

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At an **Ordinary Meeting** of the County Council held in the **Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham** on **Wednesday 20 July 2022** at **10.00 am**

Present:

Councillor B Bainbridge in the Chair

Councillors M Abley, E Adam, R Adcock-Forster, V Andrews, J Atkinson, P Atkinson, A Batey, A Bell, C Bell, R Bell, G Binney, J Blakey, D Brown, L Brown, J Cairns, R Charlton-Lainé, J Charlton, J Cosslett, B Coult, 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, P Heaviside, S Henig, J Higgins, L A Holmes, C Hood, A Hopgood, L Hovvels, J Howey, C Hunt, G Hutchinson, A Jackson, M Johnson, N Jones, P Jopling, C Kay, B Kellett, 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, P Molloy, D Mulholland, D Nicholls, J Nicholson (Vice-Chair), D Oliver, R Ormerod, E Peeke, R Potts, P Pringle, J Purvis, J Quinn, S Quinn, A Reed, I Roberts, S Robinson, K Robson, K Rooney, A Savory, E Scott, P Sexton, K Shaw, A Shield, J Shuttleworth, A Simpson, T Smith, M Stead, W Stelling, 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 D Boyes, I Cochrane, A Hanson, K Hawley, T Henderson, D Howarth, M Simmons, C Varty and S Zair

1 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2022 were confirmed by the Council as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Councillor Gunn informed Council that she had asked a question on the Leader's report at the meeting held on 22 June and had received a response. Councillor Gunn asked whether such questions were minuted. The Deputy Monitoring Officer replied that although the minutes had been agreed this could be checked and feedback provided to Councillor Gunn. There was no intention to either miss questions asked or answers provided.

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 was pleased to announce that Children's Services in County Durham had been rated 'Good' by Ofsted following a recent inspection which covered children's social care services provided by the Council, including safeguarding, children in care, care leavers, fostering and adoption. The inspectors' report praised those in charge of children's services at the Council, rating the impact of leaders as 'Outstanding'.

Since the last meeting the Chair reported she had attended a number of events relating to Armed Forces Day, the Future Business Magnate Awards and the Queen's Baton relay event which was a fantastic occasion for County Durham.

It was brilliant to see the amazing Batonbearers carrying the Baton through the County being cheered on by spectators along the way and fabulous to see the 300 schoolchildren at Durham Racecourse who encouraged the Batonbearers.

4 Leader's Report

Councillor A Hopgood, Leader of the Council welcomed all Members to the last full council before the summer break.

The Leader hoped Members had been managing to keep cool in the hot weather. Although it looked as though the next few days would be cooler, with the summer ahead the Leader took the opportunity to remind Members of the need to take extra care in the sunshine and to look out for those who were most vulnerable during heatwaves. Members were encouraged to look at the Council's heatwave plan, which was available on the Council's website, to ensure the warmer weather could be safely enjoyed.

The Council's initiative to create a network of electric vehicle charging points across the county had recently been recognised at the MJ Awards, where the Scaling of On Street Charging Initiative won the award for Best EV Charging Project. The Council's eLearning course to tackle littering was highly commended in the Digital Transformation category. The Leader placed on record her thanks to staff involved in these projects.

Members of the Council's Warm and Healthy Homes Team had been crowned National Energy Champions of the Year at the Energy Awards. The

award recognised the team's work to support people affected by higher living costs, who may suffer ill health as a consequence of not being able to pay their energy bills.

Finally, the Council had once again made it onto the list of the country's top 100 employers for apprenticeships. As well as being one of only two local authorities on the list, the Council was now ahead of household names such as BP, Jaguar Landrover and Santander.

The Leader was sure that the Council would join her in congratulating everyone involved in these projects and thanking them for all their hard work.

As already mentioned, this was the last Council meeting before the summer recess and the Leader hoped that all Members would have an enjoyable break. Over the coming weeks, there would be a lot to do across County Durham, including the fantastic Seaham Food Festival at the beginning of August.

Councillor Marshall asked whether the Leader would join him in thanking all the emergency services and Council staff for keeping communities safe in the extreme weather conditions of the past few days. The Leader of the Council confirmed she would as, she was sure, would the whole Chamber.

5 Questions from the Public

A question had been received from Mr Cunningham asking whether the Council's Education Department were aware of contentious interpretations of anti-racism and 'Woke' ideals in teacher training materials which may be proposed for adoption within County Durham's School curriculum.

The questioner was unable to attend the meeting, but the Cabinet Portfolio Holder would respond to the question in writing following the meeting, and the response would be posted on the Council's website.

6 Petitions

There were no petitions for consideration.

7 Report from the Cabinet

The Chair reported there was no report from the Cabinet.

8 County Durham Youth Justice Service, Youth Justice Plan 2022 - 2023

The Council considered a report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services which presented the Youth Justice Plan 2022/23 and highlighted some of the key achievements in reducing re-offending during 2021/22 along with areas for improvement which the Service would focus on during the current year (for copy see file of Minutes).

In **Moving** the report, Councillor J Shuttleworth, Portfolio Holder for Rural Communities and Highways informed Council that the Plan highlighted a continued high level of performance and improvement during 2021/22. Councillor Shuttleworth welcomed the Service Improvement Plan and confirmation of additional government funding for the Service which had just been announced.

In **Seconding** the report Councillor A Shield, Portfolio Holder for Equality and Inclusion appreciated the value of the report and supported the updated Plan for the year ahead. Councillor Shield acknowledged the Council's partnership approach to supporting both young people and victims.

Councillor O Gunn thanked the Youth Justice Service in County Durham, a Service which often lay outside of the spotlight yet carried a massive amount of work on many levels to improve the lives of young people. Councillor Gunn urged all Members to read the report which detailed many of the programmes the Service provided and the outcomes of these.

Resolved:

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

9 Adoption of Cotherstone Parish Neighbourhood Plan

The Council considered a report of the Interim Head of Regeneration, Economy and Growth which sought approval to formally 'make' (approve) the Cotherstone Parish Neighbourhood Plan (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Parish Council for Cotherstone had produced a neighbourhood plan which had passed independent examination in 2021. On 7 July 2022 a referendum was held for the Neighbourhood Plan which was overwhelmingly approved by voters. The Council must now make the Plan to formally enable it to become part of the statutory development plan for the Neighbourhood Area.

In **Moving** the report Councillor E Scott, Portfolio Holder for Economy and Partnerships commended the residents of Cotherstone for their hard work in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan. There had been an overwhelming

positive response in the recent referendum and it was therefore clear that the priorities in the Neighbourhood Plan reflected the priorities of local people.

In **Seconding** the report Councillor R Bell, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance was pleased that the Plan had been endorsed by an overwhelming majority of residents who voted in the referendum.

Resolved:

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

10 Motions on Notice

The Chair informed Council that there were four Motions for consideration, and these would be dealt with in the order in which they were received as detailed on the agenda.

The first Motion was from Councillor M Stead and was carried over from the previous meeting.

Councillor Stead informed Council that his motion asked for the government to recognise that County Durham was a rural county and be funded appropriately. It further asked for help for government to consider more help for residents and for a summit to be called by the council with relevant organisations to work to do all that could be done to help people.

Councillor Stead was pleased to confirm that the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council had written to the government laying out each aspect of his motion and asking for reconsideration of the County's rural status and to make sure it considered more help for residents.

Councillor Stead had also received confirmation from Councillor Alan Shield, the Council's Equalities and Social Inclusion Portfolio Holder that the Council would be doing work on a summit.

Given that every aspect of his motion had been agreed and actioned by the Joint Administration Councillor Stead withdrew his Motion.

Moved by Councillor L Holmes, **Seconded** by Councillor K Robson:

This council notes that eating disorders and excess weight are public health concerns for our county and considers that a whole systems approach is required to promote healthy weight by supporting people to reduce excess calorie intake and increase physical activity.

This council will continue to work across the whole system with our communities, families, education settings, employers, and the VCS to address food poverty and to increase access to affordable healthy food, to promote healthy food options and to promote and increase access to physical activity.

The Eatwell Guide is a policy tool used to define government recommendations on eating healthily and achieving a balanced diet.

Given the importance of healthy food this Council calls for partners across the whole system to work with government recommendations on healthy eating and adopt the Eatwell Guide as the standard they aim to achieve for their food offer.

An Amendment was **Moved** by Councillor L Hovvels, **Seconded** by Councillor A Surtees

This council notes that eating disorders and excess weight are public health concerns for our county and ~~considers~~ that a whole systems approach is required to *support people who live in food poverty eat a more healthy diet* ~~promote healthy weight by supporting people to reduce excess calorie intake and increase physical activity.~~

This council *acknowledges all the great work and continued support being provided to our families* ~~will continue to work across private, public and VCS sectors the whole system with our communities, families, education settings, employers, and the VCS to address food poverty and to increase access to affordable healthy food,~~ to promote healthy *lifestyles in light of the current food poverty crisis and increasing cost of living crisis which is only set to get worse.* ~~food options and to promote and increase access to physical activity.~~

The Eatwell Guide is a policy tool used to define government recommendations on eating healthily and achieving a balanced diet, *however, in order to increase access to affordable healthy food requires the cause of food poverty to be addressed and whilst we may continue promoting healthy food options access to physical activity there is inescapable evidence that for many people, including families with children, there is a gap between available income and the actual cost of securing a nutritious diet.*

~~Given the importance of healthy food this Council calls for partners across the whole system to work with government recommendations on healthy eating and adopt the Eatwell Guide as the standard they aim to achieve for their food offer and healthy lifestyles for our families and the elevation of the north east of England being identified as the region of highest deprivation in the country where almost half of our children now live in absolute poverty and the choice between heating and eating has become a cruel reality for more families.~~

This Council calls a food poverty emergency for County Durham and

A Calls on the Government to provide more resource/funding for our communities to enable sustainable living for our residents.

B will lobby government to request more funding for our partners to enable them to support further our communities in providing healthy accessible food in line with the Eatwell Guide for our communities.

Councillor P Sexton, Portfolio Holder for Adult and Health Services considered that the Amendment was a fundamental change to the Motion and sought legal advice on the matter. Councillor Sexton informed Council he would be supporting the Motion. The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised that the amendment had been checked prior to being presented to Council and did not negate the original Motion. The rules on debate allowed for words to be added and words to be taken away and the Amendment clearly related to the original Motion.

Councillors K Shaw, F Tinsley, V Andrews, M McKeon, O Gunn, S Wilson, R Charlton-Lainé and J Miller spoke in support of the Amendment.

Councillor R Bell formally objected to the way in which the Amendment had been brought to Council. It was not acceptable to bring an Amendment without sight to the Members which was incapable of being displayed on the screen as one slide and requested a hard copy of future Amendments be tabled in advance. Councillor Bell informed Council he would be supporting the Motion.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised Council that the Amendment would be scrolled through on screen so that Members had sight of it. There was currently no requirement in the Constitution for hard copies of Amendments to be provided although this was something that could be considered by the Constitution Working Group.

Councillor A Jackson informed Council he would be supporting the Motion.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised Council that the 30 minute time limit for debating Motions had elapsed.

A named vote on the Amendment was requested.

For the Amendment

Councillors E Adam, R Adcock-Forster, V Andrews, J Atkinson, P Atkinson, A Batey, C Bihari, G Binney, R Charlton-Lainé, S Deinali, K Earley, L Fenwick, C Fletcher, J Griffiths, O Gunn, D Hall, S Henig, J Higgins, L Hovvels, M Johnson, C Kay, B Kellett, L Maddison, R Manchester, C Marshall, B McAloon, D McKenna, M McKeon, I McLean, S McMahon, J Miller, P Molloy, D Mulholland, D Nicholls, P Pringle, J Purvis, S Quinn, I Roberts, S Robinson, K Shaw, G Smith, T Smith, A Surtees, F Tinsley, S Townsend, E Waldock, M Wilson, S Wilson, D Wood and R Yorke.

Against the Amendment

Councillors M Abley, B Bainbridge, A Bell, C Bell, R Bell, J Blakey, D Brown, L Brown, J Cairns, J Charlton, J Cosslett, B Coult, M Currah, T Duffy, J Elmer, D Freeman, D Haney, P Heaviside, L Holmes, C Hood, A Hopgood, J Howey, C Hunt, A Jackson, N Jones, P Jopling, C Lines, C Martin, E Mavin, L Mavin, S McDonnell, M McGaun, J Nicholson, D Oliver, R Ormerod, E Peeke, R Potts, J Quinn, A Reed, K Robson, K Rooney, A Savory, E Scott, P Sexton, A Shield, J Shuttleworth, A Simpson, M Stead, W Stelling, A Sterling, D Stoker, T Stubbs, D Sutton-Lloyd, M Walton, A Watson and M Wilkes.

Abstention

Councillor G Hutchinson

The Amendment was **Lost**.

A named vote on the Substantive Motion was requested.

A further vote was taken on the Substantive Motion

For

Councillors M Abley, B Bainbridge, A Bell, C Bell, R Bell, J Blakey, D Brown, L Brown, J Cairns, J Charlton, J Cosslett, B Coult, M Currah, T Duffy, J Elmer, D Freeman, D Haney, P Heaviside, L Holmes, C Hood, A Hopgood, J Howey, C Hunt, A Jackson, N Jones, P Jopling, C Lines, C Martin, E Mavin, L Mavin, B McAloon, S McDonnell, M McGaun, P Molloy, J Nicholson, D Oliver, R Ormerod, E Peeke, R Potts, J Quinn, A Reed, K Robson, K Rooney, A Savory, E Scott, P Sexton, A Shield, J Shuttleworth, A Simpson, M Stead, W Stelling, A Sterling, D Stoker, T Stubbs, D Sutton-Lloyd, M Walton, A Watson and M Wilkes.

Against

Councillors E Adam, R Adcock-Forster, V Andrews, J Atkinson, P Atkinson, A Batey, C Bihari, G Binney, R Charlton-Lainé, S Deinali, K Earley, L Fenwick, C Fletcher, J Griffiths, O Gunn, D Hall, S Henig, J Higgins, L Hovvells, M Johnson, C Kay, B Kellett, R Manchester, C Marshall, D McKenna, M McKeon, I McLean, S McMahon, J Miller, D Mulholland, D Nicholls, P Pringle, J Purvis, S Quinn, I Roberts, K Shaw, G Smith, T Smith, A Surtees, F Tinsley, S Townsend, E Waldock, M Wilson, S Wilson, D Wood and R Yorke.

Abstention

Councillors G Hutchinson, L Maddison, S Robinson

The Substantive Motion was **Carried**.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer informed Council that the two remaining Motions would be carried forward to the next Council meeting in September.

11 Questions from Members

There were no questions from Members.