

**COUNCIL**  
26th January 2017

**PRESENT** – The Mayor; Councillors Baldwin, Carson, Copeland, Coultas, Crichlow, Crudass, Crumbie, Mrs. Culley, Curry, Donoghue, Galletley, Grundy, Harker, L. Haszeldine, C. L. B. Hughes, L. Hughes, Johnson, Mrs. D. Jones, Kane, Kelley, Kelly, Knowles, Lawton, Lee, Lister, Lyonette, McEwan, Mills, Newall, K. Nicholson, M. Nicholson, Nutt, Regan, S. Richmond, A. J. Scott, Mrs. H. Scott, Storr, C. Taylor, J. Taylor, Tostevin, Wallis and Wright. (43)

**APOLOGIES** – Councillors Cossins, Dixon, I. Haszeldine, E. A. Richmond, Stenson and York. (6)

**ABSENT** – Councillor Cartwright. (1)

**41. MINUTES** – Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Council, held on 24 November 2016.

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

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

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

**44. ANNOUNCEMENTS – (1) New Year's Honours** - The Mayor reported that Mr. Peter Rowley, a keen sportsman and member of the town's Quakers Running Club, and a resident of Darlington, had been admitted as a Member of the Order of the British Empire for services to sports administration.

The Mayor also reported that Mr. Richard Tucker, a resident of Darlington, had been admitted as a Member of the British Empire for services to business and the community.

**RESOLVED** - That the congratulations of the Council be conveyed to those who received awards.

**(2) Boxing Day Dip** – The Mayor thanked Members for the support and sponsorship he received in relation to the 'Boxing Day Dip' he undertook at Seaton Carew, to raise funds for his respective charities.

**(3) Death of Former Mayor and Councillor Allan Gill** - The Mayor reported on the death of Former Mayor and Councillor Allan Gill, who had sadly passed away, and

referred to Former Mayor and Councillor Gill's years of service, and roles on the Council.

As a mark of respect, Members held a short silence for Former Mayor and Councillor Allan Gill.

**45. QUESTIONS – TO ANSWER QUESTIONS (WHERE NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN) FROM – (1) The Public** – There were four questions, with notice, from members of the public, who received an answer thereon.

**(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) Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner for Durham and Darlington** – The Mayor reported that the Police and Crime Commissioner for Durham and Darlington, had submitted his apologies for the meeting.

**46. COUNCIL REPORTS – (1) Local Code of Corporate Governance** – The Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) to inform Council of proposed changes to the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance, and outline the Framework for production of the Annual Governance Statement.

The submitted report outlined that the Council's current Local Code of Corporate Governance was adopted in 2008, and based upon the publication 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government – Framework' issued in 2007 by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), in association with the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), that set the standard for local authority governance in the UK.

The submitted report stated that, to reflect the changing circumstances and environment in which local authorities operate, CIPFA and SOLACE had issued an updated 2016 edition of their 2007 publication, that Darlington's Local Code of Corporate Governance had been reviewed in light of the new guidance received, and that a revised draft had been produced reflecting the seven core principles of good governance.

The submitted report also highlighted that the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 required local authorities to publish an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) each year, and the submitted report outlined the framework for the production of the AGS.

**RESOLVED** – (a) That the revised draft Local Code of Corporate Governance, as appended to the submitted report, be approved.

(b) That the AGS Framework, detailed at Appendix B of the submitted report, be noted.

**REASON** – To ensure the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance reflects the latest CIPFA/SOLACE guidance on delivering good governance in local government.

**(2) Council Tax Calculation of Tax Base 2017/18** - The Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) to determine the Council's tax base for 2017/18.

The submitted report stated that, in accordance with Section 33 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 2012, the Council had to decide its tax base by 31 January in the year preceding that for which the tax base applies.

**RESOLVED** – (a) That the calculation of the Council's tax base for the year 2017/18 be approved.

(b) – That the tax base for the Council and the individual tax base for the parishes, as set out in Appendix 1 of the submitted report, be approved.

**REASON** – To comply with statutory requirements, enabling the Council Tax for 2017/18 to be set by the Council in February 2017.

**(3) Request for Extension of Non-Attendance – Councillor York** – The Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) to enable Members to consider an application on behalf of Councillor York for an extension to the six-month period of his non-attendance at meetings, due to ill health.

The submitted report outlined that Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 states that if a Member of a Local Authority fails throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of his or her last attendance to attend any meeting of the authority, he or she shall, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a Member of that authority.

It was reported that Councillor York had not attended any Council or Committee meetings since 1 September 2016, and consequently would cease to be a Member of the Council on 28 February 2017, unless the Council approves the reason for the failure to attend before that date.

**RESOLVED** – That an extension of six months be agreed, with a further review at that time.

**REASON** – To ensure compliance with a request from a Member under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

**47. CABINET REPORTS – (a) Overview Reports of Cabinet Members** – The 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.

**(b) Dementia Review Group – Final Report** – The Chair of the Dementia Review Group submitted a report (previously circulated) to present the outcome and findings of a Review Group established by the Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee to look at the dementia pathway and the support and advice services available in Darlington, and to seek approval as to the recommendations contained within the final report.

The submitted report stated that, at a meeting of the Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee in November 2015, it was agreed to establish a Dementia Review Group to look at the dementia pathway, and the support and advice services available in Darlington. It was reported that the Review Group had met on many occasions during the course of the review, and that a wide number of issues had been discussed and considered. The final report of the Review Group, 'Living Well With Dementia' was considered at a Special Meeting of the Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee on 13 December 2016, and by Cabinet at its meeting held on 17 January 2017, who endorsed the recommendations contained therein, and agreed to forward to Council for approval.

**RESOLVED** – That the recommendations outlined in the Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee report, 'Living Well With Dementia', be approved.

**REASON** – To ensure that all partners work together to support and improve services for people living with dementia and their carer's and that the dementia pathway is followed.

**(c) THE LIBRARY SERVICE** – The Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) to consider recommendations in relation to the Library Service in Darlington.

**NOTE:** The Mayor reported that the decisions agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 17 January 2017, in relation to the Library Service, had been called in by members of the Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee. Due to this call in request, the Mayor advised that this item would be deferred to a future meeting of the Council.

**(d) Mid Year Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management Monitoring Report 2016/17** - The Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) on the revised Treasury Management Strategy, Prudential Indicators and to provide a half-yearly review of the Council's borrowing and investment activities.

The submitted report stated that the Prudential Indicators were examined by the Audit Committee on 16 December 2016, and it was agreed at that meeting that the updated Prudential Indicators and revised Operational Boundary and Authorised Limit for borrowing be referred to Council, via Cabinet, for approval. It was also reported that the Audit Committee was satisfied with the Council's borrowing and

investment activities, the reported Prudential Indicators, and the revised borrowing limits.

The Prudential Indicators were set in three statutory annual reports to Council, and the submitted report followed the Council's approval in February 2016 of the 2016/17 Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management Strategy. The key objectives of the three annual reports were to ensure that governance of the large amounts of public money under the Council's Treasury Management activities complied with legislation and met the high standards set out in the codes of practice, to ensure that borrowing was affordable, and to report performance of the key activities of borrowing and investments.

The submitted report also outlined revisions to the Prudential Indicators, which related to higher capital expenditure in 2016/17 due to greater slippage than anticipated from 2015/16, which increased the expected capital spend by £6.142M, however it was reported that loans to Registered Landlords will not take place so expected borrowing need would reduce from £50.266M to £4.174M. It was reported that the Operation Boundary would reduce to £150.017M, and the Authorised Limit would reduce to £194.479M to remain in with the Capital Financing Requirement for 2016/17.

**RESOLVED** – (a) That the revised prudential indicators and limits, as detailed in Tables 1 to 6, 8 and 14 to 17 of the submitted report, are examined.

(b) That Property Funds and Corporate Bond Funds will now be included in the Councils approved investment instruments and the maximum amount to be invested in such instruments will be £10 million, as noted in Table 17.

(c) That the reduction in the Treasury Management Budget (Financing Costs) of £0.264M, as detailed in Table 11 of the submitted report, be noted.

**REASONS** – (a) To comply with the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.

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

(c) To comply with the Local Government Act 2003.

(d) To enable further improvements to be made in the Council's Treasury Management function.

**(e) CABINET URGENT DECISIONS** – The Director of Economic Growth submitted a report (previously circulated) detailing decisions taken by Cabinet as a matter of urgency and to which the procedure for call-in could not be applied.

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

**REASON** – To comply with the Council's Constitution.

**48. SCRUTINY REPORTS – 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.

**49. NOTICE OF MOTION - Transitional State Pension Arrangements -** The following Motion was moved by Councillor Copeland, and seconded by Councillor Mrs. H. Scott:

‘The Council calls upon the Government to make fair transitional state pension arrangements for all women born on or after 6th April 1951, who have unfairly borne the burden of the increase to the State Pension Age (SPA) with lack of appropriate notification.

Hundreds of thousands of women had significant pension changes imposed on them by the Pensions Acts of 1995 and 2011 with little/no/personal notification of the changes. Some women had only two years notice of a six-year increase to their state pension age.

Many women born in the 1950's are living in hardship. Retirement plans have been shattered with devastating consequences. Many of these women are already out of the labour market, caring for elderly relatives, providing childcare for grandchildren, or suffer discrimination in the workplace so struggle to find employment.

Women born in this decade are suffering financially. These women have worked hard, raised families and paid their tax and national insurance with the expectation that they would be financially secure when reaching 60. It is not the pension age itself that is in dispute - it is widely accepted that women and men should retire at the same time.

The issue is that the rise in the women's state pension age has been too rapid and has happened without sufficient notice being given to the women affected, leaving women with no time to make alternative arrangements.

The Council calls upon the Government to reconsider transitional arrangements for women born on or after 6th April 1951, so that women do not live in hardship due to pension changes they were not told about until it was too late to make alternative arrangements.’

The Motion was put to the meeting and carried.

**50. MEMBERSHIP CHANGES –** Consideration was given to membership changes of the Committees, Subsidiary Bodies and Other Bodies for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2016/17.

**RESOLVED** – (a) That Councillor Baldwin be appointed to the Tees Valley Combined Authority - Independent Remuneration Panel, in place of Councillor Ian Haszeldine.

(b) That Councillor Donoghue be appointed to the Place Scrutiny Committee, in place of Councillor Mills.