

COUNCIL
22nd June, 2004

PRESENT - The Mayor; Councillors Copeland, Dixon, Flowers, Harker, Mrs. Hart, Hartley, Haszeldine, Heaney, Holmes, Johnson, B. Jones, Mrs. Jones, S.J. Jones, Lewis, Lister, D.A. Lyonette, Maddison, McEwan, Newall, Nutt, Richmond, Roberts, F.S. Robson, S. Robson, Ruck, Scott, Mrs. Scott, Stamford-Bewlay, Stenson, Vasey-Smith, J.C. Vasey, L. Vasey and Williams. (34)

APOLOGIES – Councillors Armstrong, Baldwin, Bristow, Mrs. Brown, Burt, Hughes, Hutchinson, Long, J.M. Lyonette, Reynolds, Mrs. Swift, Thistlethwaite, Walker, Wallis and Wilson. (15)

ABSENT – Councillors Foster, Lee and Maybrey. (3)

21. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS – There were not declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

22. CORPORATE AND BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN 2004/05 – The Chief Executive submitted a report (previously circulated) presenting the draft Corporate and Best Value Performance Plan 2004/05 (also previously circulated) for adoption and approval.

The submitted report outlined the statutory duty under the Local Government Act 1999 for the Council to publish an annual Best Value Performance Plan, and also highlight, following the introduction of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) regime in 2002, the growing importance being placed upon improvement planning as part of the overall process for which the Council had developed a Corporate Plan for combined publication. By combining both elements within one document, the Council would go further than its statutory obligations by producing a single reference point to assess the Council's performance and also set out its future direction.

RESOLVED – (a) That the Corporate and Best Value Performance Plan 2004/05, as appended to the submitted report, be approved for adoption.

(b) That the Chief Executive be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to oversee any minor amendments in the final printed production.

REASON – (a) To meet statutory obligations to produce a Best Value Performance Plan.

(b) To ensure the content is as accurate and up to date as possible.

23. ELECTORAL PILOT – NORTH ROAD BY-ELECTION 2004 – The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to a proposal to make an application to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to run an all-postal pilot by-election for the North Road Ward vacancy, arising from the resignation of former Councillor Mrs. S. Walker.

The submitted report outlined the background to the proposal of the Government, in partnership with local authorities and the Electoral Commission, to promote an extensive programme of pilot

innovations at local elections, particularly involving e-voting and all-postal voting; stated that all-postal voting was the most successful innovation leading to increased voter turnout; the Council had responded to an invitation to pilot the Local Elections in May 2003; following its application to the ODPM for the Council to become an electoral pilot authority for the elections in May 2003, the Government made the Borough of Darlington (All Postal Voting Scheme) Order 2003, which directed the way in which the ballot should be held in Darlington in May 2003; and that the outcome of that election was positive, with a turnout of 51.1 per cent. The Electoral Commission carried out evaluations of this Council's and all pilots carried out in 2003, which were reported to the Government in positive terms.

Particular references were made to the application to be submitted to the ODPM; the main points to be included in the Order to be made by the ODPM; the implications of the European Parliamentary and Local Elections (Pilots) Act 2004 on the date on which the by-election could be held; and the proposals for the North Road Ward. The last date on which the by-election could be held was Thursday, 19th August, 2004;

References were also made to the production of a marked register; the proposed simplified Declaration of Identify form; additional factors taken into account; the costs of the by-election; the need for cross party support for the proposals; the timetable; timing issues; and future by-elections. In addition it was reported that the alternative to applying to the ODPM for approval for an all-postal pilot was to run the election on a conventional basis.

RESOLVED – (a) That an application be made to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for the Council to run an all-postal pilot for the North Road by-election and that they key features of the scheme to be submitted be as set out in paragraph 2 of the submitted report.

(b) That the Chief Executive, as Returning Officer, be given delegated authority to finalise detailed proposals in conjunction with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and in consultation with Group Leaders.

(c) That the Chief Executive, as Returning Officer, be given delegated authority to invite competitive quotations for the printing work required and to let the appropriate Contract.

(d) That the Chief Executive, as Returning Officer, be given delegated authority to apply when appropriate for an all-postal pilot whenever a by-election arises, pending future general enabling legislation.

REASONS – (a) To enable an application for a pilot scheme to be submitted to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and if approved to carry forward the proposals.

(b) To increase the efficiency of setting up an all-postal by-election.

NOTE – A vote on the above resolution was taken by a call of names of the Members present and there appeared:-

For the Motion –

The Mayor; Councillors Copeland, Dixon, Flowers, , Harker, Mrs. Hart, Hartley, Haszeldine, Heaney, Holmes, Johnson, B. Jones, Mrs. Jones, S.J. Jones, Lewis, Lister, D.A. Lyonette, Maddison, McEwan, Newall, Nutt, Richmond, Roberts, F.S. Robson,

S. Robson, Ruck, Scott, Mrs. Scott, Stamford-Bewlay, Stenson, Vasey-Smith,
J.C. Vasey, L. Vasey and Williams. (34)

Against the Motion –
None.

Motion Carried

24. MEMBERSHIP CHANGES – Consideration was given to the membership of Committees, Subsidiary Bodies and Other Bodies for the Municipal Year 2004/05.

RESOLVED – That Councillor Richmond be appointed to the vacancy on the LEA School Governors Appointments Panel following Councillor Burt's resignation from that Panel.

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

Mayor

Borough Solicitor