

**COUNCIL**  
2nd May 2013

**PRESENT** – The Mayor; Councillors Carson, Copeland, Cossins, Coultas, Crudass, Crumbie, Curry, Dixon, Donoghue, Francis, Galletley, Harker, Harman, Haszeldine, L. Haszeldine, C. L. B. Hughes, L. Hughes, Hutchinson, Johnson, B. Jones, Mrs. D. Jones, Kelley, Landers, Lewis, Long, D. A. Lyonette, J. M. Lyonette, Macnab, McEwan, Newall, Nutt, Regan, E. A. Richmond, S. Richmond, A. J. Scott, Mrs. H. Scott, Stenson, C. Taylor, J. Taylor, Thistlethwaite, J. Vasey, Wright and York. (44)

**APOLOGIES** – Councillors Cartwright, Knowles, Lawton, Lee, Lister, Swainston and L. Vasey. (7)

**ABSENT** – Councillors Grundy and Wallis. (2)

**65. MINUTES** – Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Council held on 21st March 2013.

**RESOLVED** – That the Minutes be approved as a correct record.

**66. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

**67. ORDER OF SEALING DOCUMENTS** – Presented – The Register showing the documents which had been sealed since the last meeting of Council.

**68. ANNOUNCEMENTS – (1) Election of Councillor Helen Crumbie** – The Chief Executive announced that Councillor Helen Crumbie had been elected to represent the Lascelles Ward at a by-election held on 11th April 2013. The Mayor subsequently extended a welcome to Councillor Crumbie, who was attending her first meeting of the Council.

**(2) Death of Former-Councillor Holmes** – The Mayor reported on the death of former-Councillor Bill Holmes, who had sadly passed away on the 13th April 2013. It was noted that former-Councillor Bill Holmes served as a Member on the Council between May 2003 and May 2007, and had represented the North Road Ward.

**(3) Darlington 1883** – The Mayor advised Members that Darlington 1883 had recently secured the Northern League Division One title with a victory over Team Northumbria, and moved that the congratulations of the Council be forwarded to Darlington 1883, together with best wishes for the forthcoming 2013/14 season.

**RESOLVED** – That the congratulations of the Council be forwarded to Darlington 1883 on the occasion of their title win, together with the best wishes of the Council for the forthcoming 2013/14 season.

**(4) Feethams Office Development** – The Mayor noted that it was pleasing that up to four hundred public sector jobs would be moving to the town centre after the Department for Education accepted the Council’s offer of accommodation.

**(5) Councillor Lewis** – The Mayor welcomed Councillor Lewis back to the Chamber following his recent period of illness.

**69. QUESTIONS – TO ANSWER QUESTIONS (WHERE NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN) FROM – (1) The Public** – There were no questions from members of the public.

**(2) Members to Cabinet/Chairs** – There were no questions from Members, where notice had been given, for the Mayor, Members of the Cabinet, or the Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees.

**70. COUNCIL REPORTS – (1) Budget Saving Proposals – Assistant Director Salary Implications** – The Director of Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting approval for the amalgamation of the posts of Assistant Director Finance and the Head of Human Resources, to create a new post entitled Assistant Director Finance and Human Resources, and endorse the findings of the Hay evaluators in relation to the proposed grade changes for the amalgamated post, and also the Assistant Director Adult Services to take account of the changes in responsibility from the 1st April 2013.

The submitted report stated that, as part of the on-going savings programme, Cabinet had agreed at its meeting on the 9th April 2013, subject to Council approval, the amalgamation of the Assistant Director Finance role with the Head of Human Resources role. It was reported that the amalgamation of these roles would reduce costs by a further £50, 000 in addition to savings already made via the shared post.

The submitted report also highlighted that restructuring arrangements within the Directorate for People Services had significantly enhanced the accountability of the Assistant Director Adult Services.

**RESOLVED** – (a) That the posts of Assistant Director Finance and the Head of Human Resources be amalgamated to form a new role entitled Assistant Director Finance and Human Resources.

(b) That the grade change to AD1 for the Assistant Director Finance and Human Resources be endorsed.

(c) That the grade change to AD1 for the Assistant Director Adult Services be endorsed.

**REASON** – To enable savings to be made and reduce management costs.

**(2) Council Size Submission** – The Chief Executive submitted a report (previously circulated) to gauge views on a proposed submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) in relation to the future size of the Council.

The submitted report stated that Council had been invited to make a submission to the LGBCE on the future size of the Council, as the first stage in a Further Electoral Review. The work undertaken by a cross party working group to develop the draft submission was outlined, and this included the completion of a survey of Member workloads and activity, evidence received from individual members about ward based activity, work on outside bodies, and the extent of partnership working.

The submitted report stated that the range of services provided by the Council would shrink quite dramatically due to the significant reductions in funding from Central Government, and that this would have an impact on the role of Members. It was suggested that the role of a Councillor in Darlington might shrink to focus primarily on the delivery of regulatory and statutory functions, with a limited representative role reflecting the reduced pattern of services provided, or it could grow to develop a much stronger representative set of functions, such as facilitating community action, developing and running local community forums.

**RESOLVED** – (a) That the proposed Council Size be 50.

(b) That the draft Council Size Submission be approved.

(c) That the submission be referred to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

(d) That the Chief Executive, in consultation with the three group leaders, has delegated powers to make any necessary amendments to the Council Size Submission before final submission on 23rd May 2013.

**REASONS** – (a) The proposed number reflects detailed analysis of the information in the submission, and was the view of the cross party working group.

(b) To enable the submission to comply with the deadline set by the LGBCE.

**71. CABINET REPORTS – (1) Overview Reports of Cabinet Members** – The Leader and Cabinet Members each gave a report (previously circulated) on the main areas of work undertaken under their relevant portfolio during the previous cycle of meetings. Cabinet Members answered questions on their portfolios.

**(2) Feethams Office Development** – The Director of Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that Members agree capital funding of up to £9.3million for the construction of an office building to the rear (east) of the Town Hall, to be funded by Prudential Borrowing, and approval of the estimated revenue financial consequences of the scheme, noting that the range of costs was dependant on varying factors in the future.

The submitted report informed Members that Mowden Hall, which accommodated staff from the Department for Education (DfE), was in a poor state of repair and required significant investment to remedy defects and improve the facilities, and that the DfE had therefore taken a decision to move from Mowden Hall. It was reported that the Council had worked closely with the DfE to identify alternative property options within Darlington

which met the DfE relocation criteria, and that the Council had proposed three property options, an existing office building within the town centre, a flexible and open plan office within a thriving business park, and a new build option as part of an innovative public sector hub.

**RESOLVED** – (a) That capital funding of up to £9.3million for the construction of an office building to the east (rear) of the Town Hall, to be funded by Prudential Borrowing, be agreed.

(b) That the estimated revenue financial consequences of the scheme, as detailed in paragraphs 55 to 65 of Appendix 1 to the submitted report, noting that the range of costs was dependant on varying factors in the future, be approved.

**REASONS** – (a) To fulfil the constitutional requirements associated with a new build office development, and the increased financial implications that the Council will be exposed to.

(b) To meet the timescales required for such a new build project, subject to confirmation that the Feethams Office Development was the Department for Education's preferred property solution.

(c) To retain between 340 and 440 jobs in the Borough.

(d) To aid the delivery of the Feethams Planning and Development Brief and the objectives of the Town Centre Masterplan.

**72. SCRUTINY REPORTS – OVERVIEW REPORTS** – The five Scrutiny Committee Chairs each submitted a report (previously circulated) on the main areas of work undertaken by their relevant Scrutiny Committee during the last cycle of Committee meetings.

**73. MEMBERSHIP CHANGES** – There were no membership changes reported at the meeting.