

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At an **Ordinary Meeting** of the County Council held in the **The Main Hall - Spennymoor Leisure Centre** on **Wednesday 20 October 2021** at **10.00 am**

Present:

Councillor W Stelling in the Chair

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K Batey, A Bell, L Brown, J Cairns, R Charlton-Lainé, J Charlton, T Duffy, J Elmer, D Hall, D Haney, C Kay, S Quinn, P Taylor and E Waldock.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Chair referred to the tragic events that took place on Friday at Belfairs Methodist Church in Leigh in which Sir David Amess MP was killed. The event had left the country shocked. The Chair informed Council that he had sent a letter of condolence on behalf of the Council.

The Chair was also sad to announce the passing of former Derwentside District Councillor, Kevin Howe, who represented the Havvanah Ward on the former District Council from 2003 to 2007.

Members gave a moments reflection out of respect to Sir David Amess MP and Kevin Howe.

1 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2021 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 he had continued to enjoy attending events over the last month in his capacity as Chair. These events, which showcased the best the county had to offer, included a celebration evening for the Consett Women's Section of the Royal British Legion, a Royal Visit to the Milburngate Development, the Lumiere Programme Launch, and a reception for Durham University International Students at the Town Hall.

The Chair asked that everyone be respectful to each other during the meeting. Robust debate was part of the democratic process but the Chair asked Members to respect the views of others and not to point fingers at others during debate.

Where points of order were raised, once a ruling had been made on advice of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, it would not be re-visited

Finally, the Chair reminded Members of their responsibility to attend all mandatory training sessions. If a Member had not yet attended they should look out for the final sessions, which were being arranged shortly.

4 Leader's Report

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

The County Council had been successful in being named on the long list for UK City of Culture 2025. A lot of hard work had already gone into preparing and promoting the bid, and there was a lot more to be done to secure the title for County Durham. However, the Leader was confident that Durham was deserving of the accolade and, with so much at stake in terms of benefits to the county and wider region, all in the Council were very much committed to the next phase of the competition.

The Leader again encouraged Members to visit the Durham 2025 website and share the social media messages with as many people as possible in order to show support.

The Council had been highly commended in two categories at the Municipal Journal Local Government Achievement Awards 2021, the Digital Transformation Award for the accelerated delivery of the digital strategy, and the Senior Leadership Category, which recognised corporate management team's expertise and dedication in leading the authority through the pandemic.

Following Cabinet's approval of nearly £50 million of investment in the third phase of NETPark, the Council welcomed George Freeman, Minister for Science, Research and Innovation at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, to see the site for himself.

The Council's winter maintenance programme was fully up and running. During the winter season 1,700 kilometres of County Durham's priority one roads will be treated, covering almost half of the county's road network and the Council had 42,000 tonnes of salt stocked.

County Durham residents were being given the chance to nominate the important local buildings and heritage items which they valued the most through the Local List project. Part of a national pilot initiative, the project would see much loved gems, which may not qualify for national Listed Status, added to the council's local list to help protect them through the planning system.

Next month would see the return of Lumiere, the UK's leading light festival, spreading across four nights from Thursday, 18 to Sunday, 21 November. With 37 installations across the city and wider county, this year's event promised to be bigger, better and brighter than ever. The Leader hoped everyone would take the opportunity to visit and enjoy it. The event would show the world what the County had to offer and demonstrate why County Durham should be named City of Culture 2025.

Councillor C Marshall informed Council that the Labour Group was supportive of the Council's bid for City of Culture 2025 and asked when Members of the Council would expect to see the benefits to all communities set out clearly if the bid was successful. Councillor Marshall also referred to the Municipal Journal Awards and asked the Leader whether she acknowledged the work of the Labour Group who ran the Council over the past two years and the work they did with the Senior Leadership Team throughout the pandemic

The Leader of the Council thanked Councillor Marshall for his questions. The bid for City of Culture was still at an early stage but as soon as a report was available about the City of Culture bid she would ensure all Members were fully briefed. Referring to Councillor Marshall's second question the

Leader thanked all Members of the Council for the work they had done in their communities throughout the pandemic.

5 Questions from the Public

One public question had been received from Mr Southwell as follows:

Why have a Review for a Building which is about to be completed in approximately four months which was intended to be the Headquarters of Durham County Council when it is fit for purpose, when a Planning Report on the 5th March 2019, indicated 99.74% of Residents had no objections?

Councillor A Hopgood, Leader of the Council, thanked Mr Southwell for his question and responded as follows:

As set out in the Cabinet report we considered on 29 September, Cabinet asked for a review of the options for the new building to be undertaken and we have now considered the initial outcomes of that review. Specifically, in relation to the planning report that you refer to, paragraph 131 of that report sets out that the total number of representations received was 964, of which 956 were in objection and 8 were in support. So in summary, 99.2% of those responding were opposed to the planning application.

As a new administration taking control of the council at an unprecedented time, with coronavirus having huge impacts on individuals and how people work, and also given the scale of investment in the new building, we feel it is right and appropriate to undertake the review to carefully consider the options that are available for its future use.

I can assure Mr Southwell that we will ensure that any future decisions we take in relation to the building represent value for money and are in the public interest.

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 15 and 29 September 2021 (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Chair informed Council that three questions on the Cabinet report had been submitted and reminded Council that Members were permitted to ask a supplementary question arising from the question/answer.

Councillor R Crute asked the following question:

At the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 15 September 2021 members considered a report on the Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn (2020-21) which included an update on progress made towards achieving MTFP (12) savings and referred to budget pressures across individual services within the council.

It has been reported recently by the charity Age UK that council tax may have to rise on average by 10% next year, just to ensure that social care services can 'stand still'. This follows the charity's concerns that revenue raised from the government's proposed increase in National Insurance (NI) Contributions will be diverted directly to the NHS over the next three years, leaving social care 'desperately short of funds'.

Could the relevant cabinet member advise what assistance has been sought or received from central government to mitigate any adverse impact on social care services during this period, and also advise which measures are to be put in place to protect social care budgets from additional pressures.

Councillor R Bell, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance thanked Councillor Crute for his question and gave the following response:

Councils have been provided with the ability to increase council tax via the adult social care precept in recent years, with a 6% increase allowed over the three years 2018/19 to 2020/21 and then a further 3% across 2021/22 to 2022/23. In addition, the social care grant available to Durham is £22.9 million, with a further £5.25 million provided in 2021/22.

I would refer Cllr Crute to the MTFP(12) update report considered by Cabinet last week, which provided an overview of the Health and Social Care Levy announced on 7 September, to be funded through the introduction of an increase to both employers and employee's national insurance rates and an increase in dividend tax.

The total sums to be raised from the announced tax rises is forecast to be circa £12 billion per annum, with the NHS expected to receive the majority of this funding (85%) in each of the next three years to help to address the current backlogs.

The expectation is that after three years the backlogs will be at a manageable level and additional funding will then flow to social care, but a sum of £4.9 billion will be made available to local government over the next three years.

The major draw overtime for this additional funding will be to address the changes to charging for social care services, where the government has announced a range of changes to the charging regime, including a cap on care costs, and the ability of self-funders to access the council's contracts.

These proposals will have a profound impact upon the income that local authorities receive for providing social care services and on residential and nursing care providers.

We await further Government announcements as there is little by way of detail available at this stage, but our officers are currently assessing what these new measures might mean for the council, its residents and care providers across the county.

The announcements to date would indicate that there is an expectation from Government that demographic and fee related pressures need to be met from council tax increases and efficiencies within the local authority going forward.

As members will be aware, as things stand there is a cap on the level of Council Tax increases that can be applied without a referendum and that the additional flexibility through the application of an Adult Social Care Levy ends next year. The recent announcements do appear to open up the prospect for further council tax raising powers beyond next year but we just don't know at this stage.

The Government has stated that public sector employers will receive new grant funding to offset the budget pressures linked to employers NI increases and our updated MTFP forecasts include an additional £2m of new grant funding to offset the estimated £2m costs impacts of the 1.25% increase on the Councils employer's National Insurance costs from next year.

The Age UK report which my colleague quotes from references adult social care pressures, the major budgetary concern for this council in recent years has been in children's social care rather than adult social care. I can however confirm that the council did respond to the recent call for evidence on the inquiry into Long Term Funding of social care, pushing for:

- Additional grant funding for social care rather than precept raising powers;*
- Free dementia care, which would resolve most issues of significant charges; and*
- A premium National Living Wage for the care sector to improve recruitment and retention of care workers.*

Finally, after his appointment as Secretary of State, I wrote to Michael Gove requesting that adequate support be given to Councils on a needs basis for

both adult social care and children's social care pointing out that Council Tax is not the way for us to find the funds given our low council tax bands and hence low ability to raise additional revenue through Council Tax. 1% on our Council Tax yields around £2.4m of revenue. The Council also makes its case through bodies like the County Council's Network and other national bodies. I am not aware of any assurances from Central Government on funding going forward but I am sure that they are having lively discussions on these matters.

Councillor Crute thanked Councillor Bell for his response. Councillor Crute thought it was grossly unfair in these times that hard pressed families were having to pick up a bill for social care either through an adult social care precept or through an additional National Insurance contribution and asked whether Councillor Bell would agree with this.

Councillor Bell thanked Councillor Crute for his supplementary question and provided the following response:

The National Insurance increase will be fully debated I am sure at Agenda Item 13 and I will reserve comments for that. I would observe that clearly money has to be found from somewhere and if it is not from local taxation it has to come from national taxation in some manner or means. I would agree that Council Tax is not the way for Durham County Council to fund its budgetary pressures on children and adult social care, given our limited capacity to raise Council Tax because of our low Council Tax bands.

Councillor R Yorke asked the following question:

Changes to the proposed leisure provision in Bishop Auckland have been amended, jeopardising the ability to create a new 4G football pitch for use by the local community.

The previous proposals, recommended by DCC Officers, also included a proposal to invest millions of pounds to create a community hub and spearhead a major regeneration scheme for Woodhouse Close. Can the Leader of the Council please explain whether Bishop Auckland will receive the same levels of investment, bringing about the regeneration and positive changes the community of Woodhouse Close deserve? How the Council will help to fulfil its obligations and promises previously made to support grassroots football in Bishop Auckland and work to rebuild the partnership that had been developed with Bishop Auckland FC and the Council?

As a supplementary question, now that the Coalition has closed Sunnydale School, can we look at siting a community hub in Shildon, a town of 12,000 people and now without a secondary school.

Councillor A Hopgood, Leader of the Council, thanked Councillor Yorke for his question and provided the following response:

At the time of the March 2021 Cabinet report plans for the facility mix of each new build, including outdoor facilities and consideration of outdoor space had not yet reached a stage of proposals, and as such a 4G football pitch wasn't in scope of the project and the Council has not therefore committed to the investment in 4G pitches noted by Councillor Yorke.

The provision of playing pitches is the subject of the emerging playing pitch strategy and emerging priorities within the south of the county note that according to current calculations using Sport England formula, there is no demonstratable requirement for additional pitches in Bishop Auckland, as two such facilities already exist.

When considering investment in pitches the Council uses this nationally adopted formula and is committed to ensuring a balanced investment across the whole county based on need and the availability of funding. Officers have met with representatives of Bishop Auckland Football Club and are continuing to work with them to develop and understand levels of demand and how this can be considered as part of playing pitch provision.

Proposals for the community hub will be blended with plans for the leisure centre on the existing Woodhouse Close site. This approach will ensure the same positive opportunities for the immediate and wider community yet represent much better value for money and a more operationally sound investment.

The leisure strategy builds on the significant wider investment in Bishop Auckland in retail, leisure, skills and town centres.

With respect to the supplementary question this relates to Shildon which is not part of the agenda, I would provide Councillor York with a written response or he could bring the question to the next Council meeting when it would be on the report from Cabinet.

Councillor C Marshall asked the following question

Can the Leader of the Council please explain the reputational risk to the Council for the decision taken by Coalition to build a third Council HQ on Aykley Heads. The report informs there is only one interested party and states that existing County Hall is no longer fit for purpose.

The Council has an almost complete HQ and any new build on Aykley Heads creates uncertainty for investors, jeopardises job creation and is a complete waste of taxpayers money.

How will the Council be able to scrutinise this, given the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board refused to call a special meeting to discuss the proposal or will Members who want to see a transparent process need to contact the Local Government Ombudsman to ensure our taxpayers are receiving a fair deal?

Councillor A Hopgood, Leader of the Council, thanked Councillor Marshall for his question and provided the following response:

The report that was presented to Cabinet in September clearly sets out that the Council is committed to the development of Aykley Heads as a strategic employment site and sets the timescale for marketing the site.

The report also clearly and directly sets out the requirement for a business case to assure the decision-making process of the council and have clear regard to economic, financial, commercial, environmental, management and strategic objectives.

Based on evidence gathered to date, and considering the interest shown in the building on the Sands, there is an opportunity for the Council to explore the potential broader economic impacts that could be achieved through disposal of the building to the interested third party.

The business case required will be completed, as a matter of urgency, to determine the Council's options for moving forward with its office and civic accommodation, therefore I am confident that a prompt decision can be made, which will fully address the value for money and public interest tests that we always need to apply in our decision making. The business case that will come forward will be comprehensive and transparent and all Members will be afforded the opportunity to raise any questions or queries at that time.

Should the value for money and public interest tests not be met by an alternative course of action, then, as the report clearly states, the Council will occupy the building on the Sands as originally planned.

With regards to our external auditors or as referred to the Ombudsman, I can confirm that they have and will continue to be kept informed and that they have raised no objections or issues with the course of action we are pursuing.

As regards the involvement of Scrutiny, their work programme is a matter for the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs and individual Committees to determine and not something that the Executive, rightly so, can get involved in.

Councillor Marshall informed Council it was his knowledge that a Cabinet Member was at a Scrutiny meeting last week suggesting agenda items which should be added to the work programme and asked the following supplementary question:

If the Coalition want to build a third HQ and sell off one of the three it has how is publicly announcing there was only one interested party negotiating with the Council on the building at the Sands going to secure the best value for the taxpayer?

The Leader of the Council thanked Councillor Marshall for his supplementary question and provided the following response:

The Joint Administration has always said that it would be transparent. To say that there was more than one when there was only one is totally inappropriate and as already stated the external auditors are more than happy with what has been done so far in terms of the report produced. This was the first report and I would ask that you wait until you see the next report and come back with more questions at that point.

8 Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022/23

The Council considered a report of the Interim Corporate Director of Resources which sought approval for the continuation of the current Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) for a further year into 2022/23, which would continue the protection afforded to all claimants in line with what their entitlement would have been under the former Council Tax Benefit system (for copy see file of Minutes).

In **Moving** the report, Councillor R Bell, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance informed the Council that the report set out the details of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2022/23 with a recommendation that the Scheme remains unchanged. Durham was the only Council in the north-east that had a scheme which continued to provide support equal to that which was available under the Council Tax Benefit Scheme and the Council should be proud that it had continued to support such an important benefit for people across the County. Durham County Council was supporting those on low incomes but it must be recognised that this decision came at a cost in terms of lost Council Tax revenues compared with virtually every other Council in the Country and therefore the decision would need to be reviewed in one year's time.

In **Seconding** the report Councillor A Shield, Portfolio Holder for Equality and Inclusion thanked all relevant officers and Councillor Bell for the report and thanked the staff who administered the Scheme and had worked tirelessly to deal with an increase in applications during the last year.

All Members, past and present, should be proud that the Council had been able to retain a Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme that maintained support to vulnerable and disadvantaged households equal to that which was available under the Council Tax Benefit Scheme. Durham was only one of a handful of Councils across the Country and the only Authority in the north-east which continued to retain a Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme at the same level as the former national Council Tax Benefit System. Durham had ensured that the Government's funding had been specifically allocated to support the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme as it was believed that some local authorities in England may have used Government funding for other budgetary purposes.

The level of protection afforded to working aged claimants, many of whom were in work but suffered low wages, had been a godsend during the last year. While the Scheme came at a cost of foregone Council Tax revenues, now was not the time to consider making changes to the Scheme.

Councillor Crute informed Council that he was in support of retention of the Scheme. Paragraph 8 of the report referred to regular monthly recalculations of Universal Credit and the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Councillor Crute asked whether it was too early to tell whether there would be an impact on the Scheme from the removal of the £10 Universal Credit uplift.

The Interim Corporate Director of Resources replied that it was too early to tell the impact, but as the income had reduced the Council would be recalculating people's entitlement to Council Tax support.

Councillors C Marshall and A Surtees both spoke in support of retention of the Scheme.

Resolved:

- (a) That the current Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme be continued into 2022/23, which would retain the same level of support to all working age council taxpayers on low incomes as was the case under the previous Council Tax Benefit Scheme;
- (b) That the extension to the Scheme be initially for a further year only and be kept under continuous review with a further decision on the scheme to apply in 2023/24 to be considered by Cabinet in summer 2022 and Full Council by 11 March 2023.

9 Treasury Management Outturn 2020/21

The Council noted a report of the Interim Corporate Director of Resources which provided information on the treasury management outturn position for 2020/21 (for copy see file of Minutes).

10 Report of the Audit Committee for the Period September 2020 to August 2021

The Council noted a report of the Chair of the Audit Committee which informed the Council of the work of the Audit Committee during the period September 2020 to August 2021 and how the Committee continued to provide good governance across the Council (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor A Watson, Chair of the Audit Committee provided an update on the work of the Committee during the period outlined in the report.

The report covered the work of the Audit Committee during the period September 2020 to August 2021, a period which largely pre-dated Councillor Watson's involvement and Councillor Watson recognised and thanked Councillor Eddie Bell and members of the Audit Committee, both past and present, for their contributions to the work of the Committee.

Through careful consideration and challenge of a wide range of officer reports presented, the Audit Committee had fulfilled its role in gaining assurances as to the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements, including the effectiveness of the risk management framework and associated control environment.

In relation to Financial Reporting of the Council's Statement of Accounts, the Audit Committee had ensured that any issues arising from the process of compiling, auditing and certifying the Council accounts were dealt with properly.

It was to the credit of all those involved that the Council continued to maintain high standards in this regard and continued to receive unqualified opinions on its accounts and on its Value for Money arrangements.

This had been achieved during extremely challenging circumstances, with the coronavirus pandemic necessitating the holding of a number of our meetings remotely, though there was a return to in person meetings from June 2021.

The report set out details of the various meetings that had been held over the last twelve months and the issues that had been considered.

There were three key areas of the Committee's work during the period that Councillor Watson drew attention to.

The first area related to the work of Internal Audit. The Audit Committee continued to promote and champion the work of Internal Audit across the organisation. As such, the Committee agreed the Internal Audit Strategy, Charter and the annual internal audit plan proposed by the Interim Chief Internal Auditor and Corporate Fraud Manager.

Updates were provided to the committee on a quarterly basis. Councillor Watson was satisfied that the Committee provided the appropriate challenge to this process, with a number of officers attending the Committee to provide explanations and answer questions across the year.

Secondly, the External Audit of the Council's Statement of Accounts. In June the Committee received a report from the Corporate Director of Resources which presented the draft un-audited Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021. The draft accounts were certified and provided to external audit within the statutory deadline.

Following the conclusion of the external audit, the accounts were approved by Audit Committee at its September meeting, a substantial achievement particularly when considering that many other authorities were not able to meet the statutory reporting deadlines this year. Durham was one of only 5 County Councils in the Country to achieve sign off by 30 September this year.

Finally, Councillor Watson drew attention to the continuing good work of the Council's Corporate Fraud Team

The Protecting the Public Purse reports the Committee had considered demonstrated, across the Council, the counter fraud activity that was being completed in order to acknowledge, prevent and pursue fraud under the Council's Counter Fraud & Corruption Strategy. Fraud had been acknowledged as a strategic risk that prevention was better than cure.

To give some context, the Corporate Fraud Team in 2020/21 completed 691 investigations over a wide range of areas including into Covid-19 grant frauds, Blue Badge abuse, Council Tax claims, bogus insurance claims and Housing Tenancy to name a few. The team focussed their efforts with the emerging Covid-19 fraud and scams but not just investigating concerns but also to protect the Council and the Community, utilising its Fraud Communication Strategy and Awareness Campaign.

The Council had an excellent local and national profile for their work in this area. They have developed strong partnerships with other public sector

organisations which continued to enhance the reputation that the Council had.

In summary, whilst the report was largely for information, Councillor Watson considered the effectiveness of the Audit Committee to be excellent.

11 Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2020-2021

Councillor M Simmons, Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel presented the Corporate Parenting Panel's Annual Report 2020-21 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor Simmons thanked Councillor Ivan Jewell and the previous Panel along with all of the young people who made it possible.

The annual report covered the period April 2020 to March 2021, and it had already been presented at lots of meetings, so Members may have had sight of it.

Councillor Simmons informed Council that there was a wide range of work taking place across the board to support children and young people in care, as well as care leavers.

Councillor Simmons alluded to some of the achievements the Panel was particularly proud of, like the work to allow pets into residential children's homes after young people said how valuable this was to their mental health and wellbeing, as well as the work that had taken place to improve Wi-Fi connections, which had been most valuable during the pandemic when young people relied on technology for keeping in touch with friends and family, as well as for their schoolwork.

Work was continuing to address the priorities identified in the annual report, and Councillor Simmons looked forward to providing an update on this in the next annual report.

Throughout the year the Panel continued to meet with young people from the children in care council, who held the Panel to account on the progress being made against these priorities.

Finally, Councillor Simmons thanked everyone involved in the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel and sought endorsement of the Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report for 2020-21.

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 2020-21, and the priorities for the year ahead be endorsed.

12 Adoption of Cassop-cum-Quarrington Neighbourhood Plan

The Council considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth which sought approval to formally 'make' (adopt) the Cassop-cum-Quarrington Neighbourhood Plan (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Parish Council for Cassop-cum-Quarrington had produced a Neighbourhood Plan which had passed independent examination in 2021. On 23 September 2021 a referendum was held for the Neighbourhood Plan and it was overwhelmingly approved by voters. The Council must now make the Plan so that it formally becomes part of the statutory development plan for the Neighbourhood Area.

Moved by Councillor E Scott, Portfolio Holder for Economy and Partnerships, **Seconded** by Councillor J Shuttleworth, Portfolio Holder for Rural Communities and Highways.

Councillor M McKeon thanked Frank Salisbury and Richard Cowen for their involvement in the production of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Resolved:

- (a) That the Cassop-cum-Quarrington Neighbourhood Plan be formally made (adopted) to become part of the statutory development plan; and
- (b) That the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to take all necessary steps to affect the adoption of the Cassop-cum-Quarrington Neighbourhood Plan including the publicity requirements contained in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

13 Motions on Notice

Moved by Councillor F Tinsley, **Seconded** by Councillor O Gunn:

This Council condemns the changes made by the Conservative government to the way Adult Social Care is funded in England. This includes the introduction of an 'Adult Social Care Cap' of £86K and increases to National Insurance contributions which will have a disproportionate financial impact on younger members of society and small businesses recovering from the Covid 19 pandemic. The changes will have an unfair impact on residents of County Durham because the Adult Social Care Cap is a much higher proportion of the average value of houses in County Durham than in many other parts of the country.

An Amendment was **Moved** by Councillor R Bell, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, **Seconded** by Councillor P Sexton, Portfolio Holder for Adult and Health Services:

This Council ~~condemns~~ *considers* that the changes made by the Conservative government to the way Adult Social Care is funded in England, *and to fund the clearance of the Covid-related NHS backlog, could be improved.*

This includes the introduction of an 'Adult Social Care Cap' of £86K and increases to National Insurance contributions.

The increased NI contributions which will have a disproportionate financial impact on younger working age members of society rather than those living on pensions and investment income, and small businesses recovering from the Covid 19 pandemic.

The changes will have an unfair impact on residents of County Durham because the Adult Social Care Cap is a much higher proportion of the average value of houses in County Durham than in many other parts of the country.

Council therefore resolves to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer suggesting that:

- *The Adult Social Care Cap be set as a % of an individual's assets rather than a monetary amount and that*
- *Tax increases on unearned income, and taxes that are paid by people of all ages be considered in preference to the increase in National Insurance.*

Councillor Hopgood **Moved** a Motion without Notice that Standing Order 10.7 be suspended to extend the time for debating Motions on Notice but not to suspend Standing Order 4.2 to extend the length of the meeting. **Seconded** by Councillor R Bell.

The Council **agreed** the suspension of Standing Order 10.7 which related to the time allowed for the discussion of Motions.

Councillor C Marshall requested a named vote on the Amendment.

For the Amendment

Councillors M Abley, B Avery, B Bainbridge, C Bell, R Bell, J Blakey, D Brown, J Cosslett, B Coult, K Fantarrow, L Fenwick, D Freeman, P Heaviside, L A Holmes, C Hood, A Hopgood, J Howey, C Hunt,

G Hutchinson, A Jackson, N Jones, P Jopling, C Lines, C Martin, E Mavin, L Mavin, S McDonnell, M McGaun, B Moist, P Molloy, J Nicholson, D Oliver, R Ormerod, E Peeke, R Potts, J Quinn, A Reed, G Richardson, K Robson, K Rooney, J Rowlandson, A Savory, E Scott, P Sexton, A Shield, J Shuttleworth, M Simmons, A Simpson, M Stead, W Stelling, A Sterling, D Stoker, T Stubbs, D Sutton-Lloyd, M Walton, A Watson, M Wilkes and S Zair.

Against the Amendment

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

Abstain

Councillor L Maddison.

The Amendment was **carried** and therefore became the Substantive Motion.

Councillor R Ormerod requested a named vote on the Substantive Motion.

For the Motion

Councillors M Abley, B Avery, B Bainbridge, C Bell, R Bell, J Blakey, D Brown, J Cosslett, B Coult, K Fantarrow, D Freeman, P Heaviside, L A Holmes, C Hood, A Hopgood, J Howey, C Hunt, G Hutchinson, A Jackson, N Jones, P Jopling, C Lines, L Maddison, C Martin, E Mavin, L Mavin, S McDonnell, M McGaun, B Moist, P Molloy, J Nicholson, R Ormerod, E Peeke, R Potts, J Quinn, A Reed, G Richardson, S Robinson, K Robson, K Rooney, J Rowlandson, A Savory, E Scott, P Sexton, A Shield, J Shuttleworth, M Simmons, A Simpson, M Stead, W Stelling, A Sterling, D Stoker, T Stubbs, D Sutton-Lloyd, M Walton, A Watson, M Wilkes and S Zair.

Against the Motion

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

Abstain

Councillor D Oliver.

The Substantive Motion was **carried**.

The Chair informed Council that Councillor Malloy had indicated that he wished to defer his Motion to the next meeting to allow a full debate.

14 Questions from Members

There were no questions from Members.