

Sunderland City Council

At a meeting of SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL held in the CIVIC CENTRE on WEDNESDAY, 28th MARCH, 2012 at 6.00 p.m.

Present: The Mayor (Councillor N Wright) in the Chair

Councillors	Allan	Gibson, E.	Morrissey	Trueman, D.
	Ball	Gibson, P.	Oliver	Trueman, H.
	Bell	Gofton	Porthouse	Tye
	Blackburn	Heron	Richardson, D.	Vardy
	Bonallie	Howe	Scaplehorn	Walker
	Charlton	Kay	Scott	Walton
	Copeland	Kelly	Shattock	Watson, P.
	Curran	Lauchlan	Smiles	Watson, S.
	Ellis	Macknight	Smith, D.	Williams
	Emerson	Martin, L.	Smith, P.	Wilson
	Essl	Martin, T.	Smith, D.	Wiper
	Fairs	McClennan	Snowdon	Wood
	Fletcher	Miller, F.	Speding	Wright, A.
	Forbes	Miller, G.	Stewart	Wright, T.
	Foster, S.	Miller, G.	Tate	
	Francis	Mordey	Thompson	

The notice convening the meeting was read.

Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 7 March, 2012 (copy circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest

The following Councillors declared personal interests in the under mentioned items of business for the reasons respectively indicated: -

Item 7(1) - Report of the Cabinet – Localism Act – Pay Accountability Provisions	Councillors Kay, Martin and McClennan Councillor Mordey	Members of the Tyne and Wear Local Government Pension Scheme Appointed Member on the Tyne and Wear Pension Fund
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Item 11 (i) – Notice of Motion – Extension of High Speed Rail to the North East

Councillor Wood

Member of Rail Future and the Tyne and Wear ITA

The following Councillor declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the under-mentioned item of business for the reason indicated and left the meeting during its consideration:-

Item 7(1) - Report of the Cabinet – Localism Act – Pay Accountability Provisions

Councillor Wright

Member of the Tyne and Wear Local Government Pensions Scheme

Announcements

(i) Councillor John Gallagher and Former Councillor Michael Clare

The Mayor paid tribute to Councillor John Gallagher, and former Councillor Michael Clare, who had both recently passed away. Members and Officers stood for a minute's silence as a mark of respect.

(ii) Retirement of Councillors Charlton, Fairs, Tom Foster, Wake and Walton

The Mayor advised that Councillors Charlton, Fairs, Tom Foster, Wake and Walton would be retiring from office and not standing at the next Local Government Elections. On behalf of the Council, she expressed gratitude for their past service and wished them well for the future.

(iii) TUC Unionlearn Quality Awards

At the invitation of the Mayor, the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor H. Trueman informed the meeting of the Council's success in receiving the prestigious Unionlearn Quality Award for the Delivery and Co-ordination of the Apprenticeship programme at the national 'Apprenticeships : Quality and Equality' conference in London on the 9th February, 2012.

The Mayor formally accepted the award on behalf of the Council.

(iv) XL Villages Awards

At the invitation of the Mayor, the Portfolio Holder for Children and Learning City, Councillor P Smith, informed the meeting of the Council's success in the recent XL Villages Awards and commended

all those staff involved and congratulated them on their commitment to youth work.

The Mayor formally accepted the award on behalf of the Council.

Reception of Petitions

RESOLVED that the under mentioned petition, submitted by the Councillor named, be received and referred for consideration in accordance with the Council's Petitions Scheme, to the Chief Officer indicated: -

Cllr. D. Richardson – Petition asking the City Council to provide a safe walking route to Dubmire Primary School – Executive Director of City Services.

Cllr. D. Richardson – Petition objecting to the Planning Application 11/03629/VAR, Houghton Quarry Site – Deputy Chief Executive.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Anderson, Errington, T. Foster, Maddison, Padgett, Rolph, Scanlan, Wake, Wakefield and Waller.

The Cabinet reported and recommended as follows: -

1. Localism Act 2011 – Pay Accountability Provisions

That they had given consideration to a recommendation from the Personnel Committee on a joint report of the Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development and the Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services which set out the pay implications of the Localism Act 2011 and the draft Pay Policy Statement.

The Cabinet recommended the Council to approve and adopt the draft Pay Policy Statement as set out for publication by 31 March, 2012.

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

Upon the Report of the Cabinet being put to the meeting, it was: -

RESOLVED the report of Cabinet be approved and adopted.

The Standards Committee reported and recommended as follows: -

1. Localism Act 2011 – The Amended Standards Regime

That they had given consideration to a report of the Head of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer which outlined the changes to the new Standards Regime and recommending proposals in respect of the recruitment of “Independent Persons”, as required by the Act in order for the Council to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place in readiness for the implementation date of the new legislative provisions that are expected to come into force on 1 July 2012.

The Standards Committee recommended that:-

- (i) there be two Independent Persons appointed;
- (ii) the appointments be for two years, but with provision to extend for a further three years without re-advertisement;
- (iii) a Panel comprising the Chair and three other members of the current Standards Committee be set up to shortlist and interview candidates and to make a recommendation to Council for appointment; and
- (iv) the Head of Law and Governance, in consultation with the Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services, be authorised to finalise the role description and set the initial allowances and expenses for the Independent Persons and to take all necessary steps to progress their recruitment.

Councillor Tate, duly seconded by Councillor Shattock, having moved the report, it was:-

RESOLVED that the report of the Standards Committee be approved and adopted.

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.

Action Taken on Petitions

The Council received the under mentioned reports on action taken in relation to petitions which had been presented to Council:

(i) Petition objecting to the Council using Thompson Park Compound as a refuse collection depot and welfare facility by Streetscene – Presented by Councillor C Shattock on 7th December 2011

The Executive Director of City Services had considered the petition which had been signed by 25 residents and had agreed to continue to operate the services from the Thompson Park Compound in accordance with restrictions on the activities carried out. Operations in the park would be monitored closely to ensure impacts were minimised.

The method of operation had been investigated by relevant Council Officers from Development Control, Planning and Environment Health Teams and found to be appropriate.

Streetscene operations needed to use facilities available to ensure it could provide the highest level of service with the resources available. The use of the compound at Thompson Park would allow services in the park and the local Street Scene area to be provided efficiently and in a more responsive way.

Council Officers had given firm assurances to act as a good neighbour to residents and liaise regularly with residents and if appropriate through the Friends of Thompson Park Steering Group.

Councillor Shattock and the lead petitioner had been informed accordingly.

(ii) Petition against the closure of Crowtree sauna and the lack of accessible replacement and urging the Council to replace the closed Crowtree sauna with an accessible facility; not leaving the many users having to face the prospect of a long, expensive journey to Washington or Hetton – Presented by Councillor P Dixon on 5th October 2011

The Executive Director of City Services had considered the petition which had been signed by 88 residents and determined that the petitioners' request to replace the Crowtree sauna should be declined.

In planning for the development of a new sauna, not only would this require a revenue budget, but significant capital expenditure would be required for its construction. External funders did not regard sauna provision as a priority in achieving an increase in participation in sport and physical activity. Therefore, any development would need to be financed by City Council budgets and, given the current economic climate, no Council funding was currently available to prioritise this.

The Executive Director did, however, had agreed to consider the development of a sauna and 'add value' to a facility, where the cost implications were not prohibitive.

The Ward Councillors and the lead petitioner had been notified of the Executive Director's decision.

Notice of Motion

(i) Notice of Motion – Extension of High Speed Rail to the North East

Councillor Wood, seconded by Councillor Oliver, moved the following motion in relation support for the extension of high-speed rail to the North-East:-

"This Council expresses its support for the extension of high-speed rail to the north-east and seeks a commitment from Her Majesty's Government to this effect."

Councillor Speding, seconded by Councillor H. Trueman, moved the following amendment:-

Delete the words "the north-east" on the first line and replace with the word "Sunderland"

The amendment was agreed and the new substantive motion having been put to the meeting, it was:-

RESOLVED that this Council expresses its support for the extension of high-speed rail to Sunderland and seeks a commitment from Her Majesty's Government to this effect.

(ii) Notice of Motion – Government Performance

The Leader, seconded by the Deputy Leader, moved the following motion in relation to Government performance:-

"This Council notes the appalling record of the Conservative led Coalition Government since its formation following the General election of 2010 and furthermore deplores the extensive list of broken promises. From reneging on their cast iron guarantee of a Referendum on Europe to breaking their pledge to Students not to increase university fees, this Conservative led Coalition has proven itself unworthy of the Nations trust and should apologise to those they have misled."

Upon being put to the vote the motion was carried with 47 Members voting in favour, viz:-

The Mayor (Councillor N. Wright) in the Chair

Councillors	Allan	P. Gibson	G. Miller	Tate
	Ball	Gofton	Mordey	Thompson
	Bell	Hall	Porthouse	D. Trueman
	Blackburn	Heron	D. Richardson	H. Trueman
	Bonallie	Kay	Scaplehorn	Tye
	Copeland	Heron	Scott	Walker
	Curran	Kelly	Shattock	P. Watson
	Emerson	Lauchlan	Smiles	S. Watson
	Essl	MackKnight	P. Smith	Williams
	Fletcher	T. Martin	Snowdon	Wilson
	S. Foster	McClennan	Speding	T.H. Wright
	E. Gibson	F. Miller	Stewart	

12 members voting against, viz:-

Councillors	Ellis	Forbes	Oliver	Wiper
	Fairs	Howe	Vardy	Wood
	Francis	L. Martin	Walton	A. Wright

And 1 Member abstaining from the vote, viz:-

Councillors D. Smith

Accordingly, it was:-

RESOLVED that this Council notes the appalling record of the Conservative led Coalition Government since its formation following the General election of 2010 and furthermore deplores the extensive list of broken promises. From reneging on their cast iron guarantee of a Referendum on Europe to breaking their pledge to Students not to increase university fees, this Conservative led Coalition has proven itself unworthy of the Nations trust and should apologise to those they have misled.

(iii) Notice of Motion – Proposed Closure of Gill Bridge House and Shackleton House

The Leader, seconded by Councillor Allan, moved a motion relating to the proposed closure of Gill Bridge House and Shackleton House.

Upon being put to the meeting, the motion was carried unanimously and it was: -

RESOLVED that the Sunderland City Council views with concern the proposal by “Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs” to close Gill Bridge House and Shackleton House which are situated in Sunderland city centre.

Recognising that the staff who work in these offices are universally opposed to this proposal and claim to contribute £500,000 per annum to the city centre economy, we believe that this will result in:

- i) An adverse economic impact on the City centre.
- ii) A poorer service for customers who use the facilities in these offices.

Therefore this Council resolves to:

- a) Support the campaign to oppose this proposal.
- b) Instruct the Chief Executive to write to David Guake MP, Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, expressing our objections.

Quarterly Report on Special Urgency Decisions

The Leader of the Council 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.

(Signed) N. WRIGHT,
Mayor.