

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, 20 July 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, D Burnett, P Burns, L Caffrey, B Clelland, P Craig, W Dick, S Dickie, P Diston, K Dodds, C Donovan, A Douglas, D Duggan, 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, R Mullen, B Oliphant, A Ord, C Ord, M Ord, I Patterson, S Potts, D Robson, S Ronchetti, J Simpson, J Turnbull, J Turner, K Walker, D Weatherley, D Welsh, A Wintcher and K Wood

APOLOGIES: Councillors: J Eagle, G Haley, S Hawkins, L Moir, J Wallace and H Weatherley

CL18 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 25 MAY 2023

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2023 be approved as a correct record subject to it being noted that Cllr K Walker was in attendance.

CL19 OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor announced that within the King's Birthday Honours List 2023 the following people were recognised who live and work within the Borough:

- Christine Myhill, Gateshead Libraries and Heritage Manager, was awarded an MBE for services to Public Libraries during Covid-19.
- Karolynne Hart, Community Art Development Manager, was awarded the British Empire Medal for services to Public Libraries and to the Arts.
- Bill Fullen, former Chief Executive of the Gateshead Housing Company, was awarded an OBE for services to Housing.
- Lawrence Patrick Doherty, Project Manager DWP, was awarded an MBE for services to the community in Gateshead.
- Dr Ian Pattison, lately Chair of NHS Sunderland CCG, was awarded an OBE for services to the NHS.

- Peter Heath, Deputy Chief Fire Officer at Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, was awarded King's Fire Service Medal for Distinguished Service.

CL20 PETITIONS

There were no petitions submitted.

CL21 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions submitted by members of the public.

CL22 PROVISIONAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMMES

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of Overview and Scrutiny Committees provisional work programmes for 2023/24.

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the provisional work programmes for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees for 2023/24 be approved.

CL23 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of the appointment of an Independent Person for standards of conduct issues affecting Council and Parish Council Members.

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the appointment of Dr Stuart Green as the Independent Person for standards of conduct issues be approved for a period of three years.

CL24 PROVISIONAL REVENUE OUTTURN 2022/23

Consideration was given to a report confirming the outturn position on the 2022/23 revenue budget.

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the appropriations to and from reserves be approved.

CL25 CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2022/23 – YEAR END OUTTURN

Consideration was given to a report on the 2022/23 Capital Programme outturn and the monitoring of performance against the statutory Prudential Indicators.

COUNCIL RESOLVED - (i) That the Capital Programme Outturn for 2022/23 be noted;
(ii) That the financing of the Capital Programme be approved; and

- (iii) That none of the approved Prudential Indicators set for 2022/23 have been breached.

CL26 ANNUAL YOUTH JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2024

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of the Annual Youth Justice Strategic Plan for 2023-24.

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the Annual Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2023-24 be approved.

CL27 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) 30 YEAR BUSINESS PLAN

Consideration was given to a report seeking endorsement of the proposed Housing Revenue Account 30-year Business Plan 2023-2053.

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 30 Year Business Plan 2023-2053 be approved.

CL28 TREASURY ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of the Treasury Annual Report 2022/23.

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the Treasury Annual Report for 2022/23 be approved.

CL29 REVENUE BUDGET 2023/24 - FIRST QUARTER REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report informing of the latest monitoring position on the 2023/24 revenue budget at the end of the first quarter.

COUNCIL RESOLVED -

- (i) That an amendment to the net revenue budget for 2023/24 from £289,902,826 to £281,884,964 be approved.
- (ii) That the removal of pandemic budget and the equivalent reserve funding be approved.
- (iii) That a £2.4m increase in the 2023/24 HRA budget be approved to reflect the increase in the depreciation charge funded from the HRA reserve.

CL30 CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2023/24 - FIRST QUARTER REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report informing of the latest position on the 2023/24 Capital Programme and Prudential Indicators at the end of the first quarter to 30 June 2023.

- COUNCIL RESOLVED -
- (i) That all variations to the 2023/24 Capital Programme be approved.
 - (ii) That the financing of the revised programme be approved.
 - (iii) That Cabinet confirms that the capital expenditure and financing requirements have been revised in line with the amended budget and that none of the approved Prudential Indicators set for 2023/24 have been breached.

CL31 NOTICE OF MOTION - RAILWAY TICKET OFFICES

Councillor M Gannon moved the following motion:

“On the 5th July 2023, the Government unveiled plans via the Rail Delivery Group to axe over one thousand railway ticket offices. For the North East, this would mean total closures of the ticket offices at:

- Alnmouth
- Berwick upon Tweed
- Darlington
- Durham
- Eaglescliffe
- Hexham
- Malton
- Middlesbrough
- Morpeth
- Northallerton
- Redcar Central
- Scarborough
- Sunderland
- Thirsk
- Thornaby

This would only leave ticket offices open only at Newcastle, York and Hartlepool, all on reduced opening hours.

Whilst the consultation was announced to run for twenty-one days from 5th July, some ticket office staff have already been handed redundancy notices. It is also

pertinent to note that despite the consultation itself being aimed at the general public, it has not been released in any kind of paper, easy-read, audio or BSL format, therefore excluding many of the people for whom ticket offices are essential from even having their say.

During the pandemic, the private train operators in the UK made more than £300 million between March 2020 and September 2022. This will rise to £400 million by September 2023. The majority of this funding was a government subsidy direct from the UK taxpayer.

In December 2021, the UK's largest train operator, First Group, handed £500 million to its shareholders for running South Western Railway and TransPennine Express services. As all in the North East will well be aware, this year alone 75% of TransPennine Express services have been late or cancelled. The CEO of First Group was paid £840,000 during that time and received a 6% pay rise.

Reducing the human presence at our stations is not driven by austerity or government cuts: it is driven by profiteering of the private sector. It will make life more difficult for those who are disabled, have limited mobility, struggle with new technology, feel unsafe around unstaffed stations, and anyone who just needs extra help. The railway in this country is proven to be profitable. The people of this country should benefit from that with at least basic service levels.

This council resolves to ask that the Leader and Chief Executive:

- **Respond to the Rail Delivery Group consultation to object in the strongest terms in relation to the proposals for our region;**
- **Write to the Secretary of State for Transport to object to these proposals.”**

The motion was duly carried.

CL32 QUESTIONS

There were no questions received.

Mayor.....