

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

18 September 2023

PRESENT: - Councillor Waltham MBE in the Chair

R Hannigan (vice-chair), J Davison, Marper, Mitchell, Poole, Reed and C Sherwood

Councillors Ahmed, Ali, L Foster, Matthews, Patterson and Yeadon attended the meeting.

Stuart Fair, Victoria Lawrence, Lesley Potts and Richard Mell were in attendance at the meeting.

The meeting was held at the Conference Room, Church Square House, Scunthorpe.

1545 **DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND PERSONAL OR PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS.**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

1546 **MINUTES**

Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 31 July 2023 having been circulated amongst the members, be taken as read and correctly recorded and be signed by the chair.

1547 **TO PRESENT A REVIEW OF YEAR ONE OF THE COUNCIL PLAN 2022-2025 AND THE 2022/2023 YEAR END FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE COUNCIL AND PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE APPROVED BUDGET.**

The Director: Governance and Communities submitted a report presenting a review of year one of the Council Plan 2022-25 including the investment for each priority and highlighting impact achieved, and also presented the 2022-23 year-end financial position of the council and performance against the approved budget.

The Director in the report explained that in May 2022, Council approved a new Council Plan for the period 2022-2025 and it was adopted as part of the Council's policy framework. Having been in place for one year and following recent Council elections, it was deemed appropriate to review progress and to ensure the focus of the Plan retained relevance. This review document attached as an appendix, represented a high-level overview against the Council Plan. The core strategies and plans that support it produced annual reports to the Executive and Partnerships, providing finer detail on actions and impact made against the outcomes.

It also stated that since the council elections in May 2023 the new Conservative administration had announced an ambition to back every community across North Lincolnshire to thrive, being tougher on

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environmental enforcement and ensuring young people, families, and older people could live happy, fulfilling and safe lives. In light of this, as part of a further review of the Council Plan, the Cabinet may wish to also revise the themes under the existing priorities for year two.

The report also explained that Council had set a revenue investment budget of £174.9m for 2022-23 for the delivery of its functions and strategic priorities. This included approval of an additional £5m use of reserves to address unprecedented inflationary pressures in year. At outturn, revenue investment totalled £175.4m, reflecting net additional spend of £0.5m. Funding for capital investment in 2022-23 was originally set at £47.2m although the net effect of additional investment and rephasing to future years reduced this to £39.5m as reported to Cabinet 6th February 2023. The revised capital programme for approval in appendix 2 updated the 2023-24 capital investment budget to reflect outturn spend of £39.7m (including year-end re-phasing, confirmation of grant funding and in year funding adjustments).

It also stated that the financial outturn report and position provided external stakeholders with evidence of the integrity of the council's financial conduct and performance and demonstrates fiscal discipline. It also gave the Cabinet the confidence that the Council was well placed to navigate future challenges.

Councillor Marper, Cabinet Member Investment, Outcomes and Governance thanked the Director for the report and work carried out by officers and highlighted, summarised and commented upon key aspects of its content.

Resolved – (a) That the achievements and updates presented in the Council Plan which reflects the positive action taken during 2022-23 as set out in Appendix A (appendix 1) be noted; (b) that the continuation of the current themes under the existing priorities for year two be approved, and (c) that the financial position of the council for 2022-23 be noted and the revised capital programme as set out in Appendix 2 of the review document be approved.

1548 **FINANCIAL POSITION UPDATE.**

The Director: Governance and Communities submitted a report providing an update on the Council's in-year financial position in 2023/24, explaining the latest revenue budget and requesting approval of the revised capital programme. It also set out the Council's updated medium term financial planning position and the treasury management position against the Prudential Code Indicators.

The Director in the report explained that in February 2023, Council approved plans to invest £191.5m of revenue resource in 2023-24 and £126.0m of capital resource over a three-year period to support delivery of the council plan, achieve its strategic objectives and legal duties for the benefit of residents and businesses. Revenue investment had subsequently increased to £191.6m following confirmation of the Public Health Grant for 2023/24 and the Capital programme to £128.3m following outturn 2022/23 and in year re-phasing.

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In line with good financial management practices, the Council's use of resources was closely monitored and reported regularly to senior leadership and the Cabinet. The report was the first formal report to Cabinet in 2023/24 providing information on the current financial position at quarter one. It also provided an update on the next stages of financial planning for 2024/25 onwards, identifying risks and opportunities to the current Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) as the initial stages of refreshing the MTFP were underway.

The current forecast indicated net operating expenditure would be within the £191.6m approved investment allocation, with a small underspend of £0.4m forecast at this early stage in the financial year (of which £210k was within core budgets and £167k Dedicated Schools Grant). Within the overall forecast there were several notable variances emerging across the Council:

- Employee costs – pending finalisation and agreement of the NJC pay agreement for 2023/24 it was currently forecast that employee costs will be below budgeted levels.
- Demand pressures were being experienced in some Council services, particularly within school's transport, and
- Income budgets were under pressure, partly due to the current economic conditions and pressures on the cost of living (inc. commercial rents and planning income).

The Council's capital plans included £49.2m investment in 2023/24 (to date, £8.2m (17%) had been spent). At quarter one the forecast outturn in year was £50.2m primarily due to rephasing and additional external funding. Further detail on the capital and revenue positions at quarter one is provided Appendix 1.

The Director's report also provided an update on the Council's 'financial resilience context', 'medium term financial plan' and 'budget policy framework' with supporting appendices.

Councillor Marper, Cabinet Member Investment, Outcomes and Governance thanked the Director for the report and work carried out by officers and highlighted, summarised and commented upon key aspects of its content.

Resolved – (a) That the 2023/24 financial position set out in the report be noted; (b) that the budget adjustments approved under delegated powers and the revised budget position for 2023/24 be noted; (c) that the revised capital programme 2023/26 be approved, and (d) that the progress against the approved Treasury Management Strategy and prudential code indicators be noted.

1549 **REFUGEE SETTLEMENT UNITED KINGDOM RESETTLEMENT SCHEME (UKRS) AFGHAN RELOCATION AND ASSISTANCE POLICY (ARAP) 'HOMES FOR UKRAINE'.**

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The Director: Governance and Communities submitted a report which updated Cabinet on the renewed pledges for Refugee Resettlement in North Lincolnshire and sought approval for North Lincolnshire Council to support the extension of the local offer previously agreed in March 2022 for both the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and the United Kingdom Resettlement Scheme (UKRS). The report also confirmed North Lincolnshire Council's support and involvement in any future Ukraine Resettlement Programme and reaffirmed the Council's continued commitment to supporting vulnerable young people through the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) Scheme and National Transfer Scheme.

The Director's report explained that North Lincolnshire had been involved in the resettlement of refugees since 2015 and in that period has resettled 22 families from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan through the United Kingdom Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) the Afghan Locally Employed Staff (LES) Scheme and the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP). All the commitments across these schemes had been fulfilled. In addition to supporting the various family and adult Resettlement schemes, North Lincolnshire Council continued to support the resettlement of young people through the UASC scheme and had a clear commitment to the National Transfer Scheme, where young people currently in Kent were relocated to North Lincolnshire.

The report also stated that all the Adult and Family schemes commitments were based on a fair share allocation across Yorkshire and Humber based on population and capacity. A collaborative, cross government approach was being taken to support the effective integration of all Refugees who chose to come to the UK including engagement with Local Authorities and each of the 11 Strategic Migration Partnerships across the UK. Currently there were many Afghan Refugees who came to the UK under Operation Pitting who remained in temporary accommodation. To facilitate the ceasing of temporary accommodation, North Lincolnshire was required to renew its pledge on future numbers for each of the schemes. An initial pledge between September 2023 and March 2024 for accepting Afghans leaving hotels was required, as these are the priority group. In addition, the Council was requested to make a pledge on the UKRS Scheme from April 2024 to March 2025.

From a North Lincolnshire perspective, its newly suggested combined allocation, based on the fair share was 36 people - 16 for ARAP and 20 for UKRS, this was likely to constitute four Afghan households and five UKRS households.

Also, on 14th March 2022 the Government (DLUHC) announced the "Homes for Ukraine" Scheme. The scheme allowed individuals to sponsor a named Ukrainian or a named Ukrainian family to stay with them in their home or in a separate property. The Council has supported the scheme acting as a link to DLUHC and providing support to both guests and sponsors. The Phase Two Resettlement Scheme for Ukrainians was supporting a process whereby guests were now moving out of sponsors accommodation through a "Find Your Own Accommodation Pathway." North Lincolnshire Council and its

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partners were committed to participate in the scheme and would continue to provide support to those Ukrainian families and individuals who had chosen to remain in the UK and settle in private accommodation.

Councillor Hannigan, Cabinet Member Adults, Health, Families and Communities thanked the Director for the report and work carried out by officers and partners, and highlighted, summarised and commented upon key aspects of its content.

Resolved – (a) That the Cabinet confirms its approval for the Council to renew its pledge for 2023-25 and receive the number of Refugees as set out in the report; (b) that the Council’s ongoing commitment to the “Homes for Ukraine” Scheme and its commitment to the future provision of Resettlement for Ukraine as guided by National Policy be approved, and (c) that Cabinet reaffirms its commitment to supporting Vulnerable Young people who arrive as UASC and also confirms its commitment to continue to support the National Transfer Scheme as required.