

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, 14 July 2016

PRESENT: THE MAYOR COUNCILLOR A THOMPSON (CHAIR)

Councillors: J Adams, R Beadle, C Bradley, M Brain, L Caffrey, M Charlton, B Clelland, P Craig, S Craig, D Davidson, W Dick, S Dickie, P Dillon, C Donovan, A Douglas, D Duggan, K Ferdinand, M Foy, P Foy, M Gannon, A Geddes, B Goldsworthy, M Goldsworthy, M Graham, T Graham, J Green, S Green, G Haley, M Hall, S Hawkins, M Henry, M Hood, H Hughes, J Lee, P Maughan, J Kielty, K McCartney, L Kirton, J McClurey, J McElroy, E McMaster, M McNestry, P Mole, B Oliphant, C Ord, M Ord, S Ronchetti, R Mullen, C Simcox, J Turnbull, L Twist, I Patterson, J Wallace, N Weatherley and A Wheeler

APOLOGIES: Councillors: K Dodds, John Eagle, J Graham, L Green, C McHatton, C McHugh and J Simpson

Mohammed Bilal from the Gateshead Muslim Society gave the opening address.

CL20 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 MAY 2016

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held 26 May 2016 be approved as a correct record.

CL21 OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

(A) Appointment of Chair of Planning and Development Committee

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That Councillor Bob Goldsworthy be appointed as the Chair of the Planning and Development Committee and that the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to agree appointments to the resultant vice chair vacancies.

(B) Great British Care Awards 2016

The Mayor announced that Special Olympics Gateshead had been successful in winning the 'Putting People First' category at the Great British Care Awards 2016.

This award recognises teams that have embraced the Putting People First /

Personalisation agenda and who can demonstrate an innovative approach to empowering people to have more control over the support they need in their lives.

In recognition of this achievement, the Mayor presented the award to: Ann Clarke, Jonathan Brown, Andrew Knox, Andrew Dodd and Andrew Pagan, Special Olympic Athletes.

CL22 PETITIONS

Councillor Duggan submitted a petition on behalf of local residents in respect of street cleaning in Low Fell.

CL23 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions submitted by members of the public.

CL24 RECRUITMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval for interim arrangements covering the period between the departure of the current Chief Executive, Jane Robinson, on 29 July 2016, and the recruitment of a permanent replacement.

- COUNCIL RESOLVED -
- i) That it be noted that the Chief Executive, Jane Robinson, leaves the Council on 15 August 2016.
 - ii) That the recruitment process to be followed to identify a permanent replacement be noted.
 - iii) That Mike Barker be appointed as Interim Chief Executive and head of paid service until a permanent replacement commences their term of office.

CL25 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2017/18 - 2021/22

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017/18 to 2021/22.

- COUNCIL RESOLVED -
- i) That the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2017/18 to 2021/22 be approved.
 - ii) That the review of both general fund and strategic earmarked Council reserves be noted.
 - iii) That it be noted that the Strategic Director, Corporate Resources, following consultation with the Chief

Executive, will continue to produce and monitor on an annual basis, a rolling programme of five-year budget forecasts taking account of the key issues facing the Council.

iv) That it be noted that the Strategic Director, Corporate Resources, following consultation with the Chief Executive will continue to keep under review and update the Medium Term Financial Strategy as appropriate to respond to Government policy and funding announcements.

CL26 CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2016/17 - FIRST QUARTER REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report that informed of the latest position on the 2016/17 capital programme and Prudential Indicators at the end of the first quarter to 30 June 2016. The report assessed the variances from the approved programme and detailed the proposed financing of the capital programme. The report also considered the impact of CIPFA's Prudential Code on the capital programme and the monitoring of performance against the statutory Prudential Indicators.

COUNCIL RESOLVED - i) That all variations to the 2016/17 Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report be approved as the revised programme.

ii) That the financing of the revised programme be approved.

iii) That it be confirmed that the capital expenditure and capital financing requirement indicators have been revised in line with the revised budget and that none of the Prudential Indicators set for 2016/17 have been breached.

CL27 REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of a number of amendments to the Constitution.

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the proposed changes to the Council's Constitution as set out in Appendix 2 of the report be approved.

CL28 REPORT FROM THE CABINET

The Leader of the Council reported on a number of key issues currently affecting the Council.

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

CL29 NOTICE OF MOTION - HATE CRIME

Councillor P Foy moved the following motion (altered in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.2):-

“This council believes Gateshead is stronger because of its diverse communities and that society benefits from this diversity.

This council believes that the borough benefits from residents with different ethnicities, nationalities, religions and sexual orientations. We welcome the positive contributions of all residents, regardless of background, to life in Gateshead. We therefore wish to reassure all people living in Gateshead, with our proud heritage of migration and diversity, that they are valued members of our community.

This council believes that acceptance and the celebration of diversity are the hallmarks of modern society and that no one should be forced into conformity. We therefore express concern at the significant increase of hate crime reported since the referendum on 23rd June. Racism, xenophobia and hate crime of any nature have no place in our society. Gateshead Council condemns racism, xenophobia and hate crimes unequivocally.

We congratulate the anti-racism charity Show Racism the Red Card on their 20th anniversary and commend their work here in Gateshead in providing young people and adults with high quality anti-racism education.

Show Racism the Red Card tell us that their education workers have witnessed for some years growing anti-immigrant sentiment and anti-Muslim hatred to add to the older more established racisms. They have highlighted their concerns that migrant communities are being demonised for societal problems which have varied and complex causes and that the recent referendum on the EU was dominated by anti-immigrant sentiment leading many to see it as a referendum on our borders.

We cannot let the EU referendum result boost the confidence of those with racist ideas and attitudes, we cannot allow far-right organisations to grow and descend upon our communities, we must all stand firm in challenging racism where we see it.

Gateshead Council resolves to:

- 1) Support action by Northumbria Police to tackle hate crime;
- 2) Invite Show Racism the Red Card to address a future meeting of the Council;
- 3) Assist organisations like Show Racism the Red Card and other programmes that promote acceptance and diversity to access the support and resources needed to fight and prevent racism and xenophobia, so as to enable them to offer their programmes to every school in Gateshead;
- 4) Take positive action to promote diversity and acceptance, including information on reporting hate crime in Council News and on the Council’s website.”

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

CL30 NOTICE OF MOTION - CHANGES TO PENSIONS

The Chief Executive advised that the Monitoring Officer had exercised his discretion to grant a dispensation to those Councillors who would otherwise have had to declare a personal and/or prejudicial interest in this matter, on the grounds that without the dispensation, the number of persons prohibited would be so great a proportion so as to impede the transaction of business.

Councillor L Caffrey moved the following motion:-

“Council notes that:

- Women born in the 1950s have been hit particularly hard by the equalisation of pension age and they have had very little time in order to prepare properly for the changes, being given little or no notice so were unable to be prepared.
- The issue of fairness has been largely ignored in these proposals.
- A petition to Parliament with nearly 200,000 signatures resulted in a debate in Westminster Hall with many examples of the impact of these changes to women shared.
- Local MPs have highlighted the issues nationally representing many constituents affected by these changes.
- Government have not amended the proposals at all yet this issue is continuing to be of concern to huge numbers of women approaching pension age.

Council resolves to write to the Secretary of State to express concerns for the hundreds of women in Gateshead affected by these unfair changes highlighting the concerns raised in the debate and urging the government to compensate properly for the changes.”

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

CL31 QUESTIONS

There were no questions submitted.

JANE ROBINSON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Leader reminded councillors that Jane Robinson was attending her last meeting before starting her new job at Durham University. He referred to her excellent service to the Council as both Chief Executive and Assistant Chief Executive and Council agreed that it should place on record its appreciation for Jane’s service.