

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At an **Ordinary Meeting** of the County Council held in the **Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham** on **Wednesday 21 June 2023** at **10.00 am**

Present:

Councillor J Nicholson in the Chair

Councillors M Abley, E Adam, R Adcock-Forster, V Andrews, J Atkinson, P Atkinson, A Batey, K Batey, R Bell, C Bihari, J Blakey, D Boyes, D Brown, L Brown, J Cairns, J Charlton, J Cosslett, B Coult, R Crute, M Currah, S Deinali, K Earley, J Elmer, L Fenwick, C Fletcher, D Freeman, J Griffiths, O Gunn, C Hampson, D Haney, A Hanson, P Heaviside, T Henderson, S Henig, J Higgins, C Hood, A Hopgood, L Hovvels, J Howey, G Hutchinson, M Johnson, N Jones, P Jopling, B Kellett, C Lines, L Maddison, R Manchester, C Marshall, C Martin, E Mavin, L Mavin, B McAloon, S McDonnell, M McGaun (Vice-Chair), D McKenna, M McKeon, I McLean, S McMahan, J Miller, B Moist, P Molloy, D Mulholland, D Nicholls, R Ormerod, R Potts, P Pringle, J Purvis, J Quinn, S Quinn, A Reed, G Richardson, I Roberts, S Robinson, K Robson, K Rooney, J Rowlandson, A Savory, E Scott, P Sexton, K Shaw, M Simmons, A Simpson, G Smith, T Smith, M Stead, A Sterling, D Stoker, T Stubbs, A Surtees, D Sutton-Lloyd, F Tinsley, S Townsend, E Waldock, M Walton, A Watson, M Wilkes, M Wilson, S Wilson, D Wood and R Yorke

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Bell, C Bell, G Binney, I Cochrane, K Hawley, D Howarth, C Hunt, C Kay, A Shield, J Shuttleworth, P Taylor and S Zair

1 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2023 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 Council that since the last Council meeting in May she had attended various events including welcoming a Japanese delegation to County Hall on 6 June and visiting the Remembering Hiroshima and Nagasaki Exhibition at the Oriental Museum in Durham, attending the 190th Durham Regatta on 10 June and attending flag raising at Stanley Town Council on 18 June and at County Hall on 19 June for Armed Forces Day.

The Chair was pleased to announce that a £1million home designed to give children and young people in care a "stepping-stone" to living more independently had been opened in County Durham. The home, which was named Maple House, sat directly alongside the existing Aycliffe Secure Centre in Newton Aycliffe.

The new staff team at Maple House would care for up to four 12 to 18-year-olds once they were ready to move out of the centre, and would provide support and guidance to help them into the community. The home had four en-suite bedrooms, spacious living and dining areas, an entertainment room and enclosed garden, as well as a staff sleep-in room, office and meeting room.

The Chair informed Council that a £1.5m upgrade of County Durham's main cycling, wheeling and walking route had been completed, with a new glow in the dark section among the improvements made.

Durham County Council had worked with Sustrans to deliver the improvements on the National Cycle Network Route 1 (NCN1), which ran through the county. The Department for Transport-funded work had taken place on parts of the NCN1 between Seaham and Pesspool Wood near Haswell.

Resurfacing work had been completed on the two sections between Dawdon and the A19, and the new Jade Business Park development and the old coke works at South Hetton. More recently, County Durham's first trial glow in the dark surfacing had been laid between the old coke works and the A182 crossing point. And south of the A182, resurfacing between the A182 and Pesspool Lane near Haswell had also been completed, alongside the replacement of the boardwalk in Pesspool Wood.

Finally, schoolchildren in County Durham had been involved in creating a floral annual display at one of Durham's most prominent roundabouts. Pupils from Gilesgate Primary School helped the Council's civic pride and clean and green teams plant this year's flower display at Gilesgate roundabout.

Each year the Gilesgate display followed a different theme, with this year's design created to mark the coronation year of King Charles III. The planting marked the tenth year the school had been involved in the display, which was seen by thousands of visitors and residents coming in and out of the city.

4 Leader's Report

Councillor A Hopgood, Leader of the Council was delighted to announce that the County Durham Pound project had recently been honoured with a national award, the Best Public Sector Project at this year's Social Value Awards.

For an initiative that was launched less than a year ago, this was a fantastic achievement. The Leader congratulated all those at the council who had been involved in the project so far, as well as the partners involved.

The County Durham Pound aimed to provide social change by encouraging businesses and other organisations to spend and invest money in a socially responsible way, helping to create more jobs for local residents, reducing the impact on the environment and supporting training and upskilling.

As well as impressing the judges at the Social Value Awards, the innovative and collaborative approach taken by the partners, coupled with a dedication to creating sustainable and inclusive communities was bringing about real results.

The partnership had already supported the installation of a wild pod at Oakley Cross School in West Auckland. The pod provided a natural habitat for hedgehogs and other wild animals and also gave children the opportunity to learn about the importance of looking after the environment.

And the council had been working with construction partners to promote greater engagement with communities, deliver apprenticeships and look for opportunities to employ local people.

This award was testament both to the work undertaken so far and the commitment of the partners involved, a fantastic achievement for a project that was only just getting started.

In response to a question from Councillor Surtees, the Leader of the Council confirmed that she had congratulated Darren Knowd, Head of Procurement, Sales and Business who had been working on the social value project.

5 Questions from the Public

One question had been received for the meeting from Etain Stobbart who was in attendance.

'Hallgarth Care Home is a vital service that's currently under threat. Durham County Council has a duty of care to its most vulnerable residents and to providing a decent adult services offer for all who need it. Will the council therefore commit to saving Hallgarth Care Home, including, if necessary, by bringing it in house?'

In response Councillor C Hood, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Adult and Health Services thanked Ms Stobbart for her question and provided the following response.

'Hallgarth Care Home in Durham is operated by Four Season's Health Care.

We are fully aware of the situation at Hallgarth and officers from our Adult and Health Services teams continue to work sensitively in partnership with residents, families, and Four Seasons Health Care to ensure the well-being of residents.

I can confirm that the Council is not in a position to take over the care home provision in this case. We are informed by Four Seasons that Hallgarth is its only leasehold property, and the current landlord has made it clear that they are not willing to continue to lease the site as a care home service even to an alternative provider.

We understand that Four Seasons managers have also made this clear to residents, families, and staff. We are also aware that occupancy at the home has been much lower than the optimum level for such services, and has been for some time, meaning that the service would be likely to face significant viability issues were it to remain open.

I can also advise you that Durham care homes perform well, with both internal council monitoring assessments and Care Quality Commission ratings continuing to show the quality of local services are higher than many comparator areas.

There is also currently an overprovision of care home places in County Durham, with detailed demand modelling carried out by the Council in 2022-23 predicting that this will remain the case in the coming years.

We understand the anxieties of residents, families and staff in the current situation and are following our established processes for such service closures.

The priority for our teams, working in partnership with all stakeholders will be to continue to support residents and families in finding suitable alternative placements for Hallgarth residents.

Additionally we will also be offering support to staff regarding potential alternative employment through our Durham Care Academy.'

6 Petitions

There were no petitions for consideration.

7 Report from the Cabinet

The Council noted a report from the Cabinet which provided information on issues considered at its meetings held on 19 April, 17 May and 31 May 2023 (for copy see file of Minutes).

8 Submission of Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations Development Plan Document and Revised Statement of Community Involvement

The Council considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth which advised Council on the representations received following the final statutory consultation on the Publication Draft of the Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations Development Plan Document (M&WDPD) and to sought Council's approval of the Publication Draft of the Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations Development Plan Document for Submission (for copy see file of Minutes).

In **Moving** the report Councillor E Scott, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economy and Partnerships informed Council that the Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations Development Plan Document gave additional detail and clarity on what was required for new development to be acceptable and thanked the staff team for their significant hard work. **Seconded** by Councillor J Rowlandson, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Resources, Investments and Assets.

Councillor R Ormerod declared an interest as Clerk to Shincliffe Parish Council who had made representations on the Draft Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations Development Plan.

Resolved:

That:

- (a) the formal submission of the of the Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations Development Plan Document at Appendix 2 and

- associated submission documentation to the Secretary of State pursuant to Section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 be authorised;
- (b) the Corporate Director of Regeneration Economy and Growth in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Regeneration be authorised to:
- (i) approve the submission of the documents required to be submitted alongside the M&WDPD to the Secretary of State as required by Section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 for consideration at public examination;
 - (ii) agree statements of common ground with neighbouring authorities and other interested parties in order to demonstrate effective and on-going joint working;
 - (iii) continue discussions with interested parties and suggest to the Inspector any edits and consequential changes necessary following Council approval up to and during the Examination; and
- (d) the Corporate Director of Regeneration Economy and Growth be authorised to ask the Inspector appointed to hold the Examination in Public to recommend modifications to the M&WDPD Publication Draft under Section 20(7C) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 necessary to satisfy the requirements of Section 20(5b) of the Act and make the document sound.
- (e) the Statement of Consultation at Appendix 3 be agreed;
- (f) the amendments identified in the 'Schedule of Minor (Additional) Modifications' at Appendix 4 be agreed; and
- (g) the Waste Technical Paper (Appendix 5) and an updated County Durham Local Aggregate Assessment (Appendix 6) be agreed.

9 Members' Allowances Scheme 2023-24

The Council considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which advised Council on the outcome of the review of the Members' Allowances Scheme by the Independent Remuneration Panel for 2023/24, and sought Council to agree a scheme of allowances for 2023/24 and 2024/25, taking into account the views of the Panel.

Moved by Councillor A Hopgood, Leader of the Council, **Seconded** by Councillor C Marshall and

Resolved:

That:

- (a) the Members Allowances Scheme remain unchanged for 2023/24 and 2024/25;
- (b) a fundamental review of the Members Allowances Scheme take place in summer of 2024 to inform the scheme for 2025/26 and beyond, which will coincide with implementation of the Local Government Boundary Review recommendations; and
- (c) the IRP be consulted on a revised Members' Allowances Scheme for 2025/26 to reflect the new Council size and electoral division boundaries to be presented to Council for approval in due course.

10 Motions on Notice

The chair informed Council that there was one Motion for consideration.

Councillor M Stead informed Council that the Motion was due to be moved at Council in January and included an amendment put forward by the Labour Group at that time. Given that the Leader of the Council had spoken to the Secretary of State and this was to be followed up with a letter from the Deputy Leader of the Council to government, Councillor Stead informed Council that he wished to withdraw his Motion.

11 Questions from Members

There were no questions from Members.