

COUNCIL

Thursday, 17 July 2025

PRESENT – The Mayor, Councillors Anderson, Baker, Bartch, Coe, Cossins, Crumbie, Mrs Culley, Curry, Dillon, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Harker, Haszeldine, Henderson, Holroyd, Johnson, Keir, Laing, Lawley, Layton, Lee, Mahmud, Mammolotti, Marshall, McCollom, McEwan, McGill, M Nicholson, Pease, Porter, Ray, Renton, Robinson, Roche, Snedker, Storr, Toms, Tostevin, Wallis and Walters

APOLOGIES – Councillors Ali, Allen, Beckett, Crudass, Garner, K Nicholson, Dr. Riley and Mrs Scott

32 MINUTES - TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS COUNCIL HELD ON 15 MAY 2025, 22 MAY 2025, AND 19 JUNE 2025.

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meetings of this Council held on 15 May, 22nd May and 19th June 2025.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meetings of this Council held on 15 May, 22nd May and 19th June 2025. be approved as correct records.

33 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest recorded at this meeting.

34 SEALING.

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

35 ANNOUNCEMENTS.

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

37 THE PUBLIC;

There were four questions, received with notice, from Members of the Public. Three 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 the Member of the Public who did not attend to ask their question in person.

38 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.

39 COUNCIL REPORTS.

40 PAVEMENT CAFE POLICY

The Executive Director, Economy and Public Protection, submitted a report (previously circulated) which invited Members to approve the final of the Council's revised Pavement Café Policy.

The submitted report sought Members' approval of a revised Pavement Café Policy, following public consultation and supported by the Licensing Committee, incorporating legislative changes, and to reflect the changing dynamics of the town.

RESOLVED – That Full Council approve this revised Pavement Café Policy, which will apply to all licences issued from the date of this agreement.

REASON - The recommendation is supported to ensure standards are maintained to protect the public, taking into account legislative changes and guidance issued to local authorities.

41 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.

42 ADOPTION OF FINALISED APPRAISAL FOR THE STOCKTON & DARLINGTON RAILWAY: NORTHGATE CONSERVATION AREA INCLUDING CHANGES TO ITS BOUNDARY AND NAME

The Executive Director, Economy and Public Protection, and the Cabinet Member for the Economy Portfolio, submitted a report (previously circulated) which sought Councillors' approval to adopt the finalised Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area Appraisal, including changes to its boundary and name. The document that has been submitted is called *Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area Appraisal. Finalised document. March 2025.*

The report provides justification for adopting the finalised appraisal for the Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area. The draft version of the appraisal (September 2024) had been subject to a six-week public consultation period. Amendments have been made in light of the comments received.

Members in attendance congratulated both the Portfolio Holder for Economy and the Executive Director, Economy and Public Protection, for producing a fantastic and interesting report, and posed some technical questions.

RESOLVED - That:

- (a) Council adopts the finalised appraisal for the Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area.
- (b) Council adopts the finalised boundary for the Stockton & Darlington Railway:

Northgate Conservation Area (see chapter 6.0 of the appraisal).

- (c) Council adopts the name change from Northgate Conservation Area to Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area.
- (d) Council authorises the amendment of finalised Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area Appraisal with regards to the text marked in yellow, to reflect the adopted status of the document. The adopted appraisal will be named: Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area Appraisal. Adopted document. March 2025.

Reasons –

- (a) The Northgate Conservation Area is a designated heritage asset of international significance due to its structures and associations directly linked to the birth/early years of the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR) of 1825. Despite its high importance, it has been on the national Heritage at Risk Register since 2010.
- (b) The bicentennial of the S&DR is in September this year. The Council has been making significant investments in preparation for the celebrations inside the Conservation Area (e.g. Hopetown Darlington, Edward Pease house).
- (c) The current Northgate Conservation Area appraisal was adopted in January 2007 and is now deemed inadequate and out of date. The present Conservation Area boundary dates from 2003.
- (d) The new appraisal picks up some of the ‘unfinished’ work carried out by Durham County Council (2022) and Land Use Consultants (2021). It provides a detailed record and analysis of the existing Conservation Area, as well as proposals for boundary changes and name change, and suggestions for improvements so that the Conservation Area may eventually be removed from the Heritage at Risk register.
- (e) The responses on the draft document were generally very supportive of the appraisal and its proposals, including the feedback received from Historic England and the Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway.
- (f) Once the new appraisal has been adopted it will provide an evidence base for managing change in the area and form a material consideration in the Planning process, replacing the 2007 document.
- (g) It will also assist if funding is sought for larger regeneration schemes within the amended boundary. Historic England confirmed that they will not provide funding for improvement works within the Conservation Area until the new appraisal, including boundary changes and name change, has been adopted.

43 CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRESS

The Cabinet Member responsible for the Economy Portfolio, and the Executive Director,

Economy and Public Protection, submitted a report (previously circulated) to update Council progress towards the Council's net zero target.

The Cabinet Member responsible for the Economy Portfolio gave context regarding the actions taken by the service area since the last update, and informed Members on some of the workings of the Climate Change Working Group.

Members posed questions on some of the issues discussed in the Climate Change Working Group, specifically around investigations into increased carbon emissions, and fuel bills at Council venues. The Chair of the working group also reiterated their belief that the Council must take into account future needs of Net Zero into their current developments.

Members also made reference to the Tree and Woodland Policy, questioning whether a new strategy needs to be implemented to account for the high volume of trees being planted.

Thanks was also passed to the Climate Change Working Group for their efforts.

RESOLVED – That Council notes the contents of the report.

Reasons - The recommendations are supported by the increasing public pressure to act on climate change, the Council may run 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.

44 DESIGNATION OF NEW MIDDLETON ST GEORGE CONSERVATION AREA AND ADOPTION OF FINALISED APPRAISAL

The Cabinet Member responsible for the Economy Portfolio, and the Executive Director, Economy and Public Protection, submitted a report (previously circulated) which sought approval to designate a new conservation area at Middleton St George and to adopt the corresponding appraisal. The submitted document was titled *Stockton & Darlington Railway: Middleton St George (Fighting Cocks) Conservation Area Appraisal. Finalised document. May 2025*.

The report provides justification for the designating a new conservation area at Middleton St George and adopting the corresponding appraisal. The draft version of the appraisal (December 2024) had been subject to a six-week public consultation period. Amendments have been made in light of the comments received.

The Cabinet Member responsible for the Economy Portfolio also made reference to comments made by Historic England, which have been addressed. The Cabinet Member also reiterated that the appraisal was wholly evidence based.

RESOLVED –

(a) Council adopts the new conservation area boundary at Middleton St George (see chapter 6.0 of the finalised appraisal).

(b) Council adopts the new conservation area's name: Stockton & Darlington Railway:

Middleton St George (Fighting Cocks) Conservation Area.

(c) Council adopts the finalised appraisal for the new Middleton St George Conservation Area.

(d) Council authorises the amendment of finalised appraisal with regards to the text marked in yellow, to reflect the adopted status of the document. The adopted appraisal will be named: Stockton & Darlington Railway: Middleton St George (Fighting Cocks) Conservation Area Appraisal. Adopted document. May 2025.

Reasons –

(a) Fighting Cocks was an original stopping point (station) along the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR) of 1825. The presence of the railway led to the establishment of the Middleton Iron Works in 1864, which sparked the development of the village of Middleton St George.

(b) The bicentennial of the S&DR is this year. There will be many events along the former route to celebrate the birth of the modern railway. Darlington Borough Council (DBC) has been making significant S&DR-related investments, and Middleton St George Parish Council is also preparing for its celebration within the village. Over the past few years, heritage assets at Fighting Cocks have been promoted through the Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan, S&DR Heritage Action Zone and Fighting Cocks Heritage Hub.

(c) The appraisal demonstrates in detail that sufficient special interest survives at Middleton St George which is associated with the S&DR and the industrial development of the village justifying the designation of a conservation area. It picks up the 'unfinished' work by Durham County Council who proposed a (different) conservation area boundary for Middleton St George in 2022.

(d) The draft conservation area boundary proposed by DBC has generally been welcomed by residents who took part in the public consultation. It is also supported by the Friends of the S&DR and Middleton St George Parish Council. Amendments have been made following feedback received, including concerns raised by Historic England.

(e) Once the conservation area boundary has been adopted, the appraisal will provide an evidence base for managing change in the area and form a material consideration in the Planning process. Conservation area designation can also assist if funding is sought for larger regeneration or conservation schemes within the boundary.

(f) The appraisal also includes suggestions to improve the condition of the area. These are in line with the aims of the Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan and the Fighting Cocks Heritage Hub.

45 UPDATED STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT - PART 1 (LOCAL PLAN)

The Cabinet Member responsible for the Economy Portfolio, and the Executive Director, Economy and Public Protection, submitted a report (previously circulated) which sought approval to adopt an updated version of its Statement of Community

Involvement (SCI) Part 1 (Local Plan).

It was stated at the meeting that this update must commence every 5 years.

RESOLVED - That Council adopt the Updated Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Part 1 (Local Plan)

Reasons - The recommendation is supported as the Council is required to have an up-to-date SCI as part of the plan review process.

46 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.

47 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.

48 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 2025/26 that:

(a) Councillors Johnson and Kevin Nicholson replace Councillors Ali and Mahmud on the Police and Crime Panel.

(b) Councillor Garner replace Councillor Ali on the Joint Audit Committee.

(c) Councillors Mrs Culley and Bartch replace Councillors Mrs Scott and Durham on the Council Decision Making and Scrutiny Process Working Group.

(d) Due to the revision to the political balance arrangements on the Combined Fire Authority, Darlington was allocated an additional seat for a Minority Group Member on the Authority's Appeals Committee. Members therefore approved the appointment of Councillor Snedker to this seat.