

COUNCIL

Thursday, 30 September 2021

PRESENT – The Mayor, Councillors Ali, Bartch, Bell, Boddy, Dr. Chou, Crudass, Mrs Culley, Curry, Dulston, Durham, Harker, Haszeldine, Heslop, Holroyd, L Hughes, Johnson, B Jones, Mrs D Jones, Laing, Layton, Lee, Marshall, McEwan, K Nicholson, M Nicholson, Paley, Preston, A J Scott, Mrs H Scott, Snedker, Sowerby, Tait, Tostevin and Willis

APOLOGIES – Councillors Allen, Baldwin, Clarke, Cossins, Crumbie, Donoghue, Keir, Lucas, McCollom, Mills, Newall, Renton, Wallis and Wright

ABSENT – Councillors Lister

22 MOTION (WITHOUT NOTICE) TO ADJOURN THE MEETING

Pursuant to Paragraph 28 (k) of the Council Procedure Rules, Councillor Harker moved a Motion that, in light of a Member returning a positive Covid-19 test following attendance at a recent meeting, this meeting be adjourned, and reconvened at a later date, which was seconded by Councillor Haszeldine.

The Motion was Lost.

23 MINUTES - TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS COUNCIL HELD ON 15 JULY 2021

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Council held on 15 July 2021.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of this Council held on 15 July 2021, be approved as a correct record.

24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

25 SEALING.

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

26 ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Queen's Birthday Honours - The Mayor reported that British Army Warrant Officer Daniel Jones, of the Yorkshire Regiment, had received a Commander Field Army Commendation in the Queen's Birthday Honour's List.

27 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.

(2) MEMBERS TO CABINET/CHAIRS;

There was one question, where notice had been given, from Councillor Harker, to Councillor Durham, Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Resources, who provided an answer thereon.

(3) MEMBERS TO THE POLICE, CRIME AND VICTIMS' COMMISSIONER FOR DURHAM AND DARLINGTON.

The Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner for Durham and Darlington attended the meeting, addressed Members and answered questions thereon.

28 COUNCIL REPORTS.

(4) CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S APPRAISAL

The Assistant Director Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that the recommendation of the Appraisal Sub-Group in respect of the Chief Executive's Performance Appraisal, be endorsed.

The submitted report stated that the Appraisal Sub-Group met on 7 September 2021 to consider the Chief Executive's Performance Appraisal in accordance with the previously agreed process, and outlined the recommendation of the Appraisal Sub-Group.

RESOLVED – That, in respect of the Chief Executive's Appraisal, it be noted that the Appraisal Sub-Group had met and considered the Chief Executive's Appraisal for 2021/22, and agreed that the Chief Executive will focus on the following key themes for the year ahead:

- (i) transitioning out from Covid as an organisation and as a Borough;
- (ii) execute key regeneration priorities including town centre;
- (iii) delivery and communication of the council plan;
- (iv) promoting the council in a positive light and develop the new leadership with a positive employee culture and service;
- (v) positively seek additional funding for councils schemes;
- (vi) work with partners to better Darlington; and
- (vii) reviewing and delivering the MTFP supporting service delivery.

REASON - To enable the appraisal to be confirmed.

(5) LICENSING ACT POLICY REVIEW

The Group Director of Services submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that the current Statement of Licensing Policy be carried forward to allow sufficient time to fully consult with the hospitality trade and stakeholders, once the impact that Covid-19 regulations had on the industry could be sufficiently assessed.

The submitted report stated that, due to Covid-19 restrictions, there had been no opportunity for a meaningful consultation with the hospitality trade and stakeholders on the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy, which was due for renewal, and that a new policy would be developed once the hospitality trade has had a chance to recover from the pandemic, and once the impact of legislative changes made due to Covid-19 could be properly assessed. It was reported that this approach had been supported by the Licensing Committee at its meeting held on 17 August 2021.

RESOLVED – That the Statement of Licensing Policy be carried over with immediate effect.

REASON - To ensure standards are maintained until such a time meaningful consultation can take place with the hospitality trade following recovery from Covid-19 restrictions.

29 CABINET REPORTS.

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.

30 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, and responded to any questions thereon.

31 NOTICE OF MOTION

(6) TO CONSIDER A MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR LAYTON, AND SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR HARKER

The following Motion was moved by Councillor Layton, and seconded by Councillor Harker:

In increasing National Insurance Contributions (NIC), the government will be funding social care reforms at the cost of the poorest and the youngest in our community. Younger workers and households relying on welfare will be hardest hit by this tax increase.

The increase in NIC contributions could dissuade local companies from hiring people on a

permanent basis due to higher employee NIC payment, leaving Darlington workers faced with more unstable working conditions.

Youth unemployment is particularly high in Darlington (11.7% for 20-24 year olds compared to a national average of 7.7%) and the Tees Valley already, raising NIC is likely to exacerbate this problem. On top of this, the average 25-year-old, lucky enough to find work, will be paying an extra £12,600 over their working lives from the NIC increase.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation estimates that two million families on low incomes who face imminent cuts to benefits will have to pay £100 more in NIC annually.

This extra cost will have a devastating effect on over 10,000 Darlington families who are already facing an historic £1,040 cut to their annual incomes when Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit are reduced on 6th October 2021.

The TUC estimates that 2.3 million workers, many of which are key worker households, will be worse off as a result of government plans to cut Universal Credit. Many of those on Universal Credit (40% of claimants) are already in work. Many thousands of families in Darlington will be affected by these hard-hitting changes to benefits and tax.

This Council resolves that the double blow of increasing National Insurance and reducing the £20 uplift for those on Universal Credit could have a devastating effect on families in Darlington and around the country, already struggling to make ends meet.

This Council agrees to:

- a. Call on government to rethink these plans as a matter of urgency.
- b. Call on MPs Peter Gibson (representing Darlington) and Paul Howell (representing Sedgefield and parts of Darlington) to explain their rationalisation for supporting the NI rise and the cut to the £20 uplift to Universal Credit both of which will have devastating economic consequences for many thousands of working and out of work people in Darlington.
- c. Call on the Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee to look at the impact of the NI increase and the cut to the £20 uplift on Universal Credit on Darlington's people and economy.

The Motion was Lost.

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

Consideration was given to membership changes of the Committees, Subsidiary Bodies and Other Bodies for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2021/22.

RESOLVED – (a) That Councillor Johnson be appointed to the vacancy on the Adults Scrutiny Committee;

(b) That Councillor Keir replace Councillor Dulston as the Named Substitute for Councillor Mrs. Scott on the Tees Valley Combined Authority Cabinet; and

(c) That Councillor Dulston replace Councillor Mrs. Jones on the Tees Valley Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.