

COUNCIL
14th May, 2009

PRESENT – The Mayor; Councillors Armstrong, Baldwin, Barker, Burton, Chapman, Copeland, Coultas, Curry, Davies, Dixon, Dunstone, Francis, Freitag, Harker, Hartley, L. Haszeldine, Hughes, Jenkinson, Johnson, B. Jones, Mrs. D. Jones, Lawton, Lewis, Lister, Long, D. A. Lyonette, J. M. Lyonette, Maddison, McEwan, Newall, Nicholson, Nutt, Regan, Richmond, Robson, Ruck, A. J. Scott, Mrs. H. Scott, Stenson, Swainston, Swift, Thistlethwaite, Walker, Wallis, Williams and York. (47)

APOLOGIES – Councillors G. Cartwright, M. Cartwright, Galletley, Lee, Roberts and Vasey. (6)

71. MINUTES – Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Council held on 26th March 2009.

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

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

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

74. ANNOUNCEMENTS – (1) Deaths of Alderman Sheila Brown, former Councillor, and Mayor of Darlington, William Simpson Newton, and former Chief Housing Officer, Ken Pritchard – The Mayor referred to the recent deaths of Alderman Sheila Brown, former Councillor, and former Mayor of Darlington, William Simpson Newton, and former Chief Housing Officer, Ken Pritchard. Members observed a short silence as a mark of respect for those that had recently passed away.

RESOLVED – That the deepest sympathy of the Council be conveyed to the families of those that had recently passed away.

(2) High Sheriff of the Palatine of the County of Durham – The Mayor reported that Mr. Alasdair MacConachie O.B.E., the Chair of the Darlington Partnership Board, had been appointed as the High Sheriff of the Palatine of the County of Durham on 18th March 2009.

RESOLVED - That the congratulations of the Council be conveyed to Mr. MacConachie.

(3) Prayer and Verse for Darlington – The Mayor announced the winners of the ‘Reflections of Darlington’ Competition, which had invited residents of the Borough to write a Prayer or Verse for Darlington. The overall winners were Debby Gill, for her prayer, and Class 3G from the Federation of Abbey Schools, for their verse.

75. 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.

(3) Members to the Nominated Member of the Police Authority in accordance with Section 20 of the Police Act 1996 – There were no questions to the nominated member of the Police Authority in accordance with Section 20 of the Police Act 1996.

76. COUNCIL REPORTS – (1) Constitution – The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to seek approval for the revised Constitution, incorporating in year changes, changes to Contracts Procedure Rules, and consequential changes to the scheme of delegation and Financial Procedure Rules.

The submitted report highlighted the changes made to the Constitution over the course of the previous year, and outlined further additional changes considered necessary. A number of changes were identified to enhance the Contract Procedure Rules, and a copy of these changes was appended to the submitted report. As a result of the amendments proposed to the Contract Procedure Rules, a number of consequential amendments had been made to the Financial Procedure Rules and the Scheme of Delegation.

RESOLVED – (a) That the proposed changes to the Contract Procedure Rules, Financial Procedure Rules and Scheme of Delegation be approved.

(b) That the revised Constitution be approved.

REASON – To ensure that the Council has an up to date and complete record of its decision-making processes, which is available to Members and the public.

(2) Members Training – The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to give consideration to designating two further training courses in the Members' Training and Development Programme as mandatory.

The submitted report outlined the review of Development Control undertaken by the Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee, which had recommended the introduction of training for all Members of the Planning Applications Committee. This recommendation was endorsed by Cabinet at its meeting held on 28th April 2009. The submitted report also detailed the recommendation of the Standards Committee, at its meeting on 16th March 2009, that Members undertake mandatory training on Safeguarding Adult responsibilities on a biennial basis. The Standards Committee was also requested to approve further mandatory training courses.

RESOLVED – (a) That mandatory training on Safeguarding Adults be introduced for all Members on a biennial basis (every two years).

(b) That mandatory training for all Members of the Planning Applications Committee be introduced on an annual basis, and that the training be open to all other Members of the Council to attend on a non-mandatory basis.

(c) That power be added to item (i) of the Standards Committee's Terms of Reference to approve mandatory training courses.

REASONS – (a) To strengthen the approach to safeguarding adults at risk in Darlington.

(b) To ensure that Members are fully trained and updated annual on planning matters.

(c) To ensure that training and awareness raising exists in Darlington.

(d) To enable the Standards Committee to approve mandatory training courses for Members.

76. 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) Cabinet Urgent Decisions – The Corporate Management Team submitted a report (previously circulated) detailing two decisions taken by the Cabinet as a matter of urgency and to which the procedure for call-in could not be applied.

The submitted report outlined the procedure to be followed if decisions were taken under the Urgency Rule.

RESOLVED – That the urgent decisions taken by Cabinet be noted.

REASON – To comply with the Council’s Constitution.

77. SCRUTINY REPORTS – (1) Overview Reports – The five Scrutiny Committee Chairs each gave a report (previously circulated) on the main areas of work undertaken by their relevant Scrutiny Committee during the last cycle of Committee meetings.

(2) Annual Reports 2008/09 - The five Scrutiny Committees Chairs each gave a report (previously circulated) on the main areas of work undertaken by their relevant Scrutiny Committee during the Municipal Year 2008/09.

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