

Minutes

Sunderland City Council

At a meeting of SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL held in the MONTGOMERY SUITE, STADIUM OF LIGHT, SUNDERLAND on WEDNESDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2021 at 4.00pm

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

Councillors	Ali	Fletcher	MacKnight, N	Reed
	Bewick	Foster	Mann	Rowntree
	Blackburn	Gibson, E	Mason-Gage	Samuels
	Burnicle	Gibson, P W L	McClennan	Smith, G
	Butler	Gibson, P	McDonough	Snowdon, D
	Chequer	Greener	McKeith	Snowdon, D E
	Crosby	Hartnack	Miller, F	Stewart
	Dixon	Haswell	Miller, G	Taylor, A
	Dodds	Howe	Mullen	Trueman, D
	Donaghy	Jenkins	Nicholson	Tye
	Doyle	Johnston, K	Noble	Walker, M
	Dunn	Johnston, S	O'Brien	Walker, P
	Edgeworth	Leadbitter	Peacock	Warne
	Fagan	Lauchlan	Potts	Williams
	Farthing	Laws	Price	Wood, P

The notice convening the meeting was read.

Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Blackett, Hodson, D MacKnight, Morrissey, Scanlan, P Smith, D Wilson, A Wood, and Aldermen Arnott, Forbes, Greenfield and Tate.

Minutes

17. RESOLVED that the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 23 June 2021 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declaration of Interests

The following declaration of interest was made and the Member concerned left the meeting during consideration of the item: -

Announcements

It was with great sadness that the Mayor informed Council of the deaths of former Councillors Turner, Ambrose, Newton, Sleightholme, Waistell and L Walton.

The Mayor invited Council to join him in partaking in a minute's silence as a mark of respect for their former colleagues.

Covid-19 – Verbal Update by the Leader of the Council

The Mayor invited the Leader to provide a verbal update on the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Leader commented that when he last provided an update in June, the news had just been received that the final steps in the easing of Covid restrictions were to be delayed. Whilst that was only a couple of months ago, in many respects it felt like quite a while since the return to something approaching normality. The Leader was thankful that people had been able to enjoy a great summer in Sunderland and reflected on how this symbolised and represented community spirit, resilience and the huge potential within the City to recover strongly from Covid-19 and all of the associated impacts.

The Leader commented it was a real joy to see several announcements on some very significant investments over the summer, which helped the Council press ahead with ambitious regeneration plans. These included the launch of Nissan EV360, the £1billion groundbreaking electric vehicle hub, the unveiling of the major transformational plans for Sunderland Station and a number of high profile companies across several sectors which had announced that they would be creating 4,000 new jobs in Sunderland. The Leader highlighted the fantastic news that Together for Children had been rated as Outstanding following Ofsted's recent inspection. Finally, heralding the welcome return of world class events to the City, Sunderland had hosted the World 2 series cycling event in August. The Leader stated that the afore mentioned signalled that Sunderland was on course to recover from the impact of lock down and Covid-19 into a smart, dynamic, healthy and vibrant City for the residents of Sunderland.

Returning to the current situation with regard to the pandemic, the Leader expressed concerns that Covid-19 had not gone away and that, as reported by the Director of Public Health, the number of cases remained stubbornly high. The Leader pleaded to everyone to continue to fight the virus as infection rates continued to fluctuate across the country and remained higher than would like in the City and the North East region. Inevitably, as people had been mixing, rates had increased and this had resulted in people becoming seriously ill and needing hospital care, and sadly in the worst cases, unfortunately dying.

The Leader reported that the Government's Autumn and Winter Covid Plan outlined steps to steer the country through the coming months, and it outlined further measures that would be taken if the data suggested they were necessary to protect the NHS. It remained incumbent that everyone was up to date with current guidance and regulations and were aware of the risks of Covid, moving into Autumn and Winter. Having as many people vaccinated as possible was the best defence against Covid-19 and plans had been announced for a booster jab for over 50s and roll out of the vaccination to 12 to 15 year old age group. The Leader urged everyone eligible to take up the recommended dose and advised that the details of vaccinations were available on the Council and NHS websites. The Leader emphasised that people should keep to the current rules and guidance in relation to hands-face-space and commented that wearing face coverings and social distancing were extremely important, and going into the Autumn Winter virus season, regular testing and self-isolation.

In closing, the Leader implored to keep schools, businesses, places of work and leisure facilities open by continuing with the momentum that been built into the recovery during the challenging period. He expressed the importance of looking after oneself and others. The Leader thanked the Mayor for receiving the update.

18. RESOLVED that the update from the Leader be noted.

Citywide approach to carbon reduction – Verbal update by the Deputy Leader of the Council

The Deputy Leader provided an update on the ongoing progress being made in relation to the city's goal of being carbon neutral by 2030 and reducing its carbon emissions. The Deputy Leader highlighted key progress and development work that had taken place in recent months which included:-

- The announcement, at the beginning of July, by Nissan and Envision Group - about the new Nissan 36Zero Electric Vehicle Hub that would be established in the city, and the new giga factory that would be built by Envision AESC. In addition to the valuable jobs which would be created in the city's green economy, a micro-grid, bringing together energy consumption, generation and storage, was being developed to underpin the investment, which was aiming to save 55,000 tonnes of carbon annually;
- Approval of the North East Community Forest, which was recently approved by Government and which covered all of Tyne and Wear and much of County Durham. Part of the Forest commitment included increasing the overall tree canopy cover from 18.4% as it was currently within Sunderland, to 30% by 2050;
- Participation in celebrations to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, through the Queen's Green Canopy programme. Sunderland had been awarded 420 trees from the Woodland Trust as part of this programme, as well as a further 2,500 trees from the charity Trees for Cities;

- Arrangements for the first meeting of the Young People's Advisory Group - which the Council had been developing with Together for Children, Sunderland College and the University of Sunderland University. This would take place in early October and would bring together young representatives from across the city to discuss climate action and share their views with the 2030 Shadow Board;
- Ongoing delivery of the BREEZ project that supported Small and Medium-sized Enterprises with energy efficiency measures;
- Completion of design work for solar PV panels at St Mary's, Farrington Row, Bunny Hill and Holmeside car parks. Between the sites they would provide approximately three quarters of a Megawatt of renewable energy; and
- Reporting by the Council which had, for the first time, publicly disclosed its citywide environmental data and actions to the Carbon Disclosure Project (known as CDP), which would help the Council better understand and manage the environmental footprint going forward on this important agenda.

The Deputy Leader hoped she had provided a useful and positive update on work that was ongoing and would continue to provide updates to Council as appropriate going forward.

19. RESOLVED that the information be noted.

Reception of Petitions

20. 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 Mullen – Petition opposing the change of use of 32 Stewart Street to HMO.

Councillor Howe – Petition calling on the Council to reopen the access to green space Lowery Road.

Councillor P Wood – Petition to record residents' concerns regarding Civic Centre Disposal.

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.

Report of the Cabinet

The Cabinet reported and recommended as follows: -

1. Update to Constitution: Procurement Procedure Rules and Review of Financial Thresholds

That they had given consideration to a report of the Executive Director of Corporate Services (copy attached) to seek agreement to recommend to Council proposed changes to the Procurement Procedure Rules (PPRs) and key financial reporting thresholds.

The Cabinet noted the content of the report and the proposed changes to the Procurement Procedure Rules (PPRs) and key financial reporting thresholds and accordingly, referred the report to Council.

The Cabinet recommended the Council to:-

- (i) approve the proposed revised Procurement Procedure Rules (as contained in Appendix A to the report) and the increases to financial thresholds set out in paragraphs 5.1 to 5.7 of the report, and
- (ii) authorise the Assistant Director of Law and Governance to amend the Constitution accordingly, including the making of any consequential amendments, stylistic or typographical changes, to ensure consistency throughout the Constitution.

2. Licensing Act 2003 – Review of Cumulative Impact Assessment

That they had given consideration to a report of the Executive Director of Neighbourhoods (copy attached) on the Licensing Act 2003 – Review of Cumulative Impact Assessment which informed of the legal requirement of the Council, in its capacity of Licensing Authority, to undertake a review of the Council's Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA), under the Licensing Act 2003, ("the Act").

The Cabinet recommended to Council that the existing CIA should cease as from 19 September 2021, and that a CIA be further considered in the next 6-12 months subject to the availability of all relevant data at that time. The report was also referred to the Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee for further advice and consideration. The Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendation that the existing CIA should cease as from 19 September 2021 and that a CIA be further considered in the next 6-12 months subject to the availability of all relevant data at that time. The Scrutiny Committee also expressed its concern at the short timescales for consultation with regard to the report.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor G Miller, duly seconded by the Deputy Leader, Councillor Rowntree, moved the report of the Cabinet and the supplementary report.

Councillor Haswell, duly seconded by Councillors Mullen and McDonough, moved a reference back on Item 1 – Update to Constitution: Procurement Procedure Rules and Review of Financial Thresholds.

Upon being put to the vote, the reference back was defeated with thirty two Members voting against: -

Councillors	Blackburn	Gibson, P	Noble	Taylor
	Butler	Johnston, K	Price	Trueman, D
	Chequer	Lauchlan	Rowntree	Trueman, H
	Dodds	Laws	Samuels	Tye
	Farthing	MacKnight, N	Smith, A	Walker, G
	Fletcher	Mason-Gage	Snowdon, D	Walker, P
	Foster	Miller, F	Snowdon, D E	Warne
	Gibson, E	Miller, G	Stewart	Williams

Twenty eight Members voting in favour:

Councillors	Ali	Fagan	Johnston	O'Brien
	Bewick	Gibson, P	Leadbitter	Peacock
	Crosby	Greener	Mann	Potts
	Dixon	Hartnack	McDonough	Reed
	Donaghy	Haswell	McKeith	Smith, G
	Doyle	Howe	Mullen	Wood, P
	Dunn	Jenkins	Nicholson	

And one Member abstaining: -

Councillor McClennan

Accordingly, it was: -

21. RESOLVED that Item 1 of the report of the Cabinet be approved and adopted.

The remaining item on the report of the Cabinet was then put to the meeting. Accordingly, it was: -

22. RESOLVED that Item 2 of the report of the Cabinet be approved and adopted.

Action taken on petitions

The Council received and noted the report below which detailed the action taken in relation to the following petitions which had been presented to the Council.

(i) Petition from residents regarding vehicle access and parking problems at Salisbury and Dalla St, South Hylton – presented by Councillor Mann on 22 March 2021.

The petition had highlighted concerns of the residents regarding vehicle access and parking at Salisbury and Dalla St, South Hylton. The access was severely restricted, causing problems with parking for residents with disabilities, was difficult to access for refuse collection and was a hazard for emergency vehicles.

Following consideration by Council Officers, it was confirmed that the Council was not in a position to progress the works suggested however it offered to explore the option of entering into an agreement with the petitioners should they wish to progress the works themselves.

The Ward Councillors and lead petitioner had been advised of the outcome.

(ii) Petition from residents requesting that the Council reduce the speed limit and install other traffic calming measures in Allendale Road and surrounding streets – Presented by Councillor McDonough on 27 January 2020.

Following consideration by Council Officers, the petition had been declined.

Most of Allendale Road was already a 20mph zone covering large areas outside of both schools and there were numerous other traffic calming measures installed at this location. The primary school 20mph zone had just been extended and ward councillors had been consulted during this process in May 2020 and provided with a further update in September 2020.

The Ward Councillors and lead petitioner had been advised of the outcome.

(iii) Petition that highlighted an objection to planning application ref. 21/01001/FU4, which related to a development of 69 no. affordable dwellings on land east of Primate Road, Plains Farm – presented by Councillor Mullen on 23 June 2021.

The petition would be treated as a formal representation in respect of planning application ref. 21/01001/FU4 and would be material to the consideration of the application by officers ahead of its determination by the Planning and Highways (East) Committee. The concerns raised within the petition in relation to road capacity, highway safety, parking and the amenity of existing residents, were all material considerations and the implications of the proposed development in respect of these issues would be fully assessed by officers prior to the presentation of the planning application to the Committee for determination.

(iv) Petition that set out concerns from residents regarding excessive noise at Rainton Arena – presented by Councillor Heron on 23 June 2021.

The allegations of excessive noise had been investigated and to date there was no evidence to suggest that a statutory nuisance existed. The licensee was engaging with the Council to enhance existing licensing conditions to provide further controls in respect of the licensing objectives on site.

A response had been shared with Cllr Juliana Heron and a follow up query had also been responded to.

(v) Petition from residents requesting that the Council revoke the decision to lease the Seaburn Tram Shelter and commit to maintaining in its original form and for its original purpose – presented by Councillor Doyle on 27 January 2021.

The proposals for the former tram shelter formed part of the Council's wider Coastal Communities Fund Round 5 project (CCF5). Along with three other projects - the Seaburn Bay Shelter, the former Roker Toilet Block, and the Seaburn beach huts - the proposals for the former tram shelter were given planning consent in January 2019.

It was proposed to carry out local engagement on the proposals. A preferred tenant had been selected who would carry out engagement with the local community on their proposals for the building. This would enable them to both build up their own understanding through community engagement and to share their ideas and proposals. This engagement would then inform the development of the planning application which they would need to submit for listed building consent to the Local Planning Authority for consideration.

A response had been sent to Councillor Doyle on 29 June 2021 setting out the review and the conclusion, as set out above. Officers would continue to work with the selected tenant to ensure the planned engagement takes place with the local community, and other stakeholders as appropriate, and to ensure the physical proposals developed for the premises could protect and enhance it as a grade II listed building.

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, which advised that there were no such instances since the last report.

The Leader of the Council, duly seconded by the Deputy Leader, moved the report.

23. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies

The Assistant Director of Law and Governance submitted a report seeking approval for a number of proposed changes to various committees and outside bodies which had arisen since the Annual Council meeting.

The Leader of the Council, duly seconded by the Deputy Leader, moved the report and accordingly it was:

24. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) Councillor Mullen, in place of Councillor Peacock, and also Councillor Mann be appointed to the seat on the Scrutiny Co-Ordinating Committee held by the former UKIP Group;
- (ii) The appointment of a Liberal Democrat Group Member to the seat on the Planning and Highways Committee (East) held by the former UKIP Group be deferred to a later meeting;
- (iii) Councillor Peacock be appointed to the seat on the Planning and Highways Committee (West) held by the former UKIP Group;
- (iv) Councillor Bewick be appointed to the seat on the Licensing and Regulatory Committee held by the former UKIP Group;
- (v) Councillor Jenkins to replace Councillor A. Wood on the Homelessness Appeals Panel;
- (vi) Councillor Jenkins be appointed to the seat on the Appeals Committee held by the former UKIP Group;
- (vii) The period of appointment of Mr Dennis Hall as Independent Person, as set out in the report, be extended for an additional period of two years from 1 October 2021;
- (viii) The Flood and Coastal Group Engineer from the City Development Directorate be appointed as the officer representative to the Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group and the position for an elected member representative to the Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group be deferred to a later meeting;
- (ix) It be noted that Councillor Mullen, with Councillor Doyle as his substitute, had been nominated to the NECA Audit and Standards Committee;
- (x) The position for an elected member representative to be appointed to the vacancy on the Samuel Dobson Trust be deferred to a later meeting;
- (xi) The position for an elected member representative to be appointed to the vacancy on the Victoria House Charity be deferred to a later meeting; and

- (xii) The change to the appointments by the Leader of Council on the South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership Joint Executive Committee to appoint Councillor K. Johnston to replace Councillor Farthing on the Joint Executive Committee and for Councillor Farthing to become the substitute Member be noted.

Notices of Motion

The Leader of the Council, Councillor G Miller, duly seconded by the Deputy Leader, Councillor Rowntree, moved the suspension of Council Procedure Rules 11.1 and 14.1 so far as they required the signing and delivering of a notice of motion to be carried out in person.

25. RESOLVED that the suspension of the relevant Council Procedure Rules be agreed.

(i) Road Safety

Councillor Mullen duly seconded by Councillor Hartnack moved the following motion:-

“Councillors of all parties have concerns about road safety in our city.

From speeding problems to road markings, we take seriously the complaints we receive from residents about dangerous driving, unsafe roads, and the sometimes inadequate response to these problems.

It is regrettable that too often the Council's response to road safety issues is too slow or defeatist – particularly when councillors are told, by Highways Officers, that there is no problem because 'the average driver does not speed' or because 'there has not been a fatal accident'.

Council believes that a culture change within the organisation is necessary and therefore resolves to:

- Change the way speeding problem areas are identified, moving away from the median to a system which reflects a mix of incidents numbers, police concerns, resident complaints, and councillor reports.
- Develop a strategy for dealing with anti-social driving outside of sociable hours.
- Improve the way that Sunderland City Council logs and reports upon residents' speeding complaints and to frequently communicate this data to Northumbria Police.

- Work more closely with the police on the installation of 20mph zones to ensure these can be effectively enforced.
- Work with Northumbria Police to establish Community Speed Watch schemes in problem areas.
- Introduce a system for councillors to request urgent junction protections be installed in areas of their wards where poor visibility is hazardous.
- Prioritise the re-painting of faded junction lines over other road markings where the faded junction lines present a danger to drivers' safety."

The Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Rowntree, duly seconded by Councillor Stewart moved the following amendment:-

First Paragraph, after "unsafe roads,"

Delete "and the sometimes inadequate response to these problems"

Add "and will continue to take action to protect public safety in these matters"

Second Paragraph, delete and add new second paragraph.

"We therefore applaud the decision of cabinet in June 2021 to approve a new Road Safety Assessment Scheme that significantly broadened the qualifying criteria for the introduction of traffic management measures, allowing greater flexibility in dealing with road safety issues raised by elected members and their communities."

Third Paragraph

Delete "Council believes"

Add "We also welcome the decision of the Council to embrace Community Wealth Building, recognising"

After "necessary" add "to ensure that we are working with residents"

After "therefore" add "this council"

Amend first bullet point as follows:

Delete "Change"

Add "Implement the changes within the new Road Safety Assessment Scheme as soon as possible thereby changing."

Amend third bullet point as follows:

After “complaints add “through its inclusion within the roll out of the councils new mobile reporting system”

Amend sixth bullet point as follows:

After “be” delete “installed” and add “prioritised”

So that the amended motion would read:

“Councillors of all parties have concerns about road safety in our city. From speeding problems to road markings, we take seriously the complaints we receive from residents about dangerous driving, unsafe roads, and will continue to take action to protect public safety in these matters.

We therefore applaud the decision of cabinet in June 2021 to approve a new Road Safety Assessment Scheme that significantly broadened the qualifying criteria for the introduction of traffic management measures, allowing greater flexibility in dealing with road safety issues raised by elected members and their communities.

We also welcome the decision of the Council to embrace Community Wealth Building, recognising that a culture change within the organisation is necessary to ensure that we are working with residents and therefore this council resolves to:

- Implement the changes within the new Road Safety Assessment Scheme as soon as possible thereby changing the way speeding problem areas are identified, moving away from the median to a system which reflects a mix of incidents numbers, police concerns, resident complaints, and councillor reports.
- Develop a strategy for dealing with anti-social driving outside of sociable hours.
- Improve the way that Sunderland City Council logs and reports upon residents’ speeding complaints through its inclusion within the roll out of the councils new mobile reporting system and to frequently communicate this data to Northumbria Police.
- Work more closely with the police on the installation of 20mph zones to ensure these can be effectively enforced.
- Work with Northumbria Police to establish Community Speed Watch schemes in problem areas.
- Introduce a system for councillors to request urgent junction protections be prioritised in areas of their wards where poor visibility is hazardous.
- Prioritise the re-painting of faded junction lines over other road markings where the faded junction lines present a danger to drivers' safety. “

Upon being put, the amendment was declared to be carried unanimously. The substantive motion, as amended, was put to the meeting and accordingly it was: -

26. RESOLVED that:-

Councillors of all parties have concerns about road safety in our city. From speeding problems to road markings, we take seriously the complaints we receive from residents about dangerous driving, unsafe roads, and will continue to take action to protect public safety in these matters.

We therefore applaud the decision of cabinet in June 2021 to approve a new Road Safety Assessment Scheme that significantly broadened the qualifying criteria for the introduction of traffic management measures, allowing greater flexibility in dealing with road safety issues raised by elected members and their communities.

We also welcome the decision of the Council to embrace Community Wealth Building, recognising that a culture change within the organisation is necessary to ensure that we are working with residents and therefore this council resolves to:

- Implement the changes within the new Road Safety Assessment Scheme as soon as possible thereby changing the way speeding problem areas are identified, moving away from the median to a system which reflects a mix of incidents numbers, police concerns, resident complaints, and councillor reports.
- Develop a strategy for dealing with anti-social driving outside of sociable hours.
- Improve the way that Sunderland City Council logs and reports upon residents' speeding complaints through its inclusion within the roll out of the councils new mobile reporting system and to frequently communicate this data to Northumbria Police.
- Work more closely with the police on the installation of 20mph zones to ensure these can be effectively enforced.
- Work with Northumbria Police to establish Community Speed Watch schemes in problem areas.
- Introduce a system for councillors to request urgent junction protections be prioritised in areas of their wards where poor visibility is hazardous.
- Prioritise the re-painting of faded junction lines over other road markings where the faded junction lines present a danger to drivers' safety.

Government cuts in financial support to most vulnerable

Councillor Noble duly seconded by Councillor Rowntree moved the following motion:-

“Our Council recognises the significant impact on residents, particularly children and young people, of the deplorable decision of the Government to remove the Uplift provision for those on Universal Credit that will push many struggling families further into poverty.

This Council will therefore:-

Support those at risk of financial difficulties by offering solutions such as actively participating in and the promotion of the Kickstart Scheme to local employers, inclusive of for those 16 - 24 on Universal Credit, to gain employment for a minimum of 6 months.

Utilise and enhance our current Welfare Rights Service for those most vulnerable, supporting local job clubs and training provision help up-skill improve confidence and knowledge, to help our residents become more financially resilient through these challenging times to counteract the negative impact.

Ask the Chief Finance Officer to write a further letter on behalf of the Council to the Chancellor and Prime Minister demanding the government re-introduce this payment as a matter of urgency to the many thousands of individuals, families and their children in Sunderland and the North-East that will be adversely affected by this austerity driven cut in financial support to the most vulnerable.”

It having been agreed during the course of the debate that the motion be altered to replace the reference to “Chief Finance Officer” with “Leader”, on the motion being put, it was declared to be carried and accordingly, it was:-

27. RESOLVED that:-

Our Council recognises the significant impact on residents, particularly children and young people, of the deplorable decision of the Government to remove the Uplift provision for those on Universal Credit that will push many struggling families further into poverty.

This Council will therefore:-

Support those at risk of financial difficulties by offering solutions such as actively participating in and the promotion of the Kickstart Scheme to local employers, inclusive of for those 16 - 24 on Universal Credit, to gain employment for a minimum of 6 months.

Utilise and enhance our current Welfare Rights Service for those most vulnerable, supporting local job clubs and training provision help up-skill improve confidence and knowledge, to help our residents become more financially resilient through these challenging times to counteract the negative impact.

Ask the Leader to write a further letter on behalf of the Council to the Chancellor and Prime Minister demanding the government re-introduce this payment as a matter of urgency to the many thousands of individuals, families and their children in Sunderland and the North-East that will be adversely affected by this austerity driven cut in financial support to the most vulnerable.

(Signed) H TRUEMAN
Mayor

