

THE DISTRICT COUNCIL OF CHESTER-LE-STREET

Report of the Annual Council Meeting in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Newcastle Road, Chester-le-Street, Co Durham, DH3 3UT on Thursday, 29 May 2008 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT:

Councillors

A Humes	W Laverick
A Turner	M D May
L Armstrong	P H May
J W Barrett	P B Nathan
L E W Brown	J M Proud
R Court	D L Robson
L Ebbatson	M Sekowski
M Gollan	J Shiell
R Harrison	T J Smith
A K Holden	D Thompson
D M Holding	F Wilkinson
C J Jukes	A Willis

Officers: R Templeman (Chief Executive), I Forster (Director of Corporate Services), T Galloway (Director of Development Services), C Potter (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), L Dawson (Acting Head of Regeneration), J Henderson (Acting Head of Resources Directorate), J Elder (Acting Head of Resources) and A Kinsey (Housing Strategy Officer), M Welsh (Principal Internal Auditor), Sue Pearson (Personal Secretary), K Glasper (Personal Secretary) and D Allinson (Democratic Services Assistant)

The retiring Chairman, Councillor Humes advised that it was great to be back but also sad as it was his last night in the Chair. He thanked everyone who had helped him throughout the year which had been an experience of a lifetime. He had made lots of friends and had been fortunate to be Chairman in a year which had been one of the most exciting in the Council's history. He advised that we were the first Council in the Country to move from a poor rating to become a good one and that we had seen massive regeneration in the Town Centre and the development of the Civic Heart. There had also been considerable regeneration taking place in the outlying Districts at Pelton Fell, Sacriston and Grange Villa.

We saw an increase in business complexes on our Industrial Estates provide many jobs for local people. The Council had won numerous awards of which there were too many to list. We had moved from being a District Council to become part of the Unitary Authority. All in all he felt it had been a sensational year and it was with a heavy heart that he handed over to his successor.

He conveyed his thanks to all Members for their support during the past year, in particular the Leader Linda Ebbatson and Deputy Leader Simon Henig for making his job an easy one. He gave special thanks to Roy Templeman Chief Executive who had the enviable task of keeping him right during the Council Meetings. He also gave special thanks to Councillors Westrip and Nathan for their lively and positive contribution to the Council Meetings.

Thanks were also given to his Vice Chairman Allen Turner and his wife Margaret for their support, his secretary Sue Pearson, and to all the Officers and staff for the part they played in making this past year the most memorable in the Council's history.

He concluded by conveying thanks and best wishes to Jayne Henderson (who was leaving the Authority) for the phenomenal job she had done in improving the Benefits Service and wished her well for the future in her new role.

1. TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL FOR 2008/2009

Councillor A Humes invited nominations for the appointment of Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year.

Councillor L Ebbatson proposed and Councillor L Armstrong seconded that Councillor D Thompson be elected Chairman of the Council.

There being no further nominations the Council RESOLVED:

“That Councillor D Thompson be elected Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year.”

Councillor Thompson thanked everyone for giving him this opportunity. He advised that the final year of the Council should be a year of celebration and about making sure that Members and employees achievements are recognised, celebrated and most importantly communicated. Let's make it an unforgettable year!

2. TO APPOINT A VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL FOR 2008/2009

The newly appointed Chairman invited the retiring Vice Chairman Councillor Allen Turner to say a few words.

Councillor Turner said that as most of you know he had previously been Chairman of this Council and he was therefore well aware of the workload and responsibility that came with that position. He was also aware of the increase in workload and responsibility since becoming a new County Councillor. To attempt both jobs he felt would be absolutely impossible and he felt it was therefore correct that after the recent Election he gave up any possibility of becoming Chairman of this Council. However as always he was still committed to this Council. He offered his best wishes to the new Chairman

and Vice Chairman and hoped that they and their families enjoyed their new positions as much as he and Margaret had done in the past.

The Chairman invited nominations for the appointment of Vice Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year.

Councillor L Ebbatson proposed and Councillor L Armstrong seconded that Councillor F Wilkinson be appointed Vice Chairman of the Council.

There being no further nominations, the Council RESOLVED:

“That Councillor F Wilkinson be appointed Vice Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year.”

The Chairman invited the Leader to say a few words.

The Leader took the opportunity to thank those people who were leaving the Authority and welcome the new comers. Particular thanks and appreciation was given to Councillors Turner and Humes for the work that they had done over the past year. She advised that Councillor Humes had been a particularly good Civic Head and public face of Chester-le-Street and thanked him for being a charming and entertaining host. The Leader requested that thanks and appreciation also be passed on to Councillor Turner and Councillor Humes’s wives.

The Leader welcomed Councillor David Thompson and Councillor Frank Wilkinson and advised that she looked forward to working with them over the coming year.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors G Armstrong, S Barr, G K Davidson, S C L Westrip, M Potts and K Potts.

4. TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 24 APRIL 2008

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the proceedings at the meeting of the District Council held 24 April 2008, copies of which had previously been circulated be approved.

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the minutes be confirmed as a correct record.”

The Chairman proceeded to sign the minutes.

5. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

There were no declarations of interest received from Members.

6. TO APPOINT A LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FOR 2008/2009 AND TO AGREE THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF EXECUTIVE MEMBERS.

The Chairman invited nominations for the appointment of Leader of the Council when it was proposed by Councillor L Armstrong and seconded by Councillor M Sekowski that Councillor L Ebbatson be appointed Leader of the Council.

There being no further nomination, the Council RESOLVED:

- “1. That Councillor L Ebbatson be appointed Leader of the Council.”
2. That the maximum number of Executive Members remain as 10.”

7. TO NOTE THE APPOINTMENT OF PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

The Leader thanked everyone for their confidence and support in electing her as Leader of the Council. She thanked members of the Executive who were standing down, namely Councillor S Barr, Councillor M Potts and Councillor S Henig.

She advised that the overall aim of the Executive for the coming year was to achieve our People and Place priority bringing people together to help communities thrive.

It was agreed that the Executive for 2008-2009 would be as follows:

Councillor SCL Westrip	- Neighbourhood Services Portfolio - Lead Member on Neighbourhoods Action Learning Set
Councillor CJ Jukes	- Regeneration and Strategic Planning Portfolio - Lead Member on Town Centre Action Learning Set
Councillor L Armstrong	- Resources and Value for Money Portfolio
Councillor M Sekowski	-Community Engagement and Partnerships Portfolio -Lead Member on Partnerships for the Future Action Learning Set

The Leader advised that because there would now only be 5 Members instead of 6 she had requested that the budget saving be used to provide a budget for Scrutiny to assist in their new role.

She advised that Councillor Tracie Smith had agreed to be the Champion for Sport in the Community. Her role would be to liaise with the Executive on the

District and County- wide play strategies and the 2012 Olympiad where the District was working with other Councils in the region to welcome visiting teams.

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the appointment of Portfolio Holders be noted.”

8. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to review the Council's Constitution as part of the Council's commitment to continuous improvement.

He advised of changes he wished to make on pages 22 and 23 of the report and outlined the amendments to the Constitution in relation to Overview and Scrutiny and the composition of the Planning Committee and the Licensing Committee for all Members to serve on these Committees.

In relation to the Overview and Scrutiny it was proposed for 29 Members to be on this Committee with only one Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the changes set out in the report and Appendices be incorporated into the revised Constitution and adopted with immediate effect and that the said fully revised Constitution be formally agreed and adopted with immediate effect.”

9. TO APPROVE A PROGRAMME OF ORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL.

Councillor L Ebbatson proposed and Councillor L Armstrong seconded that the programme of meetings for the year be agreed as circulated.

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the programme of meetings for the year as detailed on the schedule circulated be agreed.”

10. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES, ANNUAL REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE, DISAPPLICATION OF POLITICAL BALANCE RULES, ALLOCATION OF SEATS AND APPOINTMENTS AND NOMINATIONS TO BODIES.

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Legal and Democratic Services on the appointment of Committees, the annual review of Political Balance, disapplication of Political Balance Rules, allocation of seats and appointment and nominations to other bodies. Additional amendments were

outlined by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services a copy of which had previously been circulated.

The Council RESOLVED:

- “1. That the annual review of the political balance on the Council be noted.
2. That the Council bodies that existed immediately before the end of the last municipal year be re-established with their Schemes of Delegation unchanged with the exceptions that (1) all four Overview and Scrutiny Committees are replaced by a single Overview and Scrutiny Committee and (2) that the Standards Committee be increased by an additional Parish Representative and two independent Members, with in both such cases the respective Schemes of Delegation agreed in the 2008 Review of the Constitution Report (3) the Planning Committee is increased to all 34 elected Members and (4) the Licensing Committee is increased to all 34 elected Members subject to the proviso at (3) and (4) that no Members shall be entitled to participate in any decision-making on such Committees unless training has been undertaken by such a member to the satisfaction of the Chief Executive.
3. That the Council continues to disapply the political balance requirements from the Performance Committee.
4. That the Council following the above review determines the allocation of seats to the political groups in accordance with the statutory rules as set out in Appendix 1 to this report.
5. That the Council appoints members to the Council bodies as set out in Appendix 3 to this report and appoints Members and nominates Members to serve on outside bodies as set out in Appendix 4 to this report.
6. That the amendments proposed by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to the report be approved.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

All Non-Executive Members

Standards Committee

Councillor MJ Gollan
Councillor SCL Westrip
Councillor W Laverick

Planning Committee

All Members

Licensing Committee

All Members

Statutory Licensing Committee

Councillor G Armstrong
Councillor L Armstrong
Councillor S Barr
Councillor JW Barrett
Councillor MJ Gollan
Councillor S Greatwich
Councillor AK Holden
Councillor CJ Jukes
Councillor M Potts
Councillor J Shiell
Councillor T Smith
Councillor D Thompson
Councillor JM Proud
Councillor A Willis
Councillor PH May

Personnel Committee

Councillor J W Barrett
Councillor P Ellis
Councillor SA Henig
Councillor DM Holding
Councillor K Potts
Councillor M Sekowski
Councillor A Turner
Councillor SCL Westrip
Councillor JM Proud
Councillor P Nathan
Councillor M May

Personnel Committee Appeals Panel

Any 5 Members of the Personnel Committee

Personnel Committee Appointments Panel

Leader of the Council
Deputy Leader of the Leader
Councillor CJ Jukes
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Councillor JM Proud

Appeals Committee

Any three Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Audit Committee

Councillor G Armstrong
Councillor R Harrison
Councillor J Shiell
Councillor JM Proud

Electoral Arrangements Advisory Group

Councillor SA Henig
Councillor G Armstrong
Councillor JW Barrett
Councillor P Ellis
Councillor AK Holden
Councillor K Potts
Councillor A Turner
Councillor R Court
Councillor W Laverick

Performance Committee

Councillor L Ebbatson
Councillor SA Henig
Councillor SCL Westrip

Other Bodies

Association of North East Councils	Councillor L Ebbatson
Association of Public Service Excellence	Councillor TH Harland
Age Concern	Councillor A Turner
Cestria Housing Association Limited	Councillor AK Holden Councillor DL Robson Councillor A Turner Councillor SCL Westrip Isobel Smith
Chester-le-Street Amateur Swimming Club	Councillor T Smith
Chester-le-Street & City of Durham Enterprise Agency	Councillor CJ Jukes Councillor MJ Gollan
Chester-le-Street Community Association	Councillor CJ Jukes

	Councillor T Smith
Chester-le-Street District Youth and Community Committee	Councillor MJ Gollan
Chester-le-Street District Scout Executive Committee	Councillor AK Holden
Chester-le-Street & Durham Victim Support Group	Councillor L Ebbatson
Chester-le-Street Learning District Partnership	Councillor L Armstrong
Chester-le-Street Unit of Sea Cadet Corps Committee	Councillor R Harrison
Chester-le-Street Youth Centre Management Committee	Councillor T Smith
Citizens Advice Bureau Management Committee	Councillor S Barr
The Alliance (Coalfields Communities Regeneration)	Councillor CJ Jukes
County Durham e-Government Partnership	Councillor L Armstrong
County Health Scrutiny Sub Committee	Councillor G Armstrong Councillor R Harrison
Crime Prevention Panel	Councillor D Thompson
Durham County Association of Local Authorities	Councillor L Ebbatson Councillor SCL Westrip
Durham County Waste Partnership	Councillor SCL Westrip
Durham Rural Community Council	Councillor M Sekowski
Great North Forest	Councillor AK Holden Councillor D Thompson
Groundwork West Durham	Councillor GK Davidson
ENCAMS	Councillor JW Barrett
Local Arts Forum	Councillor GK Davidson
Local Childrens Board	Councillor M Sekowski

Local Police/Public Consultative Committee	Councillor S Barr Councillor R Harrison
Local Government Association General Assembly	Councillor L Ebbatson
North East Assembly	Councillor L Ebbatson
North Eastern Regional Employer's Organisation	Councillor L Armstrong Councillor SCL Westrip
Northern Consortium of Housing Authorities	Councillor S Barr
Northern Regional Executive Committee For National Housing & Town Planning Council	Councillor R Harrison
Pelton Community Association	Councillor M Sekowski Councillor S Greatwich
Roseberry Grange Golf Course Committee	Councillor K Potts
Sacriston Development Group	Councillor DL Robson
Town Twinning Association	Councillor DM Holding Councillor R Harrison Councillor A Willis
School Governors	
Chester-le-Street South Pelaw Infant School	Councillor CJ Jukes
Chester-le-Street Cestria Primary School	Councillor P Ellis
Chester-le-Street Newker Primary School	Councillor GK Davidson
Chester-le-Street Bullion Lane Primary School	Councillor SA Henig
Pelton Roseberry Primary School	Councillor S Barr
Chester-le-Street Park View School and Community Shared Use Scheme	
Community Association Committee (3)	Councillor MJ Gollan Councillor CJ Jukes

11. TO ACCEPT THE REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD 3 APRIL 2008.

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the report of the meeting of the Audit Committee held 3 April 2008, copies of which had previously been circulated.”

12. INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2007/2008

Consideration was given to a report from the Acting Head of Internal Audit containing the opinion on the effectiveness of the control environment for the 2007/08 financial year.

Councillor Harrison spoke in relation to the performance of the Internal Audit Section for 2007/08 and the assignments they had completed during the year and highlighted the key points in the report. He thanked the Members of staff in the audit section for their hard work over the past year.

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the Internal Audit Annual Report 2007/08 be noted.”

13. HOUSING STRATEGY.

The Housing Strategy Officer proceeded to give a background on the report and to seek approval of the revised Housing Strategy.

The Leader thanked the Officers concerned on the work they had undertaken on producing this Strategy.

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the Housing Strategy be approved, subject to the data being checked on the table 2.12 , page 108 of the report.”

14. CORRESPONDENCE

There were no items of correspondence.

15. CONFERENCES

There were no invitations to attend conferences.

16. COMMON SEAL

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the action of the Officer in affixing the Common Seal of the Council to the following documents be confirmed:

Transfer in duplicate relating to land at Woodstone Village, Fencehouses
Section 106 Agreement in duplicate relating to Land at Drum Road, Chester-
le-Street

The meeting terminated at 7.00 pm