

**COUNCIL**  
25th March, 2004

**PRESENT** – The Mayor; Councillors Armstrong, Bristow, Mrs. Brown, Burt, Copeland, Dixon, Flowers, Foster, Francis, Harker, Mrs. Hart, Hartley, Haszeldine, Heaney, Holmes, Hughes, Hutchinson, Johnson, B. Jones, Mrs. Jones, S.J. Jones, Lister, D.A. Lyonette, Maddison, McEwan, Nutt, Reynolds, Richmond, Roberts, S. Robson, Ruck, Scott, Mrs. Scott, Stamford-Bewlay, Stenson, Mrs. Swift, Thistlethwaite, Vasey-Smith, J.C. Vasey, L. Vasey, G.B. Walker, Wallis, Williams and Wilson. (45)

**APOLOGIES** – Councillors Baldwin, Lee, Long, J.A. Lyonette, Maybrey, Newall, F.S. Robson and Mrs. Walker. (8)

**87. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** - Councillors McEwan, A. J. Scott and Williams each declared personal and prejudicial interests in the Overview report on the Education Portfolio, in relation to paragraph 1(h) Whinfield Infant and Junior Schools – Amalgamation (Minute 91 below refers) and left the Chamber during consideration of that item. Councillor Nutt declared a personal and non prejudicial interest in the Overview report on the Education Portfolio, in relation to 1(h) Whinfield Infant and Junior Schools – Amalgamation (Minute 91 below refers) and left the Chamber during this item. Councillor Stenson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the Overview report on the Overview of Highways and Transport Portfolio in relation to 1(a) Town Centre Parking (Minute 91 below refers) (as there was no discussion on this item he did not leave the meeting). Councillor Mrs. Hart declared a personal and non prejudicial interest in the Overview of Education Portfolio in relation to paragraph 1(g) Harrowgate Hill Infant and Junior Schools – Amalgamation (Minute 91 below refers). Councillor Dixon declared a personal and non prejudicial interest in the Darlington Sure Start Plan (Minute 91(2) below refers). Councillors Armstrong, Johnson and Reynolds each declared personal and prejudicial interests in relation to Service Level Agreements (Minute 93 below refers) and left the Chamber during consideration of this item.

**88. MINUTES** – Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meetings of this Council held on 29th January, 23rd February and 10th March, 2004.

**RESOLVED** – That the Minutes be approved as correct records.

**89. SUCCESS IN NATIONAL AWARDS** – The Mayor referred to the Council’s success in recent national awards. The Council’s Communication Unit won several awards at the North East Institute of Public Relations Pride Awards 2003/04. The Anti-litter campaign had received the ‘New Programme of the Year’ Award at the ENCAMS (formerly Keep Britain Tidy Group) Awards; and at the Local Government Chronicle Awards the Council’s Anti-litter campaign won the ‘Community Initiative of the Year’ Award, the Human Resources Team was also Highly Commended in the ‘Personnel Team of the Year’ category and the Communications Unit was Commended in the ‘Communications Team of the Year’ category.

**RESOLVED** – That the congratulations of Council be conveyed to all those involved in achieving these Awards.

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

**RESOLVED** – That the Register of documents which have been sealed since the last meeting of the Council be signed by the Mayor.

**91. CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS AND 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. Discussion ensued on the content of the reports and the Cabinet Members answered questions thereon.

**RESOLVED** – That the reports be received.

**(2) The Darlington Sure Start Plan 2004-06** – The Director of Education submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting approval of the Darlington 2004-06 Sure Start Plan and accompanying delivery Action Plan (also previously circulated).

The submitted report outlined the background to development of the Plan and accompanying delivery action plan, which had been produced by the Darlington Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP), Darlington Sure Start Local Programmes, Darlington Community Learning services and Darlington Primary Care Trust. The Plan had been produced in light of the Government's Green Paper 'Every Child Matters', which encouraged local authorities and other key stakeholders to work collaboratively and take a more holistic approach to the development of young children.

**RESOLVED** – That the 2004-06 Sure Start Plan be approved.

**REASONS**–(a) To fulfill statutory planning processes.

(b) To enable proposed developments to proceed.

**(3) Behaviour Support Plan 2004-05** – The Director of Education submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting approval of the Behaviour Support Plan for 2004-05 (also previously circulated).

The submitted report outlined the background to the development of the Behaviour Support Plan, which was a statement prepared by the Authority that offered comprehensive details of actions for supporting the improvement of behaviour in its schools, identifying the support that would be made available to schools and steps to facilitate the spread of good practice. Reference was also made to Government proposals to removed the existing requirements for a Behaviour Support Plan and to introduce a strategic Single Education Plan between 2004-06.

**RESOLVED** – That the Behaviour Support Plan 2004-05 be approved.

**REASONS** – (a) It is a Statutory Plan and requires Council Approval.

(b) The Plan sets out the developments needed to improve behaviour support to schools.

**(4) Local Compact** – The Director of Community Services submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting approval of the draft Local Compact (also previously circulated) between the Council, Primary Care Trust (PCT) and Community Section.

The submitted report stated that following the launch of the Compact between Central Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector in November 1998, local authorities had been encouraged to develop similar compacts locally. The Local Compact was a statement of partnership between the Council, PCT and the Voluntary and Community Sector which provided a commitment to work together more closely and respect each other's rights and responsibilities.

**RESOLVED** – That the Local Compact be agreed.

**REASON** – The recommendation is supported to comply with the Government's expectation that all local authorities, as a matter of good practice, agree a local compact with the Voluntary and Community Section.

**(5) Cabinet Urgent Decisions** – The Corporate Management Team submitted a report (previously circulated) detailing a decision taken by 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 and one decision taken under that rule since the last ordinary meeting of this Council held on 29th January, 2004.

**RESOLVED** – That the urgent decision taken by Cabinet be noted.

**REASONS** – To comply with this Council's Constitution.

**92. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORTS - OVERVIEW REPORTS** – The five Scrutiny 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. Discussion ensued on the content of the reports and the Scrutiny Chairs answered questions thereon.

**RESOLVED** – That the reports be received.

**93. SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS** – The Director of Social Services submitted a report (previously circulated) seeking approval to renew existing Service Level Agreements (SLA's) with Independent Sector Providers and requesting the waiving of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules to enable current social care arrangements to be maintained.

The submitted report detailed the Services Level Agreements which were to be renewed and the reasons for the request to waive Contract Procedure Rules.

**RESOLVED** – (a) That the use of Service Level Agreements for contractual arrangements, detailed in Paragraph 5 of the submitted report, be authorised.

(b) That Contract Procedure Rules be waived for the reasons detailed in the submitted report.

**REASONS** – (a) All of the organizations are committed to the principles of partnership working and are developing services to ensure positive outcomes for Service Users.

(b) There are significant benefits arising from relationships developed between provider organizations and Service Users as a result of the continuity of services.

(c) Some of the organizations make significant financial contributions to the service.

(d) A number of these services have been part of the Best Value reviews and considered to be appropriate services.

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

**95. POLICE AUTHORITY QUESTIONS** – There were no questions to the nominated member of the Police authority in accordance with Section 20 of the Police Act 1996.

THE COMMON SEAL of THE )  
COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH )  
OF DARLINGTON was hereunto affixed )  
this twenty seventh day of )  
two thousand and four in the presence of :- )

Mayor

Borough Solicitor