

## COUNCIL

Thursday, 30 January 2025

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

**APOLOGIES** – Councillors Ali, Crudass, Haszeldine, M Nicholson, Ray, Mrs Scott and Wallis.

### 46 **MINUTES - TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THIS COUNCIL HELD ON 28 NOVEMBER 2024 AND 19 DECEMBER 2024**

**Submitted** – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meetings of this Council held on 28 November 2024 and 19 December 2024.

**RESOLVED** – That the Minutes of the meetings of this Council held on 28 November 2024 and 19 December 2024, be approved as correct records.

### 47 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

Councillor Robinson declared a Pecuniary interest in Minute 54 (a) below, in accordance with Section 106 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992, and took no part in the discussion or vote thereon.

### 48 **SEALING.**

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

### 49 **ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

**Death of the Deputy Lord-Lieutenant of County Durham, Alasdair MacConnachie** – The Mayor announced the death of the Deputy Lord-Lieutenant of County Durham, Alasdair MacConnachie, who had passed away on 25<sup>th</sup> December 2024. The Mayor referred to Mr. MacConnachie's years of service as Vice Lord-Lieutenant of County Durham, Deputy Lord-Lieutenant of County Durham and High Sheriff of Durham, and noted that Mr. MacConnachie had been awarded the Freedom of the Borough of Darlington in 2012.

**Death of the ex-Lord Lieutenant of County Durham, Sir Paul Nicholson** - The Mayor announced the death of the ex-Lord Lieutenant of County Durham, Sir Paul Nicholson, who had passed away on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2025. The Mayor referred to Sir Paul's years of service, noting that he was knighted in 1993 for services to industry and the public in the North-East, and that he had served as Lord Lieutenant of County Durham between 1997 and 2013.

Members stood and observed a short silence in respect of these individuals who had contributed and demonstrated such a commitment to the Borough.

**King's New Year's Honours 2025** – The Mayor advised Members that awards were conferred on two individuals who resided or worked in Darlington. Members were informed that John Arthur Evans, Executive Chair of Beanies the Flavour Company, based in Darlington, had been awarded with the Officer of the Order of the British Empire (O.B.E.) for services to Entrepreneurship, and that Calvin Kipling, Head of the Virtual School, Darlington Borough Council, had been awarded the Member of the Order of the British Empire (M.B.E.) for services to Education.

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

**Holocaust Memorial Day 2025** - The Mayor acknowledged Holocaust Memorial Day, which had taken place on Monday, 27th January 2025, and marked the 80th Anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, and the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the genocide in Bosnia.

Members stood and observed a short silence to remember those murdered and reflect on the atrocities of genocide.

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

**51 THE PUBLIC;**

There were seven questions, received with notice, from Members of the Public. Five Members of the Public attended the meeting to ask their question in person, and each received an answer thereon.

The Mayor requested that a written response be provided to those Members of the Public who did not attend to ask their question in person.

**52 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.

**53 COUNCIL REPORTS.**

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

**54 CABINET REPORTS.**

**(1) COUNCIL TAX CALCULATION OF TAX BASE 2025/26**

The Executive Director of Resources and Governance submitted a report (previously circulated) to determine the Council's tax base for 2025/26.

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 report for the calculation of the Council's tax base for the year 2025/26, be approved.

(b) That the tax base for the Council of 35,904.5 and the individual tax base for the parishes, as set out at Appendix 2 of the submitted report, be approved.

**REASON** - The recommendations are supported to comply with statutory requirements, enabling the Council Tax for 2025/26 to be set by Council in February 2025.

## **(2) CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRESS**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (previously circulated) to update Council on progress towards the Council's net zero target.

The submitted report stated that the Darlington Eco Fair was held in June 2024, with more than 5000 attending the marquee, and that a Climate Change Seminar for Members had been held on 19 September 2024. It was reported that the Highways Asset Management Team annual maintenance programme for 2023/24 had demonstrated a total reduction of over 348 tonnes in CO2 emissions.

The submitted report highlighted that the Sustainability and Climate Change Officer had submitted the Council's report to DEFRA as part of a trial project for local authorities to report to the Secretary of State under the Climate Change Act's Adaption Reporting Power. Progress on actions had been reviewed and some of the delivery dates of actions had been amended to allow resources (staff and financial) to be managed.

It was reported that the Housing Service was bidding for Wave Three of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund through the Tees Valley Combined Authority, and it was stated that should the bid be successful, Wave Three would see a further 1600 of the Council's homes below EPC C by 2028.

Members were informed that the Head of Environmental Services and the Sustainability and Climate Change Lead Officer had worked together to commission a piece of work to calculate the carbon sequestration potential of Council land, and that the Council were the first local authority in the UK to do this work in this way. It was reported that the report had been received and demonstrated a positive result.

**RESOLVED** – That the content of the report be acknowledged.

**REASON** – Due to the increasing public pressure to act on climate change, the Council runs the risk of significant damage to its reputation if it does not deliver on its stated commitment to dealing with the Council's contribution to climate change.

## **(3) MID YEAR PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING REPORT 2024/25**

The Executive Director of Resources and Governance submitted a report (previously

circulated) which sought approval of the revised Treasury Management Strategy, Prudential Indicators and to provide a mid-yearly review of the Council's borrowing and investment activities.

The submitted report stated that the mandatory Prudential Code, which governs Council borrowing, required Council approval of controls, called Prudential Indicators, relating to capital spending and borrowing. It was reported that the Prudential Indicators were set in three statutory annual reports to Council, and the submitted report followed the Council's approval in February 2024 of the 2024/25 Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management Strategy.

The submitted report highlighted that 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 in terms of a reduction to Operational Boundary to £179.323M, and the Authorised Limit to £259.628M to allow for any additional cashflow requirement.

**RESOLVED** - (a) That the revised Prudential Indicators and limits in Tables 1 to 6, 8, 10 and 12 to 17 of the submitted report be examined.

(b) That the Treasury Management Budget (Financing Costs) projected outturn, shown in Table 11, be noted.

(c) That the updated Prudential Indicators be approved.

**REASONS** - (a) In order 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.

#### **(4) 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.

#### **55 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.

**56 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 Beckett replace Councillor Garner on the Audit Committee.