

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET MEETING

Tuesday, 16 April 2024

PRESENT: Councillor M Gannon

Councillors: C Donovan, J Adams, A Douglas, L Green,
G Haley, J McElroy, M McNestry and B Oliphant

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors: C Buckley, K Dodds and L Kirton

C147 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Brain.

C148 MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting held on 19 March 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

C149 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

C150 COUNCIL TAX PREMIUMS

Consideration has been given to approve the legislative Second Homes Premium provided for in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 which billing authorities may charge.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the application of the Second Homes Premium from May 2025 be approved.

The decision above has been made for the following reasons:

- (a) Application of the Second Homes Premium will deliver additional council tax income for the council and its precepting bodies.
- (b) It will further discourage the holding of empty properties.

C151 ENERGY GRANTS FOR SWIMMING POOLS

Consideration has been given to an urgent decision which accepted a grant of £0.356m from Sport England for energy improvement works at Dunston Leisure

Centre.

Consideration has also been given to request grant approval for £4.148m grant to install low carbon heat pumps at Dunston Leisure Centre and Blaydon Leisure and Primary Care Centre. Further consideration has been given to request approval to award design contracts to Equans Ltd for low carbon heat pumps.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the urgent decision taken to accept a £0.356m grant from Sport England for energy efficiency works to Dunston Leisure Centre be noted.
- (ii) Cabinet give approval to accept the grant of £4.148m towards energy works at various swimming pools.
- (iii) Cabinet give approval to add £0.395m to the 2024/25 and 2025/26 capital programme, to provide the required 12% match funding.
- (iv) Cabinet give approval to appoint Equans Ltd as the contractor to undertake both the detailed design work for energy works at various swimming pools, at a budgeted cost of £0.475m.
- (v) Delegated approval of final terms, conditions and costs of the design contract is given to the Strategic Director of Economy, Innovation and Growth, in consultation with Strategic Director, Resources is agreed.

For the following reasons:

- (a) To improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions of the swimming pools in question.
- (b) To support the future viability of swimming pools in Gateshead.
- (c) To support the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan to achieve net zero emissions by 2030.

C152

GENERALIST HOME CARE - RECOMMISSION OF NEW CONTRACTS

Consideration has been given to approve the procurement of a new Generalist Home Care service in Gateshead to meet current and growing future demands to achieve our 'Home First' vision.

RESOLVED:

- (i) Cabinet endorsed the new model and associated costings to support the implementation of new Generalist Home Care services in Gateshead.
- (ii) Cabinet approved the project to progress to the next procurement stage.

The above decision has been made for the following reasons:

- (a) To support securing the required capacity to meet current and future demands for these services.
- (b) To achieve the ASC demand interventions included in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy over the next five years.
- (c) To meet the ECC charter standards that will improve terms and conditions for Care Workers under these contracts.

C153 PROPOSALS FOR SCHOOL TERM DATES 2025/26

Consideration has been given to approve the school term dates for 2025/26.

RESOLVED:

- (i) Cabinet approved the school term dates for 2025/26.

The above decision has been made for the following reasons:

- (a) To allow future planning to take place.
- (b) Make effective and efficient use of local authority resources.

C154 GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Consideration has been given to approve the discontinuation of the provision of facilities for the travelling community at the existing site at Baltic Road. Consideration has also been given to a proposal to demolish the buildings on site so that the land can be appropriated and managed accordingly.

RESOLVED:

- (i) Cabinet approves the permanent closure of the travellers' site at Baltic Road, Gateshead and approves the intention to conclude the proposed redundancy as reported with subsequent cessation of the service.
- (ii) Cabinet request that the Service Director, Property and Assets take back the management of the land associated with the site.

The above decision has been made for the following reason:

- (a) There is no longer demand for the provision of temporary and permanent stopping facilities for travellers at this location.

C155 CLIMATE EMERGENCY UPDATE, ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY UPDATE AND BIODIVERSITY DUTY

Consideration has been given to:

1. Note the results of the independent environmental Audit.
2. Note the carbon monitoring report summary.
3. Note the ongoing activities that are progressing towards our climate and environmental sustainability targets.
4. Note the Council's Biodiversity Duty and agree to a biodiversity report of the Council's activities.
5. Recommend full Council approve the amended wording to the Council's Environmental Policy.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Council is recommended to approve the amended wording to the Council's Environmental Policy.
- (ii) That Council is recommended to approve the work to produce the first Biodiversity Report by Winter 2024.

The above decision has been made for the following reasons:

- (a) To progress towards the Council's carbon neutrality commitment.
- (b) To fulfil the Council's biodiversity duty.

C156

COMMUNITIES AND VOLUNTEERING SERVICE

Consideration has been given to seek approval to move the Communities and Volunteering Service and its budget from Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities to Public Health and Wellbeing.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Council is recommended to approve the proposed move of the Communities and Volunteering Service from Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities to Public Health and Wellbeing.
- (ii) That the Council is recommended to approve an administrative budget virement of £0.607m.

The above decision has been made for the following reasons:

- (a) To refocus the Council's efforts around poverty, inequality, and socio-economic disadvantage and to support the Council to deliver its commitment to ensure a healthy standard of living for all, in accordance with international law on economic and social rights.
- (b) To support the Director of Public Health as the responsibilities of this role broaden.

C157

HOME ENERGY CONSERVATION ACT REPORT 2023

Consideration has been given to approve the submission of the Council's return to government in relation to the Home Energy Conservation Act (1995).

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Home Energy Conservation Act Report be approved.
- (ii) That Cabinet agree to the Report being submitted to the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero.
- (iii) That Cabinet agree to the publication of Appendix 2 on the Council's website.

The above decision has been made for the following reasons:

- (a) To meet the Council's statutory obligations under HECA (1995).
- (b) To continue improving the energy efficiency of both housing and non-domestic buildings in Gateshead.
- (c) To reduce CO2 emissions from the domestic sector.

C158

COUNCIL TAX AND NON-DOMESTIC RATES - TRANSFER OF UNCOLLECTABLE AMOUNTS

Consideration has been given to approve the transfer of outstanding balances from Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) accounts where all possible recovery action has been taken and the balances are now considered to be uncollectable.

RESOLVED:

- (i) Cabinet approves the transfer of 1,419 uncollectable accounts in respect of Council Tax balances totalling £1,824,068.25.
- (ii) Cabinet approves the transfer of 107 uncollectable accounts of Non-Domestic Rates balances totalling £940,521.03.
- (iii) That the action taken under delegated powers to transfer Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates accounts with balances of £500 or less identified in paragraph 8 of the report is noted.

The above decision has been made for the following reasons:

- (a) To ensure the effective management of the Council's resources.
- (b) To ensure that the Council Accounts accurately reflect the correct financial position.

C159

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the remaining business in accordance with paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

C160

PROJECT FUNDING FOR GATESHEAD ENERGY COMPANY

Consideration has been given to agree a £0.61m grant to Gateshead Energy Company for Phase 1 of the Old Fold Heat network. Consideration was also given to agree two additional loans to Gateshead Energy Company:

- £0.7m for Old Fold Phase 1 heat network, from existing capital programme.
- £0.5m for GB Lubricants connection, as an addition to the capital programme.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the grant to Gateshead Energy Company of £0.61m from the £2.85m of Heat Network Investment Programme grants held by the Council for the Old Fold Phase 1 scheme be approved.
- (ii) Cabinet approves the request that the Council issue a 40 year loan of £0.7m to Gateshead Energy Company, for the Old Fold Phase 1 scheme.
- (iii) Cabinet approves the request that the Council issue a 10 year loan of £0.5m to Gateshead Energy Company, for the GB Lubricants connection, and to add this additional amount to the capital programme.

The above decision has been made for the following reasons:

- (a) To allow Gateshead Energy Company to continue to grow and expand, to deliver the Council's objectives.
- (b) To reduce cost of energy to homes and businesses, to support Thrive agenda.
- (c) To reduce carbon emissions of homes and community facilities, to support the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan.
- (d) To prove concepts for larger scale delivery of heat network to Council homes, to support Climate Emergency targets and to stimulate green economy jobs and skill, in line with the Economic Development Strategy.

Copies of all reports and appendices referred to in these minutes are available online and in the minute file. Please note access restrictions apply for exempt business as defined by the Access to Information Act.

The decisions referred to in these minutes will come into force and be implemented after the expiry of 3 working days after the publication date of the minutes identified below unless the matters are 'called in'.

Publication date: 18 April 2024

Chair.....