

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

At a Ordinary Meeting of the County Council held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham on **Wednesday 22 July 2015 at 10.00 am**

**Present:**

**Councillor J Blakey in the Chair**

Councillors J Allen, B Armstrong, J Armstrong, L Armstrong, B Avery, D Bell, E Bell, R Bell, H Bennett, G Bleasdale, D Boyes, J Brown, J Carr, J Chaplow, J Clare, J Clark, P Conway, K Corrigan, R Crute, M Davinson, K Dearden, M Dixon, S Forster, D Freeman, J Gray, C Hampson, T Henderson, K Henig, S Henig, D Hicks, M Hodgson, G Holland, A Hopgood, K Hopper, L Hovvels, I Jewell, O Johnson, C Kay, B Kellett, A Laing, P Lawton, J Lee, J Lethbridge, H Liddle, J Lindsay, R Lumsdon, J Maitland, P May, B Moir, A Napier, T Nearney, M Nicholls, H Nicholson, P Oliver, A Patterson, T Pemberton, M Plews, C Potts, L Pounder, G Richardson, S Robinson, J Rowlandson, A Savory, A Shield, J Shuttleworth, M Simmons, M Simpson, H Smith, T Smith, M Stanton, W Stelling, B Stephens, D Stoker, P Stradling, L Taylor, P Taylor, O Temple, F Tinsley, E Tomlinson, J Turnbull, A Turner, A Watson, M Wilkes, M Williams, A Willis, C Wilson, S Wilson, R Young and S Zair

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E Adam, J Alvey, A Batey, A Bell, J Bell, A Bonner, P Brookes, C Carr, J Charlton, J Cordon, P Crathorne, K Davidson, N Foster, I Geldard, B Glass, B Graham, O Gunn, D Hall, J Hart, J Hillary, E Huntington, S Iveson, C Marshall, L Marshall, N Martin, J Maslin, J Measor, O Milburn, S Morrison, R Ormerod, J Robinson, K Shaw, A Surtees, K Thompson and R Yorke

### **1 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2015 were confirmed by the Council as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest in relation to any item of business on the agenda,

### **3 Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman congratulated Pauline Young, a social worker, who had received a Chief Superintendent Commendation Award for her work in safeguarding vulnerable adults.

The Chairman reminded Council of her announcement at the meeting held on 17 June 2015 about three council employees who had taken positive action by providing first aid and comfort to a gentleman who had suffered a stroke. On 16

July the Chairman visited Hackworth Road Depot at Peterlee where the employees were based and presented them with the Chairman's Medal in recognition of their life saving actions.

**Resolved:**

That the Council place on record its congratulations to Pauline Young on her award.

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

The Leader provided an update to the Council as follows:

- The Government presented a budget on 8 July, which was the second budget in a matter of months and signalled further severe cuts to come in local government finances. Analysis carried out showed that local government had lost  $\frac{1}{3}$  of its spending power since 2010, with the highest level of cuts being in the North East. To date, the level of cuts made by the County Council was more than double the combined budgets of all former District Councils. It was anticipated that a further £100m or more of cuts were to come, and the autumn statement, which was expected on the last Wednesday in November, was awaited. The Task and Finish Group of ANEC would be meeting in the next couple of weeks to lobby government for a fairer settlement for the North East. Local government faced very difficult times ahead in what will be a decade of austerity and cuts.
- The North East Combined Authority was facing important negotiations with the government around the devolution of powers and funding to the North East. Consideration would be given to governance structures, including an elected mayor, to achieve the best deal for the North East, the key being additional powers and funding. Businesses, trades unions, the voluntary sector and community groups would all be included in the consultation process and a further devolution event, similar to that held in March, would be held in the autumn.
- The Leader provided details of the following events which had recently taken place:
  - A visit to the County had been made by the County's twinned community of Kreis Wesel, Germany;
  - A delegation from the Scottish Government had visited the County to learn about AAP's and the Council's consultation mechanism;
  - 150,000 people had attended Durham Miners Gala including all candidates for the Labour leadership election;
  - The 2015 Durham Brass Festival had finished on 19 July and again had been a great success. Councillor Henig extended his congratulations to all those involved in the Festival.
  - The Bowes Museum was staging Yves Saint Laurent: Style is Eternal. The museum had joined forces with the Foundation Pierre Berge Yves Saint Laurent to create the first exhibition in the UK to present a comprehensive display of the French fashion designer's work and life.
  - The Magna Carta and the Changing Face of Revolt exhibition was being staged at Durham City's Palace Green Library to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the sealing of the famous document.

Councillor Watson referred to a recent press article regarding the North East Combined Authority (NECA) employing a part time Chief Executive on a salary of £1,000 per day and asked how the success of this appointment would be measured.

Councillor Hopgood referred to NECA being in discussions over a possible elected mayor and suggested that Members should have been made aware of this prior to discussions taking place.

Councillor Stoker also referred to the appointment of the interim Chief Executive of the NECA on a salary of £1,000 a day for a three day week in an organisation with 8 employees. He understood that the Interim Chief Executive had already received two redundancy packages from other local authorities which totalled over £500,000 and asked whether the appointment was best value for the residents of County Durham.

Councillor Henig reminded the Council that the Combined Authority covered 7 local authority areas, not just Durham, and these areas had a combined population of around 2m people. As such, the North East Combined Authority was the largest Combined Authority in the country. There was a need for capacity within the Combined Authority, and other Combined Authorities had staffing numbers of up to 100, which came with a large cost.

In order to ensure the Combined Authority had someone of a sufficiently high calibre it had gone through a competitive recruitment process before agreeing to this interim appointment.

The Combined Authority needed to ensure it had the capacity at a senior level to lead it and push the case for the North East. This was particularly important at the current time when the Combined Authority needed to be able to respond to opportunities, including those which were part of potential devolution arrangements.

Councillor Henig informed Council that an elected Mayor would have the power to precept, whereas currently the Combined Authority had no cost to the public. It was unclear how any elected Mayor would be tied in to existing structures and also how the individual would be accountable.

Responding to Councillor Hopgood, Councillor Henig reported that he would continue to report to Council how matters were progressing within the Combined Authority. Specific stories had appeared in the press over the weekend which were not correct and the Combined Authority was currently at the early stages of talks with Ministers about devolution of powers and finances, with a view to achieving the best possible deal for the North East. Councillor Henig would push for as much consultation as possible throughout this process and he was not aware that this was happening in other Combined Authority areas.

## **5 Questions from Area Action Partnerships**

Questions had been received from the East Durham Rural Corridor AAP and the Chester le Street AAP relating to the following:

- Durham Ask Initiative
- Introduction of 20 m.p.h. zones
- Digital Town pilots

Jane Bellis, AAP Coordinator for the East Durham Rural Corridor was in attendance to ask their question and Andrew Megginson, AAP Coordinator for the Chester le Street AAP was in attendance to ask their questions.

Councillor Brian Stephens, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Local Partnerships thanked the Area Action Partnerships for their questions and provided responses to the Durham Ask Initiative and 20 m.p.h. zones questions. Councillor Jane Brown, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services thanked the Chester le Street Area Action Partnership for their question and provided a response to the Digital Town pilots question.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services informed the Council that the questions, together with the responses, would be placed on the Council's website and a copy of the responses would also be sent direct to the Area Action Partnerships.

## **6 Questions from the Public**

There were no questions from the public.

## **7 Petitions**

There were no petitions for consideration.

## **8 Report from the Cabinet**

The Leader of the Council provided the Council with an update of business discussed by the Cabinet at its meeting held on 10 June 2015 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor Wilkes referred to the County Durham Plan and asked whether any update was available regarding the judicial review or discussions which had taken place.

Councillor Henig, in the absence of the Portfolio Holder, replied that Members would be provided with an update when there was any outcome to the discussions being held.

## **9 Election of Vice-Chairman of the County Council**

**Moved** by Councillor Bleasdale, **Seconded** by Councillor Forster and

### **Resolved:**

That Councillor E Bell be elected Vice Chairman of the County Council for the ensuing year.

Councillor Bell subscribed the Statutory Declaration accepting the Office. He then advised that he accepted the position of Vice Chairman with honour and pride and with the greatest of respect to Councillor Robin Todd.

The Chairman passed on her thanks to Councillor Moir for his assistance to her with duties since the death of Councillor Todd.

**10 Appointment of Chairman of Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Moved** by Councillor Laing, **Seconded** by Councillor Williams and

**Resolved:**

That Councillor J Robinson be appointed Chairman of the Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the ensuing year.

**11 Safe Durham Partnership Plan Refresh 2015-18**

The Council considered a report of the Corporate Director, Children's and Adult Services regarding a refresh of the Safe Durham Partnership Plan for 2015-2018 (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Head of Planning and Strategic Services, Children's and Adult Services informed the Council that the Partnership Plan 2015-2018 was a refresh of the previous Partnership Plan 2014-2017 and the next full review of the Partnership Plan would be for the period 2017-2020.

The development and implementation of the Safe Durham Partnership Plan was a statutory requirement for Durham County Council and other responsible authorities, including the Police and NHS. The purpose of the plan was to demonstrate how the responsible authorities would work together to reduce crime and disorder across County Durham. The strategic objectives framework was as follows:-

- Reduce anti-social behaviour
- Protect vulnerable people from harm
- Reducing re-offending
- Alcohol and substance misuse harm reduction
- Embed the 'Think Family' approach
- Counter terrorism and prevention of violent extremism
- Road Casualty reduction

The Council then heard from Superintendent Kerrin Smith who explained that she was extremely proud of the partnership working that had taken place over many years and proud of being able to put victims and citizens at the centre of the plan. Superintendent Smith then provided details of progress and achievements in the areas of domestic abuse, restorative approaches and reducing re-offending.

Councillor J Allen, Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities informed Council that she was the new Vice Chair of the Safe Durham Partnership Board. The Partnership Plan was a key document for working in partnership to reduce crime and disorder

and the range of positive outcomes contained within it demonstrated the strength of such partnership working. She supported the vision of the Partnership Plan and looked forward to hearing further progress.

Councillor L Hovvels, Portfolio Holder for Adult and Health Services echoed the words of Councillor Allen adding that the Plan provided a clear picture of how the Safe Durham Partnership would continue towards a safer, more cohesive County Durham.

The Plan identified responses to national policy and changes, for example austerity, and demonstrated the positive nature of partnership working.

Councillor M Wilkes referred to the introduction of 20 m.p.h. speed limits around a number of schools within the County which was being examined by a Scrutiny Working Group. He expressed concern that if a proposed change of considering accident levels within 200m of a school from the current within 600m of a school this could mask accident levels.

Councillor B Stephens, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Local Partnerships replied that the 20 m.p.h. policy was currently out to consultation and that the Working Group would take this into account.

**Moved** by Councillor J Allen, **Seconded** by Councillor L Hovvels and

**Resolved**

That the Council agree the Safe Durham Partnership Plan for 2015-2018 and endorsed its publication on the internet.

**12 County Durham Youth Offending Service Youth Justice Plan 2015/2017**

The Council considered a report of the Corporate Director Children and Adults Services which presented the County Durham Youth Justice Plan 2015/17 for approval (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Plan had been approved by the County Durham Youth Offending Service Management Board on 1 June 2015 in line with Youth Justice Board and Ministry of Justice requirements, by Cabinet on 15 July 2015 and would be submitted to the Youth Justice Board following Council approval.

Councillor Wilkes complimented those in the Youth Justice Service and asked whether the Council's financial contribution to the Service would be protected for the period of the Plan.

Councillor A Napier, Portfolio Holder for Finance replied that the Council was in the process of developing MTFP6 and all services would be reviewed. Details of MTFP would be reported in November 2015.

**Moved** by Councillor O Johnson, **Seconded** by Councillor L Hovvels and

**Resolved:**

That the Youth Justice Plan 2015/17 be approved.

**13 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2014/15**

The Council considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which presented the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2014/2015 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor J Armstrong, Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny informed Council that the Annual Report contained details of key Scrutiny activity and achievements during 2014/15 and also the work programme for Overview and Scrutiny. The key activity and achievements included the following:

- Contribution to the budget process through consideration of the Medium Term Financial Plan
- Responding to the NHS Quality Accounts for 2013/14 for the North East Ambulance Service, County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust and the Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust
- Increased awareness of the Council's scrutiny function through articles in local media, Members' Bulletin and an ongoing update of the scrutiny web pages
- Maintaining and establishing links with all thematic partnerships
- Responding to various consultations and commenting on Strategies and Plans.

Overview and Scrutiny had also carried out reviews throughout 2014/15, including the following:

- Management of the woodland estate owned by the County Council.
- Tourism marketing undertaken by Visit County Durham.
- Organised crime – looking at community intelligence, illegal waste sites and the potential financial risk to the Council.
- Self-Harm amongst children and young people.

Councillor Armstrong gave special thanks to Councillor Robin Todd, the Chair of the Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee who sadly passed away in May 2015. Councillor Todd served as the Chairman of the County Council's Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee since November 2009 and had led that Committee's input into a number of significant NHS Service reviews. Councillor Todd was well known and highly regarded within the NHS Community.

Councillor Temple referred to best practice in scrutiny being the use of opposition Members and asked whether opposition Members would have a role in the leadership of the scrutiny process. Councillor Armstrong replied that it was for the membership of scrutiny to decide upon Chairmen and Vice Chairmen.

**Resolved:**

That the Council receive the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2014/15.

**14 Environmental Health and Consumer Protection Enforcement Policy**

The Council considered a report of the Corporate Director for Neighbourhood Services which sought agreement of a service specific enforcement policy that outlined the enforcement principles to be followed by authorised officers within Environment, Health and Consumer Protection (EHCP) Service when dealing with matters of regulatory non-compliance (for copy see file of Minutes).

**Moved** by Councillor B Stephens, **Seconded** by Councillor L Hovvels and

**Resolved:**

That the draft enforcement policy for ECHP services be approved.

**15 Motions on Notice**

There were no motions for consideration.

**16 Questions from Members**

There were no questions from Members.