

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

At an Ordinary Meeting of the County Council held in the Council Chamber - County Hall, Durham on **Wednesday 27 March 2019 at 10.00 a.m.**

### **Present:**

#### **Councillor J Lethbridge in the Chair**

Councillors E Adam, J Allen, J Atkinson, P Atkinson, B Avery, A Bainbridge, B Bainbridge, D Bell, E Bell, J Bell, R Bell, H Bennett, J Blakey, G Bleasdale, D Boyes, P Brookes, D Brown, L Brown, J Carr, J Chaplow, J Charlton, J Clare, J Clark, M Clarke, I Cochrane, J Considine, K Corrigan (Vice-Chairman), B Coult, P Crathorne, R Crute, S Dunn, D Freeman, A Gardner, J Grant, O Gunn, D Hall, K Hawley, T Henderson, S Henig, J Higgins, A Hopgood, P Howell, S Hugill, S Iveson, I Jewell, O Johnson, P Jopling, B Kellett, L Kennedy, K Liddell, L Maddison, J Maitland, J Makepeace, R Manchester, C Martin, L Mavin, M McKeon, I McLean, S Morrison, A Napier, J Nicholson, A Patterson, C Potts, L Pounder, S Quinn, A Reed, J Robinson, S Robinson, A Savory, E Scott, P Sexton, K Shaw, A Shield, J Shuttleworth, A Simpson, H Smith, W Stelling, J Stephenson, B Stephens, D Stoker, A Surtees, P Taylor, O Temple, F Tinsley, T Tucker, J Turnbull, A Watson, M Wilkes, A Willis, C Wilson, M Wilson and S Wilson

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Batey, A Bell, L Boyd, J Brown, C Carr, M Davinson, C Hampson, K Hopper, L Hovvells, C Kay, A Laing, H Liddle, C Marshall, L Marshall, E Mavin, O Milburn, P Oliver, R Ormerod, G Richardson, J Rowlandson, M Simmons, T Smith, D Wood and S Zair

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Chairman of the County Council with great sadness reported the death of former Wear Valley District Councillor David English. The Council stood for a moments silence as a mark of respect.

### **1 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2019 were confirmed by the Council as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## **2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest in relation to any item of business on the agenda.

## **3 Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman informed Council that he had written a letter to the Mayor of Christchurch, New Zealand to express both sympathy and support following the recent mosque shootings.

The Chairman informed the Council that he had recently visited the Phoenix House Recovery Centre at Catterick which provided support to disabled servicemen.

Finally, the Chairman extended a warm welcome to two Councillors recently elected in by-elections. Councillor Bev Coult was the newly elected Member for Esh and Witton Gilbert Electoral Division and Councillor John Higgins the newly elected Member for the Wingate Electoral Division. The Chairman congratulated them both on their election and hoped they would find their time on the Council an interesting and rewarding experience.

## **4 Leader's Report**

The Leader informed Council that the start of the following week would mark the tenth anniversary of local government reorganisation (LGR) in County Durham. Over this time there had been many achievements and many challenges, in particular those brought about by the change in government and austerity programme since 2010. The original LGR programme merged eight councils and cost up to 200 posts, although in the end this figure was considerably less, and a large proportion of the initial £20 million savings were ring fenced to fund the new Area Action Partnerships the Council's neighbourhood budgets which they had continued to fund in the ten years since.

The Leader believed a decade on that County Durham was better placed than many other councils to continue to deliver key frontline services, partly as a consequence of becoming a large unitary council of half a million people and the advantages of providing services at scale and partly because of local community budgets.

The spring issue of Durham County News featured the work and achievements of the 14 AAPs since the unitary authority was created and an event was organised for later in April to highlight some of the most successful projects across the county. The Leader thanked all those who had been involved with the AAPs over the past ten years.

Sustained investment in culture over the last ten years had helped the Council to designate 2019 as a year of culture, #Durham19, with an unprecedented programme of events, festivals, anniversaries and openings taking place across the county. The launch of #Durham19 took place at a celebration in Durham Town Hall and the event was well attended and supported by cultural partners and AAPs. Alongside the launch there were features in the Northern Echo and Chronicle about the campaign.

The year, which kicked off in January, with the third annual Durham Vocal Festival, had many highlights in store. Last weekend the Apollo Pavilion in Peterlee transformed with an art Installation, Apollo50. The event, delivered by Artichoke, was the first of several community activities to celebrate the Pavilion's 50<sup>th</sup> year.

A new running festival, which would incorporate the annual Durham City Run in July and include a family run with Paula Radcliffe would be launched on 28 March.

A major new cycling event, which could see up to 15,000 participants and more than 40,000 visitors to the county, would take place on 1 September.

Planning and promotion for the Bishop Auckland Food Festival on Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 April was well underway and a new Food Festival in Seaham was planned for June.

The second Durham Adventure Festival would take place in April. Legendary climber, Sir Chris Bonington, would headline at the Gala alongside other adventurers like Jason Mallinson, a cave diver who was involved in last year's heroic Thai cave rescue.

Across the rest of the year, there would be a mix of the familiar and the new. The year's highlights would include the Cricket World Cup fixtures in June and July at the Emirates Stadium, Chester-le-Street, the tenth anniversary of Lumiere in November, completion of The Auckland Project's cultural regeneration projects including the reopening of

Auckland Castle and the Norman Cornish Centenary celebrations which were spread across the county at a number of venues.

Ahead of the cricket matches in June, the public would have the chance to see the Cricket World Cup Trophy when it arrived next month at Raby Castle on 6 April. On 7 April the trophy would be at the new Riverwalk development in Durham City and then Durham Cathedral. On Monday 8 April it would be at Beamish in the morning and at DCCC Riverside ground in the afternoon.

2019 also marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Durham's twinning with the German university city of Tübingen. Throughout 2019, guests from Tübingen would take part in a series of festivals and special events while representatives from Durham's schools and local musicians would travel to Tübingen to take part in the celebrations there.

The Council would be holding an event in the House of Commons on 30 April, as part of its campaign to attract inward investment to the county and would have a joint focus on Business and Culture. The event would also highlight the strength and depth of strategic employment sites and opportunities across the County including the city centre, Jade, Integra 61, Aykley Heads, NETPark, Forrest Park and Project Genesis.

Building on the Business Summit the Council hosted in January, the campaign was gaining momentum. Since then a new business magazine for the county, 'D magazine', had been launched, the second issue would be published in early April and feature details of the first live business debate in the county which took place on 14 March at Netpark.

A Single-Use Plastics Partnership pledge was signed on 14 March by 30 partner organisations from across the county who have pledged to reduce their use of single-use plastics. The Council had already undertaken significant work in this area including replacing cups and straws in canteens and phasing out the use of plastic overshoes in our leisure centres. Tying into the single-use plastics work, an ongoing plastic matters campaign aimed to reduce the amount of contamination in the County's recycling.

The annual Big Spring Clean continued until 9 April. The campaign also included messages to deter littering from vehicles. The Council's award winning Operation Spruce Up campaign also continued to clean

up front streets in local communities with visits to West Cornforth and Ushaw Moor completed earlier this year and visits to Newton Aycliffe this month and Wolsingham in April.

Stainton Grove Household Waste Recycling Centre reopened on 11 March following improvement works. The improvements included provision of more facilities making it easier for residents to recycle more household waste. A new shop facility where used goods could be sold and a trade waste facility for small businesses to deposit their trade waste had also been introduced.

Referring to consultations, the Leader reported that consultation on the County Durham Plan closed on 8 March. A report was due to go to Full Council in June. Residents could submit their comments on a revised allotment policy and tenancy agreement until 31 March. The Statement of Licensing Policy consultation continued to seek views on the current policy until 3 May.

The Council's Plastic Roads Project won the APSE Highways Innovation Award 2019 in the category of Highways Maintenance.

The Buildings and Facilities Maintenance service had been shortlisted for two national awards. Construction work at three projects including Green Lane Primary, Crook Civic Centre and Locomotion, Shildon had been shortlisted for Considerate Constructors at the National Site Awards and the service themselves had been named finalists for the Gas Safety and Compliance Initiative of the Year category of the ASCP Safety and Compliance Awards 2019.

The occupational health service had achieved 'gold standard' with no recommendations for improvement from auditors.

Work had begun on the transformation of the underpass at Durham Railway Station. The project, which would include a brand-new walkway, improved LED lighting and new wall panels, had been funded by LNER and DCC.

Work continued on the flood prevention scheme for Chester-le-Street. The £6m project was expected to be completed by March 2020. Flood mitigation works had also been completed in Lanchester.

93.8% of children had been successfully placed in their first choice of secondary school. A total of 5,485 applications were made this year,

up from 5,162 in 2018, and every child has been offered a place at a school in the county.

In April 2019 the county would welcome eight families under the humanitarian support programme. This would bring the council's resettlement support to 231 individuals, against a commitment to assist up to 300 vulnerable refugees by 2020, as part of the national programme.

National Apprenticeship Week took place at the beginning of March. An awareness campaign ran throughout the week which highlighted the benefits and opportunities available to young people from taking up an apprenticeship.

A variety of activities had taken place in schools and libraries to celebrate World Book Day on Thursday 7 March.

International Women's Day was celebrated at Bishop Auckland Town Hall, a new combined fostering and adoption campaign would go live from the end of March, the Adult Learning and Skills Service would launch its Summer course guide at the beginning of April and County Durham had been selected as one of eight new national hubs to receive funding to tackle mental health stigma.

The Council continued to promote campaigns to improve public health in the county and had recently supported No Smoking Day on 13 March. Free blood pressure checks continued to be offered to over 35s in community pharmacies across the county. The Council also supported the NHS Pharmacy campaign, which encouraged people to use their local pharmacy for minor ailments.

The Council also supported world social work day on 19 March to highlight and celebrate the achievements of the profession and to raise awareness of the contribution that social workers made to the lives of children, young people, adults, families and communities.

County Durham Day was celebrated on 20 March with a series of social media posts and the flying of the County Durham flag at County Hall.

The Council would be supporting Autism Awareness Week from 1-7 April to raise awareness of the range of services and support available in the county from childhood through to adulthood through information displays and an event for stakeholders. Partners across the county

were also being asked to support the week. In addition, work had been taking place to produce an all-age autism strategy in County Durham which Cabinet would be considering next week.

Final assessment and interviews for the recruitment of a new Head of Corporate Property and Land had taken place on 21 and 22 March. The recruitment for a new Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services had commenced. The chief officer appointment committee would longlist, shortlist and then hold final assessment and interviews during the month of April.

## **5 Questions from Area Action Partnerships**

Questions had been received from Stanley Area Action Partnership and Durham Area Action Partnership relating to the following:

- progress that had been made in County Durham following the allocation of NHS England Suicide Prevention Funding to the Durham, Darlington, Tees Hambleton Richmondshire and Whitby Suicide Prevention Group and how AAP's would be engaged to roll out mental health at scale training for frontline workers and share and support best practice suicide prevention work in local communities?
- Whether the minimum spend from Area Budgets could be reduced to £3000 to allow the AAP to support more community groups.

Daniel O'Brien, Stanley AAP Coordinator and Chris Tindale, Durham AAP Vice-Chair were in attendance to ask their questions. Councillor O Gunn, Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services thanked Stanley AAP for their question and provided a response on behalf of Councillor L Hovvells, Portfolio Holder for Adult and Health Services. Councillor B Stephens, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Local Partnerships thanked Durham AAP for their question and provided a response.

## **6 Questions from the Public**

A public question had been received asking the Council to consider becoming carbon neutral by 2030 as proposed by the amendment to the Motion at the Council meeting held on 20 February.

Susan Wesley was in attendance to ask her question. Councillor J Clare thanked Ms Wesley for her question and, on behalf of Councillor

C Marshall; Portfolio Holder for Economic Regeneration, provided a response.

## 7 **Petitions**

There were no petitions for consideration.

## 8 **Report from the Cabinet**

The Leader of the Council provided the Council with an update of business considered by Cabinet on 13 March 2019 (for copy see file of Minutes).

## 9 **Election of Chairman - Area Planning Committee (South and West)**

**Moved** by Councillor J Shuttleworth, **Seconded** by Councillor A Reed that Councillor J Atkinson be elected Chairman of the Area Planning Committee (South and West).

**Moved** by Councillor J Robinson, **Seconded** by Councillor Tucker that Councillor J Clare be elected Chairman of the Area Planning Committee (South and West).

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services informed Council that the second nomination would be considered as an amendment and would therefore be considered first.

Upon a vote being taken the amendment was **carried**.

The amendment then became the Substantive Motion.

Upon a vote being taken the motion was **carried**.

### **Resolved:**

That Councillor J Clare be elected Chairman of the Area Planning Committee (South and West)

## 10 **Election of Vice-Chairman - Area Planning Committee (Central and East)**

**Moved** by Councillor J Robinson, **Seconded** by Councillor I Jewell that Councillor K Corrigan be elected Vice-Chairman of the Area Planning Committee (Central and East).

**Resolved:**

That Councillor K Corrigan be elected Vice-Chairman of the Area Planning Committee (Central and East).

**11 Statement of Returning Officer - Wingate By-Election**

The Council noted a Statement of the Returning Officer following a by-election held on 14 March 2019 in the Wingate Electoral Division.

**12 Motions on Notice**

There were no Motions on Notice.

**13 Questions from Members**

There were no questions from Members.