

Local Government Act 1972

Borough of North Tyneside

27 June 2013

At the meeting of the Council of the Borough of North Tyneside duly convened and held on Thursday 27 June 2013 at 6.00 pm in The Chamber at Quadrant at which a quorum of Members were present, that is to say: -

Present

Councillor Janet Hunter (In the Chair)
N Redfearn (Elected Mayor)

Councillor A Arkle	Councillor N J Huscroft
Councillor A Austin	Councillor C Johnson
Councillor G Bell	Councillor D W Lilly
Councillor P Brooks	Councillor F Lott
Councillor B Burdis	Councillor M L Madden
Councillor W Caithness	Councillor P Mason
Councillor K A Conroy	Councillor D McGarr
Councillor D E Corkey	Councillor Mrs P McIntyre
Councillor A Cowie	Councillor J McLaughlin
Councillor S Cox	Councillor Mrs S E Mortimer
Councillor E N Darke	Councillor T Mulvenna
Councillor L Darke	Councillor P Oliver
Councillor S Day	Councillor D Ord
Councillor M Finlay	Councillor J O'Shea
Councillor C A Gambling	Councillor C B Pickard
Councillor R Glendon	Councillor J Pickard
Councillor S Graham	Councillor M G Rankin
Councillor I Grayson	Councillor D Sarin
Councillor M A Green	Councillor L A Spillard
Councillor J L L Harrison	Councillor J Stirling
Councillor E F J Hodson	Councillor A Waggott-Fairley
Councillor John Hunter	Councillor J I Walker
Councillor M Huscroft	Councillor Mrs J A Wallace
Councillor M J Huscroft	Councillor G C Westwater

C23/06/13 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Allan, K Barrie, C Davis, S Hill, L Miller, G Madden, J Munby, A Normand and K Osborne.

C24/06/13 Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were made:

Item 5 – Creation of a Combined Authority

Councillor M A Green – disclosable pecuniary interest – she is a member of the Tyne and Wear Integrated Transport Authority [TWITA].

Councillor E Hodson – disclosable pecuniary interest – he is a member of Tyne and Wear Integrated Transport Authority [TWITA].

Councillor F Lott – disclosable pecuniary interest – he is a member of Tyne and Wear Integrated Transport Authority [TWITA].

Item 7 – Applications for University Places

Councillor A Austin – non-registerable personal interest – son attends University.

Councillor D Corkey – non-registerable personal interest – Associate Lecturer at Northumbria University.

C25/06/13 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 16 May 2013, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chair.

C26/06/13 Motions

No Motions were received for consideration at this meeting.

C27/06/13 Creation of a Combined Authority

[Councillors M Green, E Hodson and F Lott withdrew from the meeting for the duration of the discussion on this item.]

The Council received a report which detailed the current position in relation to the extensive area wide Governance Review undertaken in relation to the creation of a Combined Authority for the areas comprising of Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, Northumberland, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland.

On 24 June 2013 Cabinet had endorsed the findings of the Governance Review and specifically to the establishing of a Combined Authority that would improve the exercise of statutory functions in relation to economic growth, skills and transport across the region. Cabinet had also agreed to the submission of the Scheme that would create the Combined Authority to Government, and had noted the proposed functions

that would be shared between the Authority and the Combined Authority and those undertaken solely by the Combined Authority.

Council was now asked to endorse the decisions taken by Cabinet on 24 June 2013.

It was moved by Councillor C B Pickard and seconded by Councillor G Bell that:

‘Council:

- (a) endorses the findings of the Governance Review document at Appendix A, and specifically that establishing a Combined Authority will improve the exercise of statutory functions in relation to economic growth, skills and transport in the Combined Authority’s area, leading to an enhancement of the economic conditions and performance in the area;
- (b) endorses Cabinet’s decision to submit to the Secretary of State the Scheme for the establishment of a Combined Authority on the basis of the Scheme at Appendix 1 of the Governance Review report, and notes the proposed transfer and sharing of the functions contained within the Scheme, as detailed in paragraphs 1.8.3 to 1.8.9 of the Cabinet report at Appendix C;
- (c) notes that Durham and Northumberland will be asked to agree to transfer their Local Transport Powers and Duties to the Combined Authority, as set out in Appendix D;
- (d) notes that the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Elected Mayor, will be permitted to agree the terms of any documentation required to enable the Authority to become a constituent authority of the Combined Authority including the constitutional arrangements and operating agreement in so far that this does not place additional financial commitments on the Authority, and that the Head of Law and Governance and the Strategic Director of Finance and Resources are authorised to complete the relevant documentation and take all steps necessary to give effect to the above recommendations; and
- (e) notes that further reports may be received, as and when necessary, once the full financial and governance arrangements have been finalised.

The motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 33 votes to 7 votes.

C28/06/13 Co-Deputy Chair Vacancies on Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing Sub-Committee and Economic Prosperity and Housing Sub-Committee

The Council received a report which had been prepared following the receipt of letters giving notice of the resignations of Councillor J Walker as a Co-Deputy Chair of the Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing Sub Committee and of Councillor A Normand as a Co-Deputy Chair of the Economic Prosperity and Housing Sub Committee, with effect from 27 June 2013.

It was noted that Councillor Walker was to replace Councillor Normand as a member of the Economic Prosperity and Housing Sub Committee also with effect from 27 June 2013.

The Council was requested to make appointments to the two vacant positions of Co-Deputy Chair.

It was moved by Councillor B Pickard and seconded by Councillor J O'Shea that:

“Council:

- (1) notes the change in membership of the Economic Prosperity and Housing Sub Committee;
- (2) appoints Councillor A Normand as Co-Deputy Chair of the Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing Sub Committee; and
- (3) appoints Councillor J Walker as Co-Deputy Chair of the Economic Prosperity and Housing Sub Committee.”

The motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 35 votes 0 votes.

C29/06/13 Applications for University Places

[Councillor D Corkey withdrew from the meeting for the duration of the discussion on this item.]

In accordance with a motion agreed by Council on 29 November 2012, the Council received a report explaining the circumstances which had led to a reduction of the number of young people from North Tyneside applying for university places.

It was moved by Councillor I Grayson and seconded by Councillor M Madden that:

“Council: (1) notes the contents of the report; and
(2) agrees that the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning meet the Chair and Co-Deputy Chairs of the Children, Education and Skills Sub Committee to consider ways in which the Council can encourage more young people to apply for university places.”

The motion, on being put to the meeting, was unanimously agreed.

C30/06/13 Urgent Report - Health and Wellbeing Governance

The Chair announced that the Deputy Chair of Council had agreed to the report being considered as a matter of urgency at this meeting to enable the Council to determine the position regarding voting rights for members of the Health and Wellbeing Board prior to the next meeting of the Board, which was due to take place on 23 July 2013.

This report set out the comments of the Health and Wellbeing Board in response to the Council's proposal that only the Elected Mayor and/or Councillors serving as Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board may vote at the Board's meetings.

It was moved by Councillor L Spillard and seconded by Councillor A Waggott-Fairley that:

“Council confirms its previous proposal that only the Elected Mayor and/or Councillors serving as Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board may vote at the Board’s meetings.”

The motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 37 votes to 10 votes.

C31/06/13 Common Seal

Resolved that the Common Seal be affixed to all deeds and documents required for carrying into effect the various decisions of the Council made since its last meeting.

C32/06/13 Chair’s Announcements

The Chair informed Council that her charities for the year would be the ‘Injured Players Foundation’ - a rugby based charity helping injured players; and ‘Help for Heroes’.

She also informed Council of her visit to the Friendship Games in Poland, along with pupils from Churchill Community College.

C33/06/13 Mayor’s Announcements

The Council was advised that written details of Mayor Redfearn’s announcements were available at the meeting on request.

C34/06/13 Questions by Members of the Council

The Chair informed Council she had agreed that a combined response would be given to questions 1 and 7 as they were similar questions and also to questions 2 and 5 for the same reason. Each questioner would have the right to ask a supplementary question.

1. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor D Ord

‘At the Council AGM we were told that the Mayor had already implemented her promise to have wardens in place in all sheltered housing. Could the Mayor inform us of how many there are, how she recruited these people so quickly and which budget did she use to pay them?’

7. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor P Mason

‘What will be the total costs of the new wardens in the sheltered accommodation, the posts for which have recently been advertised, and how will those costs be funded?’

Councillor J Harrison replied on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

‘I am delighted to inform Council that the Elected Mayor has delivered on her first promise to have wardens reinstated in all of our sheltered housing schemes.

The Elected Mayor knows from listening to our residents just how much their presence is valued by our residents.

We currently have 24 full time (equivalent) members of staff working close to the borough's 26 sheltered housing schemes. The Mayor has asked officers to recruit five new Sheltered Housing Officers which will allow the Council to put in place a much improved scheme which will meet the needs of our residents.

It is important to understand this because of the changing roles of the Wardens, as this gives the opportunity to move the role on to become Sheltered Housing Officers who will be looking after our older people in various ways, including inspecting their homes, giving advice and support, carrying out Risk Assessments, supporting individual living and undertaking Tenancy Reviews.

The cost of the implementation of this service for the current financial year is approximately £70,000 with an annual cost of £138,000 thereafter.

This cost is being met from the Housing Revenue Account in 2013/14.'

Councillor Ord asked the following supplementary question:

"So you are going to have five new Sheltered Housing Officers, and as care staff are liable to have high absenteeism rates, how will you be able to cover staff absences?"

Councillor J Harrison replied as follows:

"We will end up with 29 members of staff and there will be 26 schemes. A rota will be put together to ensure there will be adequate cover between 8.00 am and 4.00 pm.

Councillor Mason asked the following supplementary question

"Will there be a review of staffing requirements when the programme is complete?"

Councillor J Harrison replied as follows:

"No. We have introduced Sheltered Housing Officers to address future needs and to improve the service and this will include carrying out Tenancy Reviews, knowledge transfer, helping to decant as required. The role has moved on from a Warden role to a Sheltered Housing Officer role. If we've got this right there will be no need to carry out a review."

2. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor D Ord

'Before the election the Mayor pledged to go through the Council's finances line-by-line. Can the Mayor inform us if the current administration now understands the real financial position of the Authority and what it is?'

5. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor M J Huscroft

'Has the Mayor opened the books and gone through them line by line as she had promised in her election campaign? What did she find and were there any surprises?'

Councillor R Glendon replied on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

“You both asked the question at the end about the financial position of the authority, the answer is there is a £21 million black-hole in the accounts.”

Councillor Ord asked the following supplementary question:

“At Finance Sub-Committee we were told there was a surplus, so are you saying that information was incorrect?”

Councillor Glindon replied as follows:

‘I am talking about this year’s account’s not last year’s.’

Councillor Huscroft asked the following supplementary question:

“Will the Mayor agree to support giving financial information to all Members so we can have budgetary scrutiny?”

Councillor Glindon replied on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

‘The information is available to all Members on the Internet. You can access financial reports from there’

3. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor N J Huscroft

‘The agreement that the first meeting of a scrutiny committee would be held at 6.00 pm to ascertain the best timing for members so that they could attend and make their contribution to scrutiny in the future. This appears not to have been done, despite agreement by the Full Council. Could the Mayor give us her opinion on the necessity of Chairs of committees keeping to Council decisions?’

The Elected Mayor replied as follows:

‘It is my understanding that the Council, at its Annual Meeting, agreed that the first meeting of each of the Council’s Committees for 2013/14 would commence at 6.00 pm, in consultation with the Chair, and thereafter should be at the discretion of each committee.

I understand that each of the Scrutiny Committees have agreed to hold their meetings at 6.00pm for 2013/14.

It is not the role of the Elected Mayor to preside over the Committee Chairs.’

Councillor Huscroft asked the following supplementary question

“Is the Mayor saying she does not have a remit over what the Council decides?”

The Elected Mayor replied as follows:

“Not over scrutiny matters.”

4. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor M J Huscroft

'Has the contract for Wallsend joint service centre been signed off and when?'

Councillor E N Darke replied on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

'Yes, it was entered into on 14 March 2013.'

Councillor Huscroft asked the following supplementary question:

"How many times has the Cabinet Member met with New River to ensure the timescales are on track, as I am led to believe they are 3 months behind schedule?"

Councillor Darke replied as follows:

"I have never met New River, but the Mayor has and I understand we hope to take control of the Centre in January 2014 and there will be an official opening after that."

6. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor M Finlay

'What is the position regarding Wallsend Park and Hall Grounds; how far behind schedule is the project, what is being done about it and when can we expect completion?'

Councillor E N Darke replied on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

'Kier North Tyneside are currently reviewing their programme and working to bring the schedule back on track for completion as planned in September 2013.'

I've been overseeing the process for the last 5 weeks with the intention of seeing it back on track.

Phase 1 is now open, the play area is very popular, the Park Pavilion is being used by the bowlers and the café is being fitted out by the Parks team in preparation for the opening on 7 July 2013.'

Councillor Finlay asked the following supplementary question:

"As part of the work a café has been built in the Park and it is now completed. When will it be open, who will run it and what are the likely opening times?"

Councillor Darke replied as follows:

"It will open on 7 July as I have already answered."

8. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor D Lilly

'Has the Mayor reduced her allowance by £10,000 pa, this being the sum by which the Labour Group proposed that the previous Mayor should reduce her allowance?'

The Elected Mayor replied as follows:

“The Elected Mayor’s allowance is recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel and I am not proposing changes to the allowance as that would be unfair on whoever follows me.

However, on 12 August, I will make a recommendation to Cabinet to ask that £5,000 of my allowance is transferred to the Young Mayor’s budget to replace the £5,000 you removed from that budget; and also £5,000 to support the organisation of different social activities for older people in the Borough, whom I dearly care about.

So I will reduce my allowance to be spent on what I consider to be worthwhile causes.”

Councillor Lilly asked the following supplementary question

“Why haven’t you done what you said you were going to do for two years?”

The Elected Mayor replied as follows:

“I have just told you what I’m going to do. £10,000 from my allowance will go to good causes.”