

COUNCIL
18th January, 2007

PRESENT – The Mayor; Councillors Armstrong, Baldwin, Bristow, Mrs. Brown, Copeland, Dixon, Flowers, Foster, Francis, Galletley, Mrs. Hart, Haszeldine, Heaney, Holmes, Hughes, Johnson, B. Jones, Mrs. Jones, S. Jones, Lawton, Lewis, Long, D. A. Lyonette, J. M. Lyonette, Maddison, McEwan, Newell, Nutt, Dr. Reynolds, Richmond, Roberts, S. Robson, Ruck, A. J. Scott, Mrs. Scott, Stenson, Swainston, Mrs. Swift, J. C. Vasey, L. Vasey, Vasey-Smith, Walker, Wallis, Williams and Wilson.(46)

APOLOGIES – Councillors Harker, Hartley, Hutchinson, Lee, Maybrey, F. S. Robson and Thistlethwaite. (7)

62. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – Councillors Copeland, Dixon, Francis, Hughes, Long and Newall each declared personal and non-prejudicial interests in Minute 66(1) below, in relation to the Highways and Transport Portfolio Report. Councillors McEwan and Dr. Reynolds each declared personal and non-prejudicial interests in Minute 66(1) below, in relation to the Children’s Services Portfolio Report. Councillor Heaney declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in relation to Minute 66(1) below, in relation to the Community and Public Protection Portfolio Report.

63. MINUTES – Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Council held on 23rd November 2006.

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

64. ANNOUNCEMENTS – The Mayor made the following announcements:

(1) Interim Director of Children’s Services - The Mayor extended a warm welcome to the Interim Director of Children’s Services, who attended a meeting of this Council for the first time.

(2) New Years Honours List - The Mayor reported that Mr. David Heaton, Principal of the Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College in Darlington, had received an O.B.E., in the Queen’s New Years Honours List.

RESOLVED - That the congratulations of the Members and Officers of this Council be conveyed to Mr. Heaton.

65. 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 had been sealed since the last meeting of the Council, be signed by the Mayor.

66. 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 Cabinet Members answered questions thereon.

RESOLVED – That the reports be received.

(2) Youth Opportunity Fund – The Director of Community Services submitted a report (previously circulated) that outlined the means by which this Council may deliver and administer the Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds, as agreed by Cabinet, and requested that he be given delegated powers to approve applications for grant funding, based on recommendations from the Head of Youth Service and from the Youth Board.

The submitted report provided background on the Youth Matters: Next Steps document released by the Government on 8th March 2006. The report stated that a key element of Youth Matters: Next Steps initiative was the creation of the two funds, Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital, and outlined the guidance on the operation of the two funds released by the Government, and the key objectives of the funds.

RESOLVED – That delegated powers be provided to the Director of Community Services, to approve applications for grant funding based on recommendations from the Head of Youth Service and from the Youth Board.

REASONS – (a) To enable the release funding to support young people's ideas and initiatives, providing the opportunity to extend the breadth and scope of youth provision and to ensure that service provision is being shaped and determined by young people. This in turn will inform key products within the Local Area Agreement.

(b) To ensure appropriate procedures and mechanisms are put in place to ensure that young people do have an active role in decision-making, but that the Council is also able to ensure that projects and initiatives are relevant and have strategic fit.

(3) Prudential Indicators Update and Treasury Management Half-Year Review – The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to update Members on the Prudential Indicators and provide a half-yearly review of this Council's Treasury Management borrowing and investment activities.

The submitted report highlighted that the prudential indicators had been updated to take account of the Council's borrowing position. It was reported that the maximum borrowing levels (the Authorised Limit and the Operational Boundary) and the key indicators have been reduced to reflect the new profile of the Capital Programme.

The submitted report stated that the Council's return on investments had been good, exceeding the target set of matching external comparators for the first six months of the current financial year. Based on the first six months of 2006/07 the Council's borrowing and investments were forecast to produce a saving of £0.843m on the 2006/07 approved budget.

RESOLVED – (a) That the revised Prudential Indicators and Limits within the report be approved.

(b) That the Treasury Management Half-Yearly Review be noted.

REASONS – (a) In order to comply with the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities;

(b) To inform Members of the performance of the Treasury Management function; and

(c) To comply with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003

(4) Cabinet Urgent Decisions - The Corporate Management Team submitted a report (previously circulated) detailing one decision 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 decision taken by Cabinet be noted.

REASON - To comply with the Council’s Constitution.

67. SCRUTINY COMMITTEES 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.

RESOLVED – That the reports be received.

68. COUNCIL TAX CALCULATION OF TAX BASE 2007/08 – The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to determining the Council’s Tax Base for 2007/08 in accordance with Section 33 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992.

RESOLVED – (a) That the report of the Director of Corporate Services for the calculation of the Council's tax base for the year 2007/08, be approved.

(b) That, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, the amount calculated by Darlington Borough Council as its council tax base for the year 2007/08 shall be 33,659.78 and that the individual tax bases for the following parishes for 2007/08 shall be :-

Parish	Tax Base
Archdeacon Newton	153.39
Bishopton	168.16
Heighington	919.77
High Coniscliffe	94.93
Hurworth	1,224.13
Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent	222.86
Low Dinsdale	325.31
Middleton St. George	1,317.54
Neasham	155.68
Piercebridge	59.84

Sadberge	284.57
Walworth	40.80
Whessoe	561.44

REASON – To comply with statutory requirements.

69. SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT REPORT – The Director of Community Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide Members with details of an existing Service Level Agreement (SLA) with an Independent Sector Provider, to seek agreement for its renewal and to obtain agreement to waive the Council’s Contracts Procedure Rules to enable current social care arrangements to be maintained.

The report outlined the nature of the Service Level Agreement with Thornbeck College and the reasons for the negotiation of a new contract.

RESOLVED – That the Director of Community Services be given delegated power to negotiate a suitable Service Level Agreement with the existing supplier of the service detailed in the report and that the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules be waived accordingly.

REASONS – (a) The placement is meeting the client’s needs.

(b) There is currently no alternative provider.

70. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES – The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to amend the current membership of Committees for the Municipal Year 2006/2007 following the resignation of Councillor Foster from the Conservative Group.

The report summarised the political composition of the Council in relation to ‘Counting Committees’ and outlined the proposed structure following Councillor Foster’s resignation.

RESOLVED – That the revised membership of Committees for the Municipal Year 2006/2007 be approved.

REASON - To ensure the political make-up of the Council is reflected in the Council’s ‘Counting Committees’.

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

72. POLICE AUTHORITY QUESTIONS – Councillor B. Jones asked a question to Councillor Dixon, the nominated Member of the Police Authority, in accordance with Section 20 of the Police Act 1996, and Councillor Dixon replied.