

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At an **Ordinary Meeting** of the County Council held in the **Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham** on **Wednesday 19 July 2023** at **10.00 am**

Present:

Councillor J Nicholson (Chair) in the Chair

Councillors 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 Chaplow, I Cochrane, J Cosslett, B Coult, R Crute, M Currah, S Deinali, T Duffy, K Earley, J Elmer, L Fenwick, C Fletcher, D Freeman, J Griffiths, O Gunn, D Hall, C Hampson, D Haney, A Hanson, K Hawley, P Heaviside, T Henderson, S Henig, J Higgins, C Hood, A Hopgood, L Hovvels, D Howarth, J Howey, G Hutchinson, A Jackson, M Johnson, N Jones, P Jopling, C Kay, 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, P Molloy, D Nicholls, D Oliver, R Ormerod, E Peeke, 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, J Scurfield, K Shaw, A Shield, J Shuttleworth, M Simmons, A Simpson, G Smith, T Smith, W Stelling, A Sterling, D Stoker, T Stubbs, A Surtees, D Sutton-Lloyd, F Tinsley, S Townsend, C Varty, M Walton, M Wilkes, M Wilson, S Wilson and D Wood

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Bell, C Bell, R Charlton-Lainé, C Hunt, P Taylor, E Waldoock and A Watson

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Chair announced with great sadness two deaths, former County Councillor, Sedgefield Borough Councillor and Alderman Bob Fleming and former Durham City Councillor and Mayor of Durham Mildred Brown.

Bob served on Durham County Council between 1997 and 2001 and on Sedgefield Borough Council from 1987 to 1991 and 1995 to 2007. Bob also served on Great Aycliffe Town Council for 36 years and was awarded the honour of Freeman of the Town in 2015.

Mildred represented the Sherburn Ward on Durham City Council from 1983 to 2003 and was Mayor of Durham City in 1988 to 1989.

Members stood for a moments silence out of respect to Bob and Mildred.

1 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2023 were confirmed by the Council as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2 To receive any declarations of interest from Members

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 June she had attended various events including a French education visitors delegation who carried out visits to schools on 27 June and a visit by Parkside/Tubingen students to County Hall on 29 June. The Chair had also attended the Future Business Magnates Awards on 30 June and Haswell Mencap on 5 July for the official opening of their sensory garden and Patch to Plate project.

In addition to this, year-long celebrations had begun to mark 75 years of an East Durham town. Durham County Council had received a grant of £92,302 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to carry out a programme of events to commemorate 75 years of Peterlee being established as a 'New Town'.

On Saturday 1 July, Peterlee 75 was launched at Castle Dene Shopping Centre with 'Peterlee: The Place to Be', a unique photography exhibition tracing the origins and early development of the town. Over the next year, the Peterlee 75 celebrations would continue with a series of events, exhibitions, concerts, and workshops in and around the town, inviting people to reflect on Peterlee's history and have a say on its future. The programme would involve the whole community from the centre of the town to surrounding areas, including the villages from which Peterlee was founded.

Additionally, this year marked the 75th Anniversary of Newton Aycliffe.

Newton Aycliffe was designated as a new town in April 1947, but the actual birth of the town was widely regarded as being 1948.

The key dates in relation to the birth of the town were 28 June 1948 which marked the "cutting of the first sod" ahead of the construction of the first houses, and 9th November 1948 which was when the keys were handed over to the first resident of the town. A number of events had already been held as part of the celebrations.

Finally, the Chair thanked Councillor O Gunn and Councillor F Tinsley for extending an invitation to a 100th birthday event within their electoral division..

4 Leader's Report

Councillor A Hopgood, Leader of the Council reminded Members that this was the last full Council before the summer recess and, while she was sure all Members were all looking forward to a break, the next six weeks could be a difficult time for many families.

Keeping children entertained could be a challenge at the best of times, and Councillor Hopgood reminded Members of the many events and activities taking place across the county to support families over the coming weeks.

The council's Fun and Food programme offered free holiday activities with healthy food for children and young people. Sessions were hosted by schools and voluntary groups, as well as services from across the council.

Children and young people aged 18 and under could take advantage of free-swimming sessions at all of the council's leisure centres throughout every school holiday.

There would also be a wide range of low-cost family friendly activities running throughout the summer at various venues, from libraries and parks to locations such as Killhope Lead Mining Museum.

Finally, there would be lots of free family entertainment at Seaham Food Festival, which took place on Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 August. With a stunning coastline as the backdrop, there was also the opportunity to enjoy the beach as well.

Councillor Hopgood hoped all Members would be able to share this information with residents and advise them that details were available on the council's website and wished all Members a restful recess.

Councillor C Marshall thanked the Leader for her report and asked the Leader if she could give some reassurance around the proposed new leisure facilities in Seaham and Chester le Street. The Leader replied that a report would be brought to Cabinet in the autumn. The facilities were always proposed as being part of phase two which had been agreed under the previous administration. All Members were welcome to attend meetings of Cabinet and ask questions.

5 Questions from the Public

There were no questions from the public.

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 meeting held on 14 June 2023 (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Chair informed Council that no questions had been received on the report from Cabinet.

8 Treasury Management Outturn Report 2022/23 - Report of Corporate Director of Resources

The Council noted a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which provided an overview of the councils treasury management outturn performance for 2022/23, including a summary treasury position, details of borrowing activity during the year and the position as at 31 March 2023, an overview of investment activity and details of investments held at 31 March 2023, performance against the key treasury management indicators and performance against the key prudential indicators (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor R Bell, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance thanked officers for the comprehensive update on treasury management activity and added it was pleasing to note that the Council had fully complied with all the requirements of the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy agreed in February 2022.

9 Youth Justice Plan 2023/24 - Report of Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services

The Council noted a report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services which presented the Youth Justice Plan 2023/24 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor T Henderson, Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services informed Council it was pleasing that the Plan for 2023/24 had not required any significant amendment from 2022/23 and thanked officers and staff for the work which had gone in to producing the Plan.

Councillor Deinali thanked officers for the Plan and for the work done to ensure young people had the support and interventions needed to reach their potential. It was evident that a lot of work had gone into the Plan which had the welfare and wellbeing of young people at its centre.

10 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report - Report of Corporate Director of Resources

The Council noted the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor R Crute, Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board informed the Council that the report covered the period of the former Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and invited the former Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, Councillor C Martin to present the report.

Councillor C Martin, former Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board presented the report to Council.

Councillor Martin informed Council that the report recapped the fantastic work scrutiny had done over the year. Councillor Martin thanked officers for the production of the report, the Monitoring Officer, all of the officers who had supported Overview and Scrutiny and the Chairs and Vice Chairs for leading on the work and all those involved in contributing to scrutiny, providing a critical friend to the Executive.

Councillor Martin thanked Councillor C Lines as his Vice Chair of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board who had been very supportive and had pushed hard to deliver the agenda of overhauling the scrutiny process.

Councillor Martin highlighted some of his achievements as Chair and raised his biggest regret from this time period.

Councillor Martin informed Council that his ambition was for scrutiny to have a bigger role in developing policy to get Members ahead of the policy making process so they could set out what good policy looked like for their communities and also provide effective challenge.

Effort had been put in to do more focused work on developing the council's budget, doing some deep dives into some particular areas and providing some specific recommendations that fed into the budget.

While the full outturn report had been considered by scrutiny Councillor Martin considered it to be an oddity that scrutiny spent a lot of time discussing the approaching budget, but very little on how the council actually delivered that budget across the whole organisation.

Councillor Martin considered that Members would not be doing their job properly in scrutiny unless the executive were uncomfortable with the debates they were having and he had no doubt that that the agendas he encouraged and facilitated during his tenure did that.

Councillor Martin's biggest regret was not having more opposition members as part of the leadership of scrutiny, although he was proud that he was the first chair of scrutiny to have a vice chair from the opposition.

In concluding, Councillor Martin wished the best of luck to the new leadership of scrutiny.

Councillor C Lines, Vice Chair of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board thanked Councillor Martin for his strong and fair leadership as Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board that allowed all Members to contribute fully to discussions and debate.

Councillor C Marshall informed Council that scrutiny was a way in which all non-Cabinet Members had the opportunity to challenge and influence the decision makers. Councillor Marshall placed on record his Group's thanks to every Member who had contributed to the work of scrutiny and thanked Councillor Martin for the role he played.

Resolved:

That the report be received.

11 Annual Report of the Standards Committee 2022/23 - Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Councillor J Nicholson, Chair of the Standards Committee presented the annual report of the Standards Committee for the period 2022/23.

Councillor Nicholson informed Council that the report set out the Membership of the committee for the period, including the two new Parish and Town Council Co-opted Members who were appointed by Council in March 2023. The report also referred to the interim appointment of Karen Milburn as Independent Person who had provided invaluable support whilst recruiting new Independent Persons. Councillor Nicholson had written to Ms Milburn on behalf of the Committee to thank her for her support to the Committee and the Monitoring Officer during her short tenure. The recruitment exercise for Independent Persons was conducted during the last quarter of the period and Councillor Nicholson was pleased to report that at the start of the new Municipal year there were three new Independent Persons alongside Alan Fletcher who was appointed in 2021.

The Committee's Work Programme, which was consistent with the terms of reference was set out in the report at paragraph 14, and attached at Appendix 2. The Committee had continued to monitor standards and governance issues nationally. Council would recall that in December 2022 it had agreed to sign up to the LGA 'Debate not Hate' campaign. Since then the Committee had continued to receive regular updates in relation to the campaign and had supported the Monitoring Officer to provide case studies to the LGA on the support available to councillors who encountered abuse and intimidation.

In respect of complaints there had been an increase in the number of complaints received during the year when compared with 2021/22. The majority of complaints continued to relate to Town and Parish Councils, however there had been a slight increase in the number of complaints against County Councillors. Whilst the number of complaints had increased, there was a decrease in the number of complaints where local resolution was recommended and an increase in the number of complaints where the outcome was 'no further action'. There had been no requirement to convene a Standards Committee Hearing Panel during the period.

Looking ahead the Committee had agreed a Work Programme for 2023/24 which would continue to be a living document, which could be updated to reflect any developments within the Committee's remit throughout the year. The Committee looked forward to welcoming the new Independent Persons to their meetings following their recent induction training.

Finally, Councillor Nicholson thanked the Monitoring Officer and her team for their continued work with the Committee in assisting to ensure that high standards were achieved by all locally elected members, and she asked the Council to note the report.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

12 Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report

The Chair invited Councillor M Simmons, Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel to present the report and informed Council that Billie Tasker and Luke Joseph, two young people co-opted onto the Corporate Parenting Panel were in attendance to speak to the report, supported by Rob Walker, Project Worker for Investing in Children.

Councillor M Simmons, Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel presented the Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report for endorsement.

Councillor Simmons thanked officers from the Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) along with all the young people who made the Annual Report possible.

The Annual Report covered the period April 2022 to March 2023 and covered a wide range of work taking place across the service to support the young people in care, as well as care leavers.

Councillor Simmons alluded to some of the achievements CPP were particularly proud of, including the focus on personalised care, ensuring each young person had an individual care plan detailing how they needed to be looked after to help them get the best from their lives.

Awareness raising work had been undertaken with staff in children's homes and with foster carers to remind them how young people liked to be treated. Young people were now on the interview panels for all foster carers and children's home staff to ensure they helped appoint the best people to the jobs.

Updates had been made to Family Time rooms to help young people have the best possible experiences with their family members, in more natural surroundings

A care leavers scrutiny committee had been developed and the care experienced young inspectors programme helped explore how services were received by young people.

CPP had a commitment to continue to support young people with their transport arrangements.

Finally, the Mockingbird Foster care model which helped support foster families in a way similar to other family networks had been implemented.

The Ofsted inspection results earlier in the year were certainly an achievement, with us being graded as 'good' overall with the impact of leaders on social work practice being 'outstanding'. In addition, Ofsted noted our Corporate Parenting Strategy as ambitious.

Work was continuing to address the 2023-24 priorities identified in the annual report, which included savings and life skills, and Councillor Simmons looked forward to providing a progress update in the next annual report.

Throughout the year CPP met with young people from the Children in Care Council, who held the Panel to account on the progress being made against priorities, and rightly so.

Councillor Simmons was extremely proud of the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel, and the commitment within the service to ensure the best possible experiences and outcomes for the young people who were in our care.

Billie Tasker, a representative from the Children in Care Council addressed Council. For Durham to have young people attend meetings of the Corporate Parenting Panel showed young people how forward thinking Durham was as not all regions had this provision in place. Billie referred to the statement she had published in the Annual Report specifically where she mentioned the Panel had encouraged her to present her ideas and feelings in an unorthodox manner, encouraging young people to present in a way they felt comfortable. Billie informed Council that she had prepared some poetry for the meeting to express her work with the Council, how she felt about it and how she felt about having her voice heard. Billie then recited her poetry.

Luke Tasker, a representative from the Children in Care Council addressed Council. Luke thanked Council for inviting him to speak again. Luke informed Council that it had been amazing over the last year to work as part of the CPP and representing the Children in Care Council.

Luke thanked everyone for the hard work they had put in over the last year and thought the Annual Report reflected on all efforts and the success being seen from that hard work.

From the support for unaccompanied asylum seekers, which had been amazing, to the support around the entry to care packs, that were now called 'supply packs' which had been incredible, it showed how much the council listened to young people and take their ideas on board with ideas that could benefit life for young people from just an idea which he had taken to Children in Care Council under a year..

The CPP helped to promote that young people as more than 'children in care' and were young people with a range of skills, abilities and talents. To support this, service leads shared proud moments, and at each CPP meeting to showcase some of our achievements, no matter how big or small. As Luke was part of the Advisory Board he got the opportunity to travel to London to speak with the Council of Children in Care and always promoted Durham and the work it did as it was a lot different to other councils who did not include young people in their work as much as Durham did.

The Chair thanked and praised both Billie and Luke for their presentations. Their voice was important to all in County Durham and to everybody who came into the care system.

Councillor S Deinali thanked Billie and Luke for their presentations and thanked officers and staff for a thorough Annual Report. Councillor Deinali also thanked all staff who worked with and helped to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children in care in County Durham. It was good that priorities were based around what young people wanted and needed.

Councillor O Gunn thanked the Corporate Parenting Panel for the Annual Report which exemplified and focussed on work which had been developed over many years in terms of Corporate Parenting. Councillor Gunn considered that without the input of the Children in Care Council this development would have been much slower.

Councillor Hopgood, Leader of the Council thanked Billie and Luke for their presentations and thanked Councillors Simmons, Walton, all Members on the Corporate Parenting Panel and the Children in Care Council for their work.

Resolved:

- (a) That the content of the Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report be noted.
- (b) That the Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report, which provided oversight of the work undertaken during 2022-23, and the priorities for the year ahead be endorsed.

13 Local Government Boundary Commission Review - Report of Corporate Director of Resources

The Council noted a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which detailed the next steps in relation to the Local Government Boundary Commission England in respect of future electoral divisions (for copy see file of Minutes).

14 Call-in of Executive decision made on 14 June 2023 - Home to School Transport Services - Consultation Outcomes - Report of Corporate Director of Resources

The Council considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources regarding consideration of the Executive Decision made on 14 June 2023 in respect of Home to School Transport Services – Consultation Outcomes for which Call-in was exercised and considered at the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board meeting held on 28 June 2023 (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services presented the report and outlined the procedure to be followed for the debate, explaining that the usual Rules of Debate would apply.

The Chair invited the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services to provide background and context to the decision made by Cabinet on 14 June 2023. Members had no questions for the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services.

Councillor R Crute, Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (COSMB) informed Council that the decision made by Cabinet at its meeting held on 14 June 2023 with respect to the Home to School Transport Policy was referred to COSMB in line with the Constitution and the Council's procedure for Call-in. At the COSMB meeting held on 28 June 2023 a number of comments were made about the Cabinet decision but specifically in relation to the proposed increase in concessionary travel fares with many Members expressing concerns about the impact this would have on some households already struggling with the ongoing cost of living crisis, record levels of Council Tax combined with rising mortgage costs caused by a prolonged period of high interest rates. Following a vote at COSMB a decision was made to refer the matter to Council for deliberation. In accordance with Council Procedure Rules and for a debate to take place a Motion was needed to be moved and seconded. Councillor Crute **Moved:**

That this Council requests Cabinet to reconsider its decision made on 14 June in relation to Home to School Transport on the grounds set out in Paragraph 16 of the report to Council.

In **Seconding** the Motion Councillor S Deinali informed the Council that although only nine schools would be impacted by the uplift to £2 many residents in the communities surrounding the schools would be impacted. County Durham had some of the most disadvantaged areas in the United Kingdom, and while some families were eligible for free transport there were those who were on the breadline, low income working households who were not eligible for benefits and not eligible for free transport. These were the families who would be impacted most. In addition to concerns about the uplift, recommendations to move away from single person transport to collective hubs and the move to personal budgets were also a concern. The extra stress and pressure on families could have an immense impact causing distress and unnecessary disruption. Councillor Deinali considered that the decisions made by Cabinet had not been fully thought through with regards to the level of impacts on families in County Durham.

Councillor C Lines, Vice-Chair of COSMB informed Council that he had followed the review of Home to School Transport as it had progressed and had the opportunity to contribute to the review through the consultation, through the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and twice at Cabinet. Councillor Lines felt that the call-in request contained a glaring inaccuracy about the uplift and failed to outline how the decision did not adhere to the principles of decision making as set out at Article 10 of the

Council's Constitution. The Cabinet decision was neither contrary to the Council's Policy Framework nor not wholly consistent with the Council's budget.

Councillor O Gunn considered free and easily accessible school transport was a lifeline for many young people and families in County Durham. There were significant financial pressures on the Council and there was a need to address financial priorities, however it was clear from the recommendations for Home to School Transport that for the Cabinet, Home to School transport was not a priority.

Councillor L Mavin informed Council that the current model for home to school transport was financially unsustainable with increased costs from £14m in 2019/20 to £29m in 2023/24, more than 100% increase. Increasing demand had put additional strain on available resources. Growing populations, changing demographics and more students now required transport assistance leading to higher costs for the Council including the need for additional vehicles and drivers. There was no requirement for this decision to be sent back to Cabinet because a fully costed proposal had already been agreed.

Councillor C Fletcher presented the views of the Belmont Student Council Democratic Group who considered that the suggested walking route from Sherburn to the Belmont Community School building through Renny's Lane to Birkdale Gardens was unsafe and unsuitable for children aged 11 to 16. The alternative route was also unsafe due to the lack of a footpath next to the Road B1283. The Democratic Group had requested that Council reconsider the report and Councillor Fletcher informed Council she supported the Motion.

Councillor L Fenwick expressed concern at children with special educational needs being sent to transport hubs and considered that children and families would be hugely impacted by the proposed changes to home to school travel.

Councillor E Scott informed Council that the proposal was not a £2 uplift to fares as had been stated in the Call-in letter, it was a proposed 37p uplift to £2.

Councillor P Jopling informed Council that the issue of increasing costs of school transport budgets was a national issue for all councils. There were currently 370 pupils in County Durham travelling on their own in taxis and there were 544 passenger assisted allocated to transport journeys. Each young person travelling in this way costed an average of £20,000 a year. Travelling in groups could have numerous benefits for children, including social and emotional development, providing opportunities to interact and

engage with peers and fostering the development of important social skills by travelling together.

Councillor F Tinsley considered that the decision needed to be brought back to Cabinet. Councillor Tinsley expressed concern that Cabinet had agreed a charge to the standard and maintained concessionary scheme of £2 to align to the bus service improvement plan offer for 2023/24. However, the bus service improvement plan figure of £2 only existed until 31 October 2023 then it would increase by 25% to £2.50 and come November 2024 this would return to commercial rates. This would be a spiralling future impact for families.

Councillor P Heaviside considered the report submitted to Cabinet was a testament to the diligent efforts put forward over a period of 18 months. The evidence gathered during this period had allowed the proposed policy change which would positively impact children from low income families or those with special education needs. One of the key recommendations was the provision of free transport for eligible children which recognised that transportation costs could be a burden for families, especially those facing financial difficulties. Additionally, children with special education needs would continue to receive free transport services.

Councillor A Reed, Chair of Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee informed Council that the home to school transport consultation period had taken place between 27 February 2023 and 9 April 2023 and there had also been three opportunities for all Members of the Council to raise concerns about the proposals. The proposed charge of £2 equated to a 37p increase. All children eligible to receive free travel based on their family income or special education needs would continue to be provided with free transport.

Councillor M McKeon considered home to school transport to be an important lifeline for young people. Going above and beyond the statutory requirement had been a necessary adaptation for a rural county like Durham.

In response to a question from Councillor D Sutton-Lloyd, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services confirmed that the Call-in was valid.

Councillor A Hopgood, Leader of the Council informed the Council there was no change to SEND provision and that anybody eligible for SEND provision of free home to school transport would continue to receive this. The use of transport hubs would be in consultation with schools and parents and would only proceed when all parties agreed that it was an opportunity for the child for development. Nothing would be implemented against the wish of a parent who didn't want their child to attend a transport hub. The Corporate

Director of Children and Young Peoples Services had confirmed that the proposal did not affect rural areas.

Councillor A Jackson informed Council that the Council was not moving away from single person travel where this was required on a need-based decision. It was important that transport identified for each child met their needs.

Councillor M Wilkes, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Climate Change informed Council that, if not addressed, the cost of home to school transport to all residents of County Durham would equate to over 10% of the entire Council Tax raised.

Councillor J Elmer informed Council that the home to school transport service needed to be financially sustainable, which at the moment it was not. Councillor Elmer considered that the Service had thoroughly reviewed all options with a goal of finding a pathway which minimised impact and had carefully engaged with all stakeholders.

Councillor P Molloy considered the proposals to be a common sense approach and could not support the Motion.

Councillor R Bell, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance informed Council that the 37p increase in fare referred to 452 pupils at 9 schools, none of which were rural. The Council was putting an additional £7.98m into the budget next year which equated to 3.9% on the Council Tax which would affect all in the County.

Councillor J Miller expressed concern at the impact the proposal would have on families and on children and informed Council that he would be supporting the Motion.

A named vote was requested.

Councillor A Surtees informed Council that parents who had children of school meals will have encountered a 17p increase per child, per meal by September 2023 with another increase due in April 2024 which would put even more pressure on family finances. Increases in nursery costs and child care costs would also be experienced.

Councillor S McDonnell informed the Council that an enormous amount of work had been expended by the procurement on home to school transport teams. Every opportunity had been available to all Members of the Council to contribute towards the review.

Councillor R Crute considered the case had been well put to refer the matter back to Cabinet. The decision to Call-in was made by Councillor Crute in

consultation with the s151 officer and the monitoring officer and was a valid referral. COSMB had a duty to hold Cabinet to account in line with the Council's Constitution.

Upon a vote being taken

For the Motion

Councillors E Adam, R Adcock-Forster, V Andrews, J Atkinson, P Atkinson, A Batey, K Batey, C Bihari, D Boyes, J Chaplow, R Crute, S Deinali, K Earley, L Fenwick, C Fletcher, J Griffiths, O Gunn, D Hall, C Hampson, A Hanson, K Hawley, S Henig, J Higgins, L Hovvels, D Howarth, M Johnson, C Kay, L Maddison, R Manchester, C Marshall, B McAloon, D McKenna, M McKeon, I McLean, S McMahan, J Miller, D Nicholls, P Pringle, J Purvis, S Quinn, I Roberts, J Scurfield, K Shaw, G Smith, T Smith, A Surtees, F Tinsley, S Townsend, M Wilson, S Wilson, D Wood and R Yorke.

Against the Motion

Councillors R Bell, J Blakey, D Brown, L Brown, J Cosslett, B Coult, M Currah, T Duffy, J Elmer, D Freeman, D Haney, P Heaviside, T Henderson, C Hood, A Hopgood, J Howey, G Hutchinson, A Jackson, N Jones, P Jopling, C Lines, C Martin, E Mavin, L Mavin, S McDonnell, M McGaun, P Molloy, J Nicholson, D Oliver, R Ormerod, E Peeke, R Potts, J Quinn, A Reed, G Richardson, S Robinson, K Robson, K Rooney, J Rowlandson, A Savory, E Scott, A Shield, J Shuttleworth, M Simmons, A Simpson, W Stelling, A Sterling, D Stoker, T Stubbs, D Sutton-Lloyd, M Walton, M Wilkes and S Zair.

The Motion was **Lost**.

15 Motions on Notice

The Chair thanked Councillor Surtees for the opportunity to defer her Motion to the next Council meeting in September.

16 Questions from Members

Councillor R Ormerod

Will the Leader of the Council join me in expressing deep concern and opposition to LNER's plans to close the ticket office at Durham rail station?

Councillor A Hopgood, Leader of the Council thanked Councillor Ormerod for his question and replied she would join Councillor Ormerod in expressing deep concern at the plans. Each Cabinet Member had written with particular regard to their Portfolio about the impact this would have and the disadvantage it would cause to travellers and would supply Councillor Ormerod with copies of these letters.

