

Sunderland City Council

At a meeting of SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL held in the CIVIC CENTRE on WEDNESDAY, 2ND APRIL, 2008 at 6.00 p.m.

Present: The Mayor (Councillor L Scott) in the Chair
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor M Smith)

Councillors	Allan	E. Gibson	Rolph	Wakefield
	Anderson	P. Gibson	J.B. Scott	J. Walker
	Arnott	Gofton	J. Scott	P. Walker
	Ball	A. Hall	Shattock	J. Walton
	Bell	G. Hall	Sidaway	L. Walton
	Blackburn	Heron	Sleightholme	Wares
	Bohill	Higgins	P. Smith	P. Watson
	Chamberlin	Howe	Speding	S. Watson
	Charlton	Lawson	J. Stephenson	Whalen
	I. Cuthbert	Leadbitter	W. Stephenson	Williams
	M. Dixon	Peter Maddison	Stewart	A. Wilson
	P. Dixon	L. Martin	Symonds	Wood
	Errington	Miller	Tate	N. Wright
	Fletcher	Morrissey	Timmins	T.H. Wright
	D. Forbes	Old	Trueman	Young
	M. Forbes	Richardson	Tye	

The Notice convening the meeting was read.

Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Council held on 5th March, 2008 (copy circulated) be confirmed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest

The following Councillors declared personal interests in the following items in respect of the reason indicated:-

Item 7(iii) – Sunderland Strategy 2008-2025	Councillor Symonds	Member of Sunderland Partnership Board
Item 7(iv) – The Safer Sunderland Strategy	Councillor Errington	Family member Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust employee
	Councillor E. Gibson	Family member Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust employee

Councillor P. Gibson	Family member Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust employee
Councillor M. Smith	Family member Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust employee
Councillor Symonds	Member of the Safer Sunderland Partnership

Mayor's Announcements

(i) Lighting Design Awards 2008 – Queen Alexandra Bridge

At the invitation of the Mayor, the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation, Councillor Joe Lawson, informed the meeting of the Council's success in receiving the Lighting Design Award 2008. The Lighting Design Awards, constituted by the Institution of Lighting Engineers and Lighting Magazine recognised the 'fantastic engineering' work that had gone into the floodlighting scheme at the Queen Alexandra Bridge.

He then presented the Mayor with the official award, which the Mayor accepted on behalf of the Council.

(ii) Beacon Status for Reducing Re-Offending

At the invitation of the Mayor, the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Pat Smith, informed the meeting that the Council had been awarded Beacon Status for reducing re-offending.

The assessors had been particularly impressed that Sunderland had expressed innovative action to reduce re-offending. She then highlighted that rates of custody had decreased from 12% to 2.8% since 1999, which was a credit to the Council.

She then presented the Mayor with the official award which the Mayor accepted on behalf of the Council.

(iii) Beacon Status for Reducing Health Inequalities

At the invitation of the Mayor, the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood and Street Services, Councillor Kath Rolph, informed the meeting that the Council had also been awarded Beacon Status for reducing health inequalities.

She reported that the Council was a key partner working towards reducing health inequalities, which was an issue embedded in all Council work programmes and one which was discussed regularly at the Health and Well-Being Review Committee. The award was a credit to all partners across the City.

She then presented the Mayor with the official award which the Mayor accepted on behalf of the Council.

(iv) SHINE Awards 2008

The Mayor then announced that the City Council had been short-listed and highly commended for six SHINE Awards at a ceremony held on 6th March, 2008. The awards recognised the achievements of the region's councils and fire services.

The Council had been short-listed in the "highly commended" category in relation to the Reputation Award – for the Council's Communications and Image Strategy; Value for Money Award – for the Council's Overnight Home Care Service; Public Services Delivery Award – for the Bunny Hill Customer Service Centre; and Partnership Working Award – for the Council's Wellness Service. In addition, two Council employees had been short-listed in the 'Unsung Hero' Award category, namely Andy Lamb, Youth Advocate and Ralph Sidney, Drainage Operations Manager.

Members of the Council then viewed a short film demonstrating Ralph in his role as Head of Drainage. The Mayor then announced that he had great pleasure in presenting Mr. Sidney, a dedicated public servant for 39 years, with the Unsung Hero Award.

(v) Retiring Councillors

The Mayor announced that six Members of the Council, namely, Councillors Norman Bohill, Margaret Higgins, Derek Sleightholme, William Stephenson, Peter Young and James Walker would be retiring from office at the end of the Municipal Year and, on behalf of the Council, expressed gratitude for their past service and wished them well for the future.

Reception of Petitions

RESOLVED that the undermentioned petitions submitted by the Councillors respectively named be received and referred for consideration to the Officer indicated below:-

- (i) Councillor Errington – petition from residents in Silksworth objecting to the application for change of use to a support and advice centre for parents and carers of drug and alcohol users at Meadow Nursery Lodge, Silksworth Gardens, Silksworth – Director of Development and Regeneration;

- (ii) Councillor L. Williams – petition from residents to request that proposals be brought forward to reduce speeding on Bonemill Lane, Rickleton – Director of Development and Regeneration;
- (iii) Councillor Morrissey – petition from residents opposing the proposed turning restrictions at the Chester Road/Ormonde Street junction in relation to the A183 Chester Road Bus Super-route – Director of Development and Regeneration;
- (iv) Councillor P. Dixon – petition requesting that Crowtree Leisure Centre remain open – Director of Community and Cultural Services.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Bainbridge, Blyth, Carthy, A. Cuthbert, Foster, T. Martin, Paul Maddison, O'Connor, Oliver and D. Wilson.

The Cabinet reported as follows:-

1. Audit Commission Annual Audit and Inspection Letter

That they had given consideration to a joint report of the Chief Executive and City Treasurer (copy circulated) on the Audit Commission Annual Audit and Inspection Letter covering the year 2006/2007 together with a copy of the Audit Letter which provided an overall evaluation of the Council's progress having regard to the Council's core performance assessment, its financial and service performance. Consideration had also been given to its strengths and areas for development.

The Cabinet had recommended to Council that the contents of the Audit Commission's Annual Audit and Inspection Letter be noted.

2. Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) Scorecard 2007

That they had given consideration a report of the Chief Executive (copy circulated) on the Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

The Cabinet had recommended that the Council note the latest CPA results whereby the maximum four star rating had been maintained, and that the Council was judged to be 'improving well' by the Audit Commission.

3. Sunderland Strategy 2008/2009

That they had given consideration to a report of the Chief Executive (copy circulated) noting that the refreshed Sunderland Strategy provided a framework to articulate a vision, aims and strategic priorities to make the vision for the City reality.

They also advised that the report had been referred to the Policy and Co-ordination Review Committee for further advice and consideration. The Committee had supported and endorsed the vision, aims and priorities contained in the Sunderland Strategy 2008-2025.

In accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, the Cabinet had recommended that the Council approve and adopt the Sunderland Strategy 2008-2025.

4. The Safer Sunderland Strategy 2008-2023

That they had given consideration to a report of the Director of Development and Regeneration (copy circulated) seeking support for the Safer Sunderland Partnership's Safer Sunderland Strategy 2008-2023.

They had also referred the report to the Regeneration and Community Review Committee for further advice and consideration. The Committee had supported and endorsed the Safer Sunderland Partnership's Safer Sunderland Strategy 2003-2023.

Accordingly, the Cabinet had recommended that the Council:-

- (i) adopt the Safer Sunderland Partnership's Safer Sunderland Strategy 2008-2023; and
- (ii) authorise the Director of Development and Regeneration to take all necessary action to publish the Strategy including the making of any necessary arrangements of a non-substantive nature.

The Mayor advised the Council that he had agreed to exercise his discretion to permit the following addendum item of urgent business, the Strategic Investment Plan, which was outside the Council's Budget Framework, to be considered at the meeting for the efficient discharge of the Council's business.

5. Strategic Investment Plan

That they had given consideration to a joint report of the Chief Executive and the City Treasurer (copy circulated) noting details of the proposed Strategic Investment Plan as a delivery mechanism for achieving the long term ambitions of the City in order to improve the quality of life for residents and communities as encapsulated within the Sunderland Strategy, the Local Area Agreement and the Corporate Improvement Plan.

Accordingly, the Cabinet had recommended that the Council approve the overall Strategic Investment Plan and agree the individual projects, subject to consultation as appropriate, being further developed.

The Leader of the Council moved the Cabinet report and was duly seconded by the Deputy Leader. The Leader spoke to the motion during which the Deputy Leader moved, and was duly seconded, that the time limit for the speech be extended.

Upon being put to the meeting the motion was carried. The report of the Cabinet having then been put to the meeting, it was:-

RESOLVED that the report of the Cabinet, together with the views of the Review Committees be approved and adopted.

The Personnel Committee reported and recommended as follows:-

1. Resignation of the Chief Executive

That they had considered a report in relation to the post of Chief Executive (together with positions of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer).

Personnel Committee now recommended that Council approve its proposal.

RESOLVED that the recommendation submitted by the Personnel Committee for Mr. D.S. to undertake the role of Acting Chief Executive (together with positions of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer) on the departure date of the current Chief Executive, until a date be fixed by the Council following a further recommendation from Personnel Committee be approved.

Written Questions under Rule 8.2

Pursuant to Rule 8.2 of the Council Rules of Procedure, Members of the Council asked questions of the Leader and Members of the Executive.

Councillor L. Martin, seconded by Councillor Wood, moved to extend the half hour time limit to ask questions.

Upon being put to the vote, the motion was defeated with 16 Members voting in favour thereof, viz:-

Councillors	Arnott	Chamberlin	G. Hall	Wakefield
	Bohill	M. Dixon	Howe	L. Walton
	Blyth	P. Dixon	Leadbitter	J. Walton
	I. Cuthbert	M. Forbes	L. Martin	Wood

And 45 Members voting against, viz:-

The Deputy Mayor (Councillor M. Smith)

Councillors	Allan	Gofton	Sleightholme	Tye
	Anderson	A. Hall	P. Smith	J. Walker
	Ball	Heron	Speding	P. Walker
	Bell	Higgins	J. Stephenson	Wares
	Blackburn	Lawson	W. Stephenson	P. Watson
	Charlton	Miller	Stewart	S. Watson
	Errington	Old	Symonds	Whalen
	Fletcher	Rolph	Richardson	Williams
	D. Forbes	J.B. Scott	Tate	A. Wilson
	E. Gibson	J. Scott	Timmins	N. Wright
	P. Gibson	Shattock	Trueman	T. Wright

Quarterly Report on Special Urgency Decisions

The Leader submitted a quarterly report (copy circulated) on executive decisions which had been taken under Rule 16 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Appointments to Committees – Children’s Services Review Committee – Co-opted Membership

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) advising that a review of the current representation of the above-mentioned Committee had recently taken place. Council were recommended to endorse and adopt five proposals including three nominations for the co-opted membership of the Children’s Services Review Committee.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Leader, seconded by the Deputy Leader, moved that the recommendations contained in the report be approved, and the Mayor having put the matter to the meeting, it was:-

RESOLVED that approval be given to:-

- (i) the appointment, as Co-opted Members on the Children’s Services Review Committee, of Mr D. Snowdon (Community Secondary Schools) and Mrs M. Carr and Mr A. Pearce (Special Schools),

- (ii) the removal of the distinction between the categories of schools in order to involve all 3 nominees in the Committee;
- (iii) the reduction of the number of Parent Governor Representatives from 5 to 3, and the appointment, as a Co-opted Member on the Children's Services Review Committee, of Audrey Johnson (non-teaching employees in schools);
- (iv) the amendment of the current representation and accept into membership '1 representative of non-teaching employees in schools and social care';
- (v) the recreation of the diversity and equality position on the Committee and re-categorise it as 'a representative of diversity and inclusion'; and
- (vi) the Review Committee to undertake a further review to amend any remaining imbalance in its membership by recruiting further representation and reporting to Council thereon.

It was noted that approval of the above items would result in an overall reduction from 16 to 15 representatives with 2 remaining vacancies, which may be addressed in the next stage of the review.

(Signed) L. SCOTT,
Mayor.