NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

At a meeting of the **Cabinet** held at County Hall, Morpeth on Tuesday 10 July 2018 at 1.00 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor P.A. Jackson
(Leader of the Council, in the Chair)

CABINET MEMBERS

Daley. W.
Homer, C.
Jones, V.
Oliver, N
Riddle, J.R.
Sanderson, H.G.H.
Wearmouth, R.

OTHER MEMBERS

Davey, J.G.
Dodd, R.R.
Flux, B.
Horncastle, C.W.
Reid, J.
Renner-Thompson, G.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Angus, K.	Executive Director of HR and OD and Deputy Chief Executive
Aviston, S.	Head of School Organisation and Resources
English, D.	Planning Manager, Neighbourhood Planning and Infrastructure
Hadfield, K.	Committee Services and Scrutiny Manager
Henry, L	Legal Services Manager
Jackson, D.	Service Director, Education and Skills
Johnson, A.	Project Director
Lally, D.	Chief Executive

Ch.'s Initials……

McEvoy, C.	Executive Director of Children's Services
Scarr, B.	Executive Director of Finance and Deputy Chief Executive

Around 15 members of the press, public, local schools, parents and representatives of the community were present.

14. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on Tuesday 14 June 2018 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Homer declared a personal, non prejudicial interest in respect of item 4(1) on the agenda (Report on outcomes of statutory consultation on proposals for education in the west of Northumberland), having three children attending Queen Elizabeth High School, but was confident she could be objective in making a decision on the issue.

Councillor Oliver declared a personal interest in the same item as he had one child attending Queen Elizabeth High School but was also confident he could be objective in making a decision.

Councillor Riddle advised that he would speak as the local member on item 4(1) on the agenda and therefore would not take part in the decision as a Cabinet member.

16. REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

(1) Report on Outcomes of Statutory Consultation on Proposals for Education in the West of Northumberland

The report provided an analysis of the representations received during the four week statutory consultation period that began on 10 May 2018 and closed on 7 June 2018 from interested parties relating to the proposals to close Bellingham Middle School and Sports College with effect from 31 August 2019 and to extend the age ranges of Kielder, Bellingham, Otterburn, Greenhaugh and West Woodburn First Schools with effect from 1 September 2019. The report requested Cabinet to consider the outcomes of the consultation and to approve the implementation of the statutory proposals, with a modification to the proposal for West Woodburn First School, the reasons for which were set out in the report. In addition Cabinet were

requested to consider and approve the non-statutory proposal to extend the age range of Wark Church of England First School with effect from 1 September 2019 as it was linked to the other proposals.

Cabinet was also asked to consider the outline business case for the provision of enhanced buildings for the Hadrian Learning Trust in Hexham, which was requested by the Trust at their meeting of 8 May 2018, and approve the allocation of funding for the project from the Medium Term Plan (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix A, along with the report of the Family and Children's Services OSC circulated at the meeting).

The Leader made some introductory remarks, setting out the procedure for the meeting. Councillor Daley then introduced the report, set out the background, and made reference to the factors outside the Authority's control including the withdrawal of Bright Tribe, the desire by the Hadrian Learning Trust to consult on changing the structure, pressures on the delivery of education in small schools and the condition of schools in the west. The majority of schools had been in favour of action being taken, so an informal consultation had taken place, leading to a formal consultation, and the report currently before members. The report represented a real partnership effort and showed that the Authority was listening, and he stressed that the decision had not been pre-determined. He paid tribute to officers, staff, parents, school leaders and communities who had helped to develop a sustainable plan, including those who had not agreed with the proposals.

Dr A. Johnson then presented the report commenting that this was the end of the statutory consultation period, and also the end of a nine month process to mitigate and take action against threats to educational opportunities and infrastructure in the west, and focus on improving educational outcomes in Haydon Bridge.

He then drew members' attention to the background as detailed in paras 6-10 of the report, and the key issues regarding the performance of Haydon Bridge High School, the financial worries and viability of schools in the area, the consultation by the Hadrian Trust on an 11-18 model and the longstanding concerns from national government about capacity issues in Northumberland, linked to a huge challenge in providing appropriate transport to pupils in very small schools in rural areas.

He then made reference to the current position:-

- Haydon Bridge High School was now back in full control of the Local Authority Interim Executive Board, and the action statement approved by Ofsted. The £600m debt had been subsidised to ensure that no further knee jerk cuts were made, and a curriculum review and leadership restructure was underway. Funding of £1.54m had been

identified as a recovery plan for the next three years, and capital funding of £3m had been identified.

- The Hadrian Trust had decided not to continue with the 11-18 model as the Authority could not support it due to the impact on other schools in the west. However, the desire was to continue to invest in the school and authorisation was being sought to the allocation of £250,000 from the medium term financial plan to look at possible investment of £36m- £40m in schools.
- The financial difficulties of small schools remained but the resilience programme was being used to assist them, and officers were working with the Diocese to develop resilience. A new MAT for Northumberland was being discussed, and it was hoped to have a structure operating by September 2019.
- Although capacity and transport issues remained, the Council had already reinstated free post 16 transport and would consider every child's individual needs should the proposals be accepted.

In relation to the statutory proposal there were three issues to consider:-

- Education in Bellingham - there was currently a first and middle school with around 160 children. The proposal was to close the middle school and establish a new primary with internal refurbishment costing £1.3m, including relocation and upgrade of the children's centre to provide 0-11 provision on a single site.
- West Woodburn First School - the consultation had highlighted significant issues of capacity, and officers were recommending a delay and review of the process. It had therefore been removed from the proposal to allow further work to be carried out in the Autumn.
- Move to Primary Schools - Otterburn, Kielder, Greenhaugh, Wark - representations from the statutory proposal had been considered alongside the representations from the informal proposal. 73 responses had been made in total, and many parents had expressed concern about the closure of the middle school for a variety of reasons, including loss of a three tier system and transport concerns.

Dr Johnson referred to the petition, which had been omitted from the report, and which had been submitted during the statutory consultation period which contained 235 signatures, 133 from the Bellingham area and to the e-petition containing 568 signatures, 24 from the Bellingham area, making 803 in total. He suggested Cabinet consider the petition attached to the submission as part of its deliberations.

The proposals would mean a reduction of 250 surplus places in the Haydon Bridge area. Regarding transport, years 5 and 6 pupils would remain at primary school for longer, but older children would have to make the journey with their peer groups to Haydon Bridge or Hexham.

He summed up the report by highlighting the main principles:-

- The need for a sustainable long term solution which would be secured by major investment.
- The ability to deliver realistic proposals and maintain a choice of secondary options in the west.
- Preservation of rural nature and ethos as requested by parents.
- The need to improve educational outcomes at the end of the secondary phase which would provide resilience in the partnership.

Member comments included:-

- Councillor Jones expressed concern about the transport arrangements for journeys from Hexham to Haydon Bridge. Dr Johnson advised that a working group would be established to ensure transport arrangements were well managed, and officers would work on the principle that pupils' needs would be dealt with on an individual basis. This was endorsed by Councillor Daley, who agreed to Chair the working group.
- With reference to the two tier/three tier debate, Councillor Oliver referred to instances where standards had declined following a move from first school to primary, and sought reassurance that this would not happen in this case. He queried what mechanisms would be put in place to ensure that it didn't. Dr Johnson advised that the planned resilience programme would provide this reassurance, adding that the change in age range was not always responsible for the decline in standards and this was why additional work was being done with West Woodburn FS. However, the schools which would become primaries were very bullish and optimistic about their prospects.
- Councillor Jackson asked for more information about the sustainability of Haydon Bridge High School which was central to the offer of secondary education in the area, and queried how the proposals had been received by the Hadrian Learning Trust. Dr Johnson replied that there had been a remarkable transformation at Haydon Bridge High School since it had been taken under the wing of the Authority, with many improvements being made. He was optimistic about its prospects, but suggested the question be asked again in six months and a year when further results were out. The Hadrian Learning Trust were disappointed that their proposals did not get approval but they were willing to engage with the Authority on their long term future.

Mr Carl Hamilton, parent
Mr Hamilton set out his reasons for opposition to the proposals which included travel times and the risks associated with travel, the ability to access after school clubs, lack of parental choice, the long term future of Haydon

Bridge High School and the quality of education on offer. The school had been consistently judged as inadequate and he felt it was wrong to send children there earlier.

He supported the retention of a three tier system because of better resources and specialist teachers from year 5, fewer transfers, SATS at Year 6 and the problems of delivering education during the transition period. He expressed concern about the impact of the proposals on rural communities, and the strong feeling that parents were being treated differently to Hexham parents. Also, the statutory guidance had not been followed as consultation had been carried out during school holidays, and there had been no reference to alternatives. The report was one sided and showed no evidence of stakeholder responses; it failed to mention several grounds for opposition and the two petitions which had been raised at FACS OSC. Comments from the Parish Council had been under-represented in the report and he felt it was wrong to sacrifice one school in order to support others. He referred to the concerns which had been raised at FACS regarding the transfer, adding that it was wrong for any review to be done after the proposals had been implemented.

Mr Eric Taylor, parent
Mr Taylor advised that he was speaking on behalf of many people who did not feel that the consultation process had been carried out in a way in which they could understand. Although he was not against change if it was change for the better, the three tier system had worked well for a number of years. Bright Tribe had been brought in because of a lack of support from the County Council but it had gone wrong. It was not clear how well the Wise Trust would deliver, but what local people wanted was education of a good standard in the local community, and the County Council needed to put investment into this from the outset to make it successful.

Ms Joyce Knudsen, local resident
Ms Knudsen disagreed that these proposals for education provision were in the best interests of the children and expressed concerns around the validity of the consultation process and standards at Haydon Bridge High School. She was also concerned about the effect on standards whilst the changes were being implemented, as there had been an adverse effect on schools in the Allendale area following implementation of a two tier structure. School standards in the north tyne area were in a stable position, much better than in the Haydon Bridge area, and she did not feel that this should be interfered with.

The prospect of a state of the art school in Hexham with no comparable facilities in Haydon Bridge first would have a detrimental effect, as it would draw parents away from Haydon Bridge and numbers would dwindle. The timing was wrong and this was a serious concern. Facilities were needed at Haydon Bridge first to ensure pupils were not lost.

Phase two of the consultation process had not been open and transparent , with critical information omitted to Cabinet and the amount of disruption ignored, and the concerns of Scrutiny disregarded. The major beneficiary of the consultation was the Hadrian Learning Trust. She felt that due process had not been followed and she urged members to halt the process.

Councillor John Riddle, local member
Councillor Riddle hoped that members and the public would have confidence that due process had been followed. He was aware what the proposals would mean in terms of transport times to Haydon Bridge High School, and agreed that transport was the major issue here, though he could see both sides. He represented the largest electoral division in the country and felt there was a case for an investigation of the catchment areas as it was difficult for the small number of pupils from the Rede Valley to get to Haydon Bridge. He felt strongly that travel times needed to be sorted out first.

He supported the proposed delay for West Woodburn First School and expressed his support for Bellingham as a growing community and a major service centre for the area. There had also been a number of planning permissions granted which would have an effect on population numbers.

Councillor Renner Thompson presented the report from FACS OSC, acknowledging that the major issues were about travel times, however, these should be mitigated by direct taxis from from farms to school, rather than lengthy bus journeys. The proposed working group would report back to the Scrutiny Committee in due course, and it had been suggested that the proposals at West Woodburn First School should be implemented at the same time as the others.

Councillor Wearmouth asked about the longest travel time. Ms Aviston advised that this was 75 minutes a day for one child. This was above the recommended maximum in the policy so it would be reviewed to make sure there was a more direct route for the taxi before it connected to the bus.

Councillor Sanderson commented that the consultation process had been very open and thorough, officers and members had spent a lot of time educating themselves on the issues involved, and the proposals were only being considered in the interests of the children involved.

In response to some of the comments made, Councillor Daley advised that it was not a question of having a state of the art school in Hexham; having a decent school would be a step forward as some parts of the school were in very poor condition and not even DDA compliant. £5m of capital investment and and extra £1.54m for teaching and learning had been agreed for Haydon Bridge High School to get the school out of its current Ofsted rating and to maintain parental choice, which had been identified by parents as their most

important issue. Northumberland County Council was the only local authority still investing in schools in the country and he referred to the successful partnership working with Prudhoe High School.

He understood this was not an easy decision for Bellingham, but the Authority was making a major investment to create an excellent facility in Bellingham from 0-11 years. This was not about supporting the Hadrian Learning Trust, but about supporting the whole west area.

Mr Henry then provided extensive legal advice to Cabinet (copy attached to the signed minutes).

Councillor Homer commented that there were a number of good schools in both partnerships but there were a number of issues to address, particularly at Haydon Bridge, and she felt the time was now right to do this. The report in front of members was the end of a long process for members involving meetings, examining consultation responses and reading all of the information. The outcome had to be sustainable both financially and for pupil numbers, and the best educational outcome was the most important issue. She believed that the proposals offered that solution, and she welcomed the investment into the Hadrian Learning Trust and into the middle and high schools in Hexham, which were both in need of investment.

Councillor Oliver agreed that a sustainable model was needed and felt this proposal offered that. He expressed appreciation for the support which had been provided by officers and commented on the amount of information which members had considered on the issue. He felt that the proposals would work for the whole area, and that the proposed investment for Hexham and Haydon Bridge, and the departure of Bright Tribe, were encouraging so there were many reasons to be optimistic. If everyone worked together, there was a good opportunity to create something successful.

The Leader agreed with the points which had been made. A sustainable solution was essential and there was a need to drive standards up across the board. The proposed funding was also to be welcomed.

On being put to the vote there voted **FOR: 7; AGAINST: 0, ABSTENTIONS: 0.** It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:-

(a) the responses to the statutory proposal and approve the closure of Bellingham Middle School and Sports College with effect from 31 August 2019 be noted;

(b) the responses to the statutory proposal be noted and approval be given to the extension of the age ranges of Bellingham, Kielder, Greenhaugh and Otterburn First Schools with effect from 1 September 2019;

(c) approval be given to the linked non-statutory proposal to extend the age range of Wark Church of England First School with effect from 1 September 2019, which was referenced within the Statutory Proposal;

(d) the issues facing West Woodburn First School which had arisen since the publication of the Statutory Proposal with respect to pupil numbers, staffing and finance set out in the report at para. 13 which called into question the educational and financial viability of the school becoming a primary school in September 2019 be noted, and as a consequence, approval be given to modify the statutory proposal by not at this stage approving the change of age range to the school, and agreeing that further exploration be undertaken with the governing body during the Autumn Term 2018 to investigate and identify what arrangements could be put in place at the school to strengthen capacity and reduce costs;

(e) the implications of the proposals on pupils, parents, staff and the local community as set out in the Statutory Proposal and included with the Background Papers to the report;provide capacity and reduce staffing costs, be noted;

(f) it be noted that the above proposals are linked and therefore must be decided together in order to ensure that the impact of the proposals on the wider area is considered;

(g) the implications for Home to School Transport of the statutory proposals as set out in the report be noted;

(h) taking into account the Department for Education's (DfE) 'Guidance for decision-makers: Statutory guidance for decision-makers deciding prescribed alteration and establishment and discontinuance proposals, April 2016' and the 'Opening and closing maintained schools; Statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers April 2016' attached to the report at Appendix 3 respectively, approval be given to approve the proposal without modification;

(i) the implementation of the preferred building options set out in para. 30 of the report; including the capital expenditure of £5.1m be approved;

(j) it be noted that all of the above are conditional upon the granting of planning permission by 31 August 2019 in relation to the building works at Otterburn and Greenhaugh First Schools;

(k) it be noted that a desk-top analysis has identified that the indicative construction costs for the provision of new buildings for the Hadrian Learning Trust would be in the region of £36-40m;

(l) in the light of Recommendation 11 and the information provided in the report, officers be authorised to develop a detailed business case in order to establish a preferred site and develop a robust project budget to provide new buildings for the Hadrian Learning Trust in Hexham and allocate £250k from the Medium Term Plan to carry out the necessary survey's, ground investigation and feasibility works, in order to provide cost surety, prior to procurement; and

(m) the report of the Family and Children's Services OSC be noted.

The Chair then adjourned the meeting so that the decision, and the reasons for it, could be written up. On the meeting being reconvened, the Leader read out the following statement:-

The proposals to close Bellingham Middle School and Sports College and to extend the age ranges of Kielder, Greenhaugh, Bellingham, Otterburn and Wark Church of England First Schools should be adopted and implemented for the following reasons:-

1) These changes across the maintained schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership best supports the long term viability and quality of all the schools in the partnership.

2) There would be an exciting opportunity to invest £5.1m into the fabric of schools in the Haydon Bridge Partnership, including:

   - Significant investment in a newly created Bellingham Primary School, including enhanced facilities for art/technology and community spaces that could be used by all schools to deliver an enhanced primary curriculum.
   - Significant investment, of around £3.5m in Haydon Bridge High School to rationalise the buildings, safeguard the site and upgrade the interior of the remaining buildings.In addition an investment of £1.5m to subsidise the school over the next three years to ensure a transition that provides a good educational experience.

3) Parents and students would retain a choice of secondary education in the west of the county, while parents would retain the preference to apply for a place for their child in any school.

4) The Governing Bodies of Kielder, Otterburn, Greenhaugh and Wark have indicated they support the change to a primary structure.Primary age children living in the catchment areas of Kielder, Greenhaugh, Otterburn and Wark C of E First Schools would remain in their good or outstanding village primary schools for a further two years, therefore

would not have to make a transition and travel to Bellingham at age 9 and 10.

5) The proposed Resilience Programme will attempt to support the good and outstanding schools in the North Tynedale and Redesdale area to work together and across the partnership and beyond to increase sustainability through building on and sharing current good practice.

6) A review of transport routes to Haydon Bridge High School will be undertaken to assess the impact of the implementation of the statutory proposal on individual children living in the North Tynedale and Redesdale areas, particularly in relation to pupils in Years 7 and 8 who would travel to Haydon Bridge High School.

The consultation on this statutory proposal and the wider informal consultation has been very extensive, reasonable and robust and has attempted to preserve small rural primary and secondary education.

Councillor Riddle then joined the Cabinet members to take part in the rest of the meeting.

(2) Proposed Closure of Netherton Northside First School

The report outlined the results of the statutory consultation process undertaken by the Council in relation to the proposed closure of Netherton Northside First School with effect from 31 August 2018. This consultation had come about as a result of a request of the Governing Body of Netherton Northside due to the significant drop in the number of pupils attending the school and its impact. Cabinet was asked to decide whether or not to approve the closure of the school as requested by the Governing Body (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix B, along with the report of the Family and Children's Services OSC circulated at the meeting).

Councillor Daley reminded members that the approach had originated from the schools because of falling numbers. He praised the school, teaching staff and community for their efforts.

Ms Aviston reported that there had been a five month period of consultation following a request from the Governing Body. There had been efforts to attract new pupils, but there were now only three on roll with no prospect of any new pupils in the foreseeable future. No representations had been made during the formal consultation process and she highlighted the report's recommendations.

Councillor Renner Thompson presented the report from FACS OSC, who had had no objections. It had been noted that the proposals had originated from the school itself.

Mr Henry then reminded members of the legal advice previously given to Cabinet, with particular reference to the relevant advice on rural schools (copy attached to the signed minutes).

Members confirmed that they were happy that the process had been properly followed.

On being put to the vote there voted **FOR: 8; AGAINST: 0, ABSTENTIONS: 0.** It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:-

(a) the proposal to close Netherton Northside First School as set out in the Statutory Proposal with effect from 31 August 2018 be approved:

(b) it be noted that Netherton Northside First School is listed on the Designation of Rural Primary Schools (England) Order 2017 and therefore consideration be given to the points set out in paragraph 10 of the report;

(c) the impact of the proposal set out in the Statutory Proposal attached at Appendix 1 of the report be noted;

(d) taking into account the Department for Education's (DfE) 'Guidance for decision-makers: Statutory guidance for decision-makers deciding prescribed alteration and establishment and discontinuance proposals, April 2016' and the 'Opening and closing maintained schools; Statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers April 2016' attached to the report at Appendix 2a and Appendix 2b respectively, approval be given to approve the proposal without modification;

(e) in reaching this decision, Cabinet has taken into account the guidance set out in 'Guidance for decision-makers: Statutory guidance for decision-makers deciding prescribed alteration and establishment and discontinuance proposals, April 2016' in relation to 'Rural Schools and the presumption against closure' (refer to para. 10 of the report); and

(f) the report of the Family and Children's Services OSC be noted.

The Chair then adjourned the meeting so that the decision, and the reasons for it, could be written up. On the meeting being reconvened, the Leader read out the following statement:-

The statutory proposal to close Netherton Northside First School should be adopted for the following reasons:

1) Netherton Northside First School will have only 2 pupils on roll at the school in September 2018.

2) In spite of the efforts of the Governing Body and staff, the school has not been able to attract additional pupils to the school that would both assist in providing an improved educational experience for existing pupils and support the viability of the school.

3) There have been no viable alternatives put forward to the closure during the informal and formal stages of consultation on the proposal to close the School.

4) There are 5 alternative schools between a distance of approximately 5 to 8 miles of Netherton village that would be able to offer places to the pupils according to parental preference, including a choice of faith schools.

5) Although the school building is not used as a community facility, Cabinet acknowledge that the loss of any school has an impact on the local community to a greater or lesser extent.

6) For the reasons set out above and in the light of the statutory guidance on 'Rural Schools and the presumption against closure', Cabinet agree with the Governing Body of Netherton Northside First School that it is in the best educational interests of the pupils on roll at the school that it closes with effect from 31 August 2018.

The consultation on this proposal has been extensive, reasonable and robust.

(3) Elective Home Education

The report informed the Cabinet and the community about elective home education, the rise in parents choosing to home educate in Northumberland since September 2016 and the actions taken by officers to ensure children are well educated and safeguarded (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix C, along with the report of the Family and Children's Services OSC circulated at the meeting).

Councillor Daley reported that there had been significant growth in this area, with 233 pupils now electively home educated. The report highlighted the real concerns involving such issues as socialisation, participation in higher education and radicalisation.

Ms McEvoy advised members that numbers were increasing both in Northumberland and nationally,and the issue was becoming of increasing importance to the DfE and Ofsted. There were concerns about the quality of

education being provided at home, and also about the numbers of children unknown to the Authority.

Councillor Renner Thompson reported that the Family and Children's Services OSC had had grave concerns about the issue but recognised that there was little which could be done until the expected legislation was brought into force. Future costs to be factored in had also been the subject of discussion.

Members supported the need for ongoing monitoring of the situation and queried what the engagement process was with those parents who chose home education. Ms McEvoy advised that advice and support was always offered, including a home visit, but there was no duty on the Authority to assess the quality of education provided.

Members were concerned at the numbers of children involved and the unknowns,and also at the suggestion that some schools might encourage home education as a way of dealing with disruptive pupils. Concern was also expressed about the number of SEN pupils being home educated and it was felt that the reasons for this needed to be examined.

It was suggested that Scrutiny should keep a watching brief on this and perhaps report back in six months. Councillor Renner Thompson advised that the legislation would not have been implemented by then, but it would be included in the Committee's work programme for review at the appropriate time.

RESOLVED that:-

(a) the concerns regarding potential impact on safeguarding and education outcomes for children be noted;

(b) the resource implications of proposed changes to national policy be understood; and

(c) the report of the Family and Children's Services OSC be noted.

17. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR of HR and OD & DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Apprenticeship Pay Proposal for the Apprenticeship Programme for Northumberland County Council

The report sought Cabinet approval to a pay grading system for the Apprenticeship Programme for Northumberland County Council which

reflected the entrant's age, experience and pathway level at which they joined the Council and a fair pay progression throughout until graduation from the apprenticeship programme (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix D, along with the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC circulated at the meeting).

Councillor Oliver advised that the Authority was leading the way on this proposal, which would provide additional structure for the apprenticeship programme. Members agreed this was an exciting way to take forward the workforce programme, particularly for older young people.

RESOLVED that:-

(a) the current pay arrangements for new Level 2 and Level 3 apprentices based on the National Minimum and National Living Wage arrangements be formalised;

(b) a new pay structure be adopted which reflects the marketplace, for new entrants to apprenticeships at Level 4, 5, 6 and 7 that aligns with the job evaluation scheme; and

(c) the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC be noted.

18. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PLACE

Markets Strategy 2018-2023

The report provided Cabinet with an update on achievements against the 2010 - 15 strategy action plan, an update on the process taken to review the strategy and sought approval of the proposed Markets Strategy 2018 - 2023 (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix E, along with the report of the Communities and Place OSC circulated at the meeting).

The report was introduced by Councillor Sanderson who expressed support for the Markets Strategy, and advised that a watching brief would be maintained as trends, customers and traders were constantly changing. Some interesting and innovative ideas were being put forward and the Markets Manager was ambitious and keen to innovate.

Councillor Reid referred to the report from Communities and Place OSC and drew members' attention to the comments made. Things did move very quickly in the retail world so the Authority needed to be open to the possibility of future change or face the risk of some markets failing.

RESOLVED that:-

(a) the Markets Strategy 2018 - 2023 and the Markets Strategy Action Plan be approved; and

(b) the report of the Communities and Place OSC and the comments made be noted.

19. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PLACE

North Northumberland Coast Neighbourhood Plan

The report sought approval to formally 'make' the North Northumberland Coast Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan passed independent examination on 22 February 2018. A local referendum held in the Parishes of Bamburgh, Beadnell and North Sunderland on 24 May 2018 returned an overwhelming majority vote in favour of using the Plan to make decisions on planning applications. The Council was now obliged by statute to make the Neighbourhood Plan unless it considered that doing so would breach European Union obligations (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix F).

The report was presented by Councillor Riddle who advised that this was the fifth Neighbourhood Plan to pass referendum. There had been overwhelming support for the Plan with 90% of those who voted, voting in favour of it.

Members were advised that this was the first Plan to contain a policy on principal residency, an innovative approach which meant that proposals for new housing would only be supported where the dwelling was occupied only as a principal residence.

The Leader commented that this demonstrated the power of the Neighbourhood Plan process and he acknowledged the work involved in getting to this stage. He credited the working group involved for their approach.

RESOLVED that:-

(a) the referendum outcome of 24 May 2018 be noted;

(b) approval be given to formally 'make' the North Northumberland Coast Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with section 38A(4)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004;

(c) the decision statement (attached at Appendix 1) required under Regulation 19 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 as amended be approved; and

(d) the North Northumberland Coast Neighbourhood Plan and the decision statement be published on the Council's website and publicised elsewhere in order to bring it to the attention of people who live, work or carry out business in the neighbourhood area; and the decision statement be sent to the qualifying body and anyone else who asked to be notified of the decision.

20. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Write Offs 2017-18

The report provided details of debt written off during the 2017-18 financial year (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix G).

Councillor Oliver advised that write offs had slightly increased this year due to the inclusion of Homes for Northumberland, however, overdue debts had fallen which was good news. He was also pleased to highlight that the Authority had the best council tax collection rates in the north east and a high business rate collection. Overall, the picture was good.

RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.

21. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PROPERTY AND CAPITAL PROGRAMMING

Summary of New Capital Proposals considered by Officer Capital Strategy Group

The report summarised proposed amendments to the Capital Programme considered by the officer Capital Strategy Group at its meeting held on 8 June 2018 (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix H).

RESOLVED that the following recommendations be made to Council:-

Cambois Primary GSHP: Approve the new budget requirement of £236,049, of which £40,021 to funded by the use of SCIP grant and the balance through the renewable energy programme budget in the MTFP;

Seahouses Primary GSHP: Approve the new budget requirement of £326,133, of which £57,150 to be funded by the use of SCIP grant and the balance through the renewable energy programme budget in the MTFP;

Rothbury Fire Station GSHP: Approve the revised budget requirement of £98,547 – previously £76,215 to be funded through the renewable energy programme budget in the MTFP.

22. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

(a) That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items on the Agenda as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act, and

(b) That the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure for the following reasons:-

Agenda Item	Paragraph of Part I of Schedule 12A
12(1-2)	3 - Information relating to (the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the interest in disclosure because disclosure would adversely affect the Authority's ability to conduct its affairs.

23. REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

(1) Enterprise Zone - Ashwood Business Park

The purpose of the report was to enable the Cabinet to make a formal recommendation to the County Council in respect of the Council contribution of £2.6 million towards the Ashwood Business Park, Enterprise Zone Infrastructure works (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix I, coloured pink and marked Not for Publication, along with the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC circulated at the meeting).

RESOLVED that:-

(a) recommendations 1-5 as detailed in the report be approved; and

(b) the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC be noted.

(2) Enterprise Zone - Bates Terminal Blyth - Infrastructure Works

The purpose of the report was to enable the Cabinet to make a formal recommendation to the County Council in respect of the Council loan to the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) of £2.95 million towards the Port of Blyth, Bates Terminal, Enterprise Zone Infrastructure works (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix J, coloured pink and marked Not for Publication, along with the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC circulated at the meeting).

RESOLVED that:-

(a) recommendations 1-5 as detailed in the report be approved; and

(b) the report of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC be noted.

CHAIR……..

DATE…….