

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

At an **Ordinary Meeting** of the County Council held in the **Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham** on **Wednesday 25 January 2023** 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, K Batey, C Bell, R Bell, C Bihari, G Binney, J Blakey, D Brown, L Brown, J Charlton, 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, P Heaviside, T Henderson, L A Holmes, C Hood, A Hopgood, L Hovvels, C Hunt, G Hutchinson, A Jackson, M Johnson, N Jones, P Jopling, B Kellett, C Lines, L Maddison, R Manchester, C Marshall, C Martin, B McAloon, S McDonnell, M McGaun, D McKenna, M McKeon, I McLean, S McMahan, J Miller, 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, G Richardson, S Robinson, K Robson, K Rooney, J Rowlandson, A Savory, E Scott, K Shaw, A Shield, J Shuttleworth, M Simmons, A Simpson, G Smith, T Smith, M Stead, W Stelling, A Sterling, D Stoker, A Surtees, D Sutton-Lloyd, P Taylor, F Tinsley, S Townsend, C Varty, E Waldock, 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 Hawley, S Henig, J Higgins, D Howarth, J Howey, P Molloy and T Stubbs

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Chair announced with great sadness two deaths, former Councillor and Alderman Mary Hawgood and former Councillor Ronnie Meir.

Mary represented the Newton Hall Electoral Division on the County Council from 1993 and 1997 and the Framwellgate Ward on Durham City Council between 1991 and 2003 and the Crossgate and Framwellgate Ward on the City Council between 2003 and 2007. Mary was also Mayor of Durham in 2004/05.

Ronnie represented the Seaham Electoral Division on Durham County Council between 2005 and 2008 and also served on Seaham Town Council.

Members stood for a moments silence out of respect to Mary and Ronnie.

## **1 Minutes**

The minutes of the Ordinary and Extraordinary meetings held on 7 December 2022 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 reminded Council that Holocaust Memorial Day was the day for everyone in the UK to remember the millions of people murdered in the Holocaust, under Nazi persecution, and in the genocides which followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur.

It was commemorated annually on 27 January, which coincided with the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi concentration and extermination camp.

To mark Holocaust Memorial Day the Council was holding a free event on Friday 27 January at the Gala Theatre in Durham City, where Professor Marek Szablewski would share the story of his family's life in occupied Poland during World War II.

Durham County Hall would be lit purple on the evening and Durham Cathedral was also marking the day by hosting a display of artwork by St Leonard's and Belmont schools to reflect the Holocaust Memorial Day theme for 2023, 'Ordinary People'.

It was essential that people continued to reflect on these harrowing events, which demonstrated what could happen when discrimination and prejudice took hold. It was also a stark reminder of why it was so important to promote tolerance and equality, and to work together to eradicate hate crime.

The Chair informed Council that since the last Council meeting she had attended several events, including the County Council staff awards on 7 December and the Seaham Sea Cadets awards night on 15 December. She had also attended some beautiful Carol services at Shildon, Stanley and Ferryhill and watched the Mencap Nativity on 17 December.

Moving on to some recent Council successes the Chair was pleased to report that Durham was recognised for its efforts to reduce and recycle waste at the National Recycling Awards.

Durham won the Campaign of the Year for its Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment recycling project which gave small electrical and battery operated items the chance to become something new.

The Councils Shared Lives Service, which supported almost 100 people across County Durham and Hartlepool had been rated as outstanding by the Care Quality Commission.

Durham County Council had once again been awarded Disability Confident Leader Level 3 status by the Department for Work and Pensions. Since the initial accreditation three years ago, Durham had established a staff disability and allies' network, which continued to grow and provided support for disabled staff as well as acting as a voice as to how improvements could be made.

Finally, the County Council and some local care homes it worked with had won two accolades at the national Reminiscence Interactive Therapy Activities (RITA) awards.

The council and homes piloting RITA were presented with the silver award in the RITA Star Award category, and Redworth House Care Home in Shildon won the bronze award for Best Use of RITA to Prevent Falls.

The RITA equipment had been trialled in 12 care homes in the county where user-friendly interactive screens and tablets were used to assist residents, particularly those with memory impairments, through listening to music, watching news reports of significant historical events, listening to war-time speeches, playing games, watching films, and karaoke.

The Chair and Council congratulated all staff involved in the achievement of the awards.

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

The Council noted a report from Councillor A Hopgood, Leader of the Council as follows:

Just after Christmas the government announced it was minded to agree a devolution deal for the north east and last week Cabinet endorsed the proposal.

If it progressed, the deal would bring £4.2 billion of investment to the north east, including £48 million a year to support inclusive economic growth and support regeneration priorities, and £900 million for transport.

This, in addition to an indicative budget of £60 million a year for adult education and skills, and £69 million of investment in housing and regeneration.

This significant investment and the devolution of powers to our region was all the more important given last week's announcement on levelling up funding.

A public consultation on how devolution would work will begin next week, with details of how to get involved available on the County Council's website. Councillor Hopgood encouraged all Members to share the link with residents and businesses in their wards to ensure everyone had the opportunity to have their say.

The Joint Administration remained hugely ambitious for County Durham and would not let last week's news deter it from its plans to build County Durham's economy and further develop communities.

Councillor C Marshall expressed disappointment that the Council's five levelling up bids, which cost £2m had been unsuccessful and asked the Leader of the Council what she considered levelling up was to the residents of County Durham. The Leader of the Council replied that the Joint Administration had demonstrated its ambition for County Durham, adding the criteria for bids for levelling up were changed after the Council had submitted its bids so that any Council which received funding in the first round would not receive funding in the second round. The Joint Administration was taking this up with Government.

## **5 Questions from the Public**

There were no questions from the public.

## **6 Petitions**

The Council received a petition from Councillor Danny Wood, Chair of Pelton Parish Council which related to a play/recreation area at The Wynd at Pelton.

The Chair thanked Councillor Wood for presenting the petition which would be forwarded to the appropriate service for a response as part of the Council's Petitions Scheme.

## **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 December 2022 (for copy see file of Minutes).

## **8 Updated Local Code of Corporate Governance**

The Council considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which provided the updated Local Code of Corporate Governance, which was considered and approved by the Audit Committee on 28 November 2022 (for copy see file of Minutes).

### **Resolved:**

That the updated Local Code of Corporate Governance be received.

## **9 Local Government Boundary Commission Review**

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).

Councillors C Marshall and A Hopgood thanked officers for their work on the Local Government Boundary Commission Review.

## **10 Overview and Scrutiny - Six Monthly Update**

The Council noted a six-monthly update report from Overview and Scrutiny (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor C Martin, Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board presented the Overview and Scrutiny update which set out some of the activity undertaken in the past six months.

Councillor Martin informed Council that the six-month period had again been a very busy period for scrutiny, which continued to encourage inclusiveness and transparency in its work and aimed to increase its input into policy development.

It continued to implement the scrutiny process in accordance with the four principles of effective scrutiny:

- To provide a constructive critical friend challenge
- To amplify the voices and concerns of the public
- To be led by independent minded people who take responsibility for their role
- To drive improvement in public services

Councillor Martin then provided some brief examples of the work covered to date.

The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board had again contributed to the budget process through consideration and scrutiny of the MTFP.

The Board had also scrutinised the revised County Durham Poverty Strategy and Action Plan. As the cost of living crisis impacted communities this strategy and action plan played an important role in the response by the council and its partners. The Board had welcomed the opportunity to comment on the strategy and had forwarded comments to government on concerns around the causes and effects of poverty in County Durham. The Board would continue to keep a close eye on progress of the strategy.

The Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee had examined proposals for structural change in commissioning arrangements, responsibilities and collaborative working between the NHS and local government social care.

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee welcomed the opportunity to comment on the Growing Up in County Durham draft strategy.

The Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the emerging Inclusive Economic Strategy. Comments from members had helped shape the final strategy.

The Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered an update of resources and waste management services in County Durham. To assist with their understanding of the subject members undertook a visit to various recycling and waste plants.

The Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held a focused briefing session and a special committee meeting to consider the draft anti-social behaviour strategy. Their views formed part of the consultation response to the Safer Durham Partnership.

Councillor Martin thanked officers that supported the work of Scrutiny, the chairs and vice chairs who lead the work programs they formulated and all Members who had taken part in the Committees.

## **11 Local Government Association "Debate Not Hate" Campaign**

The Council considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which provided details of the Local Government Association's

'Debate Not Hate: The Impact of Abuse on Local Democracy' report (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillors S Townsend, C Fletcher, M McKeon, O Gunn, E Scott, A Hopgood, C Varty, M Walton, C Hunt, P Jopling, A Shield, D Sutton-Lloyd all spoke in support of the Campaign and some gave personal examples of intimidation and abuse they had been subjected to.

**Moved** by Councillor J Nicholson, **Seconded** by Councillor S Townsend.

**Resolved:**

That

- (a) the Debate Not Hate Campaign had been added to the Standards Committee Work Programme to ensure that the Council remained up to date with the campaign be noted.
- (b) the Leader of the Council sign the Debate Not Hate Public Statement on behalf of the County Council.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services informed Council that she would circulate the link to the Debate Not Hate Public Statement to all Members should they wish to sign individually.

Councillor R Bell **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 S McDonnell.

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

## 12 **Motions on Notice**

**Moved** by Councillor R Crute, **Seconded** by Councillor K Shaw

The current Council Tax system is iniquitous and remains unfit for purpose, even more so at a time when many households across County Durham are struggling to make ends meet under the persistent pressures of the ongoing cost of living crisis. A motion adopted by this council in 2021 to consider options in introducing a fairer system to replace Council Tax has failed to deliver any discernible benefit to the residents of County Durham. Therefore this council agrees to pursue every available opportunity to consider the benefits and feasibility of introducing a Proportional Property Tax to replace the current Council Tax regime in County Durham.

Councillor Adcock-Forster spoke in support of the Motion.

An Amendment was **Moved** by Councillor R Bell, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, **Seconded** by Councillor A Shield, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Equality and Inclusion:

The current Council Tax system is iniquitous and remains unfit for purpose, even more so at a time when many households across County Durham are struggling to make ends meet under the persistent pressures of the ongoing cost of living crisis.

A motion adopted by this council in 2021 to consider options in introducing a fairer system to replace Council Tax has failed to deliver any discernible benefit to the residents of County Durham.

Therefore this council agrees to pursue every available opportunity to consider the benefits and feasibility of introducing a *fairer system* ~~Proportional Property Tax~~ to replace the current Council Tax regime in County Durham *including a fairer way of distributing support from Central Government*.

Councillors C Marshall, O Gunn, M McKeon, D Wood, D Mulholland, A Surtees and F Tinsley all spoke against the Amendment. Councillors J Elmer, M Wilkes, S McDonnell, A Jackson and D Sutton-Lloyd spoke in support of the Amendment.

A named vote on the Amendment was requested.

#### **For the Amendment**

Councillors M Abley, B Bainbridge, C Bell, R Bell, J Blakey, D Brown, L Brown, J Charlton, J Cosslett, B Coult, M Currah, T Duffy, J Elmer, D Freeman, D Haney, P Heaviside, T Henderson, L Holmes, C Hood, A Hopgood, C Hunt, G Hutchinson, A Jackson, N Jones, P Jopling, C Lines, L Maddison, C Martin, S McDonnell, M McGaun, 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, M Stead, W Stelling, A Sterling, D Stoker, D Sutton-Lloyd, F Tinsley, 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, K Batey, C Bihari, G Binney, R Crute, S Deinali, K Earley, L Fenwick, C Fletcher, J Griffiths, O Gunn, D Hall, C Hampson, A Hanson, L Hovvells, M Johnson, B Kellett, R Manchester, C Marshall, B McAloon, D McKenna, M McKeon, I McLean, S McMahan, J Miller, D Mulholland, D Nicholls, P Pringle, J Purvis, S Quinn, K Shaw, G Smith, T Smith, A Surtees, P Taylor, S Townsend, C Varty, E Waldock, M Wilson, S Wilson, D Wood and R Yorke.

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



A named vote on the Substantive Motion was requested.

**For the Substantive Motion**

Councillors M Abley, E Adam, R Adcock-Forster, V Andrews, J Atkinson, P Atkinson, B Bainbridge, A Batey, K Batey, C Bell, R Bell, C Bihari, G Binney, J Blakey, D Brown, L Brown, J Charlton, 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, P Heaviside, T Henderson, L Holmes, C Hood, A Hopgood, L Hovvells, C Hunt, G Hutchinson, A Jackson, M Johnson, N Jones, P Jopling, C Lines, L Maddison, R Manchester, C Marshall, C Martin, B McAloon, S McDonnell, M McGaun, D McKenna, M McKeon, S McMahan, J Miller, D Mulholland, D Nicholls, J Nicholson, D Oliver, R Ormerod, E Peeke, R Potts, P Pringle, J Purvis, J Quinn, S Quinn, A Reed, G Richardson, S Robinson, K Robson, K Rooney, J Rowlandson, A Savory, E Scott, K Shaw, A Shield, J Shuttleworth, M Simmons, A Simpson, G Smith, T Smith, M Stead, W Stelling, A Sterling, D Stoker, A Surtees, D Sutton-Lloyd, F Tinsley, S Townsend, E Waldock, M Walton, A Watson, M Wilkes, M Wilson, S Wilson, D Wood, R Yorke and S Zair.

**Against the Substantive Motion:**

Councillors B Kellett, I McLean, P Taylor and C Varty.

The Substantive Motion was **carried**.

**Moved** by Councillor A Surtees, **Seconded** by Councillor J Miller

This council resolves to write to local Members of Parliament, and to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to outline the effects of the injustice to 1950s women on the communities in County Durham and to seek their support for an immediate compensation package.

Councillors M Wilkes, L Brown, C Varty, J Charlton, C Hunt, A Shield, and C Hood all spoke in support of the Motion.

A named vote on the Motion was requested.

**For the Motion:**

Councillors M Abley, E Adam, R Adcock-Forster, V Andrews, J Atkinson, P Atkinson, B Bainbridge, A Batey, K Batey, C Bell, R Bell, C Bihari, G Binney, J Blakey, D Brown, L Brown, J Charlton, 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, P Heaviside, T Henderson, L Holmes, C Hood, A Hopgood, L Hovvells, C Hunt, G Hutchinson, A Jackson, M Johnson, N Jones, P Jopling, B Kellett, C Lines, L Maddison, R Manchester, C Marshall, C Martin, B McAloon, S McDonnell, M McGaun, D McKenna, M McKeon, I McLean, S McMahan, J Miller, D Mulholland, D Nicholls, J Nicholson, D Oliver, R

Ormerod, E Peeke, R Potts, P Pringle, J Purvis, J Quinn, S Quinn, A Reed, G Richardson, S Robinson, K Robson, K Rooney, J Rowlandson, A Savory, E Scott, K Shaw, A Shield, J Shuttleworth, M Simmons, A Simpson, G Smith, T Smith, M Stead, W Stelling, A Sterling, D Stoker, A Surtees, D Sutton-Lloyd, P Taylor, F Tinsley, S Townsend, C Varty, E Waldock, M Walton, A Watson, M Wilkes, M Wilson, S Wilson, D Wood, R Yorke and S Zair.

**Against the Motion**

None

The Chair informed Council that the outstanding Motion would be carried forward to the March Council meeting.

**13 Questions from Members**

There were no questions from Members.