanded upon guidance contained within Unitary Development Plan policies which had been deleted. Councillor Johnson explained that, to support the delivery of the Development Management policies contained in the Core Strategy, and to provide additional guidance and clarity, it was considered appropriate to prepare a Development Management SPD (DM SPD). He added that, once adopted, the DM SPD would supersede the interim guidance note which was approved by Cabinet in February 2020 and would be a material consideration when determining planning applications.

The attention of Cabinet Members was drawn to the purpose of the SPD which was to:

- Provide additional planning guidance to decision makers on specific Development Management issues, building upon the policies contained within the adopted Core Strategy;
- Assist applicants to bring forward good quality developments which were policy compliant; and
- Refresh and update the Council's parking standards.

Councillor Johnson reiterated that, in September 2020, Cabinet approved consultation on the DM SPD Scoping Report and that representations from 4 consultees had been received. He explained that, following Cabinet approval in December 2020, a further public consultation had been undertaken on the draft DM SPD and representations from 11 consultees had been received. Councillor Johnson advised that the Council had taken the representations into account, where appropriate to do so, when preparing the final SPD. Cabinet Members' attention was drawn to Appendix 2, the Consultation Statement which summarised each representation received and detailed the Council's response.

Councillor Johnson added that the SPD set out additional planning guidance in relation to residential extensions and alterations, urban design, parking standards and advertisements and would be used as a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Councillor Williams welcomed the report which would support sustainable housing.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

8. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the outcomes of the consultation set out in the Consultation Statement (Appendix 2) and Adoption Statement (Appendix 3) be noted; and
- (ii) the adoption of the DM SPD, as set out in Appendix 1, on 16 June 2021 be authorised.

At this juncture, Councillor Farthing withdrew from the meeting during consideration of the following item.

Housing Innovation & Construction Skills Academy – Progress Update

The Executive Director of City Development submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided a progress update and sought approval to take all necessary steps to facilitate delivery of the Housing Innovation & Skills Academy (“HICSA”).

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chair reported that for decades the UK had failed to build enough homes which had led to rising housing costs. The Government had set an ambitious target to build 300,000 homes annually by the mid-2020s but constraints such as the shortage of skilled workers meant the target could not be met using traditional building methods alone. He advised that a significant proportion of homes must therefore be built using modern methods of construction (MMC) to achieve the target.

The attention of Cabinet Members was drawn to the shortage of workers with relevant skills which was one of the main constraints to increasing the pace of housing delivery in the UK. The Chair highlighted that it was vital that there was an increase in skills provision to promote homebuilding as an appealing career choice for young people.

The Chair explained that to address these shortfalls, position the city at the forefront of housing innovation, ensure the skills of local people meet the needs of industry, and maximise employment opportunities the Council had been developing proposals with Sunderland College and the Ministry of Building Innovation and Education (MOBIE). He reported that the proposals would create an industry-leading education and skills academy which would promote the use of MMC in the delivery of high quality new homes, embrace low carbon, renewable energy and digital technology, and accelerate carbon reduction through retrofitting of the city's existing housing stock. He advised the HICSA would change the approach to the design and construction of new homes, and it would make a decisive contribution to Sunderland's zero-carbon and smart city targets.

Councillor Williams commented on the fabulous proposal to reinvigorate local communities and to invest in and engage young people.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

9. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the proposals for delivery of the HICSA as described in this report be noted and the variation to the Capital Programme to reflect the latest budget and funding assumptions be approved;
- (ii) the Executive Director of City Development be authorised, in consultation with the Chief Executive, Executive Director of Corporate Services and the Leader of the Council, to take all necessary steps to procure the delivery of the HICSA up to (but not including) the award of building contract;
- (iii) the Executive Director of City Development be authorised, in consultation with the Chief Executive, Executive Director of Corporate Services and the Leader of the Council, to approve, finalise and (subject to the receipt of satisfactory external funding) enter into an agreement for lease with Sunderland College as the proposed tenant for the long-term letting of the HICSA following practical completion; and
- (iv) subject to the receipt of external funding for the HICSA and execution of a lease agreement with Sunderland College, the Executive Director of City Development be authorised, in consultation with the Chief Executive, Executive Director of Corporate Services and the Leader of the Council, to thereafter award the building contract for the HICSA.

Councillor Farthing was welcomed back into the meeting at this juncture.

Sunniside Regeneration Update

The Executive Director of City Development submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided a progress update and sought approval to take steps towards the appointment of preferred developers and the disposal of property interests to support the progression of regeneration proposals for the Nile & Villiers street area of Sunniside.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Johnson reported that the continued regeneration of Sunniside through the development of new and better homes, provision of new workspaces and establishment of a new community was a longstanding ambition of the Council and its partners and was aligned with the objectives of the City Plan.

Councillor Johnson explained that a partnership comprising Create Streets and TownDev Ltd, with support from Hendon based charity Back on the Map, had produced a vision for the development of a Living Arts Hub at the Council owned site in Nile & Villiers Street. He added that the Living Arts Hub would be an exemplar residential-led mixed-use scheme with high quality, sustainable homes and workspace which would be particularly appealing to Sunderland's vibrant creative community and would kickstart regeneration in Sunniside and Old Sunderland. Councillor Johnson advised the partnership was seeking an exclusivity agreement to advance detailed development and funding proposals which would support the Council's bid to MHCLG's Levelling Up Fund for the initial elements of its City Centre Housing Ecosystem.

The Chair drew Cabinet Members' attention to a historically significant building comprising 177 High Street West and 1-2 Villiers Street which sat within the Conservation Area and Heritage Action Zone. It was noted that Tyne & Wear Building Preservation Trust was seeking to acquire a long-term leasehold interest in the property which would allow it to secure grant funding for refurbishment and conversion of the building into a mixed-use scheme.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

10. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the proposals for regeneration of "the Site" as described in the report be noted;
- (ii) the Executive Director of City Development be authorised, in consultation with the Chief Executive, Executive Director of Corporate Services and Leader of the Council, to:-
 - (a) Grant an exclusivity agreement to a partnership ("the Partnership") comprising TownDev Ltd (Town) and Create Streets Ltd (Create Streets) to produce a development proposal and funding strategy that will facilitate the delivery of high-quality new homes and workspaces;

- (b) Dispose of a leasehold interest in 177 High Street West, Sunnyside (“the Property”) to Tyne and Wear Building Preservation Trust (TWBPT) for a nominal consideration of £1 (one pound), a price which is less than the best consideration that can reasonably be obtained in the market, on terms to be agreed by the Executive Director of City Development; and
- (c) Make any further land and property acquisitions or disposals within “the Site” to facilitate the regeneration proposals, at a price which represents best consideration.

Proposed New Assessment and Ranking System for Minor Road Safety Schemes

The Executive Director of City Development submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided details of a proposed new assessment and ranking system for minor road safety schemes and sought Cabinet approval for its implementation.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Rowntree reported the current system of minor road safety scheme assessment did not address the changing circumstances in accidents and collisions throughout the city and the reduction in occurrence over the last 10 years. She explained that the proposed new assessment scheme to help prioritise road safety schemes, throughout the city, better meets the road safety concerns/perceptions of communities and provides improved support to elected Members.

Cabinet Members’ attention was drawn to the sifting criteria upon which prioritisation would be based. Councillor Rowntree advised that Sift 1, existing assessment criteria, relied on recorded personal injury accidents and 85th percentile* vehicle speeds in excess of the existing speed limit (*speeds not exceeded by 85% of vehicles). With a score of 20 or above, the development of an appropriate road safety scheme based on the High Priority Factors (HPF) alone, would automatically take place subject to funding and resources being available. Members noted that Sift 2, utilised a further set of factors, classed as Medium Priority Factors (MPF) which, when scored and added to the sift 1 scores, give an overall ranking score.

Councillor Rowntree explained that the schemes would be scored during the current financial year and the top 10 ranked potential schemes would be developed and progressed during the following financial year, subject to funding and resource availability. She added that schemes not progressed would be retained on the ranking list and would be reassessed at the appropriate time. However, they would have to compete in following years with new service requests that were received.

Councillor Farthing welcomed the report and added that reporting near misses would support the scoring system.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

11. RESOLVED that the implementation of a new assessment and ranking system for minor road safety schemes as detailed in this report be approved.

Proposed A183 Whitburn Road Two-Way Cycle Lane

The Executive Director of City Development submitted a report (copy circulated) which sought approval for the construction of a segregated on-road two-way cycle lane on the section of A183 Whitburn Road from the former Tram Stop at Seaburn, opposite Seaburn Recreational Ground, to the Bungalow Café, Roker.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Rowntree reminded Cabinet Members that in November 2020 the Council was informed that it had been successful in securing £1.125m, of an estimated scheme cost of £1.250m, to implement a dedicated two-way cycle lane along the A183 Whitburn Road from the former tram shelter at Seaburn to the Bungalow Café at Roker. She added that the Council is required to provide £0.125m of match funding (10%), which could be met from Local Transport Plan (LTP) grant allocation for 2021/22.

Councillor Rowntree explained that the main aim for the project was to reallocate existing road space to allow for full segregation between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles to improve and create sustainable transport links in and around the city, with no significant impact on motorists travelling along this route by keeping a two-way vehicle traffic route.

Members were advised that the proposals were in-keeping with the Councils commitment to create a healthy and prosperous city and help promote the use of alternative modes of transport and also supported the work undertaken in recent years towards the implementation of city wide off-carriageway shared use (pedestrian and cycle) network.

Councillor Rowntree commented that the scheme was also in line with the Government's vision to get the country more active and encourage people onto bikes and other sustainable modes of transport to get around the cities.

The attention of Cabinet Members was drawn to the changes in the way people were moving around the city since the pandemic with the use of more active and sustainable travel modes. Councillor Rowntree referred to data from the Automatic Traffic Counter (ATC) which had shown a 128% increase in cycling along the A183 Whitburn Road from previous years.

With reference to maintaining two-way traffic flow along the route, Members noted that the central hatch road markings including any right-turn pockets would need to be removed and any cars turning right into any of the seven junctions would need to wait on the main thoroughfare (the southbound lane only) or use alternative access routes where available. Councillor Rowntree highlighted that whilst traffic flows would be impeded while vehicles made this manoeuvre, it would provide a traffic calming feature helping to reduce vehicle speeds. She added that the scheme would involve:

- The introduction of Zebra Crossings and a new traffic signal-controlled crossing point replacing the 4 existing pedestrian refuge islands. The introduction of these crossing facilities would improve safety for all users;
- Introduction of new cycle parking facilities at key locations along the route e.g. Bungalow Café (all locations are still to be determined);
- Improved existing bus stop facilities through the introduction of raised bus kerbs allowing better access for all; and
- The scheme was designed in accordance with the latest Department for Transport's guidance, which had higher standards than previously which would ultimately help improve road safety.

Councillor Rowntree advised that to minimise disruption to the users of the seafront such as residents, businesses, and visitors/holidaymakers works would be undertaken outside of the school holidays. Therefore, it was planned to commence on site in September 2021 and works should take no longer than 26 weeks to complete. The works would be undertaken by Highways Operations and the in-house contractor.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:

12. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the construction of a segregated on-road two-way cycle lane on the section of A183 Whitburn Road from the former Tram Stop at Seaburn, opposite Seaburn Recreational Ground, to the Bungalow Café, Roker be approved;
- (ii) it be noted that the scheme, estimated to cost £1.250m, will be funded from Sunderland City Council's allocation of £1.125m from the Government's Active Travel Fund (ATF) Phase 2 (formerly the Emergency Active Travel Fund) and a £0.125m match from the Council's 2021/2022 LTP grant allocation; and
- (iii) the funding arrangements for delivery of the proposed works and the resultant variation to the Capital Programme be approved.

New Garden Waste Treatment Contract

The Executive Director of Neighbourhoods submitted a report (copy circulated) which sought approval to procure and award a contract for the treatment of garden waste collected by the Council and to be managed through the South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership (STWWMP).

(For copy report – see original minutes).

In highlighting the report, Councillor Rowntree advised Members that the current contract was due to expire on 31st March 2022 and that the Council needed to procure and award a new garden waste treatment contract. She reported that the South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership would lead on the procurement of the new garden waste provider and that the procurement process would be delivered through 2021 to secure a new provider from 1st April 2022. Councillor Rowntree concluded that the contract would ensure that the Council had arrangements in place to treat garden waste effectively in the future.

Councillor Farthing commented that the impact on the service and residents would need to be monitored. Councillor Williams added that not all residents would require this service.

Consideration being given to the report, it was:-

13. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the procurement and award of a contract for the Council's garden waste treatment to the supplier demonstrating the most economically advantageous tender by the STWWMP be approved; and
- (ii) the Executive Director of Neighbourhoods be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for a Dynamic City and the Executive Director of Corporate Services to appoint the supplier and enter into the necessary contractual documents.

Procurement of Tyres and Associated Services

The Executive Director of Neighbourhoods submitted a report (copy circulated) which sought approval to utilise the NEPO Framework for the supply of tyres and associated services.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chair reported it was essential that the Council had available to it a responsive and cost effective service provider and the move to the NEPO Framework would enable the Council to have a wider range of suppliers to use and improved value for money arrangements.

By using the NEPO Framework it was expected that vehicles would be maintained and kept operational more quickly ensuring services to residents and customers were delivered efficiently.

Consideration being given to the report, it was:-

14. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the use of the North East Purchasing Organisation Framework for the supply of tyres and associated services be approved; and

- (ii) the Executive Director of Neighbourhoods be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for a Dynamic City and the Executive Director of Corporate Services, to appoint supplier(s) and enter into the necessary contractual documents.

Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2021-2025

The Executive Director of Neighbourhoods submitted a report (copy circulated) which sought approval to adopt and publish the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2021-2025.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chair reminded Members that the Council was a Member of the South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership (STWWMP) along with Gateshead and South Tyneside Councils. On 30th April the Joint Executive of the STWWMP considered and approved the refreshed Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2021-2025.

Members' attention was drawn to the strategy which covered the management of municipal waste including general (residual) waste collected from households; kerbside recycling collections; bulky waste collections; street sweepings; fly tipped waste; and waste disposed at household waste and recycling centres.

The Chair highlighted that whilst there was no statutory requirement to produce a Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy the Council and the Partnership considered it 'best practice' to do so. In addition, the national picture in relation to waste and the potential implications for Sunderland were highlighted.

Cabinet Members were advised that the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy would structure a framework to respond to the future changes to the management of waste as new laws are implemented.

Consideration being given to the report, it was:-

15. RESOLVED that the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2021-2025 prepared by the South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership ('STWWMP') be approved and published.

Procurement of Family, Adult and Community Learning provision for 2021/2022

The Executive Director of Neighbourhoods submitted a report (copy circulated) which sought approval for the annual procurement process by which funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) would be awarded to providers for the delivery of Family, Adult and Community Learning (FACL) training courses in the academic year 2021/2022 to support the city's strategic priorities.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Farthing highlighted that the Council received Adult Education Budget grant under a contract with the ESFA annually to deliver locally responsive provision to adults aged 19+ to engage local communities, improve employability skills, improve skills for life, promote health and wellbeing and help people move closer to and into employment. For the academic year 2021-22, the amount of the ESFA funding allocation would be £1.2m. The benefits from delivery of the FACL provision had been proven through monitored outcomes as well as individual case studies. The curriculum and specification had been determined through a process informed by the requirements of the ESFA, the priorities of the City Plan and the North East LEP, as well as consultation with local VCS organisations, learning providers, DWP and Council Members and Officers. Councillor Farthing explained that a wide range of learning programmes including English, maths, digital skills, vocational qualifications, skills for employment, physical and mental health, wellbeing and resilience, environmental awareness, financial and budget management, volunteering, community engagement and therapeutic arts and crafts would be commissioned.

Councillor Williams commended Councillor Farthing for the report and the work she had undertaken in managing the contracts. Councillor Farthing thanked Councillor Williams for her kind words and explained that the awarding of contracts was based upon performance against KPIs.

Consideration being given to the report, it was:-

16. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the annual procurement process to be followed that will enable the identification and selection of suitable providers to ensure the delivery of training outcomes that support the city's strategic priorities be approved; and
- (ii) the Executive Director of Neighbourhoods be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children, Learning and Skills, to undertake the procurement of FACL training courses in the academic year 2021/2022, as set out in the report, and subsequently to award the proposed contracts to the successful bidders.

The Improvement of Bereavement Services

The Executive Director of Neighbourhoods submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided Cabinet with an update of ongoing service developments within Bereavement Services and sought Cabinet approval in relation to a number of decisions which supported continued service development.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Rowntree was pleased to share the report for consideration which described some improvements already made within Bereavement Services as well as a number of further changes and improvements. The report outlined a programme of improvements to ensure fulfilment of legal and regulatory responsibilities and achieve service excellence.

Councillor Rowntree highlighted that the proposals for improvement were in relation to some of the most important spaces and they provided opportunities to improve and expand the ways in which residents could remember their loved ones.

Councillor Williams commented on the outstanding work undertaken by a group of volunteers at Washington Cemetery and noted the range of appropriate memorialisation.

Consideration being given to the report, it was:-

17. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the revised Cemetery and Crematorium Regulations and the implementation of obligatory conduct be approved;
- (ii) the introduction of the Memorial Safety Policy be approved;
- (iii) the introduction of new memorial locations, products and opportunities be approved;
- (iv) the extension of memorial benches and trees to all public areas be authorised;
- (v) the development of a process for the management of historic memorials be authorised; and
- (vi) new fees and charges be introduced and authorised, linked to service improvements.

Sunderland Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

The Director of Children's Services, Chief Executive of Together for Children submitted a report (copy circulated) which sought approval for the revised Sunderland Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

Councillor Farthing explained that the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education, (SACRE) was made up of five groups of members representing:

1. Local Councillors of which Cllr Farthing was the current SACRE Chair.
2. Christian denominations other than the Church of England, and other faith groups that appropriately reflected the principal religious traditions of the area.
3. The Church of England (Christianity)
4. Teachers' Associations
5. Together for Children acting on behalf of Sunderland City Council.

In order to comply with the Education Act 1996 and the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, Councillor Farthing highlighted that Local Authorities were required to set up a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE). She reminded Cabinet Members that the Local Authority provided a place for SACRE to meet, and clerking / support services to SACRE meetings and educational settings. Councillor Farthing referred to the budget provision of £13,000 that was in place as part of the Dedicated Schools Grant, administered by Together for Children, for revision of the Agreed Syllabus (which is required every 5 / 6 years) and to cover the costs of printing, publishing and circulating the revised Syllabus.

Members noted that RE Education was still a statutory requirement on the curriculum of non-maintained schools although Academies and Free schools could choose to follow the Agreed Syllabus, another agreed syllabus or adopt their own.

Councillor Farthing informed Members that an Agreed Syllabus Conference had taken place, organised by SACRE. The Agreed Syllabus Conference met on 13 January 2020 and reviewed the current syllabus and presentations were made by two organisations in relation to other possible syllabuses. Following discussion, it was unanimously agreed by the Agreed Syllabus Conference to recommend the RE Today Syllabus B to the Cabinet for formal adoption. Members of the Conference felt that the new specification provided an opportunity to invigorate and offer something new and modern to pupils and RE departments in Sunderland with a greater level of professional support than previously. Subject to the decision of Cabinet the new syllabus would be formally launched at a training day with RE staff in Sunderland in the autumn term 2021.

Councillor Williams welcomed the report and commented on the opportunities within RE for young people to develop a wide range of skills.

Consideration being given to the report, it was:-

18. RESOLVED that the revised Sunderland Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education which had been recommended by the Agreed Syllabus Conference of SACRE for adoption by Sunderland schools, with effect from 1 September 2021 for a period of five years, be agreed.

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

At the instance of the Chairman it was: -

19. 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.

