

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, 21 September 2023

PRESENT: THE MAYOR COUNCILLOR E MCMASTER (CHAIR)

Councillors: K McCartney, J Adams, V Anderson, R Beadle, D Bradford, M Brain, L Brand, C Buckley, P Burns, B Clelland, P Craig, W Dick, S Dickie, C Donovan, A Douglas, P Elliott, S Gallagher, M Gannon, A Geddes, F Geddes, J Gibson, B Goldsworthy, M Goldsworthy, T Graham, J Green, L Green, S Green, M Hall, K Henderson, G Kasfikis, H Kelly, L Kirton, P Maughan, J McCoid, J McElroy, M McNestry, J Mohammed, L Moir, A Ord, C Ord, M Ord, I Patterson, S Potts, D Robson, S Ronchetti, J Simpson, J Turnbull, J Turner, K Walker, J Wallace, D Weatherley, H Weatherley, A Wintcher and K Wood

APOLOGIES: Councillors: D Burnett, L Caffrey, P Diston, K Dodds, D Duggan, J Eagle, G Haley, S Hawkins, R Mullen, B Oliphant and D Welsh

CL33 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 JULY 2023

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2023 be approved as a correct record.

CL34 OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor announced with great sadness that Mr Bahal Singh Dhindsa MBE, one of the founding trustees of the Gateshead Visible Ethnic Minorities Support Group had passed away.

The Mayor announced with great sadness that Mr Andy Waters, Parking and Streetworks Manager at Gateshead Council had passed away.

Council held one minute of silence to remember Mr Dhindsa and Mr Waters.

The Mayor announced that Lisa Stones, Senior Land Charges Officer at Gateshead Council had won the Customer Satisfaction Award – Best in Metropolitan Districts at the 2023 Land Data Local Land Charges Awards for Excellence.

CL35 PETITIONS

There were no petitions submitted.

CL36 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Mr Hyden submitted the following question:

“The Government has been undertaking a consultation on supply of accessible housing (housing that allows wheelchair users and those with other mobility issues to enjoy their home) at the time of writing in September 2023.

I made a Freedom of Information request to Gateshead Council asking for average waiting times on the housing register for homeless applicants for those with and without disabilities, to ascertain whether there was any significant discrepancy between the two averages. The response was that Gateshead Council does not record this information, whereas most councils do record these figures.

Does the Council think there would be benefits in starting to gather these statistics from its own systems as part of its equality monitoring going forward to understand whether sufficient accessible housing is made available for those with mobility issues to ensure they do not suffer significant disadvantage in accessing suitable housing?”

Councillor John Adams responded to the question.

CL37 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE 2022/23

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of the Annual Report of the Audit and Standards Committee for 2022/23.

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Annual Report of the Audit and Standards Committee 2022/23 be approved.

CL38 NOTICE OF MOTION

CL39 NOTICE OF MOTION - DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL SUCCESS RE FLY TIPPING FINES

Councillor Ron Beadle moved the following motion:

Gateshead Council congratulates Durham County Council on their tough stance on fly tipping by issuing nearly one thousand fines in 2021/22.

Council notes that in the same period Gateshead Council issued one fine.

Council calls on the Chief Executive to write to the Chief Executive of Durham County Council to invite him to send an appropriate officer to conduct a Gateshead members' seminar to explain to members and officers how their success was achieved.

CL40 AMENDMENT TO NOTICE OF MOTION - RE FLY TIPPING

Councillor John McElroy moved the following amendment:

Delete all after 'Gateshead Council' and replace with:

notes that:

According to figures provided by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the number of fly-tipping incidents in Gateshead roughly halved between 2016/17 and 2021/22 and wishes to express its gratitude to the hard-working staff who help tackle the blight of fly-tipping.

In the last two years the Council have undertaken a review of waste related anti-social behaviour to try and understand the root cause of the behaviour of those who aren't looking after their environment. We have used those findings to come up with a new approach to tackle fly tipping.

In recent years, officers have focused enforcement action on larger fly-tipping offenders, people who persistently target Gateshead and who make a living from doing so. The penalties that may be charged under Fixed Penalty Notices are too small to deter such behaviour, and it is preferable to take legal action where more substantial penalties may be levied. To only look at the number of Fixed Penalty Notices does not present a true picture of action taken by Council officers.

Experience and Council research has shown that the people who would have got Fixed Penalty Notices for small fly tips were often vulnerable people, who needed help and support to permanently change their behaviour. Fining these people was proving ineffective in behaviour change, and we found alternative mechanisms for ensuring our streets remained as clean and tidy as possible.

Gateshead Council takes this issue very seriously and as part of the £2 million investment in the local environment are in the process of setting up a new anti-social behaviour team, that will work with people to educate and change behaviours where appropriate and prosecute and fine those who persistently fail to do the right thing. Gateshead Council resolves to ignore representations on this matter from Lib Dem Councillors who failed to support a £2 million investment in the local environment when presented with the option in the Budget decisions.

The substantive motion was defeated.

On the amendment being put it was duly carried.

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

Delete all after 'Gateshead Council' and replace with:

notes that:

According to figures provided by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the number of fly-tipping incidents in Gateshead roughly halved between 2016/17 and 2021/22 and wishes to express its gratitude to the hard-working staff who help tackle the blight of fly-tipping.

In the last two years the Council have undertaken a review of waste related anti-social behaviour to try and understand the root cause of the behaviour of those who aren't looking after their environment. We have used those findings to come up with a new approach to tackle fly tipping.

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CL41 NOTICE OF MOTION - AMENDMENT TO CONSTITUTION

Councillor Jonathan Wallace moved the following motion:

This Council calls on the Chief Executive to draw up a proposed amendment to the Council constitution that would allow the submission of amendments and motions to full Council by email. This change should be ready to be incorporated into the next review of the Constitution.

CL42 AMENDMENT TO NOTICE OF MOTION - CONSTITUTION (MOTIONS)

Councillor John Adams moved the following amendment:

Add before first paragraph:

Gateshead Council confirm that a notice of a motion must still be required to be supported by the councillor giving the notice and three other councillors, as outlined in Council Procedure Rule 9.1; and that an amendment to a motion on the Council agenda may be moved if it is supported by two councillors, as outlined in Council Procedure 17.6.

Gateshead Council confirm that a notice of motion must still be communicated to the office of the Chief Executive at least six clear days before the Council meeting at which it is to be considered, as outlined in Council Procedure Rule 9.1; and that an amendment may be moved if it is submitted to the Chief Executive no later than 10am on the day before the Council meeting, as outlined in Council Procedure 17.6. However, the Council recognises the benefits in terms of speed and efficiency of being able to submit motions and amendments to the office of the Chief Executive in a digital format, rather than hard copy.

Delete all after 'to full Council' and replace with:

by digital means, and without the need for a handwritten signature. Any proposed amendment must provide mechanisms to guarantee that any submission is genuinely from an elected member of this council, as proof of identity is an important consideration in this matter.

The substantive motion was defeated.

On the amendment being put it was duly carried.

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

Add before first paragraph:

Gateshead Council confirm that a notice of a motion must still be required to be supported by the councillor giving the notice and three other councillors, as outlined in Council Procedure Rule 9.1; and that an amendment to a motion on the Council agenda may be moved if it is supported by two councillors, as outlined in Council Procedure 17.6.

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Delete all after 'to full Council' and replace with:

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CL43 QUESTIONS

There were no questions received.

CL44 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items in accordance with Paragraphs 3 and 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

CL45 SPECIALIST AND SUPPORTED HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND STRATEGY

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of a new Specialist and Supported Housing Needs Assessment and Strategy.

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) That the new Specialist and Supported Housing Needs Assessment and Strategy be approved.

Mayor.....