

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, 25 March 2021

PRESENT: THE MAYOR COUNCILLOR M HOOD (CHAIR)

Councillors: J Adams, Anderson, R Beadle, D Bradford, M Brain, C Buckley, D Burnett, L Caffrey, M Charlton, B Clelland, P Craig, S Craig, C Davison, W Dick, S Dickie, Diston, K Dodds, C Donovan, A Douglas, D Duggan, John Eagle, K Ferdinand, P Foy, S Gallagher, M Gannon, A Geddes, F Geddes, J Gibson, B Goldsworthy, M Goldsworthy, T Graham, L Green, S Green, G Haley, M Hall, H Haran, H Kelly, L Kirton, J Lee, P Maughan, K McCartney, J McClurey, K McClurey, J McElroy, E McMaster, M McNestry, R Mullen, B Oliphant, M Ord, I Patterson, J Raine, Reay, S Ronchetti, J Simpson, J Turnbull, J Wallace, R Waugh, A Wheeler and K Wood

APOLOGIES: Councillors: S Hawkins, P McNally, C Ord and R Oxberry

CL55 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 21 JANUARY 2021 AND 25 FEBRUARY 2021

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meetings held on 21 January and 25 February 2021 be approved as a correct record.

CL56 OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no official announcements.

CL57 DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT - PRESENTATION

Alice Wiseman, Director of Public Health, attended the meeting and presented her annual report, the focus of which is inequalities in Gateshead.

CL58 PETITIONS

There were no petitions submitted.

CL59 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Mr Paul Watson submitted the following question:

“In light of the Council’s Pay Policy as scheduled to be discussed at this meeting, and the wider Labour Party condemnation of the proposed 1% NHS pay rise:

Please can the Council Members offer their opinion on the Council Officers decision that in light of there being a historic error meaning that certain care workers employed via direct payments have not received any pay uplift since at least 2017 does not require action to address that historic detriment; and

Please can the Council Members offer their opinion on the Council Officers decision that the action to correct that error going forward means that in all likelihood those same care workers will also continue to not have any cost of living uplift this year either.”

Councillor G Haley responded to the question.

Mr Watson submitted a supplementary question which was agreed to be discussed outside of the meeting.

CL60 GOVERNANCE OF HOUSING SERVICES

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of the proposed arrangements for the governance of the Council's housing function and responsibilities.

- COUNCIL RESOLVED -
- (i) That the establishment of a new formal advisory committee, to be called the Strategic Housing Board, which will advise the Council or Cabinet on any matter relating to the discharge of their respective housing functions be approved.
 - (ii) That the membership of the Strategic Housing Board comprising of 15 elected members, plus the respective Chairs of the Health and Wellbeing Board and Community Safety Partnership, 3 tenant representatives and 3 partner representatives be approved.
 - (iii) That a change in title of the Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee to the Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee be approved.
 - (iv) That a change in the scope of responsibility of the Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee particularly to enable the inclusion of tenant observers and their scrutiny of services and buildings compliance be approved.

CL61 GATESHEAD CLIMATE CHANGE EMERGENCY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of an environmental policy for Gateshead Council.

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the Environmental Policy, at Appendix 5 of the report, be approved.

CL62 APPRENTICESHIP LEVY

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of an amendment to the Council's Constitution to grant the Strategic Director, Resources and Digital, delegated authority to award funds from the Council's apprenticeship levy pot to individual businesses in Gateshead.

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That Part 3, Schedule 5, of the Council's Constitution (Delegations to the Strategic Director, Resources and Digital) be amended accordingly.

CL63 GATESHEAD LOCAL PLAN - PLANNING OBLIGATIONS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD) - SECOND REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document, second review.

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document Second Review be adopted.

CL64 TREASURY POLICY STATEMENT AND TREASURY STRATEGY 2021/22 TO 2025/26

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of the Treasury Policy Statement and Treasury Strategy for 2021/22 to 2025/26.

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the Treasury Policy Statement and the Treasury Strategy, attached at Appendices 2 and 3, be approved.

CL65 LOCALISM ACT 2011 - PAY ACCOUNTABILITY PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2021-22

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of a revised pay policy statement.

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the draft Pay Policy Statement 2021/22 be approved.

CL66 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2021/22

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of the proposed calendar of meetings for 2021/22.

- COUNCIL RESOLVED -
- (i) That the calendar of meetings 2021/22 be approved.
 - (ii) That as far as possible, meetings should not be held during school holidays.
 - (iii) That the Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance, following consultation with the appropriate Chairs, be authorised to make any necessary amendments to the calendar of meetings.

CL67 IN SUPPORT OF 2021 PAY CAMPAIGN

Councillor C Davison moved the following motion:

"MOTION ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY TO COUNCIL: A FULLY FUNDED, PROPER PAY RISE FOR COUNCIL AND SCHOOL WORKERS

This Council notes:

Local government has endured central government funding cuts of more than 50% since 2010.

Between 2010 and 2020, councils lost 60p out of every £1 they have received from central government.

Over the last year, councils have led the way in efforts against the Covid-19 pandemic, providing a huge range of services and support for our communities. Local government has shown more than ever how indispensable it is. But the pandemic has led to a massive increase in expenditure and loss of income, and the Government has failed to provide the full amount of promised support.

Local government workers have kept our communities safe through the pandemic, often putting themselves at considerable risk as they work to protect public health, provide quality housing, ensure our children continue to be educated, and look after older and vulnerable people.

Since 2010, the local government workforce has endured years of pay restraint with the majority of pay points losing at least 23 per cent of their value since 2009/10.

At the same time, workers have experienced ever-increasing workloads and persistent job insecurity. Across the UK, 900,000 jobs have been lost in local government since June 2010 – a reduction of more than 30 per cent. Local

government has arguably been hit by more severe job losses than any other part of the public sector. The funding gap caused by Covid-19 will make local government employment even more precarious.

There has been a disproportionate impact on women, with women making up more than three-quarters of the local government workforce.

Recent research shows that if the Government were to fully fund the unions' 2021 pay claim, around half of the money would be recouped thanks to increased tax revenue, reduced expenditure on benefits, and increased consumer spending in the local economy.

This Council believes:

Our workers are public service super-heroes. They keep our communities clean and safe, look after those in need and keep our towns and cities running.

Without the professionalism and dedication of our staff, the council services our residents rely on would not be deliverable.

Local government workers deserve a proper real-terms pay increase. The Government needs to take responsibility and fully fund this increase; it should not put the burden on local authorities whose funding has been cut to the bone and who have not been offered adequate support through the Covid-19 pandemic.

This Council resolves to:

Support the pay claim submitted by UNISON, GMB and Unite on behalf of council and school workers, for a substantial increase with a minimum 10 per cent uplift in April 2021.

Call on the Local Government Association to make urgent representations to central government to fund the NJC pay claim.

Write to the Chancellor and Secretary of State to call for a pay increase for local government workers to be funded with new money from central government.

Meet with local NJC union representatives to convey support for the pay claim and consider practical ways in which the council can support the campaign.

Encourage all local government workers to join a union."

On the motion being put it was declared to be carried.

CL68 CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY

Councillor Kelly moved the following motion:

“Humans have already caused irreversible climate change, the impacts of which are being felt in the UK and around the world. Global temperatures have increased by 1^o Celsius from pre-industrial levels. Atmospheric CO₂ levels are above 400 parts per million (ppm) and continue to rise. This far exceeds the 350 ppm deemed to be a safe level for humanity.

Without more significant and sustained action, the world is set to exceed the Paris Agreement’s 1.5°C limit between 2030 and 2040. Therefore, the current UK target of net zero by 2050 is not satisfactory. It is too little too late.

The increase in harm caused by a rise of 2°C rather than 1.5°C is significant. This is described by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C published in October 2018. According to the IPCC, limiting heating to 1.5°C may still be possible with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society, the private sector and local communities. The costs of failing to address this crisis will far outstrip the investments required to prevent it. Investing now will bring many benefits in the form of good jobs, breathable cities and thriving communities.

Council notes that:

- (i) this Council declared a climate emergency on 23 May 2019;
- (ii) in the last 10 years, this council has reduced its own emissions by 50%, created low carbon heat and power via the district heating networks installed 2MW of solar panels across 35 buildings and schools and seen major new investment in boilers, windows and solid wall insulation to improve energy efficiency;
- (iii) this Council is committed to make its activities carbon neutral by 2030 and achieve 100% clean energy across all our functions by 2030; and
- (iv) there is a Bill before Parliament - the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill (published as the “Climate and Ecology Bill”) - according to which the Government must develop an emergency strategy that requires that the UK plays its fair and proper role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions consistent with limiting global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees C above pre-industrial temperatures.

Council therefore resolves to:

- (i) welcome the publication of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill as an important contribution to the campaign to reduce carbon emissions and restore biodiversity, although we note the Conservative government is unlikely to allow it to pass into legislation;
- (ii) increase the development of solar energy and heat from ground and mine water heat pumps; expand the use of digital technology to reduce the need for staff to travel and to minimise paper use; increase in the use of electric and other low-carbon vehicles within the Council's fleet; and

- (iii) promote understanding of Climate Emergency issues with local residents, and work with groups like the Gateshead Community Climate Alliance and North East England Climate Coalition to pursue radical action in support of this common agenda.”

Councillor J Wallace moved the following amendment:

“At the end add:

- iv) calls on the Gateshead Energy Company to bring forward a plan to end the use of fossil fuel so that there is a switch to renewable fuel sources before 2025.”

On the amendment being put, it was defeated.

The original motion was put as the substantive motion and duly carried.

COUNCIL RESOLVED -

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CL69 DIVESTMENT FROM FOSSIL FUELS

The Mayor advised that discussions have taken place with South Tyneside Council, the lead authority for the Pensions Committee, about the responsibilities of that Committee and its members.

Members of the Committee cannot be ‘mandated’ by their appointing authority because that would be inconsistent with their fiduciary duties to all scheme members and employers. Therefore, any such instruction would not be valid or lawful.

The Mayor therefore ruled the motion out of order.

CL70 QUESTIONS

No questions were received.

Mayor.....