

COUNCIL

Thursday, 23 March 2023

PRESENT – The Mayor, Councillors Ali, Allen, Bartch, Boddy, Dr. Chou, Clarke, Cossins, Crudass, Mrs Culley, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Harker, Haszeldine, Holroyd, C L B Hughes, Johnson, Keir, Laing, Layton, Lee, Marshall, McCollom, McEwan, Mills, K Nicholson, M Nicholson, Preston, Renton, Mrs H Scott, Snedker, Sowerby, Tostevin, Wallis, Willis and Wright.

APOLOGIES – Councillors Bell, Heslop, L Hughes, B Jones, Mrs D Jones, Lister, Newall, A J Scott and Tait.

ABSENT – Councillors Baldwin, Crumbie and Paley.

70 **MINUTES - TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS COUNCIL HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2023, 16 FEBRUARY 2023 AND 23 FEBRUARY 2023**

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meetings of this Council held on 26 January 2023, 16 February 2023 and 23 February 2023.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meetings of this Council held on 26 January 2023, 16 February 2023 and 23 February 2023, be approved as correct records.

71 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

72 **SEALING.**

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

73 **ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

Councillor Hilary Lucas – The Mayor announced the death of Councillor Hilary Lucas, who had passed away on 15th March 2023. The Mayor referred to Councillor Lucas' years of service and the community work that she was heavily involved with. Members stood and observed a short silence in respect of their former colleague.

Local Government (Borough) Elections 2023 – The Mayor noted that several Members would not be standing for re-election at the forthcoming Local Government (Borough) Elections, and moved a vote of thanks to those not seeking re-election.

RESOLVED – That the cordial thanks of the Council be extended to those Members stepping down for the valuable service rendered to the Borough during their terms of office.

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

(1) **THE PUBLIC;**

There were three questions, with notice, from Members of the Public, who each 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.

75 COUNCIL REPORTS.

There were no reports to be decided by Council, which had not been considered by Cabinet.

76 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.

77 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.

78 NOTICE OF MOTION

(1) TO CONSIDER A MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MCCOLLOM, AND SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR HARKER

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

- a) Research carried out by Loughborough University for the End Child Poverty coalition indicates that two in five babies, children and young people across the North East (38 per cent) were living below the poverty line in 2020/21, after housing costs were taken into account.
- b) The North East has also continued to experience by far the steepest increase in child poverty across the UK in recent years, moving from being just below the national average in 2014/15 to having the highest rate of any nation or region of the country by 2020/21. Overall child poverty rates in the North East have risen by almost half – from 26 per cent to 38 per cent – in the space of those six years; during a time when child poverty fell slightly, by two percentage points, across the country.
- c) Within Darlington it has risen from 25.9 per cent to 39.5 per cent, and increase of 13.6 per cent; and in Sedgefield 23.7 per cent to 39 per cent an increase of 15.3 per cent.

- d) This Council notes with grave concern that Government policy has failed to address the issue of child poverty across the UK, and in particular that child poverty in the North East has risen sharply.

Resolution

Council resolves to write to our two Members for Parliament, Peter Gibson MP and Paul Howell MP:

- a) To highlight and express our concern of the continued and steep rise in child poverty within the Borough of Darlington, and the wider North East,
- b) To request that they call upon the Government to acknowledge that Government policy is failing our children, and
- c) To urge Government to review and amend policy such that the levels of child poverty are reduced.

At the request of five Members, a Named Vote was taken of those Members present at the meeting and there appeared:

For the Motion: The Mayor; Councillors Boddy, Cossins, Harker, Holroyd, C. L. B. Hughes, Layton, McCollom, McEwan, K. Nicholson, M. Nicholson, Snedker and Wallis (13)

Against the Motion: Councillors Bartch, Dr. Chou, Clarke, Crudass, Mrs. Culley, Dulston, Durham, Johnson, Keir, Laing, Lee, Marshall, Renton, Mrs. H. Scott, Tostevin and Willis (16)

The Motion was Lost.

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

There were no membership changes reported at the meeting.