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GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, 19 September 2019

PRESENT: THE MAYOR COUNCILLOR M HOOD (CHAIR)

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

APOLOGIES: Councillors: M Brain, M Charlton, S Craig, C Davison, L Green, J Kielty, P Maughan, B Oliphant, J Turnbull, N Weatherley and A Wheeler

A minute's silence was observed following the deaths of Honorary Freeman Ezriel Salomon, Alderman Norman Callendar and former Mayoress Jennifer Mitchinson.

CL34 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 18 JULY 2019

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2019 be approved as a correct record.

CL35 OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

(A) Heritage Schools Award

The Mayor announced that Gateshead's Virtual School for Looked After Children has become the first virtual school in the country to be recognised with a Heritage Schools Award.

The Mayor congratulated the team on the award.

CL36 PRESENTATION FROM THE TEENAGE CANCER TRUST

Council received a presentation from Sonia Graham and Emily Collingwood, from the charity, Teenage Cancer Trust, on the work of the charity.

CL37 PETITIONS

Councillor M Hall submitted a petition regarding a traffic scheme in Winlaton.

CL38 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Mr Ross Ferguson submitted the following question:

“I understand that Gateshead Council has declared a climate emergency. I would be most grateful if the Council would inform me what deadline has been set for net zero greenhouse gas emissions and what is the strategy to achieve this?”

Councillor J McElroy, Cabinet member for Environment and Transport, responded to the question.

Mr Ross Ferguson submitted a supplementary question:

“Will the Council set up a discussion group for Gateshead residents and Councillors interested in the climate emergency, with frequent meetings to assist in the urgent development of a net zero strategy? This could be called the Gateshead Climate Forum”.

Councillor J McElroy responded to the supplementary question.

CL39 YOUTH JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-20

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of the Annual Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2019-2020.

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the Annual Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2019-20 be approved.

CL40 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of the annual report of the Audit and Standards Committee for 2018/19.

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the annual report of the Audit and Standards Committee for 2018/19 be approved.

CL41 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.

CL42 NOTICE OF MOTION - KIM MCGUINNESS AND THE 2019 PCC ELECTION

Councillor R Beadle raised a point of order in relation to this motion.

The Mayor advised that the motion was in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules.

All Liberal Democrat councillors left the room during discussion of the motion.

Councillor R Mullen moved the following motion:

“This Council congratulates Kim McGuinness on her election as Police and Crime Commissioner and believes that she will be an excellent public servant.

We believe that Kim McGuinness brought forward a detailed and clear vision for how policing needs to change, that she ran a professional and high-minded campaign for office and proved herself an articulate campaigner.

This Council deplores the sexist comments aimed at Kim McGuinness during and after the campaign. This Council believes that there is no place in public life for these sexist, misogynistic and derogatory comments.

Statements in public life – whether in public meetings, printed material, social media or blogs – need to uphold the principles of the Equality Act which says women must not be subject to discrimination or harassment because of their sex. Abuse and harassment, including on social media, can impact on women’s willingness to run for office and so restrict their participation in democratic processes.

This Council resolves to:

- write to the Home Office demanding that the law is changed to make misogyny a hate crime
- write to the Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner to ask her to require the police to record misogyny as a hate crime in their day-to-day activities
- call upon all candidates for public office to abide by the highest standards of behaviour and make a public commitment to reject sexism in their campaigns”

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

CL43 NOTICE OF MOTION - HIGH-STAKES TESTING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Councillor R Beadle raised a point of order in relation to this motion.

The Mayor advised the motion was in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules and with the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity.

All Liberal Democrat councillors left the room during discussion of the motion.

Councillor D Bradford moved the following motion:

“Gateshead Council welcomes the commitment of the Labour Party to abolish SATs and other high-stakes testing in primary schools.

It notes that:

- 1) Statutory testing in primary schools has increased since 2010 and is increasing further: by 2020, children will be tested in Reception (the Baseline Assessment), Year 1 (the Phonics Screening Check), Year 2 (SATs), Year 4 (the Multiplication Tables Check) and Year 6 (SATs).
- 2) The pressures of statutory assessment contribute to the crisis of teacher morale, workload, recruitment and retention.
- 3) Tests are focussed on the requirements of school accountability rather than on support for children’s learning.
- 4) The pressures of testing in primary schools have a detrimental effect on children’s mental health.
- 5) Educational research has demonstrated repeatedly that teaching to the test narrows the curriculum and the educational experience of children, focussing on labelling not learning.
- 6) The National Education Union has agreed to carry out an indicative ballot of its members to ask their views about the campaign to abolish high-stakes primary testing and whether they would be prepared to boycott statutory high-stakes tests in primary schools.

This Council believes that campaigning, by those who work in primary schools, parents and academics, to end the current high-stakes system of primary assessment should be welcomed, in particular the More Than A Score campaign.

Gateshead Council resolves:

- 1) To express its support for campaigns against the current system of primary assessment, including those organised by teacher unions and More Than A Score.
- 2) To call a meeting of trade unions, parents and school governors to discuss the council’s position on these matters and to coordinate a response.
- 3) To lobby the Secretary of State for Education to listen to the growing number of voices who are calling for the abolition of high-stakes testing in primary schools.
- 4) To offer support to schools within the area which adopt an alternative approach to assessment (for example by taking the More Than A Score pledge).”

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

CL44 NOTICE OF MOTION - DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BILL

Councillor I Patterson moved the following motion:

“This council notes with great concern the failure of the Government to ensure the passage of the Domestic Violence Bill before the prorogation of Parliament. This council calls on the Government to ensure the Bill is brought back in the coming Parliamentary session as a priority and that sufficient Government time is allocated to ensure its passage”.

Councillor A Douglas moved the following amendment:

Replace “Domestic Violence Bill” with “Domestic Abuse Bill”.

The amendment was accepted by the mover of the original motion and, therefore, put as the substantive motion and duly carried.

COUNCIL RESOLVED -

This council notes with great concern the failure of the Government to ensure the passage of the Domestic Abuse Bill before the prorogation of Parliament. This council calls on the Government to ensure the Bill is brought back in the coming Parliamentary session as a priority and that sufficient Government time is allocated to ensure its passage.

CL45 NOTICE OF MOTION - PROMOTING PERIOD DIGNITY

Councillor V Anderson moved the following motion:

“This council:

- Acknowledges the motion of 22nd November 2018 regarding period dignity; where it was resolved that women and girls should be able to experience their periods with dignity.
- Recognises the fantastic work done by Red Box Gateshead, Gateshead Youth Council and volunteers to promote period dignity within schools.
- Welcomes steps by central government to provide sanitary products in all schools in England from spring 2020.
- Remains deeply concerned with the issue of period poverty within Gateshead, specifically with low income families, resulting in knock-on effects including impacting health and education.

Council calls for:

- Further study to be carried out into the costs to put an end to period poverty in the borough and the benefits resulting from this.
- Continued work and support with volunteers and Gateshead Youth Council to build a success of new Project ToM to promote period dignity throughout the

borough.

- To take a lead as a local authority and provide sanitary products in all public civic buildings and places of work.
- Encourage local businesses to promote similar actions to be taken”.

Councillor C Donovan moved the following amendment:

Delete:

“Council calls for:

- Further study to be carried out into the costs to put an end to period poverty in the borough and the benefits resulting from this.
- Continued work and support with volunteers and Gateshead Youth Council to build a success of new Project ToM to promote period dignity throughout the borough.
- To take a lead as a local authority and provide sanitary products in all public civic buildings and places of work.
- Encourage local businesses to promote similar actions to be taken”.

And insert:

“Council congratulates the Gateshead Youth Council for starting the new Project ToM, to promote period dignity throughout the borough.

Council waits with interest for the results of the existing feasibility study that it is currently conducting, which will assess the financial impact on Council should it resolve to provide sanitary products in its toilets in the future.

Council acknowledges the root causes of period poverty: stigma, austerity measures, a failing welfare system, and financial abuse, and calls upon the Government to urgently tackle and prioritise these issues, which affect women and girls disproportionately, so that women and girls are not denied opportunities and are afforded dignity.”

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

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

COUNCIL RESOLVED -

“This council:

- Acknowledges the motion of 22nd November 2018 regarding period dignity; where it was resolved that women and girls should be able to experience their periods with dignity.
- Recognises the fantastic work done by Red Box Gateshead, Gateshead Youth Council and volunteers to promote period dignity within schools.
- Welcomes steps by central government to provide sanitary products in all schools in England from spring 2020.
- Remains deeply concerned with the issue of period poverty within Gateshead,

specifically with low income families, resulting in knock-on effects including impacting health and education.

Council congratulates the Gateshead Youth Council for starting the new Project ToM, to promote period dignity throughout the borough.

Council waits with interest for the results of the existing feasibility study that it is currently conducting, which will assess the financial impact on Council should it resolve to provide sanitary products in its toilets in the future.

Council acknowledges the root causes of period poverty: stigma, austerity measures, a failing welfare system, and financial abuse, and calls upon the Government to urgently tackle and prioritise these issues, which affect women and girls disproportionately, so that women and girls are not denied opportunities and are afforded dignity.”

CL46 NOTICE OF MOTION - REDUCTION IN BOTTLED WATER AND CREATING WATER REFILL FACILITIES

Councillor J Wallace moved the following motion:

“This council:

- Acknowledges the motion passed on 23rd May 2019 declaring a climate change emergency.
- Recognises the work done by council to promote recycling across the borough.

Council calls for:

- Bottled drinking water on all council premises and public buildings to be phased out as a start to reducing single-use plastic.
- To have water refill availability promoted in all council premises, using an initiative such as Refill with Northumbria Water.
- Have availability to purchase reusable water bottles on all council premises.
- Encourage local businesses to promote similar actions to be taken.”

Councillor J McElroy moved the following amendment:

Delete:

“Council calls for:

- Bottled drinking water on all council premises and public buildings to be phased out as a start to reducing single-use plastic.
- To have water refill availability promoted in all council premises, using an initiative such as Refill with Northumbria Water.
- Have availability to purchase reusable water bottles on all council premises.
- Encourage local businesses to promote similar actions to be taken.”

And insert:

- “Recognises the work started some time ago by the council which has already reduced the use of single use plastics.”

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

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

COUNCIL RESOLVED -

“This council:

- Acknowledges the motion passed on 23rd May 2019 declaring a climate change emergency.
- Recognises the work done by council to promote recycling across the borough.

Recognises the work started some time ago by the council which has already reduced the use of single use plastics.”

CL47 QUESTIONS

The following question was received from Councillor R Beadle:

“Over the summer local media reported extensively on the costs of housing residents in temporary accommodation and the numbers who have been so housed. Could the Cabinet Member confirm the trends of spend and both average and maximum lengths of stay (for adults and children) over the past three years and the anticipated / projected figures over the next three years?”

Councillor J Adams, Cabinet member for Housing, responded to the question and also a supplementary question.

Mayor.....