



COUNCIL MEETING

12 NOVEMBER 2015

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Jane Robinson, Chief Executive

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING – 24 SEPTEMBER 2015

MEMBERS PRESENT:

THE MAYOR (COUNCILLOR A GEDDES) IN THE CHAIR

COUNCILLORS: J Adams, R Beadle, M Brain, L Caffrey, B Clelland, B Coates, P Craig, S Craig, D Davidson, W Dick, S Dickie, P Dillon, C Donovan, A Douglas, K Ferdinand, M Foy, P Foy, M Gannon, B Goldsworthy, J Graham, M Graham, T Graham, J Green, JS Green, L Green, G Haley, M Hall, J Hamilton, S Hawkins, M Henry, L Holmes, M Hood, J Lee, P Maughan, K McCartney, J McClurey, J McElroy, C McHugh, E McMaster, M McNestry, P Mole, B Oliphant, M Ord, S Ronchetti, C Simcox, J Simpson, A Thompson, L Twist, J Wallace, N Weatherley, A Wheeler and K Wood

APOLOGIES COUNCILLORS:

C Bradley, M Charlton, K Dodds, J Eagle, M Goldsworthy, F Hindle, H Hughes, C McHatton, P McNally, C Ord, D Robson, P Ronan and J Turnbull

Father Kevin Cummins from St Oswald's Roman Catholic Church, Wrekenton gave the opening address.

CL/36 MINUTES

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 16 July 2015 be approved.

CL/37 2015 GREAT BRITAIN CARE AWARDS

The Mayor announced that Wendy Scope and Diane Ingham from the Council's Care, Wellbeing and Learning Service were successful in winning awards at the 2015 Great Britain Care Awards. Wendy was successful in winning the Front Line Leader of the Year Award and Diane was successful in winning the Pathfinders National Margaret Butterworth

Award.

In recognition of this achievement the Mayor presented the awards to both Wendy and Diane.

CL/38 RESTORATIVE JUSTICE QUALITY MARK

Council were informed that the Restorative Justice Council announced that the Youth Offending Team have attained the Restorative Justice Quality Mark and are the first team within the north east region to receive the award.

The Mayor presented the award to members of the Youth Offending Team.

CL/39 PETITIONS

Councillor Twist submitted a petition on behalf of residents regarding the speed limit on Woodside Lane.

CL/40 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Mr Mark Groves submitted the following question:-

“When was the Leader of the Council first made aware that the underspend on the 2014/15 budget was in excess of the £1.8 million predicted at the Cabinet meeting in January and what action did he take in response?”

Councillor M Henry, Leader of the Council, responded to the question and a supplementary question asked on Mr Groves behalf.

CL/41 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of a new Equal Opportunities Policy.

COUNCIL RESOLVED – i) That the new Equal Opportunities Policy be approved.

ii) That annexing of the Equal Opportunities Policy to the Code of Conduct for Members of Gateshead Council be approved.

CL/42 ANNUAL YOUTH JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN 2015 - 2016

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of the Annual Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2015-16.

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the Annual Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2015-16 be approved.

**CL/43 CHANGES TO HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING
POLICY UNDER THE DEREGULATION ACT 2015**

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of proposed changes to the hackney carriage and private hire policy and fees.

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the changes to the hackney carriage and private hire policy and fees be approved with effect from 1 October 2015, as required by the Deregulation Act 2015.

**CL/44 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE
2014/15**

Consideration was given to the annual report of the Audit and Standards Committee.

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the annual report of the Audit and Standards Committee for 2014/15 be endorsed.

**CL/45 ORGANISATION CHANGES – TRANSPORT STRATEGY, COMMUNITIES
AND ENVIRONMENT**

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of proposals to change the operational service arrangements of the Transport Strategy Service within the Communities and Environment Group.

COUNCIL RESOLVED - i) That the deletion of the post of Service Director, Transport Strategy be approved.

ii) That the proposed interim management arrangements as set out in the report considered by Cabinet on 15 September 2015 be approved.

**CL/46 EXTENSION OF THE DISTRICT ENERGY SCHEME TO GATESHEAD
STADIUM AREA AND NEST ROAD, FELLING**

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of an increase in the existing allocation for the District Energy Scheme within the Council's capital programme to fund the extension of the private wire network to the Gateshead Stadium area and Nest Road, Felling.

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the addition of £2m to the capital programme to fund up to a 2.6km extension to the private wire network be approved.

CL/47 REPORT FROM THE CABINET

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

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

CL/48 NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor C McHugh moved the following motion:

“This Council notes that:

- In February 2015 the United Nations agency, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), reaffirmed its belief that ‘without protecting a right to strike, Freedom of Association, in particular the right to organise activities for the purpose of promoting and protecting workers’ interests, cannot be fully realised.
- In July 2015, the Conservative Government announced its intention to change legislation affecting trade unions and their members to make it harder to win ballots for industrial action. This will only be lawful if there is a 50% turnout among trade union members entitled to vote in addition to a simple majority voting for industrial action.
- The Trade Union Bill currently before Parliament also seeks to introduce greater restrictions on picketing and the use of social media in relation to industrial action.
- The Conservative Government wants to remove the ban for employers to employ agency workers during a period of lawful industrial action.
- The Government was to grant ministers the power to reduce the amount of facilities time agreed by employers and the workforce, which is in place to ensure adequate workplace representation.

This Council believes that:

- The right to strike and protest are fundamental rights, which should be respected in a free and democratic society.
- The Conservative Government’s Bill will undermine constructive employment relations and that harmonious industrial relations are achieved by meaningful engagement and not additional legal restrictions to trade union members.
- Workplace representation ensures access to justice and has benefits across whole organisations.
- The Government’s Trade Union Bill is part of a disturbing trend to erode civil liberties and inhibit the right to speak out or protest against the Government.
- The Conservative Government’s Trade Union Bill is a politically-motivated attack on trade unions and could have negative consequences for wider civil society.

This Council resolves to:

- Write to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, stating the Council’s opposition to their Trade Union Bill and to participate in any consultations.
- Support the Northern TUC and civil liberties groups in campaigning to defend the right to strike and oppose the Trade Union Bill
- Continue to value the importance of meaningful workforce engagement and representation.”

The following amendment was submitted:

“Add: at end of third bullet under Council notes: ‘For industrial action by some public sector workers a further condition requires an affirmative vote by 40% of the eligible membership’.

Delete: at end of fourth bullet under Council believes: ‘against the Government.’

Add: At new final bullet point under Council resolves: ‘Support the TUC’s call for an amendment to the 1992 Trade Union and Labour Relations Act to allow online balloting.’

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 that:

- In February 2015 the United Nations agency, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), reaffirmed its belief that ‘without protecting a right to strike, Freedom of Association, in particular the right to organise activities for the purpose of promoting and protecting workers’ interests, cannot be fully realised.
- In July 2015, the Conservative Government announced its intention to change legislation affecting trade unions and their members to make it harder to win ballots for industrial action. This will only be lawful if there is a 50% turnout among trade union members entitled to vote in addition to a simple majority voting for industrial action.
- The Trade Union Bill currently before Parliament also seeks to introduce greater restrictions on picketing and the use of social media in relation to industrial action. For industrial action by some public sector workers a further condition requires an affirmative vote by 40% of the eligible membership
- The Conservative Government wants to remove the ban for employers to employ agency workers during a period of lawful industrial action.
- The Government wants to grant ministers the power to reduce the amount of facilities time agreed by employers and the workforce, which is in place to ensure adequate workplace representation.

This Council believes that:

- The right to strike and protest are fundamental rights, which should be respected in a free and democratic society.
- The Conservative Government’s Bill will undermine constructive employment relations and that harmonious industrial relations are achieved by meaningful engagement and not additional legal restrictions to trade union members.
- Workplace representation ensures access to justice and has benefits across whole organisations.
- The Government’s Trade Union Bill is part of a disturbing trend to erode civil liberties and inhibit the right to speak out or protest.
- The Conservative Government’s Trade Union Bill is a politically-motivated attack on trade unions and could have negative consequences for wider civil society.

This Council resolves to:

- Write to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, stating the Council’s opposition to their Trade Union Bill and to participate in any consultations.

- Support the Northern TUC and civil liberties groups in campaigning to defend the right to strike and oppose the Trade Union Bill.
- Continue to value the importance of meaningful workforce engagement and representation.
- Support the TUC's call for an amendment to the 1992 Trade Union and Labour Relations Act to allow online balloting”.

CL/49 NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor M Henry moved the following motion:

“This Council has a long standing commitment to supporting refugees and asylum seekers. We are deeply concerned by the plight of those suffering as a result of the Syrian crisis and we are working proactively with the relevant agencies to do all we can to provide support. We will place maximum effort into helping those in need and call upon the Government to ensure that the necessary resources are made available to support this vulnerable group.”

On the motion being put it was declared to be carried

CL/50 NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor J Wallace moved the following motion:

“This Council welcomes the decision of the previous Government to transfer responsibility for public health to local councils and believes that Gateshead Council is in a better position than Government to address local public health issues.

This Council expresses deep concern that the decision of the new Government to impose a cut of £200 million to the current year's public health budget in England is damaging to service provision and long term planning.

This Council notes that the Government are consulting on how to achieve the £200 million savings and notes with concern that one option is the return of public health money unspent from the previous financial year.

This Council notes with concern the £1 million underspend on public health in Gateshead in 2014/15 and that this money may have to be returned to Government.

This Council calls on the Government to retain previously agreed budgets for public health and to cancel the £200 million in year cut.”

Councillor M Gannon moved the following amendment:

Delete from first paragraph ‘the decision of the previous Government to’

Insert ‘the’ before transfer

After transfer add 'of the'

In the third paragraph, after '£200 million savings', delete the remaining sentence. Then add 'The Council is still unclear on its share of the in-year funding cut well into the financial year. The proposed cut and the lack of clarity on the amount militates against effective financial planning'.

Remove paragraph four and add the following paragraphs:

'The Council notes the Government's commitment to protecting the NHS. However, the Council is concerned that the Government hasn't recognised that Public Health budgets are used to fund a range of NHS services and therefore this in-year cut will affect front line NHS services.'

'The NHS Five Year Forward View outlines *'that the future of health of millions of children, the sustainability of the NHS and the economic prosperity of Britain will now depend of a radical upgrade in prevention and public health'*. The Council acknowledges the challenges set out in this document but notes, with concern, that cuts to Public Health budgets significantly affect the Council's ability to take on this shift towards prevention.'

'The consequences of the cut will be to affect frontline NHS Services as a result of reduced spend on prevention'.

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 welcomes the transfer of the responsibility for public health to local councils and believes that Gateshead Council is in a better position than Government to address local public health issues.

This Council expresses deep concern that the decision of the new Government to impose a cut of £200 million to the current year's public health budget in England is damaging to service provision and long term planning.

This Council notes that the Government are consulting on how to achieve the £200 million savings. The Council is still unclear on its share of the in-year funding cut well into the financial year. The proposed cut and the lack of clarity on the amount militates against effective financial planning.

The Council notes the Government's commitment to protecting the NHS. However, the Council is concerned that the Government hasn't recognised that Public Health budgets are used to fund a range of NHS services and therefore this in-year cut will affect front line NHS services.'

The NHS Five Year Forward View outlines *'that the future of health of millions of children, the sustainability of the NHS and the economic prosperity of Britain will now depend of a radical upgrade in prevention and public health'*. The Council acknowledges the

challenges set out in this document but notes, with concern, that cuts to Public Health budgets significantly affect the Council's ability to take on this shift towards prevention.

The consequences of the cut will be to affect frontline NHS Services as a result of reduced spend on prevention.

This Council calls on the Government to retain previously agreed budgets for public health and to cancel the £200 million in year cut."

CL/51 QUESTIONS

There were no questions received.

(NB: Copies of all reports referred to in these Minutes are available from the Minute File)

Mayor