

COUNCIL
20th July, 2006

PRESENT – The Mayor; Councillors Armstrong, Bristow, Mrs. Brown, Copeland, Flowers, Francis, Galletley, Harker, Mrs. Hart, Haszeldine, Holmes, Hughes, Johnson, B. Jones, Mrs. Jones, S. Jones, Lawton, Lewis, D. A. Lyonette, J. M. Lyonette, Maddison, McEwan, Nutt, Dr. Reynolds, Richmond, Roberts, Ruck, Mrs. Scott, Stenson, Swainston, Mrs. Swift, Thistlethwaite, Vasey-Smith, Walker, Wallis, Williams and Wilson. (38)

APOLOGIES – Councillors Baldwin, Dixon, Foster, Hartley, Heaney, Hutchinson, Lee, Long, Maybrey, Newall, F. S. Robson, S. Robson, A. J. Scott, J. C. Vasey and L. Vasey. (15)

27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – Councillors Copeland and Dr. Reynolds each declared personal and non-prejudicial interests in Minute 31 (1) below, in respect of the Expression of Interest in an Academy for Darlington, as Governors at Eastbourne School.

28. MINUTES – Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meetings of this Council held on 18th May, 25th May and 26th June 2006.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes be approved as correct records.

29. ANNOUNCEMENTS – The Mayor made the following announcements:

(1) Queen's Birthday Honours and Awards 2006 – The Mayor reported that Mrs. Beatrice Cuthbertson, Former Mayor of Darlington, had received an M.B.E, and that Mr. David John Capel of Darlington, Team Leader, EU Student Finance Team, Higher Education Directorate, Department of Education and Skills had received an O.B.E., in the Queen's Birthday Honours and Awards.

RESOLVED - That the congratulations of the Members and Officers of this Council be conveyed to both Mrs. Cuthbertson and Mr. Capel.

(2) Death of Former Mayoress Margaret Bernadette Anderson – The Mayor referred to the sad death of former Mayoress Margaret Bernadette Anderson, who passed away on 29th June 2006, and stated that a letter had been sent to Mrs. Anderson's family expressing the deepest sympathy of the Council for the loss they have sustained.

(3) Horticulture Award – The Mayor reported that the entry from this Council had been awarded a Silver Gilt Award at the Royal Horticulture Society Flower Show at Tatton Park in Cheshire, and expressed her personal congratulations, and that of the Council, to all those that took part in gaining this Award.

30. 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.

31. 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) A Strategy for Young People’s Participation in Darlington – The Director of Community Services submitted a report (previously circulated) seeking approval of the Strategy for Young People’s Participation in Darlington as a model for further consultation and implementation across the Borough.

The submitted report stated that through the initial development of the Youth Strategy, and latterly the Children and Young People’s Plan, a collation and analysis of consultative events with young people over the last four years had been undertaken. It emerged that while there had been a large number of consultative exercises, there was little evidence of the views of young people directly impacting on the service provision, or addressing the key issues for young people in Darlington. As a response to this, the Youth Service had developed a Strategy for Youth Participation (also previously circulated) to create a rationale, structure and mechanism for the more meaningful involvement and participation of young people.

Discussion ensued on the content of the report.

RESOLVED – That the Strategy for Young People’s Participation in Darlington as a model for further consultation and implementation across the Borough be endorsed.

REASONS – (a) There has been limited evidence of young people’s views (through consultation exercises) having a direct impact on service provision.

(b) The Youth Participation Strategy offers the opportunity to have a coherent and consistent approach to young people’s participation in decision-making.

(c) The Strategy offers the opportunity for the Council to be leading on a Borough-wide initiative with/for young people.

(d) The Youth Participation Strategy will be consistent with and complementary to the emerging corporate Community Engagement Strategy.

(3) Cabinet Urgent Decisions – The Corporate Management Team submitted a report (previously circulated) detailing four 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.

32. 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.

33. ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES DELIVERY AND IMPROVEMENT STATEMENT – The Director of Community Services submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that Council note the submission of the Delivery and Improvement Statement, by Adult Social Services, to the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI).

The report stated that Adult Social Services were required to submit a Delivery and Improvement Statement to the CSCI twice yearly (May and November), which set out performance projections against national and local performance indicators. The Delivery and Improvement Statement was used by the CSCI to make judgements about Adult Social Services' knowledge of its strengths and areas for improvement and formed part of the evidence used by CSCI to make the star ratings judgement. The report also highlighted that it was a requirement of the CSCI that the Delivery and Improvement Statement submission was reported to an open session of the Council Members within two months of it being submitted to the CSCI on 31st May 2006.

Discussion ensued on the content of the report.

RESOLVED – That the submission of the Delivery and Improvement Statement, by Adult Social Services, to the Commission for Social Care Inspection, be noted.

REASON – To comply with the CSCI's requirement that the Delivery and Improvement Statement submission is reported to an open session of the Council Members within two months of it being submitted to the CSCI on the 31st May 2006.

34. REVISIONS TO PROTOCOL OF MEMBER / OFFICER RELATIONS – The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report (previously circulated) seeking the approval of the Council in regard to revisions of the Protocol of Member / Officer relations.

The submitted report detailed that the Standards Committee had reviewed the Protocol of Member / Officer Relations and recommended the amendments outlined in the report.

RESOLVED – That the revisions to the Protocol of Member / Officer relations, as set out in the report, and contained in the Appendix, be approved.

REASON - To ensure that the standards of conduct expected of Members and Officers are highlighted in the Protocol of Member / Officer relations.

35. REPRESENTATION ON OTHER BODIES 2006/07 – COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY – The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to consider the appointment of Members to the revised Committees and Working Groups of the Combined Fire Authority.

The submitted report stated that since the Annual Council meeting, Durham County Council had informed this authority that the various Committees and Working Groups of the Combined Fire Authority had been replaced by a new Committee structure. The report sought approval for the proposed nominations to these Committees and Working Groups in the new structure.

RESOLVED - That the nominations, as detailed in the submitted report, be appointed to the Committees of the Combined Fire Authority, for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2006/07.

REASON - To appoint Members to the appropriate Combined Fire Authority Committees.

36. CABINET'S DELEGATED POWERS – ADDITIONAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE –

The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting approval to the increase of Cabinet's delegated powers to approve additional capital expenditure from £250,000 to £500,000 for the financial year 2006/07, in order that urgent capital schemes could progress promptly. A schedule of the schemes where additional capital expenditure had already been approved by Cabinet, amounting to £171,900, was appended to the submitted report.

Discussion ensued on the content of the report.

RESOLVED – That the maximum limit of additional capital expenditure that can be approved by Cabinet without reference to Council be increased from £250,000 to £500,000 for the financial year 2006/07.

REASON – In order that urgent capital schemes can progress promptly.

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

38. 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.