

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

At an **Ordinary Meeting** of the County Council held in the **Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham** on **Wednesday 23 October 2019** at **10.00 a.m.**

**Present:**

### **Councillor K Corrigan in the Chair**

Councillors E Adam, J Allen, J Atkinson, P Atkinson, B Avery, A Bainbridge, B Bainbridge, A Batey, D Bell, E Bell, J Bell, R Bell, H Bennett, G Bleasdale, L Boyd, P Brookes, L Brown, J Chaplow, J Charlton, J Clare, J Clark, M Clarke, J Considine, B Coult, P Crathorne, R Crute, M Davinson, S Dunn, S Durham, D Freeman, A Gardner, Geldard, J Grant, N Grayson, O Gunn, D Hall, C Hampson, K Hawley, T Henderson, S Henig, D Hicks, J Higgins, A Hopgood, K Hopper, L Hovvels, P Howell, G Huntington, S Iveson, I Jewell, O Johnson (Vice-Chair), P Jopling, A Laing, J Lethbridge, K Liddell, L Maddison, J Makepeace, R Manchester, C Marshall, L Marshall, C Martin, E Mavin, L Mavin, S McDonnell, M McKeon, I McLean, O Milburn, S Morrison, A Napier, J Nicholson, R Ormerod, A Patterson, C Potts, S Quinn, G Richardson, J Robinson, J Rowlandson, A Savory, E Scott, P Sexton, K Shaw, A Shield, J Shuttleworth, M Simmons, A Simpson, H Smith, T Smith, W Stelling, J Stephenson, B Stephens, D Stoker, A Surtees, O Temple, K Thompson, F Tinsley, T Tucker, J Turnbull, A Watson, M Wilkes, A Willis, C Wilson, M Wilson, S Wilson and D Wood

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Bell, J Blakey, D Brown, J Brown, C Carr, I Cochrane, S Hugill, E Huntington, B Kellett, H Liddle, J Maitland, P Oliver, L Pounder, A Reed, S Robinson, R Yorke and S Zair

### **1 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 September were confirmed by the Council as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **2 Declarations of interest**

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

### 3 Chair's Announcements

The Chair informed the Council of a number of successes in recent awards, as follows:

- the Council's building and facilities maintenance team had recently won the Best Service Team of the Year in the Facilities Management and Building Cleaning Service category at the 2019 APSE awards. The team had been praised for their continuous drive in providing an excellent service to customers;
- the Payroll and Employee Services Team had achieved re-accreditation by the Chartered Institute of Payroll Professionals following a rigorous external assessment which incorporated new, more stringent assessment criteria developed in partnership with HM Revenues and Customs. The re-accreditation was more notable given that Durham County Council was one of only seven English local authorities, and the only council in the region to achieve the accreditation for Payroll and Employee Services as part of the Payroll Assurance Scheme. It was the third time that the team had achieved the status after first being accredited in 2015 and then reaccredited in 2017; and finally
- County Durham had once again been recognised in the Northumbria in Bloom Awards for 2019 including gold medals for:
  - Durham City (best small city and joint best city for its collaboration with the Durham BID);
  - Wharton Park (best park);
  - Kynren and Hardwick Park (best tourist/visitor attraction);
  - Bishop Auckland (best large town);
  - Sedgefield (best small town);
  - Tanfield (best overall entry, the Percy Boydell Trophy, best small village);

In other areas:

- Coundon and Fishburn had been awarded silver gilts in the best large village category;
- Sacriston and Waldrige had been awarded silver gilts in the best small towns category;
- Seaham had been recognised as the most improved entry;
- Durham Botanical Gardens, Durham Railway Station and Belmont Scrambles had been commended, along with community champions singled out for special awards in both Belmont and Middleton in Teesdale;

- Schools including, Durham Gilesgate Primary, St. Joseph's Primary in Coundon, St. Joseph's RC in Stanley, and Hardwick Primary in Sedgefield, had also been recognised for their efforts.

The Chair asked the Council to join with her in placing on record their congratulations to everybody involved, most notably all of the Council staff, volunteers, community groups, schools and individuals to help showcase the very best of County Durham.

Finally, the Chair reminded the Council that a briefing about Lumiere 2019 would be held in Committee Room 2 at 1 p.m. The Chair also asked Councillors to take the time to visit colleagues from the County Durham Fire and Rescue Service at their stand in the Council Chamber Foyer which contained information about fire safety and the commercial trading arm of the Fire Service.

#### **4 Leader's Report**

The Council noted a report from the Leader of the Council as follows:

- There were less than four weeks to go until the biggest cultural event in the Council's calendar and preparations were in full swing to deliver the tenth anniversary Lumiere festival between Thursday 14 and Sunday 17 November. The 2019 programme would be the largest ever with 37 installations. Ten festival favourites would return from previous years as well as a programme of new artworks. The Leader thanked everyone in advance including the council's teams, partners and sponsors for their tremendous support in making the Lumiere biennial event such a success. Tickets for the free event would be available from Monday 28 October, online and from eleven venues across the County. It was important to note that ticketing was only required for the very busy central areas of the event areas at peak periods (from 4.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.) to help ensure that everyone had a comfortable and enjoyable visit. 26 of 37 installations would be outside the festival area and after 7.30pm none of the areas would be ticketed. The Leader stressed the importance of events like Lumiere for the county, highlighting that over the last ten years Lumiere in Durham had established a world-class reputation allowing Durham to shine bright on a global scale with images from the festival beamed across the world to people who may otherwise not have heard of Durham. It had helped change perceptions of the city and the county where people literally saw Durham in a new light and allowed Durham's already famous history and heritage to be illuminated in unique ways. More broadly it had helped put Durham on the map as a culturally vibrant place to live, visit and work. The UK's largest light festival also provided a significant economic boost to local businesses. Over the

last ten years there had been over 840,000 visits to Lumiere bringing in more than £28 million at a time of year in mid-November when visitor numbers were traditionally lower. In 2019 Durham would look forward to welcoming its millionth visitor. Lumiere also touched the lives of hundreds of people of all ages and backgrounds through community outreach programmes, providing the chance to work with professional artists and become part of the festival. Over 10,000 people had taken part in Lumiere related community projects to date and there were over 300 volunteer Festival Makers each time. Lumiere would be the culmination of County Durham's year of culture 2019 which recently saw a very successful Durham Book Festival and would shortly see the re-opening of Auckland Castle after a multimillion pound re-development.

- On Friday 25 October 2019, around 200 partners would come together at the Riverside in Chester-le-Street to launch the County Durham Partnership's new vision. The vision had been built following extensive public consultation, where residents, businesses, partners and visitors were asked what they would like to see in the future for the county. Building on the success of the last ten years the new vision would replace the current 'Altogether Better' vision from 2009. Some successes included:
  - an increase in employment from 64.6% in 2010 to 74.6% in 2018;
  - a reduction in smoking from 22% in 2012 to 14% in 2018;
  - a reduction of the Council's carbon emissions of 45% in the past 10 years; and
  - a reduction of 55% in 10 years in the amount of household waste sent to landfill.
- The annual County Durham Environment Awards would be taking place at Hardwick Hall, Sedgefield. The awards celebrated projects that improved and enhanced the County's environment, whilst also recognising the environmental achievements of individuals and groups. This year's Environment awards were particularly special as it was the 30th anniversary of the awards.
- Annual winter road maintenance operations were underway. Daily TwitterGritter reports commenced on 1st October and the Council were well prepared.
- Sumitomo Electric Wiring Systems Europe was the first tenant to sign up for a new business unit at Jade Business Park, located off the A19 near Dalton Park on the outskirts of Murton, and was set to provide over 1 million sq ft of new employment space and over 2,500 jobs. The

Council was funding the first phase of development. The Leader thanked the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) and the Highways Agency for involvement with the scheme. Meanwhile work continued apace at the Integra 61 site off the A1(M) which would also create thousands of new jobs;

- Freemans Quay Swimming pools had re-opened following essential repair works and refurbishment of the changing village and toilets. New lockers and changing cubicles had been added to modernise the space. Reception and studio areas had also been freshened up with new flooring and wall decoration. Since opening in 2008, over five million customers had visited the facilities.
- The new £3.4 million digital media centre at Durham Sixth Form Centre had opened last month. The new state of the art facility, built by the Council's building and facilities maintenance team, included a high-tech IT hub, a multimedia room, TV studio, cinema, conference and events suite and 13 classrooms.
- Work was continuing on the new County Council HQ in Durham City, which would free up the current County Hall site to create one of the best new business parks in the north east, creating up to 6,000 jobs whilst also providing a £400m economic boost to the county. It would also see 1,000 extra workers in the city centre, providing an all year round economic boost to Durham. 850 staff currently at County Hall would be moving to four strategic sites across the county, boosting footfall and the local economy of towns, such as Crook and Spennymoor.
- During October the Council would be joining with colleagues across the country to raise the profile of adoption as part of National Adoption Awareness Week. This year there would be an extended awareness campaign lasting around three weeks. The adoption team had included extra public information sessions, including an open-door event at their offices in Seaham, a coffee and chat session in Consett, and an event specifically for staff based at County Hall. Recent figures showed that three times as many children were waiting to be adopted as there were people coming forward to adopt in the North East. The Council were working hard to redress the balance and it was hoped that the awareness campaign would encourage people to explore how they could start their next chapter by adopting with the Council.
- 28 October was Care Leavers Week. The Council had maintained its very public commitment in ensuring that care leavers were given the best possible support, to enable them to live fulfilling independent lives and to help them reach their potential. A range of both practical and

financial support was on offer, including money to help buy essential items for setting up a home, priority bidding for housing, assistance to access grants and benefits, bursaries for higher education and guaranteed interviews for certain council jobs. During care leavers week the Council would be asking staff across the council what they could do to provide further help or guidance to care leavers. From mentoring and work experience through to sponsorship and discounts there were many things that the various Council teams were considering that could result in a hugely positive impact on the lives of care leavers. The Leader of the Council explained that community groups and local businesses were also being encouraged to think if there was anything they could do to help those vulnerable and sometimes disadvantaged young people to enjoy a good quality, healthy and prosperous independent life.

- The Leader congratulated Angela Hilton, a teacher at Cleves Cross Primary and Nursery School Academy in Ferryhill. Angela was one of eleven UK teachers who had been honoured as winners of the 2019 Pearson Teaching Awards for their inspirational work in education. The Pearson Awards celebrated the best of teaching across the UK. Angela had played a vital role in helping her pupils reach high standards along with a key role in the school's highly successful International Schools programme. Working with the Council's International team, exchange visits had been arranged with partner schools in Sri Lanka and France. Angela was currently leading a countywide project to build relationships with schools in Kenya.
- County Durham's efforts to ditch single-use plastics had earned a national award with the Council's single-use plastics pledge having won the Best Waste Minimisation or Prevention Project award at the LARAC (Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee) Awards.
- The Council's pest control team had again achieved a prestigious European standard, for the second-year running having been awarded the Confederation of European Pest Management Associations (CEPA) certified status, meaning their work met the highest industry standard.
- Finally, the Leader reported that an aspiring child psychologist, Amy Waites, who held a passion for youth work, had been appointed as the county's first young people's commissioner. Amy's appointment came via the Council's apprenticeship programme and would help ensure that the voices of children and young people were heard and that their needs were met by professionals in the county. The Leader wished Amy well in her important role.

## 5 Presentation by Area Action Partnership

The Council received a presentation from the AAP Coordinator and the Chair of Derwent Valley Area Action Partnership (for presentation see file of Minutes).

The Council were informed that Derwent Valley was a mix of urban and rural areas located in North West Durham, with a population of over 45,000. The area had a rich heritage of steel and sword making.

The Derwent Valley AAP priorities from 2019-2021 were:

- Employment, Enterprise and training;
- Environment; and
- Health and Wellbeing – specific focus on mental health and suicide prevention.

The AAP had well-developed action plans set against limited resources. Areas with the greatest needs were targeted. The AAP also had cross cutting themes including Older People and Transport and Community Safety.

Delivering sustainable projects was key to the partnership and examples of three such projects were highlighted to the Council, as follows:

- Beat the Scammers – How to handle nuisance callers - initially piloted in the Derwent Valley area, now extended across the County. The project had received both local and national recognition and was delivered by a range of partners. The project had reached over 5000 older people and helped make residents feel safer;
- Primary and Secondary Coding Clubs – these sessions included programming, algorithms and IT networks which helped pupils understand, from a very early age, as to how all aspects of coding came together. Each primary school were provided with their own piece of coding equipment for their own use. Due to the success of the project at primary school level, it was extended to secondary schools. Teachers and parents had also been trained to help deliver the activities; and
- School apple project – which helped encourage children to learn and appreciate the environment in which lived. Cookery and horticulture skills were delivered as part of the project which also helped participants appreciate where food came from. The ‘hands on’ project also included cookery classes, education sessions, learning about food waste, apple swapping and orchard planting.

Other, more recognised events in the area included:

- Party in the Park (2014, 2016 and 2018) - a free event consisting of live music, activities and information stalls which provided residents with access to information from a variety of partners;
- Consett Cycle Festival in 2019 - delivered in conjunction with Project Genesis, British Cycling and local members; and
- Christmas in Consett 2014-2017 - created for residents included competitions, prizes and information.

The Chair and AAP Coordinator finished their presentation by providing the Council with details of a wide and varied range of forthcoming projects.

The Chair thanked the AAP Chair and Coordinator for their presentation.

## **6 Questions from the Public**

There were no questions from the public.

## **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 at its meeting held on 11 September 2019 (for copy see file of Minutes).

## **9 Appointment of a Head of Integrated Strategic Commissioning**

The Council considered a report of the Corporate Director of Adult and Health Services which sought approval to create a Head of Integrated Strategic Commissioning (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Corporate Director of Adult and Health Services informed the Council that the post would be jointly funded between the County Council and the Durham Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), in response to the development of a Health and Social Care Plan for County Durham and specifically the development of an Integrated Strategic Commissioning function. The anticipated benefits of integrated commission were outlined for the attention of the Council.

In **Moving** the report Councillor L Hovvells explained that County Durham had a strong track record of partnership working, particularly within Health

and Social Care where significant progress had been made in recent years in improving outcomes for local people. Most recently the Council had included an integrated approach to governance arrangements, integrated community services and taken a proactive approach in caring for communities. The benefits of working in an integrated way were clear, minimised duplication and maximised skills of the combined workforce. The next phase of the integration journey would see the introduction of the integrated commissioning function and would enable Durham County Council and the Durham Clinical Commissioning Groups to work collectively in terms of commissioning health, social care and public health services to meet the needs of the local communities. It was a complex and challenging area of work, requiring strong leadership which demonstrated the importance of the post.

Councillor O Gunn, **Seconded** the proposal and explained that area of work had a very clear focus. The new function was all-age and would include the commission of services for children and young people. This would be extremely important in terms of enabling the children's health agenda and the appointment would be an important part of taking such areas of work forward on behalf of the Council and the CCGs.

Councillor J Shuttleworth, referring to the austerity regime, explained that the Council had reduced the number of Heads of Service, however, the last eighteen months had seen the creation of five posts. The post in question would cost £151,000 per year including on-costs and sought clarification regarding the salary costs associated with the appointment.

In response the Corporate Director of Adult and Health Services informed the Council that the post had been job evaluated in line with the job profile included within the report and the post was being jointly funded with the CCGs.

Upon a vote being taken it was

**Resolved**

That the Council approve the establishment of a Head of Integrated Strategic Commissioning within Adult and Health Services, at Head of Service Band 1, to be jointly funded by Durham County Council and North Durham and Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield Clinical Commissioning Groups.

## **10 Review of the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy**

The Council considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services which sought approval of a revised Statement of Licensing Policy which had been updated to create a policy document providing applicants, licensees, Members, officers and the public with more

guidance, information, recommendations and direction in relation to licensing matters (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Head of Community Protection informed the Council that the Licensing Act 2003 required licensing authorities to prepare and publish a statement of their licensing policy at least every five years. The policy had to be kept under review and the licensing authority may make revisions, as it considered appropriate.

In the absence of the Chair of the Licensing Committee, Councillor B Stephens **Moved** the report. Councillor Stephens informed the Council that the Licensing Policy sought to provide responsible management of licensing activities and provided an effective framework to ensure that licensing was safe, well run and continually supporting the local economy.

Councillor L Marshall **Seconded** the report.

**Resolved**

That the Council approve and adopt the revised statement of policy, having taken into account the current policy and the comments received during the consultation.

## **11 Adoption of Sedgefield Neighbourhood Plan**

The Council considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services regarding a proposal to adopt the Sedgefield Neighbourhood Plan which set out new policy requirements for Sedgefield Parish and would form part of the development plan (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Head of Community Protection informed the Council that a referendum was held on 12 September for the Sedgefield Neighbourhood Plan. 92.86% of all votes were in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan demonstrating support from the local community.

**Moved** by Councillor C Marshall, **Seconded** by Councillor J Robinson

**Resolved**

That the Council formally adopt the Sedgefield Neighbourhood Plan which would form part of the statutory development plan.

## **12 County Durham Vision 2035**

The Council considered a report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships which presented the latest draft of the County Durham Vision 2035 (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Director of Transformation and Partnerships informed the Council that the draft vision document had been developed with partners as a shared vision for the county for the next 15 years. Extensive public consultation had been carried out between 12 June and 31 July 2019. As referred to in the Leaders Report, the vision would be agreed by each of the Council's partners on the County Durham Partnership Board and would be launched at the County Durham Partnership event on 25 October.

In **Moving** the report Councillor S Henig explained that the new County Durham Vision would aspire to see County Durham become a place for more and better jobs, where people lived longer and independent lives with well-connected communities that supported each other. The Vision had been subject to significant consultation over recent months and there was a belief that the vision was something everyone could share across the Council and the wider partnership.

Councillor L Hovvels **Seconded** the report and highlighted the work carried out with partnership agencies, the voluntary and community sectors, Area Action Partnerships and the public.

In response to a question from Cllr R Bell regarding performance management reporting through the Service Directorates and Overview and Scrutiny, the Director of Transformation and Partnerships informed the Council that when the Council adopted the 'Altogether Better' objectives in 2008/09, all such arrangements including partnership governance, strategies, policy management framework and scrutiny arrangements were reviewed to ensure that they fitted with the vision at that time. There would now be an ongoing process of review with the adoption of the new vision and explained that it was extremely important to ensure that governance, performance management and the various action plans were assessed with the adoption of the new vision.

Councillor Wilkes referred to the Council reducing carbon emissions by 2035 and explained that from his point of view, 2035 was the day by which the Council should be eliminating carbon emissions and could not offer his support.

Upon a vote being taken it was

**Resolved**

- (a) that the public consultation feedback contained and summarised within the report be noted;
- (b) that the Council agree the vision for County Durham in accordance with Article 4 paragraph 4.01(a) of the Council's Constitution;

- (c) note that the vision would be agreed by each of our partners on the County Durham Partnership Board and will be launched at the County Durham Partnership event on 25 October;
- (d) Note that a new branding strategy was being developed for the vision; and
- (e) Note that a review of the delivery framework and monitoring arrangements for key strategies had commenced.

### **13 Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2018/19**

The Council noted the Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report for the period April 2018 to March 2019 (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel, Councillor P Brookes explained that the annual report was the second report produced by looked after children. The report contained many jargon free facts and was rich with exciting content.

Councillor Brookes highlighted that the annual reporting procedure had come about as a result of changes made to the Constitution following an OFSTED report produced in 2017 and highlighted a number of weaknesses.

Councillor Brookes announced that the changes made had been successful and referred to the latest OFSTED report which acknowledged that 'quality of practice had improved' and there was now 'strong political insight and challenge'. Councillor Brookes expressed his delight to achieve this positive endorsement.

Councillor Brookes paid tribute to Councillor H Smith, Vice-Chair of the Panel for her expertise and input and placed on record his thanks to the Senior Partnerships Officer who had been proactive in her support to the Panel. Councillor Brookes also reserved praise for Councillor B Bainbridge for participating in the care leavers challenge.

Councillor O Gunn placed on record her thanks to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Panel for their hard work, expertise and challenge. Councillor Gunn also made special mention of those Councillors who contributed through the fostering and adoption panels who undertook a tremendous amount of very important work. Councillor Gunn urged all Councillors to read the report which had been put together with the help of children.

Councillor A Hopgood thanked the Corporate Parenting Panel for the very interesting and informative report and placed on record her thanks to Councillor Brookes for leading on a very important piece of work. Councillor Hopgood explained that her participation in the Care Leavers Challenge was one of the hardest things she had undertaken and provided her with a unique

insight into how difficult it was to survive on £57.90 per week and encouraged all Members to attempt the challenge.

## **14 Motions on Notice**

There were no Motions on Notice.

## **15 Questions from Members**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9.7, Councillor B Coult asked the following question:

*At the Environment and Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee this month it was revealed that last year there was a building and facilities overspend of £67,000 on 8 named buildings.*

*With 57 council buildings not in use this year, can the portfolio holder explain the logic of having a budget of only £31,198 specifically allocated to these 57 properties, and inform council of the current projected year-end spend on these buildings?*

Councillor K Shaw, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Housing responded to thanked Cllr Coult for her question and explained that the Council were constantly reviewing its operational estates and had considerably reduced the number of buildings, generated millions of pounds in capital receipts and made significant revenue savings since 2009.

The 57 buildings referred to in the question were currently under review. The Council sought to spend as little as possible on the properties identified and of those 57:

- 6 were in process of reoccupation;
- 4 were being held for strategic project delivery;
- 18 were being marketed;
- 16 were being prepared for marketing; and
- 7 were programmed for demolition

Whilst some spend on unoccupied buildings was essential, inevitably there were sometimes unforeseen circumstances whereby additional expenditure was required. The Council would continue to keep this to a minimum by taking steps to bring buildings back into use or declaring properties surplus as soon as possible.

In response to the second part of the question, Councillor K Shaw explained that expenditure on buildings was difficult to predict and any shortfall would be met from other service budgets. Further work would be carried out to align

property related budgets as part of the introduction of a corporate landlord model for managing the council's estate.