

COUNCIL

Thursday, 18 July 2024

PRESENT – The Mayor, Councillors Ali, Allen, Anderson, Baker, Bartch, Beckett, Coe, Cossins, Crudass, Crumbie, Mrs Culley, Curry, Dillon, Dulston, Durham, Harker, Henderson, Holroyd, Johnson, Kane, Keir, Lawley, Layton, Mahmud, Mammolotti, Marshall, McCollom, McEwan, McGill, K Nicholson, M Nicholson, Pease, Renton, Dr. Riley, Roche, Mrs Scott, Snedker, Storr, Toms, Tostevin, Wallis and Walters.

APOLOGIES – Councillors Garner, Haszeldine, Laing, Lee, Porter, Ray and Robinson.

10 **MINUTES - TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THIS COUNCIL HELD ON 16 MAY 2024 AND 23 MAY 2024**

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meetings of this Council held on 16 May 2024 and 23 May 2024.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meetings of this Council held on 16 May 2024 and 23 May 2024, be approved as a correct record.

11 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

12 **SEALING.**

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

13 **ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

UK Parliamentary (General) Election 2024 – The Mayor reported on the results of the UK Parliamentary (General) Election and advised of the new MPs for the Darlington and Stockton West Constituencies, namely Lola McEvoy and Matt Vickers respectively. The Mayor also paid tribute to the two former local MPs, Peter Gibson (Darlington Constituency) and Paul Howell (Sedgefield Constituency).

Srebrenica – The Mayor informed Members that it was the 29th anniversary of the genocide in Srebrenica, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and that Councils and elected representatives had been encouraged to remember and acknowledge both the victims and survivors of Srebrenica.

Members observed a period of silence and reflection to honour the victims and survivors of this terrible atrocity, and the ongoing atrocities in Ukraine and Gaza.

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

(1) **THE PUBLIC;**

There were six 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.

15 COUNCIL REPORTS.

(1) REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE - CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Group Director of Operations submitted a report (previously circulated) to advise Council of the outcome of a review of the political balance of the Authority resulting from a change to the membership of a political group.

The submitted report stated that since the last review of the political balance of the Council in May 2024, there had been a change to the political make-up of the Council, following Councillor Pease's resignation from the Conservative Group to sit as an Independent Member. It was highlighted that political groups are allocated seats on the committees in accordance with political balance rules, which were outlined within the submitted report.

Members were advised that as a result of the change to the political balance, the Council was required to review the allocation of seats to political groups.

RESOLVED – (a) That the change to the political balance of the Council be noted.

(b) That the allocation of seats, as set out in Paragraph 14 of the submitted report be approved.

(c) That the re-allocation of two additional seats to an Independent Member (one seat on the Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee (with a reduction of one seat on this Committee from the Conservative Group) and one seat on the Members Standards Hearing Committee (with a reduction of one seat on this Committee from the Conservative Group)) be agreed.

REASON - To reflect the changed political balance of the Council and to comply with legislation.

16 DARLINGTON COUNCIL PLAN 2024-2027

The Chief Officer's Executive submitted a report (previously circulated) to present the outcome of the public consultation and a revised Council Plan for approval.

The submitted report stated that on 5 March 2024, Cabinet agreed to a public consultation on a draft Council Plan, and that the consultation ran from 6 March to 25 April 2024. It was highlighted that social media promotion reached over 20,000 people, an article on the consultation was included in the One Darlington magazine, Members were encouraged to promote the consultation within their wards, and all five scrutiny committees had considered

and supported the draft Council Plan.

Members were informed that 315 responses to the survey were received, and a summary report of the survey analysis was appended to the submitted report. A number of changes to the initial draft plan were outlined in the submitted report.

The submitted report stated that the draft plan was presented to Cabinet on 16 July 2024, and the Council Plan was recommended for referral to Council for consideration and adoption.

RESOLVED – (a) That the consultation be noted.

(b) That the revised Council Plan 2024-27 be approved.

REASONS - The Council Plan is the strategic document that sets out the Council's long term ambitions for Darlington and shorter-term priorities and actions. Approval of the plan is needed to provide guidance to the organisation, and clarity for the public and our partners on the Council's strategic priorities.

17 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.

18 CABINET URGENT DECISIONS

The Chief Officers Executive submitted a report (previously circulated) detailing a decision taken by Cabinet as a matter of urgency and to which the procedure for call-in could not be applied.

RESOLVED – That the urgent decision taken by Cabinet be noted.

REASON – To comply with the Council's Constitution.

19 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.

20 MOTIONS OF NOTICE

(1) TO CONSIDER A MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR SNEDKER AND SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR LAWLEY

The Motion was withdrawn by Councillor Snedker at the meeting.

21 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 2024/25 that:

- (a) That Councillor Cossins replace Councillor Haszeldine on the Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee;
- (b) That Councillor Cossins replace Councillor Layton on the Planning Applications Committee;
- (c) That Councillor Cossins replace Councillor Layton on the Council Decision Making and Scrutiny Process Working Group; and
- (d) That Councillor Coe replace Councillor Allen on the Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.