

Minutes

Sunderland City Council

At a meeting of SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL, SUNDERLAND on WEDNESDAY 22 MARCH 2023 at 4.00pm

Present: The Mayor (Councillor A Smith) in the Chair
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor D Trueman)

Councillors	Ali	Fagan	McKeith	Snowdon, D
	Bewick	Farthing	Miller, F	Snowdon, D E
	Blackburn	Fletcher	Miller, G	Stewart
	Bond	Foster	Mordey	Thornton
	Burnicle	Gibson, P W L	Mullen	Trueman, H
	Burrell	Gibson, P	Nicholson	Tye
	Butler	Greener	O'Brien	Usher
	Chequer	Guy	Peacock	Vera
	Chisnall	Hartnack	Potts	Walker, M
	Crosby	Haswell	Price	Walker, P
	Curtis	Heron	Reed	Warne
	Dixon	Herron	Rowntree	Watson
	Dodds	Johnston, K	Samuels	Williams
	Donaghy	Johnston, S	Scanlan	Wilson
	Doyle	Laws	Scott	Wood, A
	Dunn	Mann	Smith, G	Wood, P
	Edgeworth	Mason-Gage	Smith, P	

Also Present: -

Honorary Aldermen Greenfield and Tate

The notice convening the meeting was read.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, Councillor Ali informed all Members present that he was no longer a member of the Conservative Group, having resigned his membership of the political party, and asked permission to cross the floor.

The Mayor granted this permission to Councillor Ali and he duly took up his seat with the Labour Group of the Council.

Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Ayre, Hodson, Lauchlan, McDonough, Morrissey and A Wood together with Honorary Alderman Forbes

Minutes

- 43. RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 22 February 2023 and the extraordinary meetings held on 22 February 2023 and 8 March 2023 be confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to the following amendment:

Councillor Bond's apologies to be added to the Minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 8 March 2023.

Declarations of Interest

The following Members declared interests as follows: -

Councillors D Trueman, Watson and Williams	Item 14(ii) – Notice of Motion – Women Against State Pension Inequality	Members are part of the group of women affected by the legislation.
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Announcements

The Mayor announced that Councillors Bewick, Doyle, Farthing, P Gibson, Greener, Lauchlan and P Wood would be retiring from office and not standing in the municipal elections in May. As this would be their last Council meeting, she expressed her gratitude for their past service and wished them well for the future.

Individual speeches and tributes were paid by Members to the retiring councillors and they were thanked by all present for their contribution to the Council.

Variation of Order of Business

At this juncture it was moved by the Leader of the Council, Councillor G Miller, and duly seconded by the Deputy Leader, Councillor Rowntree, that the order of business of the meeting be varied pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13.

- 44. RESOLVED that** the order of business of the agenda be varied pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13 to allow specific items to be considered during the timeframe set for the meeting.

Report of the Human Resources Committee

The Human Resources Committee reported and recommended as follows: -

1. Pay Policy Statement 2023/2024

That at its meeting on 15 March 2023, the Human Resources Committee considered a report of the Director of Smart Cities and Enabling Services (copy attached) which sought approval for publication, subject to Council approval on 22 March 2023, of the Pay Policy Statement for 2023-2024.

Accordingly, the Human Resources Committee having considered the information set out in the report, recommended Council to approve the Pay Policy Statement for 2023-2024 and its publication on the website by 31 March 2023.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor G Miller, duly seconded by the Deputy Leader, Councillor Rowntree, moved the report of the Human Resources Committee.

Councillor Hartnack moved, and it was duly seconded, that the Pay Policy Statement be amended to reflect that the policy for the payment of market supplements was under review.

Consensus to incorporation of such a provision in the Pay Policy Statement having been indicated, the amended recommendation was put to the meeting and it was: -

- 45. RESOLVED** that the report of the Human Resources Committee be approved and adopted, with the Pay Policy Statement to include an additional provision to reflect that the policy for the payment of market supplements was under review.

Report on Special Urgency Decisions

The Leader of the Council submitted a quarterly report on executive decisions which had been taken as a matter of special urgency. There had been no such instances since the last report.

- 46. RESOLVED** that the report be received and noted.

Appointments to Together for Children Sunderland Limited

The Assistant Director of Law and Governance submitted a report seeking approval for candidates to be appointed to fill vacant positions on the Board of Together for Children Limited.

The Council had previously received a report in November 2022 setting out the planned recruitment process for a Chair and an independent non-executive director for the Together for Children Limited Board. These processes had now concluded and the position of Chair had been offered to Ms Tammy Banks, subject to due diligence checks and clearances being received. The Chair's appointment had been offered for an initial one-year term with the potential to be reappointed for a further two-year term.

The position of independent non-executive director had been offered to Mr Steve Williams, subject to checks, for a three-year term with the potential for an extension to the appointment by mutual agreement.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor G Miller, duly seconded by the Deputy Leader, Councillor Rowntree, moved the report and accordingly it was: -

- 47. RESOLVED** that the appointments of Ms Tammy Banks as Board Chair and Mr Steve Williams as Independent Non-Executive Director of Together for Children Sunderland Limited be approved.

Motions on Notice

(ii) Women Against State Pension Inequality

Councillor Laws, duly seconded by Councillor Chisnall, moved the following motion: -

“Council notes that:

- In the 1995 Pensions Act, the Government increased State Pension age for women from 60 to 65, with a further increase to 66 in the 2011 Pensions Act.
- The change was not properly communicated to 3.8m women born in the 1950s until 2012, giving some only one year's notice of a six year increase in their anticipated retirement age. 18,000 of the affected women are in our own authority area and a total of 65,000 in the North East. Source: Copy of CBP-07405 Constituency Estimates, House of Commons Library.
- The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) has found that the Department for Work and Pensions was guilty of maladministration in its handling of the State Pension Age increase for women born in the 1950s.
- The All Party Parliamentary Group on State Pension Inequality for Women has concluded that “the impact of DWP maladministration on 1950s-born women has been as devastating as it is widespread. The APPG believes that the case for category 6 injustice is overwhelming and clear. Women have had their emotional, physical, and mental circumstances totally obliterated by a lack of reasonable notice.”
- Research commissioned by campaign group WASPI has found that by the end of 2022, more than 220,000 1950s born women will have died waiting for justice since the WASPI campaign began in 2015.
- WASPI's figures show that over the course of the two year COVID pandemic, 1 in 10 women who died was affected by these uncommunicated changes and lost both their state pension income and the opportunity to make alternative retirement plans.
- Despite the Ombudsman's findings and the rapid death rate of those affected, the government is choosing to wait for further reports before taking any action.
- Council believes this injustice has not only had a profound effect on the individuals involved but on the wider community in Sunderland and on local government, not least because:
- Women who would have looked after older relatives or partners are unable to afford to do so, with a knock-on impact on local social care
- Women who would have retired and engaged in caring responsibilities for grandchildren are having to continue working, increasing the childcare burden on the state locally
- Women who have been left in poverty are struggling to meet their housing costs, with a knock-on impact on local housing stock

- There is a broader impact on voluntary services of all kinds locally, which are missing out on able, active volunteers who would otherwise have been able to retire from full-time work as planned
- Our local economy is negatively affected by the reduced spending power and disposable income the uncommunicated State Pension Age changes has brought about among women born in the 1950s

Council supports:

- The conclusion of the All Party Parliamentary Group on State Pension Inequality that women born in the 1950s have suffered a gross injustice, affecting their emotional, physical and mental circumstances in addition to causing financial hardship.
- A swift resolution to this ongoing injustice before more and more women die waiting for compensation.
- The WASPI campaign asks for an immediate one-off compensation payment of between £11,666 and £20,000 to those affected, with the most going to women who were given the shortest notice of the longest increase in their state pension age."

On the motion being put it was declared to be carried unanimously and it was therefore: -

48. RESOLVED that: -

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- The change was not properly communicated to 3.8m women born in the 1950s until 2012, giving some only one year's notice of a six year increase in their anticipated retirement age. 18,000 of the affected women are in our own authority area and a total of 65,000 in the North East. Source: Copy of CBP-07405 Constituency Estimates, House of Commons Library.
- The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) has found that the Department for Work and Pensions was guilty of maladministration in its handling of the State Pension Age increase for women born in the 1950s.
- The All Party Parliamentary Group on State Pension Inequality for Women has concluded that "the impact of DWP maladministration on 1950s-born women has been as devastating as it is widespread. The APPG believes that the case for category 6 injustice is overwhelming and clear. Women have had their emotional, physical, and mental circumstances totally obliterated by a lack of reasonable notice."

- Research commissioned by campaign group WASPI has found that by the end of 2022, more than 220,000 1950s born women will have died waiting for justice since the WASPI campaign began in 2015.
- WASPI's figures show that over the course of the two year COVID pandemic, 1 in 10 women who died was affected by these uncommunicated changes and lost both their state pension income and the opportunity to make alternative retirement plans.
- Despite the Ombudsman's findings and the rapid death rate of those affected, the government is choosing to wait for further reports before taking any action.
- Council believes this injustice has not only had a profound effect on the individuals involved but on the wider community in Sunderland and on local government, not least because:
- Women who would have looked after older relatives or partners are unable to afford to do so, with a knock-on impact on local social care
- Women who would have retired and engaged in caring responsibilities for grandchildren are having to continue working, increasing the childcare burden on the state locally
- Women who have been left in poverty are struggling to meet their housing costs, with a knock-on impact on local housing stock
- There is a broader impact on voluntary services of all kinds locally, which are missing out on able, active volunteers who would otherwise have been able to retire from full-time work as planned
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- The conclusion of the All Party Parliamentary Group on State Pension Inequality that women born in the 1950s have suffered a gross injustice, affecting their emotional, physical and mental circumstances in addition to causing financial hardship.
- A swift resolution to this ongoing injustice before more and more women die waiting for compensation.
- The WASPI campaign asks for an immediate one-off compensation payment of between £11,666 and £20,000 to those affected, with the most going to women who were given the shortest notice of the longest increase in their state pension age.

At this juncture, the meeting reverted to the order of remaining business as set out in the published agenda.

Citywide approach to carbon reduction – Verbal update by the Deputy Leader of the Council and Clean, Green City Portfolio Holder

Given the time constraints for the meeting, the Deputy Leader of the Council and Clean, Green City Portfolio Holder undertook to provide a written update on the citywide approach to carbon reduction to all Members of the Council.

Outstanding Motion from the last ordinary meeting of the Council

Dangerous Trees

The proposer of the motion, Councillor Donaghy, advised the Council that he was withdrawing the motion as, since the submission of the motion, action had been taken and updated information provided on the Council website which meant that the motion was now no longer required.

Reception of Petitions

- 49. RESOLVED** that the petitions listed below submitted by the Councillors named be received and referred to the appropriate Chief Officer for consideration in accordance with the Council's Petitions Scheme: -

Councillor Tye – Petition asking the Council to consider making Edward Street, Silksworth a one-way street.

Councillor Heron – Petition requesting the Council adopt communal green space at Heritage Green, Newbottle.

Councillor Hartnack – Petition requesting the Council to review the situation regarding the double yellow lines at Seafields and Lowry Road.

Councillor Hartnack – Petition regarding the use of the Holiday Inn, Washington.

Councillor Mann – Petition regarding the use of Pickering Road as access for the Chester Gate development.

Councillor Mann – Petition regarding anti-social behaviour at Stirling Close, Broadway Estate.

Councillor Mullen – Petition requesting the Council to convert grass verges to parking bays at Coach Road Estate, Washington.

Councillor Mullen – Petition regarding the cancellation of the Sunderland Air Show*

Councillor Mullen – Petition calling for the scrapping of CPMS permit charges.

Councillor P Wood – Petition from residents of Meadowside in support of the introduction of a 'School Streets' scheme.

*NB: This petition was subsequently withdrawn as it did not meet the requirements of the Council's Petitions Scheme.

Written Questions by Members of the Public under Rule 10

Pursuant to Rule 10 of the Council Rules of Procedure, the Leader and Members of the Cabinet were asked questions which had been submitted by members of the public.

Written Questions by Members of the Council under Rule 11

Pursuant to Rule 11 of the Council Rules of Procedure, the Leader and Members of the Cabinet were asked questions which had been submitted by Members of the Council.

- 50. RESOLVED** that written responses be issued for questions 5 to 9 from Members of the Council.

The meeting adjourned at this point, having reached three hours' duration.

(Signed) **A. SMITH**
 Mayor