

Local Government Act 1972

Borough of North Tyneside

24 September 2015

At the meeting of the Council of the Borough of North Tyneside duly convened and held on Thursday 24 September 2015 in The Chamber at Quadrant at which a quorum of Members were present, that is to say:

Present

Councillor G Bell (In the Chair)
N Redfearn (Elected Mayor)

Councillor A Arkle	Councillor F Lott
Councillor Mrs A Austin	Councillor W Lott
Councillor K Barrie	Councillor G Madden
Councillor L Bell	Councillor P Mason
Councillor K L Bolger	Councillor D McGarr
Councillor B Burdis	Councillor Mrs P McIntyre
Councillor J Cassidy	Councillor D McMeekan
Councillor K A Clark	Councillor A McMullen
Councillor SL Cox	Councillor L J Miller
Councillor EN Darke	Councillor Mrs S E Mortimer
Councillor L Darke	Councillor T Mulvenna
Councillor C Davis	Councillor A Newman
Councillor D Drummond	Councillor P Oliver
Councillor P Earley	Councillor K Osborne
Councillor R Glindon	Councillor J O'Shea
Councillor S Graham	Councillor N A Percy
Councillor M A Green	Councillor C B Pickard
Councillor J L L Harrison	Councillor J Pickard
Councillor E F J Hodson	Councillor M Rankin
Councillor Janet Hunter	Councillor M Reynolds
Councillor John Hunter	Councillor L A Spillard
Councillor M Huscroft	Councillor J Stirling
Councillor NJ Huscroft	Councillor M Thirlaway
Councillor C Johnson	Councillor A Waggott-Fairley
Councillor D Lilly	Councillor J I Walker
	Councillor Mrs J A Wallace

In attendance via Skype in a non-voting capacity: Councillor J Munby

C39/09/15 Point of Order Relating to the Elected Mayor's Announcements

A Member sought clarification as to whether or not there were any parameters regarding the agenda item 'Mayor's Announcements', and in particular whether it allowed the Mayor to inform the Council of duties recently undertaken or provided an opportunity for making statements and accusations against the Opposition, where there was no right of reply, which infringed the rules of natural justice.

The Chair explained that he understood there were no parameters for Mayor's Announcements or Chair's Announcements set out in the Constitution, either in terms of duration or content; however he suggested that this matter could be considered at a future meeting of the Constitution task Group.

C40/09/15 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors JM Allan, P Brooks, CA Burdis, I Grayson, M Hall and M Madden.

C41/09/15 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

The following declarations of interest were made:

Councillor K Bolger declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C43/09/15) as she was employed by Cofely GDF Suez, one of the Authority's partners and which was detailed in the Motion.

Councillor D Drummond declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the 2014/15 Annual Financial Report (Minute C45/09/15) as he was employed by Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority.

There were no dispensations in relation to registerable personal interests reported.

C42/09/15 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 23 July 2015 be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chair, subject to the following correction:

Minute C28/07/15 – Public Question 3 from Mrs G Barrie of North Shields – response to supplementary question replace '£289 million' with '£389 million'.

C43/09/15 Motion

In accordance with the Authority's Constitution, a Member raised a Point of Order and suggested that the Motion to be discussed was improper and should not be considered. The reason given was that it was discriminatory by omission as it excluded many other successes achieved by both Council staff and other staff within the partnerships, and singled out just one piece of work.

On seeking advice from the Head of Law and Governance, the Chair ruled that the Motion could not be considered as being improper, as suggested by the Member, and that the Motion should proceed.

It was moved by Councillor JA Wallace and seconded by Councillor D Lilly that:

'The Council notes the successful result of the Conservative Administration's decision to outsource services and work in partnership with Cofely-GDF Suez which has enabled residents to access Council services more quickly and easily, with the implementation of many new and innovative processes, making Council services more responsive to the needs of residents as well as improving efficiency. The Council congratulates officers in the teams which have been short-listed for the following national awards: Excellence in Innovation in the Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuations Performance Awards, the IT Project Team of the Year, and Workplace Transformation Project of the Year.'

An amendment was moved by Councillor CB Pickard and seconded by Councillor F Lott as follows:

Delete from 'The Council' to 'improving efficiency' and add after 'congratulates', the following 'the Council officers together with the'. The amended Motion to read:

'The Council congratulates the Council officers together with the officers in the teams which have been short-listed for the following national awards: Excellence in Innovation in the Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuations Performance Awards, the IT Project Team of the Year, and Workplace Transformation Project of the Year.'

The mover of the Motion expressed the view that the amendment negated the Motion and requested a ruling. On seeking advice from the Head of Law and Governance, the Chair ruled that the amendment sought to leave out words, as permitted by the Constitution, but did not negate the Motion.

The amendment, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 44 votes to 9 votes.

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

C44/09/15 The North East of England's Case for Culture

Council considered a report on 'The North East of England's Case for Culture'. This was a positive statement of ambition for the next 15 years, building on the strengths of the region's diverse communities and pointing to the opportunities for further investment in arts and heritage right across the North East.

The Case for Culture had been launched on 29 July 2015 with the support of the Association of North East Councils (ANEC), Arts Council England (ACE), Historic England and the region's five universities. It outlined five aspirations relating to participation and reach; children and young people; talent and progression; economic value; and distinctiveness and innovation, as the basis for recognising the existing strengths of the arts and heritage offer in the region, and the platform for further growth.

In order to achieve these aspirations the continuation of the North East Culture Partnership (NECP), and its development as a formally established organisation was seen as vital to provide a voice for the cultural sector in the North East.

Mr J Blackie, North East Culture Partnership Manager and Mr R Evans, Director of Beamish Museum were in attendance and gave a presentation on the 'North East of England's Case for Culture'. A short film on the Case for Culture was also shown.

It was moved by Councillor EN Darke and seconded by Councillor J Cassidy that

'Council welcomes the report and expresses its support for the aspirations as outlined in the North East of England's Case for Culture.'

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

Messrs Blackie and Evans were thanked for their attendance.

C45/09/15 2014/15 Annual Financial Report

The Council was requested to approve the 2014/15 Audited Annual Financial Report in accordance with Section 8 (3) of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011; and also the draft Letter of Management Representation.

The audit of the 2014/15 accounts had recently been concluded and an unqualified audit opinion was expected to be issued. The Audit Completion Report, produced by Mazars, the Authority's External Auditors, in respect of the 2014/15 Annual Financial Report had been presented to the Audit Committee on 22 September 2015. One material error had been identified in the financial statements and had been reflected in the Annual Financial Report. This related to the increase in the valuation of the housing stock at the year end. A small number of non material errors and disclosure errors identified during the audit had been corrected and were also reflected in the Annual Financial Report. A copy of the Audit Completion Report was attached as Appendix B.

The audited 2014/15 Annual Financial Report was attached for consideration and approval as Appendix A to the report. The Statement followed a statutory format as set out in the CIPFA Code and CIPFA Service Reporting Code of Practice.

Councillor R Glindon, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources welcomed Mr G Davies and Ms C Banks from Mazars. Mr Davies presented the Audit Completion Report.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions of Mr Davies, which were responded to appropriately.

A Member sought clarification regarding paragraph 1.5.17 of the covering report which related to the re-measurement of the net defined benefit liability, and in particular whether the amount that needed to be raised was going to come from the Council Tax Collection Fund, and if that was the case, would this be on top of the existing recovery plan. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources undertook to provide a written response.

It was moved by Councillor R Glindon and seconded by Councillor A McMullen that:

"Council:

- (a) approve the Audit Completion Report, submitted by the Authority's external auditors Mazars, and agree the draft Letter of Management Representation; and
- (b) approve the 2014/15 Audited Annual Financial Report."

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

Mr Davies and Ms Banks were thanked for their attendance.

C46/09/15 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.

C47/09/15 Chair's Announcements

The Chair made the following announcements:

- He had had an enjoyable visit to York Minster with the new Bishop of Newcastle.
- Members were asked to consider and inform the Chair as to whether they felt that the provision of post meeting refreshments should continue, and if it was to continue, to consider making a charitable donation.

C48/09/15 Elected Mayor's Announcements

The Elected Mayor referred to the earlier comments regarding Mayor's Announcements, and noted that there were no rules set out in the Constitution about the content of Mayor's announcements and that the Chair had suggested this matter could be considered by the Constitution Task Group.

The Elected Mayor congratulated the North Tyneside Business Factory who had won the top prize for 'promoting entrepreneurial spirit' in the Enterprising Britain Awards 2015. The prestigious and high-profile national awards were part of the Government's drive to increase entrepreneurial activity across the UK, and celebrated the wide range of activity across the country that stimulated and supported enterprise.

The Council's Business and Economic Development team would be presented with the award by the Minister for Small Business, Industry and Enterprise at a ceremony in the House of Commons on 2 November 2015, and the Mayor congratulated the Head of Business and Economic Development and his team for their success.

The Elected Mayor also informed Council that Jean Griffiths the Head of Children, Young People and Learning would be retiring at the end of the week. She thanked Jean for the excellent and valuable service she had provided to the Council, schools, colleges and young people and wished her well for the future.

C49/09/15 Questions by Members of the Council

1. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor B Burdis

'Can the Mayor tell the Chamber if any Councillors who voted against the increase in Members Allowances, as recommended by the independent Chairman of the Remuneration Panel, accepted the increase?'

The Elected Mayor responded as follows:

'Yes, I understand three of the Members who voted against the recommendations of the Remuneration Panel have accepted the increase in the basic allowance'.

Councillor Burdis asked the following supplementary question:

'Can the Mayor specify which three Members she is referring to who have accepted the increase so far?'

The Elected Mayor responded as follows:

'Yes, I understand Councillors Austin, M Huscroft and McIntyre, who all voted against the Remuneration Panel's recommendation, have accepted the increase'.

2. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor D Lilly

‘Can the Elected Mayor inform us how much revenue was raised, in the last financial year, from the sale of foreshore parking permits?’

Councillor JLL Harrison, Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport, replied on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

‘The answer is £14,450’.

Councillor Lilly asked the following supplementary question:

‘Ernie, an 80 year old resident of Tynemouth ward will be affected by this action. After the double whammy of foreshore parking permits being withdrawn and the 50% increase in hourly parking charges, the major cost of him undertaking his hobby will increase from £50 a year to over £50 a month, an increase which he can’t afford. As a result, his only regular social interaction will be severely curtailed. How can this be acceptable and in addition, how can the Mayor justify a position where she will need to generate 12,050 extra hours of paid parking just to recoup the £14,450 she will lose from withdrawing these permits?’

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

‘It is true that the permit cost of £50 per annum was set against a charge of 80p, which has now increased to £1.20. To retain the permit at £50 per annum would require a weekly charge of less than £1 per week. We have therefore suspended the issuing of any new foreshore permits pending the outcome of a parking permit review. I asked for a review because when I have looked at the numbers and types of permits we have in North Tyneside, there is quite a wide range. My intention is to try to ensure we take on board the needs of for example voluntary groups, businesses and other organisations, and I have asked Overview and Scrutiny to undertake the review and a report will be produced. There have been a number of objections received in relation to the removal of foreshore permits, and I’m now in the process of going through each of those objections.’

3. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor M Green

‘Can the Mayor outline any measures her administration have implemented to address the small but significant group of adults, who are often excluded from access to services because of their lifestyle and reluctance to fully engage with the adult social care system and partner agencies?’

Councillor A Waggott-Fairley, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, replied on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

‘I would like to thank Councillor Green for asking this extremely important and relevant question.’

I suspect, like most elected members, I have dealt with enquiries and complaints about some vulnerable residents’ reluctance, for a myriad of reasons, to engage with the statutory services and the challenges this poses to the Authority and the wider health community.

It has certainly been an area of increasing concern to me and one which has been in sharp focus because of recent Government pronouncements over cuts to public services, especially those facing this Authority and further worries about the dismantling and the

decimation of the welfare benefit provision which will hit this group of vulnerable people even harder than most and possibly see more individuals fall into this category.

However, I am glad to report that the Adult Social Care team have had this issue on the radar for some time and successfully bid for monies from a regional homelessness group to run a pilot scheme, called Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM), to develop a method of working with a cohort of individuals previously identified as having 'chaotic lifestyles'.

These individuals are really struggling and often require multi agency interventions to address their social and emotional needs but because of several lifestyle factors, such as transiency, homelessness, substance misuse, anti-social behaviour and involvement with the criminal justice system they slip through the net. As you will gather, many of these factors are interlinked and they can feed and perpetuate a cycle of inequity of social care, housing provision and inequality in expectation to better and improving health.

Initially, the pilot envisaged assisting 12-14 chronically excluded people with multiple needs and aimed to improve their interaction across a range of services, thus improving individual outcomes and addressing socio-economic inequalities.

I am extremely pleased to report that in the first year the pilot exceeded its initial target and that it engaged with 77 individuals and made a real difference to their lives. This was split into 31 clients who required more intensive work and 46 people with less complex issues who were assisted through interventions by a MEAM coordinator. Unusually 50% of the initial client group who required more intensive support were female and this appears to be a North Tyneside phenomenon. However, the work undertaken did identify a noticeable gap for female specific services and may also have highlighted a potential link with sexual exploitation; staff have assured me this will be investigated further.

The work centred around 10 specific areas, which included lessening risk taking and modifying behaviour on areas such as alcohol and drug abuse, intentional self-harm, engagement with frontline services and impulse control. All areas recorded an improvement of between 15-47%.

Over the course of the pilot, there were 53 less arrests made by Northumbria Police of people within that cohort than would normally have been expected and this generated a saving of over £88,000, in fact £38,000 more than the actual money granted in the first place. Some of our partner agencies have benefitted from those savings which was especially welcome as they are also facing central government funding cuts.

The pilot is now finished, but a post has been built into the staffing structure and this year a further 27 residents have been supported and the work currently being undertaken is ensuring people are being helped by appropriate services.

Once again I think this demonstrates that despite the worsening financial situation facing our residents and the disproportionate cuts to this Authority's budget by central government, this administration, along with its dedicated and hardworking social care staff, continue to strive to address the long standing challenges posed by this cohort of individuals and search for innovative ways to address inequalities in the borough for the benefit and social wellbeing of all'.

Councillor Green asked the following supplementary question:

'Has the work undertaken identified what the biggest factor is in relation to assisting and stabilising this group of people?'

Councillor Waggott-Fairley replied on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

'The excellent work undertaken by Adult Social Care staff has identified that maintaining stable accommodation is the single biggest issue that affected over 94% of the people in the initial cohort. There has been a history of failed tenancies and the notion that people had been helped previously but had 'burned their bridges' was a factor which worked against them when attempting to secure further accommodation. Intensive work on behalf of Adult Social Care and Housing staff has enabled more than 25 individuals to move into settled long term accommodation'.