

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, 25 January 2024

PRESENT: THE MAYOR COUNCILLOR E MCMASTER (CHAIR)

Councillors: K McCartney, J Adams, V Anderson, R Beadle, D Bradford, M Brain, L Brand, C Buckley, D Burnett, P Burns, L Caffrey, B Clelland, P Craig, W Dick, S Dickie, K Dodds, 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, G Haley, M Hall, S Hawkins, K Henderson, H Kelly, L Kirton, P Maughan, J McCoid, J McElroy, J Mohammed, L Moir, R Mullen, B Oliphant, A Ord, M Ord, I Patterson, S Potts, S Ronchetti, J Simpson, J Turnbull, J Turner, K Walker, J Wallace, D Weatherley, H Weatherley, D Welsh, A Wintcher and K Wood

APOLOGIES: Councillors: P Diston, D Duggan, J Eagle, S Green, G Kasfikis, M McNestry, C Ord and D Robson

CL60 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 23 NOVEMBER 2023

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) That the minutes of the meetings held 23rd November 2023 to be approved as a correct record.

CL61 OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor announced with great sadness the passing of Alderman David Bollands. Council held one minute of silence to remember Alderman David Bollands.

CL62 AWARDS RECOGNITION

Council recognised eight employees who were recently nominated for Digital Transformation in Social Work Award, in the National Social Worker of the Year Awards 2023.

Council recognised The Kinship Care Team for being nominated for the Kinship Care Award.

CL63 PETITIONS

There were no petitions received.

CL64 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions submitted by members of the public.

CL65 ANNUAL REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Council received a presentation from Alice Wiseman, Director of Public Health.

CL66 GATESHEAD LOCAL AREA SEND STRATEGY AND SEND IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2023-2026

Consideration was given to the report seeking agreement of the new SEND strategy and associated improvement plan.

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) To endorse the Local Area SEND Strategy as set out in appendix 2 to the report.
- (ii) To note the areas for development following the Local Area SEND inspection in May 2023.
- (iii) To note the progress of the SEND improvement programme so far and its impact for children and young people with SEND and their families; and
- (iv) To endorse the focus and priorities for the programme for 2023-26 to embed and accelerate change, responding to the Local Area inspection for SEND as set out in appendix 3 to the report.

CL67 COUNCIL SERVICES - RESTRUCTURE

Consideration was given for Council seeking endorsement on the proposed revisions to the Council's senior management structure.

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) That the organisation structure and associated change to enable the proposal as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report for implementation from 25 January 2024 be approved.

CL68 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2024/25

Consideration was given to the proposed calendar of meetings for 2024/25.

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) That the calendar of meetings 2024/25 be approved.
- (ii) That the meetings should not be held during school holidays or on dates where the holding of religious festivals may preclude attendance and involvement at meetings; and
- (iii) That the Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance, following consultation with the appropriate Chairs, canmake any necessary

amendments to the calendar of meetings.

CL69 ALLOCATIONS POLICY UPDATE

Consideration was given for Council to approve amendments to the Allocations Policy.

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) That the minor amendments to the allocations policy as set out in appendix 2 of the report be approved.
- (ii) That the substantive amendments as set out in paragraph 10 and appendix 1 of the report be approved.

CL70 CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2023/24 - THIRD QUARTER REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report setting out the latest position on the 2023/24 Capital Programme and Prudential Indicators at the end of the second quarter to 31 December 2023.

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) That the revision to the capital programme to be approved.
- (ii) That the financing of the revised programme to be approved.
- (iii) That the capital expenditure and capital financing requirement indicators have been revised in line with the revised budget and that none of the approved Prudential Indicators set for 2023/24 have been breached be agreed.

CL71 NOTICE OF MOTION

CL72 NOTICE OF MOTION - TWO-CHILD BENEFIT CAP

Councillor Ron Beadle moved the following motion:

“The two-child limit, introduced by the Conservative Government in 2017, restricts support in Universal Credit and tax credits to two children in a family.

Analysis by the Child Poverty Action Group shows that 900,000 children living in poverty in England do not currently qualify for free school meals because the Conservative Government introduced an arbitrary £7,400 household income threshold in 2018.

A new report by the Commons Education Select Committee warns mental health problems and cost-of-living pressures on families are among the complex reasons for increased absenteeism.

Scrapping the two-child limit is the most cost-effective way to reduce child poverty. It would lift 250,000 children out of poverty and mean 850,000 children are in less deep poverty.

The Child Poverty Action Group calculates that 1380 Gateshead families including 5330 children are affected by the cap.

Council resolves to:

Call on the UK Government to scrap the two-child benefit cap. We ask the Council's Chief Executive to write to Liz Twist MP, Kate Osbourne MP and Ian Mearns MP expressing the Council's support for the scrapping of the two-child benefit cap and encouraging them to raise this matter in Parliament."

CL73 NOTICE OF AMENDMENT - TWO-CHILD BENEFIT CAP

Councillor Gary Haley moved the following amendment:

Insert two new paragraphs at the beginning:

"This Council notes the achievements of the Labour Government of 1997-2010 in reducing child poverty. When Labour entered power in 1997, one in three children were living in families that were officially living in poverty. By 2010 research by the Resolution Foundation showed that the number of children living in poverty in the UK had reduced from 3 million in 1998 to 1.6 million in 2010.

"This council also recognises the significant harm caused since 2010 by both the Liberal Democrat-Tory Coalition and the Conservative governments since 2015 as a direct result of welfare reform, a benefits freeze, the closure of Sure Starts and austerity, all of which have increased poverty and damaged the economy of the North East and the well-being of its residents."

Replace "The Child Poverty Action Group calculates that 1380 Gateshead families including 5330 children are affected by the cap." with:

"Gateshead Council notes that child poverty has increased in Gateshead since 2010, with over a third of our children living in poverty (39% in the latest figures). An estimated 14.5 million people are now living in poverty, 22 per cent of the population, including 4.3 million children. The Child Poverty Action Group calculates that 1380 Gateshead families, including 5330 children, are affected by the two-child limit.

"This Council recognises the ongoing work being done across Gateshead to deal with the consequences of these policy decisions. We have invested in making sure our residents have better information, advice and guidance, which according to Citizens Advice Gateshead has resulted in an additional income of £12 million for our residents in 2022/23. Council staff should be congratulated on the excellent work they have done delivering the Household Support Fund, free school meal vouchers during school holidays, funding older person households in need, creating Warm

Spaces and funding voluntary and community organisations.”

Delete final paragraph and replace with:

“We ask the Chief Executive to write to our MPs expressing the Council’s support for the removal of the two child cap among other anti-poverty measures, including an extension of the Household Support Fund, an increase in the threshold for access to free school meals, a fundamental reform to universal credit, an end to zero-hour contracts and fire and rehire, a bold cross government child poverty strategy, free breakfast clubs in every primary school and an end to the bedroom tax. The public finances are in a woeful state after 14 years of mismanagement, but welfare must be reformed as soon as practical and must be a priority for public spending.”

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

Insert two new paragraphs at the beginning:

“This Council notes the achievements of the Labour Government of 1997-2010 in reducing child poverty. When Labour entered power in 1997, one in three children were living in families that were officially living in poverty. By 2010 research by the Resolution Foundation showed that the number of children living in poverty in the UK had reduced from 3 million in 1998 to 1.6 million in 2010.

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CL74 NOTICE OF MOTION - GATESHEAD PRIDE

Councillor Adams will move the following motion:

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This Council is pleased to announce that it is working with Out North East to deliver Pride in Gateshead 2024.

Pride in Gateshead will fly the flag for equality and bring communities together for a programme of events on an annual basis. As a Council we have always upheld the values of inclusivity and respect, whilst working towards strong community cohesion in Gateshead – something this programme will strengthen.

Pride in Gateshead will take place in August 2024 and celebrate the Borough’s proud, diverse, and inclusive LGBTQ+ community and its many allies. Delivered by Gateshead charity Out North East, this free festival will have an engaging and entertaining programme of activities and events for all communities to enjoy, including:

- Pride Picnic in the Park – Saltwell Park will host a family fun day with craft activities, circus skills, theatre performances, music and entertainment, sporting skills, advice and support stalls, and food concessions.
- Pride in Gateshead Concert – Gateshead Quayside will be brimming with pride with a main stage of national and local performers.
- Pride in Bowling – Pelaw Bowling Club will host its first Pride tournament.
- Plus, satellite events held at community venues, town centres and at Pride Media Centre, Pelaw.

This Council is proud to be able to support Out North East in the delivery of Pride in Gateshead 2024 and will work with the charity to deliver this inclusive programme of activity. Working with the organiser, we hope that Pride in Gateshead will become a firm fixture in the North East Pride calendar on an annual basis.

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

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CL75 QUESTIONS

There were no questions submitted.

Mayor.....