

COUNCIL

Thursday, 24 September 2020

PRESENT – The Mayor, Councillors Ali, Allen, Baldwin, Bartch, Bell, Boddy, Dr. Chou, Clarke, Cossins, Crudass, Crumbie, Mrs Culley, Curry, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Harker, Haszeldine, Heslop, Holroyd, Howarth, Howell, C L B Hughes, L Hughes, Johnson, B Jones, Mrs D Jones, Keir, Laing, Layton, Lee, Lister, Lucas, Marshall, McCollom, Mills, Newall, K Nicholson, M Nicholson, Paley, Preston, Renton, A J Scott, Mrs H Scott, Snedker, Tait, Tostevin, Wallis and Wright.

20 **MINUTES - TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS COUNCIL HELD ON 16 JULY 2020**

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Council held on 16 July 2020.

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

21 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

22 **ORDER OF SEALING DOCUMENTS**

Presented – The Register showing the documents which had been sealed since the last meeting of Council.

23 **ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

Suzanne Joyner, Director of Children and Adults Services – The Mayor advised Members that Suzanne Joyner, Director of Children and Adults Services, was leaving to join Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council as Director of Children’s Services, and thanked Suzanne for her significant contribution to Children and Adults Services in Darlington.

The Mayor informed Members that James Stroyan had taken over as the Acting Director of Children and Adults Services, on an interim basis, and welcomed James to his first meeting of the Council.

Miriam Davidson, Director of Public Health – The Mayor announced that Miriam Davidson, Director of Public Health, was attending her last meeting of the Council prior to her retirement. The Mayor paid tribute to Miriam and thanked her for her service.

24 **QUESTIONS - TO ANSWER QUESTIONS (WHERE APPROPRIATE NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN FROM):-**

(1) **THE PUBLIC;**

There were two questions, with notice, from Members of the Public, who each received an answer thereon.

(Note: The questions, with notice, were asked by The Mayor on behalf of the Members of the Public, in accordance within Paragraph 27 of the Meetings (Coronavirus) Protocol).

(2) MEMBERS TO CABINET/CHAIRS;

There were three questions, with notice, from Members to a Member of the Cabinet, who each received an answer thereon.

25 COUNCIL REPORTS.

(3) REGISTER OF VILLAGE GREENS

The Managing Director submitted a report (previously circulated) to put in place a procedure for the determination of applications to make corrections to an entry in the Register of Village Greens.

The submitted report stated that the Constitution delegated decisions regarding the determination of new applications for inclusions on the Register of Village Greens (under the Commons Act 2006) to the Assistant Director Law and Governance, and that if an objection is received an independent Inspector is appointed to determine the application, however it was highlighted that the Constitution does not provide for the determination of other applications regarding village greens, such as applications to add or remove land from the register where the applicant believes that a mistake was made in registration.

Following a request for clarification by a Member, the Assistant Director Law and Governance confirmed that, in the case of contested matters, or matters which require oral representations or an inquiry, the entry in the Scheme of Delegation in relation to the appointment of an Independent Inspector should read 'shall' and not 'may' as detailed in the appendix to the submitted report.

RESOLVED - (a) That the current entry in the Scheme of Delegation be amended to read:

'Determining applications affecting the registers of commons and village greens (under the Commons Act 2006 and any subsequent legislation) – Assistant Director Law and Governance. In the case of contested matters, or matters which require oral representations or an inquiry, an Independent Inspector shall be appointed to determine the application.'

and that this amendment take effect from 1 October 2020.

(b) That the Assistant Director, Law and Governance is delegated to update the Constitution to reflect the changes identified.

REASONS – (a) To enable decisions to be taken effectively and in a timely manner as set out in the Commons Act 2006 ('the Act') and the Commons Registration (England) Regulations 2014 ('the Regulations').

(b) To ensure that the Constitution is accurate and up-to-date.

26 CABINET REPORTS.

The Cabinet Members each gave a report (previously circulated) on the main areas of work undertaken under their relevant portfolio since the previous meeting of the Council. Cabinet Members answered questions on their portfolio thereon.

27 TOWN CENTRE CAR PARKING

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide an update on Town Centre Car Parking charges and sought approval for funding to continue a range of parking offers to the end of December 2020.

The submitted report stated that a series of parking offers to support the town centre in June 2018 and in October 2019 had been approved, with the intention to review the impact of the initiatives, alongside the emerging Town Centre Strategy and the Council's financial position, in May 2020. It was reported that the response to the Covid-19 pandemic delayed consideration of these offers and that a decision was made at the start of the lockdown period to temporarily cease all parking charges to support the control of the virus.

The submitted report noted that as recovery continued more and more spaces were being taken by commuters and long-term parkers, leaving a shortfall for short stay visits and for shoppers, and that an amended offer on parking to support the town centre in the approach to Christmas was required.

RESOLVED – (a) That £392,883 additional funding to extend the parking offers outlined in Appendix 1 of the submitted report, until the end of December 2020, with the funding to be taken from General fund Reserves.

(b) That the long stay parking offer in East Street car park be retained permanently.

REASONS – (a) To approve the amendment to charges.

(b) To support the recovery of the town centre.

28 SCRUTINY REPORTS - TO CONSIDER SCRUTINY OVERVIEW REPORTS:-

The 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.

29 MEMBERSHIP CHANGES - TO CONSIDER ANY MEMBERSHIP CHANGES TO COMMITTEES, SUBSIDIARY BODIES AND OTHER BODIES.

There were no membership changes reported at the meeting.