

Local Government Act 1972

Borough of North Tyneside

24 October 2013

At the meeting of the Council of the Borough of North Tyneside duly convened and held on Thursday 24 October 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 J Allan	Councillor C Johnson
Councillor A Arkle	Councillor D W Lilly
Councillor A Austin	Councillor F Lott
Councillor K Barrie	Councillor W Lott
Councillor G Bell	Councillor G Madden
Councillor B Burdis	Councillor M L Madden
Councillor C Burdis	Councillor P Mason
Councillor W Caithness	Councillor D McGarr
Councillor K A Conroy	Councillor Mrs P McIntyre
Councillor A Cowie	Councillor A McMullen
Councillor S Cox	Councillor Mrs S E Mortimer
Councillor E N Darke	Councillor T Mulvenna
Councillor L Darke	Councillor A Normand
Councillor S Day	Councillor P Oliver
Councillor M Finlay	Councillor D Ord
Councillor R Glindon	Councillor K Osborne
Councillor S Graham	Councillor J O'Shea
Councillor I Grayson	Councillor C B Pickard
Councillor M A Green	Councillor J Pickard
Councillor S Hill	Councillor D Sarin
Councillor E F J Hodson	Councillor L A Spillard
Councillor John Hunter	Councillor J Stirling
Councillor M Huscroft	Councillor A Waggott-Fairley
Councillor M J Huscroft	Councillor Mrs J A Wallace
Councillor N J Huscroft	Councillor J Walker

C74/10/13 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Brooks, D Corkey, C Davis, J Harrison, J McLaughlin, L Miller, J Munby, M Rankin and G Westwater.

C75/10/13 North Tyneside and Corporate Parenting

In introducing this item to the full Council meeting, Mrs N Redfearn, Elected Mayor, welcomed representatives from the Children in Care Council, and looked forward to receiving a presentation about looked after children in North Tyneside.

The Mayor explained that she had a long and involved interest in the way the Council provided services for looked after children, and she reminded all elected Members of their important role as corporate parents in promoting the welfare of and improving outcomes for looked after children.

Paul Cook, Head of Preventative and Safeguarding Service, introduced Katie Duncanson, Georgia Duncanson and Candy Owens, representing the Children in Care Council and Jane Pickthall, Head of the Virtual School for looked after children. He also introduced Vicki Nixon and Toni McMullen from the Council's Preventative and Safeguarding team.

Members were presented with a short DVD featuring some young looked after children in North Tyneside, and an explanation by the young people present on what is done to promote their education, health and general welfare. The Council also received a presentation giving an analysis of population, trends and outcomes with regard to looked after children in North Tyneside.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions of the representatives from the Children in Care Council and North Tyneside Council officers.

The Chair thanked all of the representatives from the Children in Care Council for providing a very interesting presentation and the efforts of the young people and she also welcomed them back in the future.

C76/10/13 Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were made:

Item 6 – Motions (Motion 2)

Councillor S Cox – registerable personal interest – owns a house which is rented
Councillor P McIntyre – registerable personal interest – owns a house which is rented
Councillor J Stirling – registerable personal interest – owns a house which is rented
Councillor J Wallace – registerable personal interest – owns a house which is rented

Item 12 – Members’ Questions – (Questions 4 and 5)

Councillor M Madden – registerable personal interest – a trustee of the Wallsend People’s Centre and Memorial Hall.

C77/10/13 Minutes

The accuracy of Minute C69/09/13 was raised by Councillor D Lilly in respect of the wording of his supplementary question to question 15.

Councillor E Hodson also raised the accuracy of the wording to the response to his supplementary question to question 17 provided by Councillor F Lott, Cabinet Member for Economic Development.

Councillors I Grayson and F Lott each clarified the position with regard to the wording of these matters.

Resolved that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 26 September 2013, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chair.

C78/10/13 2012/13 Annual Audit Letter

The Council was requested to note the 2012/13 Annual Audit Letter from the Authority’s appointed auditors, Mazars. The full Letter, covering the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013, was attached as Appendix A to the report.

The District Auditor had issued an unqualified opinion on the Authority’s accounts for 2012/13. In the report Mazars had noted that “The draft financial statements were of a high quality overall; as were the supporting working papers”.

The Audit Completion Report presented to Council on 26 September 2013 and to the Audit Committee on 25 September 2013 included more detailed information in respect of the findings of the audit of the 2012/13 Annual Financial Report.

The District Auditor had issued an unqualified Value for Money conclusion, confirming that the Authority had adequate arrangements in place for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. No specific recommendations relating to Value for Money were made in the Letter.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions of Mr Nicklin.

The Elected Mayor thanked Mr Nicklin for his work with the Council and wished him well in his retirement.

It was moved by Councillor R Glindon and seconded by Councillor J O’Shea that:

“Council notes the 2012/13 Annual Audit Letter.”

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

C79/10/13 Motions

(i) Motion with notice, signed by Councillors J Allan, J O'Shea, C Davis, G Bell and E Darke

It was moved by Councillor S Graham and seconded by Councillor G Bell that:

"The rising cost of living and falling income is causing genuine problems for people with their finances. Among those who borrow from high cost credit companies on average borrow around £326 per month. The interest paid on this money is punishing; many are unable to make the repayments.

This Council invites Cabinet to block access to Payday loan websites through the public PC's in libraries and other Council buildings across North Tyneside and from its employees' computers unless and until the industry, including its advertising practices, is effectively controlled.

This Authority pledges to investigate the use of planning law to regulate the growth and spread of Payday loan companies and pay weekly furniture providers who force maintenance and insurance agreements on customers, on our high streets.

This action should be taken to enable the Authority to protect people from taking out high interest loans from companies that fail to check that they can repay the loan, often leading to them becoming trapped in a spiral of debt.

This Council is committed to strongly support recognised Credit Unions within our Area as a sustainable alternative to high cost, short term credit.

We also call on the Government to legislate and effectively regulate Payday lenders and protect our communities from the growth in easy debt to bring closure on austerity as early as possible".

Two Members present requested a recorded vote on the motion in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13 (5).

Votes for the motion

Mrs N Redfearn, Elected Mayor, Councillors J M Allan, A Arkle, G Bell, B Burdis, C Burdis, W Caithness, K Conroy, A Cowie, S L Cox, E N Darke, L Darke, S Day, M Finlay, R Glindon, S Graham, I Grayson, M A Green, S Hill, Janet Hunter, John Hunter, M Huscroft, M J Huscroft, N J Huscroft, C Johnson, F Lott, W Lott, G Madden, M Madden, D McGarr, A McMullen, T Mulvenna, A Normand, P Oliver, D Ord, K Osborne, J O'Shea, C B Pickard, J Pickard, L A Spillard, J J Stirling, A Waggott-Fairley and J Walker.

Votes against the motion

Councillors A Austin, K Barrie, E Hodson, D Lilly, P Mason, P McIntyre, S Mortimer, D Sarin and Mrs J Wallace.

The motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 43 votes to 9 votes.

(ii) Motion with notice, signed by Councillors J Allan, J O'Shea, C Davis, G Bell and E Darke

[N.B. Councillors S Cox, P McIntyre, J Stirling and J Wallace withdrew from the meeting for the duration of the discussion and voting on this item.]

It was moved by Councillor G Bell and seconded by Councillor W Lott that:

" This Council welcomes the recent announcement made by the Leader of the Labour Party at his party's recent annual conference that his party will abolish the change to the benefits payments that is now universally called "the bedroom tax" and asks the Elected Mayor to send a letter to the Prime Minister urging him to take notice of what many people across society are saying that it is placing an unnecessary burden on members of our communities who have very little opportunity to move into smaller accommodation and are being financially penalised as a direct consequence, and reverse the legislation."

An amendment was moved by Councillor M J Huscroft and seconded by Councillor D Ord as follows:

'Number the motion paragraph 1 and add new paragraph 2:

"2. We further request the Elected Mayor, in her letter to the Prime Minister, to urge him to repeal that part of the legislation in the 2008 Local Housing Allowance Reforms Act which dealt with size criteria and reduced benefit for private tenants".'

At this point the Chair announced a short adjournment to allow time to circulate written copies of the amendment around the Chamber and to allow Members to consider it.

The amendment, on being put to the meeting, was defeated by 41 votes to 6 votes.

Two Members present requested a recorded vote on the substantive motion in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13 (5).

Votes for the substantive motion

Mrs N Redfearn, Elected Mayor, Councillors J M Allan, A Arkle, G Bell, B Burdis, C Burdis, W Caithness, K Conroy, A Cowie, S L Cox, E N Darke, L Darke, S Day, R Glindon, S Graham, I Grayson, M A Green, S Hill, Janet Hunter, John Hunter, M Huscroft, N J Huscroft, C Johnson, F Lott, W Lott, G Madden, M Madden, D McGarr, A McMullen, T Mulvenna, A Normand, P Oliver, D Ord, K Osborne, J O'Shea, C B Pickard, J Pickard, L A Spillard, J J Stirling, A Waggott-Fairley and J Walker.

Votes against the substantive motion

Councillors A Austin, K Barrie, E Hodson, D Lilly, P Mason, P McIntyre, S Mortimer, D Sarin and Mrs J Wallace.

Abstentions

Councillor M Finlay.

[N.B. Councillor M J Huscroft was not present at the time the vote was taken].

The substantive motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 41 votes to 9 votes, with 1 abstention.

C80/10/13 Appointment of Co-Deputy Chair of the Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing Sub Committee

The Council received a report which had been prepared following the receipt of notification of the resignation of Councillor A Normand as a member of the Labour Group. This had resulted in a vacancy for a position of Co-Deputy Chair of the Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing Sub Committee.

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

“Councillor S Hill be appointed as Co-Deputy Chair of the Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing Sub Committee.”

The motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 38 votes to 0 votes.

C81/10/13 Annual Council Meeting – Change of Date

The Council received a report seeking approval of the full Council to change the date of the Annual Council meeting currently scheduled for 15 May 2014.

The Local Elections (Ordinary Day of Elections in 2014) Order 2013 had now been made. This provided that the date of local elections in England in 2014 would be the same as the date of the European Parliamentary elections, ie 22 May 2014.

It had been the practice of the Council to hold its Annual Meeting 14 days after a local election. It was therefore proposed that the date of the Annual Council meeting in 2014 be changed from 15 May to 5 June 2014.

As a consequence, it was proposed that the various appointments made to committees/sub committees for the 2013/14 municipal year continue until 5 June 2014 and that arrangements be made to enable any additional meetings of committees/sub committees that may be required prior to the rescheduled Annual Council meeting but were not included in the 2013/14 programme of meetings to be convened.

It was moved by Mrs N Redfearn, Elected Mayor and seconded by Councillor J O'Shea that:

- “(1) the 2014 Annual Council meeting will take place on the revised date of 5 June 2014 and that the meeting originally scheduled for 15 May 2014 be cancelled;
- (2) the various appointments made to committees/sub committees for the 2013/14 municipal year continue until the rescheduled Annual Council meeting; and
- (3) the Head of Law and Governance, in consultation with the Chair of the relevant committee/sub committee, be authorised to convene any additional

committee/sub committee meetings that may be required prior to the rescheduled Annual Council meeting but are not included in the approved programme of meetings for the 2013/14 municipal year.”

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

C821/0/13 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.

C83/10/13 Chair's Announcements

The Chair informed Council that the Lees Trophy on show in the chamber tonight had been won by the Longbenton Air Cadet Squadron as the best air cadet squadron in the country.

She also referred to an NHS leaflet promoting organ donation which had been circulated around the chamber.

C84/10/13 Mayor's Announcements

The Elected Mayor announced that the Fire and Rescue Service had today formally notified the Council of their intention to formally consult with the Council on the proposed options for changes to their operational response over the next three years.

This followed their announcement yesterday, published in the media, of their proposals in the form of three options to achieve efficiencies, which would have implications for North Tyneside residents as it reviewed how they responded to incidents. One of the proposals, as part of option 2, was to replace Wallsend Fire Station with a new fire station in the Benton area.

The Mayor stated that arrangements would be made for all members to have an opportunity to meet with representatives of the Fire and Rescue Service to find out exactly what these proposals would mean for North Tyneside so that an informed response could be made.

The Fire and Rescue Service had confirmed that there would be a number of public meetings held as part of the formal consultation, which would run until 1 January 2014. The details of these were due to be announced soon.

In the meantime, there was an opportunity for people to respond via the Fire and Rescue website and Members were asked to encourage any residents to do that.

The Mayor informed Members that this was the last Council meeting prior to the departure of Graham Haywood, Interim Chief Executive from the Council, and she paid tribute to him, thanking him for his services to the Council since his initial 6 month appointment in March 2011. He had provided leadership for the authority in a challenging financial environment resulting from the reduction in national funding for local councils. He had kept

the Council on track in delivering its Change, Efficiency and Improvement Programme and he had provided expertise in helping the Council to become a more commercially focused organisation and to prepare for the challenges in implementing some significant national policy changes.

He had made sure that the Council focused on continuing to deliver essential frontline services to the residents of North Tyneside. He had supported the development of a staff panel and his openness, honest and approachability had been welcomed by staff.

He had helped to steer a smooth transition for the current administration and he was doing the same to provide Patrick Melia, the Council's new Chief Executive from 4 November, with a solid foundation.

The leaders of the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups associated themselves with the Mayor's comments.

Mr Haywood responded appropriately.

C85/10/13 Questions by Members of the Council

In accordance with Procedure Rule 10 (13) (d) of the Council's Constitution, it was moved by Councillor J Allan and seconded by Councillor J Stirling that:

"Council agrees that the responses to the questions submitted by Members of the Council will be provided to all Members in writing."

The procedural motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 34 votes to 14 votes.