

**DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

At an **Ordinary Meeting** of the **County Council** held on **Wednesday 4 February 2009** at the County Hall, Durham at **10.00 a.m.**

**Present**

**Councillor O'Donnell** in the Chair

Councillors Alderson, Armstrong, Arthur, Avery, Bailey, A Bainbridge, B Bainbridge, Barnett, A Bell, E Bell, R Bell, Blakey, Bleasdale, Bowman, Boyes, Brookes, J Brown, Brunskill, Burn, Burnip, Campbell, Carr, Chaplow, Charlton, Cordon, Crooks, Crute, Docherty, Fergus, Foster, Freeman, Gittins, Graham, Gray, Hancock, B Harrison, N Harrison, Henig, Hodgson, Holland, Holroyd, Hopgood, Hovvels, Hugill, Hunter, E Huntington, G Huntington, Johnson, Jopling, Laing, Lee, Lethbridge, Liddle, Magee, C Marshall, D Marshall, L Marshall, Martin, Maslin, Morgan, B Myers, D Myers, Napier, Naylor, Nicholls, Nicholson, B Ord, Paylor, Plews, C Potts, Richardson, S Robinson, Robson, Rodgers, Shield, Shiell, Simmons, Sloan, Stelling, Stephens, Stradling, P Taylor, T Taylor, Temple, Tennant, Thompson, Thomson, Todd, Tomlinson, Allen Turner, Vasey, Walker, Wilkes, Wilkinson, Williams, Willis, B Wilson, Wood, Woods, B Young, R Young and Zair.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cox, Davidson, Dixon, Farry, Iveson, Maddison, Moran, Murphy, M Potts, Savory, Southwell, Andy Turner, Wright and Yorke.

**A1 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Martin declared a prejudicial interest (in his capacity as a Public Governor of County Durham and Darlington Acute Hospitals Foundation Trust) in relation to a Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor N Harrison regarding acute medical services at Bishop Auckland General Hospital. Councillor Martin withdrew from the meeting when the Motion was considered.

Councillor Sloan declared a personal interest in relation to Item No. 6 (Common Lettings Policy).

**A2 Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 5 and 12 November and 17 December 2008 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **A3 Chairman's Announcements**

#### **(i) Help for Heroes Campaign**

The Chairman referred to the recent fundraising activities for the Help for Heroes Campaign following his visit to HMS Bulwark and presented a cheque for £4000 to Barbara Chambers, Durham Co-ordinator for the Campaign, who in turn thanked the Council for their kind donation.

In accepting the donation, Barbara spoke of the huge difference the charity made to service men and women. The charity had raised £16 million since its inception 16 months ago. The money was helping towards projects such as the development of a swimming pool complex, convalescent areas and launchpad for life rehabilitation centres at Edinburgh and Catterick and in Germany.

The Chairman also read out a letter received from the Captain of HMS Bulwark which thanked the Council for their kind donation and highlighted some of the recent activity HMS Bulwark had been engaged in together with its plans for the future.

#### **(ii) Civic Service**

The Chairman advised the Council that arrangements were being made for a civic service to take place on Saturday 30 May at 2 p.m. in Durham Cathedral. Further details would be provided to Members in due course.

#### **(iii) Welcome**

The Chairman extended a warm welcome to the new Assistant Chief Executive, Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services and Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development who had all recently taken up their appointments with the Council.

### **A4 Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Update**

The Council noted a report from the Chief Executive which provided Members with an update on the LGR programme to date (for report see file of Minutes).

The Chief Executive advised Members on the latest position regarding the senior management structure and other HR issues, including an update on Early Retirement/Voluntary Redundancy applications, the Members' Learning and Development Policy and arrangements for an induction booklet and DVD being produced for all staff on Vesting Day.

Development work on the Area Action Partnerships and the new Constitution was continuing in preparation for 1<sup>st</sup> April.

Members' seminars were continuing to be held on key themes such as Licensing, Planning, Housing and Finance.

The Department for Communities and Local Government had confirmed that a 'stock take' on progress of the LGR Programme would be taking place in the near future.

Work had also started on the long term improvement programme and staff development programme to deliver the aspirations of the blueprint and original LGR bid.

#### **A5 Electoral Review of the County Council**

The Council noted a report from the Acting Director of Corporate Services about the latest position on the Electoral Review (for report see file of Minutes).

A further meeting had been held with the Boundary Committee on 17 December to agree how best to conclude the Council's Stage 1 submission. An additional submission, with particular emphasis on those factors which influenced council size would soon be finalised and submitted to the Council meeting scheduled to take place on 27 February.

It was also clarified that the question of the next election date would be a matter for the Electoral Commission following completion of the Review and further discussions with the Council.

#### **A6 Common Lettings Policy**

The Council considered a report from the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development which sought approval of a Common Lettings Policy for the new Unitary Authority (for report see file of Minutes).

In accordance with the provisions of the Housing Act 1996, every local authority is required to have an Allocations Scheme for determining priorities and a procedure to be followed in allocating housing accommodation. Authorities must also have regard to the statutory Code of Guidance issued under the provisions of the above Act, and there was also a Government expectation that all authorities would have in place by 2010 a Choice Based Lettings Scheme.

In anticipation of these requirements, the LGR Housing Workstream and relevant partner organisations had developed and consulted upon the proposed Common Policy.

It was **Moved** by Councillor Foster, **Seconded** by Councillor Robson and

#### **Resolved:**

That the Common Lettings Policy, as detailed in the report be approved and work continue towards implementation of the Common Lettings Policy, the

Common Housing Register and the Choice Based Lettings scheme across the County.

## **A7 Notices of Motion**

### **(i) Reinstatement of Salting Routes**

In accordance with a Notice of Motion, it was **Moved** by Councillor Wilkinson, **Seconded** by Councillor Simmons:

*The bid for Unitary Status emphasised that all services would be increased in quality. Therefore, this council agrees to reinstate Woodland Road and School Avenue in Esh Winning and Buttons Bank in Waterhouses to the Priority 1 Pre-salted network from 1st April 2009 regardless of cost.*

The following Amendment was **Moved** by Councillor B Young, **Seconded** by Councillor Armstrong:

That the second sentence of the Motion be replaced as follows:

*Therefore, this Council recognises the importance of the review currently being undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny in relation to the Winter Maintenance Programme and looks forward to the service improvements they will no doubt recommend.*

On a vote being taken the Amendment was **carried** and it was

#### **Resolved:**

*The bid for Unitary Status emphasised that all services would be increased in quality. Therefore, this Council recognises the importance of the review currently being undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny in relation to the Winter Maintenance Programme and looks forward to the service improvements they will no doubt recommend.*

### **(ii) Cabinet**

In accordance with a Notice of Motion, it was **Moved** by Councillor N Harrison, **Seconded** by Councillor Holland:

*This Council notes:*

*(a) that substantial investment of £780k over three years via the successful Family Pathfinder Bid is to be made in the areas of Easington, Derwentside and Sedgfield;*

*(b) that all the Members of the Cabinet bar the Leader represent Divisions in those areas;*

*(c) that while these areas contain substantial areas of health inequality, there are also significant areas of deprivation and health inequality in other District Council areas and in particular Wear Valley.*

*The Council believes that such geographical imbalance of power together with decisions that appear to reflect that imbalance leave the Council open to accusations of bias.*

*This Council therefore:*

*(a) instructs the Cabinet to ensure that all decisions on such issues take into account the needs across all the County, and*

*(b) in order to maintain public confidence in the governance of the County Council, urges the future Leader of the new Council after 1 April 2009, to select a Cabinet which is more representative geographically of the whole of the County Area.*

On a vote being taken the Motion was **Lost**.

### **(iii) Bishop Auckland General Hospital**

In accordance with a Notice of Motion, it was **Moved** by Councillor N Harrison, **Seconded** by Councillor Zair:

*In light of the resolution of this Council on 1 October 2008 opposing any reduction in acute medical services at Bishop Auckland General Hospital, this Council expresses profound regret at the report of the Health Scrutiny Committee which supported the NHS Trust proposals to remove acute medical services and downgrade the Accident and Emergency Department at the hospital.*

*This Council also re-affirms its earlier opposition to these measures and disassociates itself firmly from the report of the Health Scrutiny Committee.*

At this point a recorded vote was requested in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16.4. The result of the vote was as follows:

#### **For the Motion**

Councillors Alderson, Arthur, Bailey, A Bainbridge, B Bainbridge, Barnett, A Bell, Brunskill, Burn, Campbell, Crooks, Freeman, Gittins, Hancock, B Harrison, N Harrison, Holland, Holroyd, Hopgood, Hugill, Hunter, G Huntington, Jopling, Lethbridge, Liddle, Maslin, Nicholson, B Ord, Richardson, S Robinson, Shield, Simmons, Sloan, Stelling, T Taylor, Thompson, Thomson, Wilkes, Wilkinson, Willis, Wilson, Wood, Woods and Zair.

#### **Against the Motion**

Councillors Armstrong, Avery, E Bell, Blakey, Bleasdale, Bowman, Boyes, Brookes, J Brown, Burnip, Carr, Chaplow, Charlton, Cordon, Crute, Docherty, Foster, Graham, Gray, Henig, Hodgson, Hovvels, E Huntington, Johnson, Laing, Lee, Magee, C Marshall, D Marshall, L Marshall, Morgan, B Myers, D

Myers, Napier, Naylor, Nicholls, O'Donnell, Paylor, Plews, C Potts, Robson, Rodgers, Shiell, Stephens, Stradling, P Taylor, Tennant, Todd, Tomlinson, Allen Turner, Vasey, Walker, Williams, B Young and R Young.

**Abstention**

Councillor Temple.

The Motion was **Lost**.

**(iv) Links with Parish and Town Councils**

In accordance with a Notice of Motion, it was **Moved** by Councillor Woods, **Seconded** by Councillor G Huntington:

*In eight weeks time the District Councils will cease to exist and the only elected local councils will be town and parish councils. This council believes that it is very important to strengthen links with the parish and town councils and will commit to offering the same level of service to them as the District Councils do at the moment.*

*That is offering free advice on legal, HR, conservation, planning matters etc whilst also providing support in the form of help and advice from the environment and community development teams.*

*This council will also commit to work in partnership with town and parish councils, consult and keep them informed of works planned for their area.*

Councillor Stephens the portfolio holder for Partnerships, suggested that the motion be withdrawn in view of the fact that the Parish Council Charter was currently out for consultation and would be brought back for consideration by Cabinet on 19 February 2009.

Councillor Woods explained that her motion was very much in the spirit of partnership working and collaboration and as such declined to withdraw the motion.

The following Amendment was **Moved** by Councillor Stephens, **Seconded** by Councillor Hovvels:

That the original motion be replaced with the following:

*The Council will await the outcome of consultation with Town and Parish Councils and will also work within the spirit of the Town and Parish Councils Charter.*

On a vote being taken the Amendment was **carried** and it was:

**Resolved:**

The Council will await the outcome of consultation with Town and Parish Councils and will also work within the spirit of the Town and Parish Councils Charter.

**(v) Decrease of Speed Limits in all villages**

In accordance with a Notice of Motion, it was **Moved** by Councillor Woods, **Seconded** by Councillor Wilkinson:

*This council believes that it is important to keep our villages safe and to that end will work to decrease the speed limits through all villages to 30mph. In particular this council will start by implementing this policy in Brancepeth and Broompark*

The following Amendment was **Moved** by Councillor B Young, **Seconded** by Councillor Armstrong:

That the second sentence of the motion be deleted and the following words be added:

*This Council also recognises the need to reduce actual speeds if our road safety and quality of life aspirations are to be realised. This approach is reflected in the current "Speed Management Strategy" agreed between this Council, Fire and Rescue Service, PCT and Durham Constabulary which itself follows Government policy and guidelines.*

*Local concerns need to be addressed in a consistent and systematic way to ensure any intervention actually reduces speed rather than simply providing a cosmetic effect.*

*This Council therefore believes that requests for speed reductions be progressed in accordance with the current policy framework previously agreed.*

At this point a recorded vote was requested in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16.4. The result of the vote was as follows:

**For the Amendment**

Cllrs Armstrong, Arthur, Barnett, E Bell, Blakey, Bleasdale, Brookes, J Brown, Burnip, Campbell, Carr, Charlton, Cordon, Crute, Docherty, Foster, Gittins, Graham, Gray, B Harrison, Henig, Hodgson, Hovvells, Hunter, E Huntington, Johnson, Laing, Lee, Magee, C Marshall, D Marshall, L Marshall, Morgan, B Myers, D Myers, Napier, Naylor, Nicholls, Nicholson, O'Donnell, Paylor, Plews, Richardson, Robson, Rodgers, Shiell, Stelling, Stephens, Stradling, P Taylor, Tennant, Todd, Tomlinson, Allen Turner, Vasey, Walker, Williams, Willis, B Wilson and B Young.

**Against the Amendment**

Cllrs Bailey, A Bainbridge, B Bainbridge, Brunskill, Burn, Freeman, N Harrison, Holland, Holroyd, Hopgood, Hugill, G Huntington, Jopling, Martin, Maslin, Simmons, T Taylor, Temple, Thomson, Wilkes, Wilkinson, Wood, Woods and Zair.

## **Abstentions**

Cllr Chaplow.

The Amendment was **carried** and it was

### **Resolved:**

This council believes that it is important to keep our villages safe and to that end will work to decrease the speed limits through all villages to 30mph. This Council also recognises the need to reduce actual speeds if our road safety and quality of life aspirations are to be realised. This approach is reflected in the current "Speed Management Strategy" agreed between this Council, Fire and Rescue Service, PCT and Durham Constabulary which itself follows Government policy and guidelines.

Local concerns need to be addressed in a consistent and systematic way to ensure any intervention actually reduces speed rather than simply providing a cosmetic effect.

This Council therefore believes that requests for speed reductions be progressed in accordance with the current policy framework previously agreed.

### **(vi) Staff Suggestion Scheme**

In accordance with a Notice of Motion, it was **Moved** by Councillor Hopgood, **Seconded** by Councillor Wilkes:

*This Council notes:*

*(a) that the people who operate the procedures and systems of the Council are often best placed to know how they actually work at grass roots level and*

*(b) that the process of Local Government re-organisation could be the perfect opportunity for Council staff to identify cost savings, improvements to efficiency and improvements to procedures;*

*This Council believes that involving staff by encouraging them to make an active and positive contribution to the process of change will make them feel valued at what we know is a stressful time.*

*This Council resolves, therefore, to reinstate ready for 1 April the County Corporate Staff Suggestion Scheme that will offer all staff across all services of the new Council the opportunity to use their voice constructively, to be involved in improving Council services and to be rewarded in a proportionate manner when such suggestions result in significant and measurable savings.*

Councillor Hodgson, portfolio for Corporate Resources, advised that the previous scheme had been temporarily suspended due to Local Government Reorganisation.



She suggested that a small working group be established to look at best practice in other local authority schemes and in the circumstances Councillor Hopgood might wish to consider withdrawing her Motion and join the working group.

On that basis Councillor Hopgood agreed to withdraw her motion.

## **A8 Questions from Members**

In accordance with the Council Procedure Rules, the following questions were asked by Members:

### **Councillor O Temple**

I have been given assurances by Derwentside's Section 151 officer that the £13.15 million contribution from Derwentside District Council included in the "Business as Usual" submission to build a new Sports Centre in Consett is fully funded. I therefore accept that contribution is fully funded.

Does the Cabinet Portfolio Member for Corporate Resources accept the assurances of Derwentside's Section 151 officer, that the £13.15 million contribution from Derwentside District Council included in the "Business as Usual" submission to build a new Sports Centre in Consett is fully funded?

Councillor Hodgson replied to the question, summarised as follows:

It would not be appropriate for a Councillor to challenge the view of a professional officer of another authority. In addition, it was understood that Councillor Temple was aware that the Consett Sports Project was the subject of an ongoing report.

### **Councillor G Huntington**

Is this Council prepared to comment on the statement made by the Children's Secretary, Mr Ed Balls (Northern Echo 16<sup>th</sup> January).

In the statement Mr Balls points out that schools where fewer than 30% of pupils achieved five GCSE's no lower than grade C including English and Maths (judged the most important subjects), are at risk of closure unless results improve by 2011. He also points out that schools just above the threshold will now be targeted with intensive support and extra money through the National Challenge Programme.

It was also noted that Local Education Authorities within the Northern Region have received extra funding of between £104,000 and £407,000 but that Durham County Council is among four authorities which failed to put together acceptable plans for spending the cash by a deadline of the end of last year, a situation which Mr Balls described as "disappointing".

Councillor Vasey replied to the question, summarised as follows:

Durham County Council officers were asked to submit plans for additional support for National Challenge schools by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and did so by its deadline.

These plans were drawn up in close consultation with DCSF officials and their education advisers, and were very robust. Officers had received very positive feedback on them from DCSF officials.

Some of the plans covered schools that were being considered as part of proposals to develop the three Academies. Those proposals were currently subject to public consultation, and were also being discussed with the Minister and his officials. Cabinet had not yet considered the outcomes of the consultation and there would inevitably be some unresolved issues about the precise pattern of secondary schooling in the future. This had added to the complexity of determining the nature, duration and amount of support that some of these schools may require. Because of these factors the Authority was still in discussion with DCSF officials about how much funding would be required and when it may be released. The Authority was actively seeking early release of this resource.

The Authority was also working with these schools to implement the key actions in the plans to ensure that the schools continue to improve and progress. All councillors were aware of the enviable track record in school improvement and the extremely rapid rates of improvement in very many County Durham secondary schools over recent years. For 6 years running our GCSE improvement has been better than the national average, and this year the County was ranked 10<sup>th</sup> out of the 149 local authorities with secondary schools, for the academic progress that young people make in the County's secondary schools. Some very spectacular improvements had occurred in many of our National Challenge schools, with Consett Moorside being possibly the most improved school in England between 2007 and 2008. These improvements demonstrate our shared commitment and skill in raising standards for young people in the County.

### **Councillor Holland**

Throughout their lifetime, the District Councils undertook the management of many playing fields and their associated facilities. These major recreational assets, and the leisure centres are at the heart of community cohesion, offering a vital provision to the welfare of our communities throughout the county. How does the Unitary Council propose to maintain these facilities after April 1<sup>st</sup> and what level of subsidy is it prepared to offer to protect these assets? Can we receive assurances now that the financial support required will be at a level that protects and indeed enhances the recreational opportunities for all the residents of this county?

Councillor Vasey replied to the question, summarised as follows:

All Members should recognise the important role which District Councils have played in building and developing leisure facilities right across the County.

Located within the County today are 22 public leisure centres, 28 swimming pools, 759 grass playing pitches, together with golf courses, youth centres and fixed play sites.

Officers have been asked to begin work on developing a Countywide leisure strategy which should hopefully be completed later this year.

### **Councillor Wilkes**

Can the portfolio holder for Corporate Resources please confirm that this Council allows staff to purchase designer brand glue sticks at up to 90p each when alternative non-branded versions can be purchased for as little as 12p?

Can the portfolio member further confirm exactly how much more this is costing than using the non-branded items over a twelve month period and why this is being allowed?

Will the portfolio holder now outlaw the purchase of these branded items and carry out an immediate root and branch review of the hundreds of thousands of pounds spent by this authority on stationary and office supplies?

Councillor Hodgson replied to the question, summarised as follows:

The current County Council contract used by schools and the rest of the Council contained a choice of two glue stick products. Feedback from users had indicated that the non-branded version did not perform as well as the branded sticks. However, depending on the application of use they are acceptable.

Schools are able to determine how they spend their resource and it is essential to enable them to exercise that choice. The County Council could limit purchases through its new Oracle system which is currently being rolled out across all services. It is intended to make informed decisions on availability of a range of products including glue sticks as part of that exercise.

It has not been possible to determine, as yet, the additional cost of the choice allowed over the last 12 months. The information is currently being awaited from the suppliers.

### **Question 1 from Cllr Woods**

In 2006 the County Council confirmed to Sherburn Village Parish Council that it had acknowledged the change of name of the village from Sherburn to Sherburn Village. In spring this year the council started to put up road signs for the new bypass using the village's old name of just Sherburn. When this was pointed out by several councillors and the parish council there was an assurance that they would be altered and all future signs would have the correct name of the village.

Since then more and more signs keep appearing on this stretch of road and its feeder roads and not one of them has the correct name of Sherburn Village.

The Parish Council and the residents of Sherburn Village want to know what the County Council intends to do about it?

Councillor Young replied to the question, summarised as follows:

In 2006 the County Council received correspondence from the Parish stating that they had changed the name of Sherburn to Sherburn Village. At the time an assurance was given that any genuine name changes would be reflected by the County. However, it had been difficult to establish what action had been taken by the Parish to bring into effect this change of name.

An examination of the latest Ordnance Survey Information still makes use of the name Sherburn without the addition of Village. However, the same source of information lists the Parish title as Sherburn Parish.

The direction signs recently provided are principally to ensure the motorists unfamiliar with the area can safely and efficiently navigate the highway network and it would seem appropriate that the same naming strategy is used by map makers and local authorities alike.

It may be that both Ordnance Survey and the County Council are in error in omitting the Village addition. However given the short notice of the question to Council it has been difficult to establish the exact position. A further investigation would be undertaken and the correct name would be used in the future.

## **Question 2 from Councillor Woods**

Durham City Council has 6,020 council houses which it manages itself following an option appraisal where 98% of tenants voted to keep the City of Durham Council as its landlord. In eight weeks time the City Council will cease to exist and many tenants are worried about their future. When will the new Unitary Council communicate with tenants and inform them of how they intend to manage their homes when they take over?

Councillor Foster replied to the question, summarised as follows:

Reassurance can be given to the tenants of the City of Durham Council and of our two Arms Length Management Organisations that immediately following vesting day there will be very little difference in the way in which the houses are managed.

The running of Council houses will continue to be provided in Easington by East Durham Homes and in Wear Valley by Dale and Valley Homes.

The Council housing in the City of Durham is to be managed by an in-house team "Durham City Homes" with many of the same faces providing the service. A Question and Answer leaflet has been prepared which would reassure all tenants that their rights would remain unchanged and introduce the new authority as landlords. This would be sent to all Council owned homes in the very near future.

### **Councillor Williams**

Can the Director of Resources confirm or investigate that a sum in excess of £1,000,000 which would have been allocated to Housing Revenue Account for improving housing in Durham, has been spent on their General Fund Budget. This will worsen the gap which this Council need to close in February.

Councillor Hodgson asked the Corporate Director for Resources to investigate the matter

### **Councillor Armstrong**

Will the Leader of the Council give a commitment that, in contrast to Newcastle and Northumberland Councils, this Council will minimise redundancies in the current economic situation with no compulsory redundancies beyond those in the bid.

Councillor Henig replied to the question, summarised as follows:

The bid set out the basic assumptions which were modelled into the costs of introducing the Unitary Authority. Within those assumptions a number of posts had been identified as being saved. The new Council would have no need for compulsory redundancies beyond the number identified in the bid.

### **Councillor D Marshall**

As it appears to be becoming an increasing practice for some Members of the Council to submit questions at full Council Meetings, I would ask that the costs of answering these questions are made available.

I do realise this is allowed under the Constitution and questions from the Public are particularly valued by Council Members.

Councillors on the other hand have many opportunities to obtain information from Cabinet Members or Officers and at other meetings of the Council such as Scrutiny and Highways, which the majority of Members are able to attend. These offer ideal situations for the majority of questions to be raised outside the Chamber.

Whilst it is recognised that on occasions urgent or important issues will be raised by Members in this meeting, should the current trend continue the costs of answering these questions could be significant and an unwanted drain on resources.

The time spent by Members and officers researching and answering some of these questions could be used more productively on Council Services.

I would ask that the costs are made available.

The Chairman replied to the question, summarised as follows:

As far as questions from Members are concerned, there can sometimes be significant amounts of time spent in researching and preparing responses and I agree with the sentiment behind the question that Member and Officer time should be spent first and foremost on service to the public.

This time has not been recorded up to now therefore it is not possible to give a direct reply to the question.

It might be the case that the Council needs to give consideration towards putting some kind of limit on these questions, either in time allocated or in the overall number accepted for a particular meeting.

Under the circumstances, and against the background of the current review of the Constitution, officers have been requested to look at how other authorities handle this situation and report back.

Officers would also be asked to look at the order of public questions on the agenda for future meetings.

## **A9 Questions from the Public**

Eight questions had been received from five members of the public covering the following issues:-

- Backlog of Repairs to Infrastructure of County Durham
- CCTV Cameras at West Cornforth
- Climate Change
- Council Spending
- Funding for Capital of Culture Bid
- Unadopted Road at Quebec

For the questioners in attendance, responses were provided to each question by the relevant Cabinet Member. (NB detailed written responses were subsequently provided to every questioner and published on the Council's Website).

On behalf of the Council, the Chairman thanked members of the public for taking the time and effort to submit their questions and attend the meeting.