

Minutes

Sunderland City Council

At a meeting of SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL, SUNDERLAND on WEDNESDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2023 at 4.00pm

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

Councillors	Blackburn	Graham-King	Miller, F	Snowdon, D
	Bond	Guy	Miller, G	Snowdon, D E
	Burnicle	Haque	Mordey	Speding
	Burrell	Hartnack	Morrissey	Stewart
	Butler	Haswell	Mullen	Thornton
	Chequer	Heron	Nicholson	Trueman, H
	Crosby	Herron	Peacock	Tye
	Curtis	Hodson	Potts	Usher
	Dixon	Hunter	Price	Vera
	Dodds	Johnston, K	Reed	Walker, M
	Donaghy	Johnston, S	Rowntree	Walker, P
	Dunn	Jones	Samuels	Walton
	Edgeworth	Laverick	Scanlan	Warne
	Fagan	Laws	Scott	Watson
	Fletcher	Leonard	Smith, A	Williams
	Foster	Mason-Gage	Smith, G	Wood
	Gibson	McDonough	Smith, P	

Also Present: -

Honorary Alderman Greenfield.

The notice convening the meeting was read.

Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Ayre, Chapman, O'Brien and Wilson together with Honorary Aldermen Forbes and Tate.

Minutes

26. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 13 September 2023 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest

The following Members declared interests as follows: -

Councillor Guy

Item 11 Report of the
Standards Committee

Councillor Guy wished to voluntarily recuse himself from the meeting for this item as he was currently going through the complaints process and did not feel it was appropriate to discuss and vote upon the procedure whilst doing so.

Announcements

i) Notice to Speak

The Mayor thanked those Members who had given notice of their wish to speak. She advised that where notice had been given, the Member would be invited to speak at the appropriate time. If any Member who hadn't given prior notice wished to speak at any point during the meeting, they should raise their hand to indicate, state their name and speak when invited to do so.

ii) Smart Places Award

Councillor Stewart informed the meeting that the Council had been awarded the Smart Places Award from Connected Britain, a highly acclaimed industry forum with over 7,500 attendees focusing on connectivity enabled economic and social good. This year saw the highest number of entries in the competition's history with organisations of all shapes and sizes vying for the coveted trophies.

Sunderland City Council were one of 5 organisations shortlisted for the prestigious 'Smart Places Award' and were delighted to win the category. The judges praised the Council and commented: 'with a focus on infrastructure, skills, digital inclusion and applications – Sunderland showed it had everything needed for a Smart City to really develop'

Cllr Stewart was proud to present the award confirming the fantastic achievement.

iii) White Ribbon Day

Councillor Chequer informed the meeting of White Ribbon Day (25th November 2023) advising that domestic violence and abusive relationships created problems around the world. White Ribbon UK were encouraging individuals and organisations to make consistent choices and actions so that we #ChangeTheStory for women and girls to live their lives free from the fear of violence. Ending men's violence against women starts when we #ChangeTheStory.

Wearing the White Ribbon was a symbol of remembrance for those who have been lost to domestic abuse, it showed our support and solidarity to ending men's violence towards women and girls and helps remind people who were perhaps reluctant to come forward that help and support was there if they need it.

Any violence was a concern and the White Ribbon Campaign's focus was on men's violence against women. Tackling, combatting and preventing violence against women was everybody's business.

Councillor Chequer informed that on White Ribbon Day (25th November 2023) and throughout the 16 Days of Activism (16 DoA) against Gender-Based Violence, Sunderland City Council, its partners and other organisations across the city would support the message to #ChangeTheStory Sunderland.

This White Ribbon Day, 25th November and beyond, Sunderland City Council would show allyship to women and girls by:

- Encouraging staff/councillors to wear a white ribbon.
- Ensuring the public and staff know where they can find help, if they need it.
- Hosting lunch & learn drop-in, with specialist domestic abuse services Thursday 23rd November 12.15 – 1.15pm – City Hall, Hydration Station
- Promoting a number of city-wide WRD activities & 16 DoA
- Highlighting the Council's refreshed Domestic Abuse Policy for staff (live on the hub)
- Promoting Domestic Abuse Champions & how to contact
- Bystander training course available to book - recognising and calling out attitudes and behaviours that are harmful
- 'Make a Pledge' board to be available in City Hall from Thursday 23rd November
- Lighting up of landmarks and buildings across the city (orange)
- Posting key messages throughout WRD and 16 DoA via Council's communications platforms
- Promotion of safeguarding week activities via SSCP

The City Council is a key member of the Sunderland Domestic Abuse and Violence against Women and Girls Executive Board, a partnership board to prevent and tackle domestic abuse and violence.

Outstanding Motions from the last ordinary meeting of the Council

(i) Notice of Motion – Starting to Solve the Sunderland Sewage Problem for Good

Councillor Bond, duly seconded by Councillor Gibson moved the following motion: -

“This Council remains concerned about the impact of dumping of raw sewage and other faecal matter into the River Wear and the North Sea off Roker, Seaburn and Hendon beaches can have on the health and wellbeing of bathers and on the reputation of Sunderland as a visitor destination.

Council therefore agrees to:

Ask the Cabinet to produce a report outlining what steps the Council could take to better protect the health and safety of anyone taking part in activities in the River Wear and/or the water off beaches in Sunderland; and report back to full Council. Ask the Cabinet to consider commissioning a full independent investigation and survey of the sewage system and outflows into the North Sea and River Wear in Sunderland; and report back to full Council”.

Councillor Hartnack, duly seconded by Councillor Peacock, moved the following amendment:-

To add to the end of the motion a bullet point which reads "Council also acknowledges as a matter of fact that Cllr Michael Hartnack has already agreed a meeting at Seaburn with Northumbrian Water Limited and residents - and that the Lib Dem Councillors for the ward have arranged no such meeting"

So that the amended motion would read: -

"This Council remains concerned about the impact of dumping of raw sewage and other faecal matter into the River Wear and the North Sea off Roker, Seaburn and Hendon beaches can have on the health and wellbeing of bathers and on the reputation of Sunderland as a visitor destination.

Council therefore agrees to:

Ask the Cabinet to produce a report outlining what steps the Council could take to better protect the health and safety of anyone taking part in activities in the River Wear and/or the water off beaches in Sunderland; and report back to full Council.

Ask the Cabinet to consider commissioning a full independent investigation and survey of the sewage system and outflows into the North Sea and River Wear in Sunderland; and report back to full Council.

- Council also acknowledges as a matter of fact that Cllr Michael Hartnack has already agreed a meeting at Seaburn with Northumbrian Water Limited and residents - and that the Lib Dem Councillors for the ward have arranged no such meeting"

Upon being put to the vote the Amended motion was defeated with 11 Members voting in favour:-

Councillors	Burnicle	Graham-King	McDonough	Reed
	Dixon	Hartnack	Mullen	Vera
	Dunn	Johnston, S	Peacock	

58 Members voting against: -

Councillors	Blackburn	Guy	Mordey	Stewart
	Bond	Haque	Morrissey	Thornton
	Burrell	Haswell	Nicholson	Trueman, D
	Butler	Heron	Potts	Trueman, H
	Chequer	Herron	Price	Tye
	Chisnall	Hodson	Rowntree	Usher
	Crosby	Hunter	Samuels	Walker, M
	Curtis	Johnston, K	Scanlan	Walker, P
	Dodds	Jones	Scott	Walton
	Donaghy	Laverick	Smith, A	Warne
	Edgeworth	Laws	Smith, G	Watson
	Fagan	Leonard	Smith, P	Williams

Fletcher
Foster
Gibson

Mason-Gage
Miller, F
Miller, G

Snowdon, D
Snowdon, D E
Speding

Wood

The Mayor then put the original motion to the meeting and accordingly it was: -

27. RESOLVED that:-

This Council remains concerned about the impact of dumping of raw sewage and other faecal matter into the River Wear and the North Sea off Roker, Seaburn and Hendon beaches can have on the health and wellbeing of bathers and on the reputation of Sunderland as a visitor destination.

Council therefore agrees to:

Ask the Cabinet to produce a report outlining what steps the Council could take to better protect the health and safety of anyone taking part in activities in the River Wear and/or the water off beaches in Sunderland; and report back to full Council. Ask the Cabinet to consider commissioning a full independent investigation and survey of the sewage system and outflows into the North Sea and River Wear in Sunderland; and report back to full Council.

(ii) Notice of Motion – In Recognition of Our Key Workers

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

“This council notes that:

- On the 23rd March 2020 the then Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, announced the first national lockdown during a televised address to the nation. It was the day the seriousness of the Covid Pandemic finally registered with the nation.
- The Prime Minister’s comments that “we will turn the tide of coronavirus in 12 weeks” proved wildly inaccurate with the number of deaths caused by the virus now approaching 200,000 people, more than 1270 sadly from Sunderland.
- The 3 lockdowns instigated by the Government in their attempts to limit the number of deaths during the pandemic were only possible through the courageous actions, and sadly in some cases sacrifice, of Key Workers in areas such as health and social care, education, food retail sector, key public services, local government and many more.

This council will take a proactive approach to ensure that these Key Workers within our communities are not forgotten, through:

- Promoting within Sunderland the notion of an annual “Key Worker Day” in recognition of the many residents of this City who risked themselves to ensure we could all remain safe during the pandemic.

- Discuss with our trade union colleagues on an appropriate date for the first annual Key Worker Day to be held no later than 31st March 2024 and actively promote this with our partners.
- Consulting via the Budget-setting process, on the introduction of an additional day of annual leave for Council staff from 2024/25 financial year in recognition of the service they have provided to our residents during the pandemic.”

Councillor Mullen, duly seconded by Councillor Reed, moved the following amendment:-

Delete "It was the day the seriousness of the Covid Pandemic finally registered with the nation" and replace with "It confirmed the seriousness of COVID-19 already widely acknowledged within the nation."

To delete the final bullet point and replace it with "Consulting via the Budget-setting process on the introduction of an additional day of annual leave for Council staff whose salaries do not exceed £50,000 per annum in recognition of the service they have provided to our residents during the pandemic."

To add a final bullet point which reads: "To take seriously the higher than national average absence rate of Council staff and to be prepared to act upon the (forthcoming) recommendations of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee's investigation into this matter."

So that the amended motion would read: -

“This council notes that:

- On the 23rd March 2020 the then Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, announced the first national lockdown during a televised address to the nation. It confirmed the seriousness of Covid-19 already widely acknowledged within the nation.
- The Prime Minister’s comments that “we will turn the tide of coronavirus in 12 weeks” proved wildly inaccurate with the number of deaths caused by the virus now approaching 200,000 people, more than 1270 sadly from Sunderland.
- The 3 lockdowns instigated by the Government in their attempts to limit the number of deaths during the pandemic were only possible through the courageous actions, and sadly in some cases sacrifice, of Key Workers in areas such as health and social care, education, food retail sector, key public services, local government and many more.
- This council will take a proactive approach to ensure that these Key Workers within our communities are not forgotten, through:
- Promoting within Sunderland the notion of an annual “Key Worker Day” in recognition of the many residents of this City who risked themselves to ensure we could all remain safe during the pandemic

- Discuss with our trade union colleagues on an appropriate date for the first annual Key Worker Day to be held no later than 31st March 2024 and actively promote this with our partners.
- Consulting via the Budget-setting process, on the introduction of an additional day of annual leave for Council staff whose salaries do not exceed £50,000 per annum in recognition of the service they have provided to our residents during the pandemic.
- To take seriously the higher than average absence rate of Council staff and to be prepared to act upon the (forthcoming) recommendations of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee's investigation into this matter."

Upon being put to the vote the Amended motion was defeated with 11 Members voting in favour:-

Councillors	Burnicle Dixon Dunn	Graham-King Hartnack Johnston, S	McDonough Mullen Peacock	Reed Vera
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47 Members voting against: -

Councillors	Blackburn Burrell Butler Chequer Chisnall Curtis Dodds Donaghy Fletcher Foster Guy Haque	Heron Herron Hunter Johnston, K Jones Laverick Laws Leonard Mason-Gage Miller, F Miller, G Mordey	Nicholson Price Rowntree Samuels Scanlan Scott Smith, A Smith, G Smith, P Snowdon, D Snowdon, D E Speding	Stewart Thornton Trueman, D Trueman, H Tye Usher Walker, M Walker, P Warne Watson Williams
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And 11 Members abstaining: -

Councillors	Bond Crosby Edgeworth	Fagan Gibson Haswell	Hodson Morrissey Potts	Walton Wood
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The Mayor then put the original motion to the meeting and accordingly it was: -

28. RESOLVED that:-

This council notes that:

- On the 23rd March 2020 the then Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, announced the first national lockdown during a televised address to the nation. It was the day the seriousness of the Covid Pandemic finally registered with the nation.
- The Prime Minister's comments that "we will turn the tide of coronavirus in 12 weeks" proved wildly inaccurate with the number of deaths caused by the virus now approaching 200,000 people, more than 1270 sadly from Sunderland.
- The 3 lockdowns instigated by the Government in their attempts to limit the number of deaths during the pandemic were only possible through the courageous actions, and sadly in some cases sacrifice, of Key Workers in areas such as health and social care, education, food retail sector, key public services, local government and many more.

This council will take a proactive approach to ensure that these Key Workers within our communities are not forgotten, through:

- Promoting within Sunderland the notion of an annual "Key Worker Day" in recognition of the many residents of this City who risked themselves to ensure we could all remain safe during the pandemic.
- Discuss with our trade union colleagues on an appropriate date for the first annual Key Worker Day to be held no later than 31st March 2024 and actively promote this with our partners.
- Consulting via the Budget-setting process, on the introduction of an additional day of annual leave for Council staff from 2024/25 financial year in recognition of the service they have provided to our residents during the pandemic.

Reception of Petitions

- 29. 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 Burnicle – Petition calling on Stagecoach North East to reinstate the number 3 bus service which has recently been cancelled in the Lakeside Village Area.

Councillor Hartnack – Petition requesting the Council urgently review the safety at the junction Cairns Road/Penrith Road/Newcastle Road with a view to undertaking urgent work to make the junction safe and reduce traffic flows to and from Newcastle Road.

Councillor Hartnack – Petition from residents requesting the Council to review the traffic light sequences at the Blue Bell junction, especially for traffic turning right from Dene Lane onto Station Road, due to numerous near misses, and dangerous rat runs being created in the area. They believe the current signal sequence is causing danger, frustration and unnecessary additional pollution.

Councillor Hartnack – Petition from residents objecting to the granting of a late licence at the premises of 139 Newcastle Road on the grounds of unsocial behaviour, excessive noise and litter

Councillor Edgeworth – Petition from residents strongly opposed to the proposed Demolition and Redevelopment of the Former Thorney Close Inn.

Councillor Edgeworth – Petition calling on the Council to install double yellow lines on the carriageway of Sevenoaks Drive between the junction with Chester Road (A183) and the entrance to the Hastings Hill pub car park.

Councillor Chequer – Petition from residents objecting to the granting of a late licence at the premises of 139 Newcastle Road on the grounds of unsocial behaviour, excessive noise and litter.

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. Feed and Food Law Service Plan 2023-2026

That at its meeting held on 7 September 2023, Cabinet gave consideration to a report of the Executive Director of City Development (copy attached) on the Feed and Food Law Service Plan 2023-2026 to be used by the Authority to undertake all relevant Feed and Food Safety Enforcement across the city and had been formulated to comply with the current recommendations of the Food Standards Agency Framework Agreement.

They also referred the matter to the Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee for advice and consideration. The Committee commended the hard work of the staff during the year and supported the Cabinet's recommendation to submit the Feed and Food Law Service Plan for 2023/2026 to Council for final approval.

Cabinet also authorised the Executive Director of City Development, in consultation with the Clean, Green City Portfolio Holder, to make any amendments to the plan which were considered appropriate in the light of comments from the Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee, and prior to the plan being referred to the Council for approval.

Accordingly the Cabinet recommended that Council: -

- (i) approve the Feed and Food Law Service Plan 2023-2026; and
- (ii) delegate authority to the Executive Director of City Development, in consultation with the Clean, Green City Portfolio Holder, to update the Plan during its three year term, on the basis referred to in paragraph 4.6 of the Cabinet report.

2. Budget Planning Framework and Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/2025 – 2027/2028

That at its meeting held on 12 October 2023, Cabinet gave consideration to a report of the Director of Finance which:

- Identified the key factors influencing the development of the Council's financial plans into the medium term and set out the budget planning framework for the Council for 2024/2025;
- Set out the headlines and context for the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2024/2025 to 2027/2028; and
- Set out the consultation / communication strategy for the budget 2024/2025.
- Sought a recommendation to Council for the approval of the updated Capital Strategy.

In accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Council, approval is required for changes to the Council Capital Strategy and an extract from the report on the Capital Strategy Update – 2023/2024 was attached.

The report was also considered by the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee on 12 October 2023. The comments of the Committee were considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 9 November 2023.

The comments of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee and the Cabinet's recommendations to Council were set out in a supplementary report and read as follows:-

The Cabinet noted the following comments of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee: -

The Scrutiny Coordinating Committee acknowledged the information contained in the report including the Medium Term Financial Plan and budget planning framework.

The Committee recommended that serious consideration was once again given to limiting any rises in council tax given the current financial climate and the impact this would have on residents of the city.

The Committee also acknowledged the work undertaken around budget consultation and updating the Capital Strategy. The Committee remained committed to budget monitoring through further updates to the Committee.

The Committee had no further comment at this time.

Accordingly, the Cabinet recommended to Council to approve the Council's Capital Strategy.

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

Accordingly, it was: -

30. RESOLVED that the report and supplementary report of the Cabinet be approved and adopted.

Report of the Standards Committee

The Standards Committee reported and recommended as follows: -

1. Review of Members' Code of Conduct

That at its meeting on 12 September 2023, the Committee gave consideration to a report of the Assistant Director of Law and Governance (Appendix 1), which invited Members to review the current Code of Conduct and to determine whether they wished to propose any amendments. (NB copies of the appendices referred to in the report can viewed via the following link [Meetings and Events \(sunderland.gov.uk\)](https://www.sunderland.gov.uk))

The Committee resolved that: -

- i.) it be recommended that Council amend the Code of Conduct as shown in Appendix 3 to the report subject to additional amendments to provide for: -
 - A footnote in relation to the second introductory paragraph indicating examples of when the code may apply,
 - a specific requirement in paragraph 2 that 'You must comply with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010'
- ii.) the current descriptions of the Seven Principles of Public Life be retained, and the Code be amended accordingly;
- iii.) no changes be made to the Code in relation to the provisions for registration and declaration of interests.

A copy of the tracked version of the updated Code showing the amendments recommended to Council by the Standards Committee was attached at Appendix 2 and for ease of reference, a clean copy of the proposed Code was attached at Appendix 3.

Accordingly, the Standards Committee recommended to Council that the amended Code of Conduct be approved.

Councillor Dodds, duly seconded by Councillor Stewart moved the report of the Standards Committee.

Councillor Hodson, duly seconded by Councillor Edgeworth moved that the report be referred back to the Standards Committee for review.

Upon being put to vote the Motion was defeated with 10 members voting in favour: -

Councillors	Bond	Fagan	Hodson	Wood
	Crosby	Gibson	Morrissey	
	Edgeworth	Haswell	Walton	

And 57 members voting against: -

Councillors	Blackburn	Hartnack	Mullen	Stewart
	Burnicle	Heron	Nicholson	Thornton
	Burrell	Herron	Peacock	Trueman, D
	Butler	Hunter	Price	Trueman, H
	Chequer	Johnston, K	Reed	Tye
	Chisnall	Johnston, S	Rowntree	Usher
	Curtis	Jones	Samuels	Vera
	Dixon	Laverick	Scanlan	Walker, M
	Dodds	Laws	Scott	Walker, P
	Donaghy	Leonard	Smith, A	Warne
	Dunn	Mason-Gage	Smith, G	Watson
	Fletcher	McDonough	Smith, P	Williams
	Foster	Miller, F	Snowdon, D	
	Graham-King	Miller, G	Snowdon, D E	
	Haque	Mordey	Speding	

The original motion to accept the report of the Standards Committee was then put to the vote, with:-

55 members voting for: -

Councillors	Blackburn	Hartnack	Mordey	Speding
	Burnicle	Heron	Reed	Stewart
	Burrell	Herron	Mullen	Thornton
	Butler	Hunter	Nicholson	Trueman, D
	Chequer	Johnston, K	Peacock	Trueman, H
	Chisnall	Johnston, S	Price	Tye
	Curtis	Jones	Rowntree	Usher
	Dixon	Laverick	Samuels	Vera
	Dodds	Laws	Scanlan	Walker, M
	Donaghy	Leonard	Scott	Walker, P
	Fletcher	Mason-Gage	Smith, A	Warne
	Foster	McDonough	Smith, P	Watson
	Graham-King	Miller, F	Snowdon, D	Williams
	Haque	Miller, G	Snowdon, D E	

And 10 members voting against: -

Councillors	Bond	Fagan	Hodson	Wood
	Crosby	Gibson	Morrissey	

Edgeworth

Haswell

Walton

Accordingly, it was: -

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

Proposal for Variation of Order of Business

It was moved by Councillor Mullen and duly seconded by Councillor Reed, that the order of business of the meeting be varied pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13 to allow agenda item 14.2 Notice of Motion – Amendment to Sunderland City Council Constitution (Part 2 Article 10 Area Committees) to be heard at this juncture: -

Upon being put to vote the Motion was defeated with 21 Members voting for: -

Councillors	Bond	Gibson	Morrissey	Vera
	Burnicle	Graham-King	Mullen	Walton
	Crosby	Hartnack	O'Brien	Wood
	Dixon	Haswell	Peacock	
	Dunn	Hodson	Potts	
	Edgeworth	Johnston, S	Reed	

And 48 members voting against: -

Councillors	Blackburn	Heron	Nicholson	Stewart
	Burrell	Herron	Price	Thornton
	Butler	Hunter	Rowntree	Trueman, D
	Chequer	Johnston, K	Samuels	Trueman, H
	Chisnall	Jones	Scanlan	Tye
	Curtis	Laverick	Scott	Usher
	Dodds	Laws	Smith, A	Walker, M
	Donaghy	Leonard	Smith, G	Walker, P
	Fletcher	Mason-Gage	Smith, P	Warne
	Foster	Miller, F	Snowdon, D	Watson
	Guy	Miller, G	Snowdon, D E	Williams
	Haque	Mordey	Speding	Wood

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.

1. Petition – Request that the Developer of the Chestergate Housing Scheme use an alternative access for construction traffic rather than Pickering Road

A petition signed by nine residents, was presented to Council on 22 March 2023 by former Councillor Pam Mann and referred to the Executive Director of City Development.

The residents claim to have suffered from noise, mud and dust whilst the development has been ongoing. The petition requested that the Council intervene with the developers and instruct them to use an alternative entrance.

Following receipt of the petition, the issues were investigated by officers and with respect to the mud and dust concerns raised in the petition, the developer states that a road sweeper was in operation when earth moving operations were ongoing. Furthermore, the road sweeper visits once a week and will also be requested when site activities and the weather deem it necessary. Repairs to the carriageway were completed during February 2023 and at a follow up highway inspection in May 2023 Council officers considered the road to be safe and serviceable. The amount of noise generated by construction traffic should have greatly reduced now that the carriageway has been repaired and the number/type of construction vehicles has reduced.

The Council have no legal powers to insist that Gentoo change the current route of construction traffic but it will request that Gentoo submit a request to alter the planning conditions and Construction Management Plan now that the access road is complete. The Council will also consider making an alternative access route a planning condition for any future phases of development.

2. Petition to Reduce or Remove Charges for Memorial Benches in Sunderland

A petition signed by 267 residents was presented to Council on 13 September 2023 by Councillor Sam Johnston requesting that charges for memorial benches be reduced or removed.

Council officers have considered the petition and advised as follows.

The Council understands that these benches hold significant sentimental value for many and have carefully considered the quality of the product offered to ensure a consistently high quality for the lifetime of the sponsorship term. The goal is to ensure the long-term sustainability of the memorial bench programme, allowing the Council to continue to provide a meaningful and lasting tribute to loved ones. Purchase costs of the premium bench, installation costs and maintenance expenses have contributed to the overall cost of each bench as the aims are to ensure the continued delivery of quality memorialisation products and improvement of public areas.

Taking into account all the associated costs in the purchase, installation and maintenance of these benches, any overage is minimal and can contribute to the administration of the scheme.

Therefore, any reduction to these charges could result in the Council subsidising the provision of this service. To remove the charges altogether would mean that this would become a fully subsidised service and would inevitably create an unprecedented demand that the Council may not be able to accommodate in terms of cost, locations, time to install and maintain in a safe usable state.

It should be noted that these benches are not benches that the Council would provide anyway, in these locations, as part of normal highway assets.

The Council understands that bench fees may be challenging to some, and is actively exploring ways to mitigate the impact of such by introducing a range of alternative memorial options to enable bereaved families to memorialise loved ones in a range of products and prices.

The Council is committed to finding solutions to residents' concerns in providing the best service at the best costs that cater for every budget.

Councillor Johnston has been advised of the response.

32. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

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.

33. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies

The Assistant Director of Law and Governance submitted a report together with a supplementary report (copy tabled) which informed Council of changes required to the allocation of Committee seats between political groups as a result of the changes to the political balance of the Council together with additional requested changes as set out in the table below.

Committee	Member(s) to be Removed	Member(s) to be Appointed
Human Resources Committee	Vacancy	Labour Group Nomination to be notified.
Health and Wellbeing Board	Cllr Bond	Cllr Vera
Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee	Cllr Curtis	Ungrouped Nomination to be notified
Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee	Vacancy	Labour Group Nomination to be notified.
Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee	Vacancy Cllr Guy	Labour Group Nomination to be notified. Cllr Curtis
Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee	Cllr Donaghy Cllr Reed	Labour Group Nomination to be notified. Cllr S Johnston
Standards Committee	Cllr O'Brien	Ungrouped Nomination to be notified.
Planning and Highways Committee	Cllr Ali	Labour Group Nomination
Licensing and Regulatory Committee	Cllr Curtis	Ungrouped Nomination to be notified.

Education (Appointment of Governors) Panel	Cllr G Smith	Cllr Gibson
Homelessness Appeals Panel	Cllr Curtis	Cllr Fagan
Appeals Committee	Cllr Curtis	Labour Group Nomination to be notified.
Port Board	Cllr G Smith	Cllr Edgeworth
East Sunderland LMAPS	Cllr A Wood	Cllr Scanlan
Outside Bodies		
Health Scrutiny Joint Committee between South Tyneside and Sunderland Local Authorities	Cllr Walton	Cllr Burnicle
North East and North Cumbria ICS and North of Tyne and Gateshead and Durham, South Tyneside and Sunderland Area Integrated Care Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Cllr Bond	Cllr Ayre
Sunderland Care and Support Limited	Cllr Thornton	Cllr A Smith
Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority	Cllr G Smith	Cllr Mullen

The Leader of the Council confirmed that details of the Labour Group Nominations appointing to their vacancies, would be brought to the January 2024 meeting.

Councillor Donaghy informed the meeting that he had agreed to fill the vacancy on the Standards Committee, referred to as Ungrouped Nomination.

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

Councillor Edgeworth, duly seconded by Councillor Fagan proposed an alternative to recommendation (xxii) of the supplementary report, and requested Councillor Gibson remain as Vice-Chair of the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee rather than be replaced by Councillor McDonough.

Recommendation (xxii) as set out in the supplementary report was put to the vote with:-

56 members voting for: -

Councillors	Blackburn	Graham-King	Miller, G	Snowdon, D
	Burnicle	Haque	Mordey	Snowdon, D E
	Burrell	Hartnack	Mullen	Speding
	Butler	Heron	Nicholson	Stewart
	Chequer	Herron	Peacock	Trueman, D
	Chisnall	Hunter	Price	Trueman, H
	Curtis	Johnston, K	Reed	Tye

Dixon	Johnston, S	Rowntree	Usher
Dodds	Jones	Samuels	Vera
Donaghy	Laverick	Scanlan	Walker, M
Dunn	Laws	Scott	Walker, P
Fletcher	Leonard	Smith, A	Warne
Foster	McDonough	Smith, G	Watson
Guy	Miller, F	Smith, P	Williams

10 members voting against: -

Councillors	Bond	Fagan	Hodson	Wood
	Crosby	Gibson	Morrissey	
	Edgeworth	Haswell	Walton	

And 2 Members abstaining:-

Councillors	Mason-Gage	Thornton
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- 34. RESOLVED** that recommendation (xxii) of the supplementary report be agreed for the appointment of Councillor McDonough as Vice-Chair of the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee in place of Councillor Gibson.

Having been moved, the remaining recommendations on the report and supplementary report were unanimously agreed and it was : -

- 35. RESOLVED that approval be given to: -**

- (i) the appointment of a Labour Group Member to the Human Resources Committee;
- (ii) the appointment of Councillor Vera to the Health and Wellbeing Board in place of Councillor Bond;
- (iii) the appointment of an ungrouped Member to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee in place of Councillor Curtis;
- (iv) the appointment of a Labour Group Member to the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee;
- (v) the appointment of Councillor Curtis to the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee in place of Councillor Guy and the appointment of a Labour Group Member to the vacant position on the Committee;
- (vi) the appointment of Councillor S Johnston in place of Councillor Reed and the appointment of a Labour Group Member to the Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee in place of Councillor Donaghy;
- (vii) the appointment of Councillor Donaghy to the Standards Committee in place of Councillor O'Brien;

- (viii) the appointment of a Labour Group Member to the Planning and Highways Committee in place of Councillor Ali;
- (ix) the appointment of an ungrouped Member to the Licensing and Regulatory Committee in place of Councillor Curtis;
- (x) the appointment of Councillor Gibson to the Education (Appointment of Governors) Panel in place of Councillor G Smith;
- (xi) the appointment of Councillor Fagan to the Homelessness Appeals Panel in place of Councillor Curtis;
- (xii) the appointment of a Labour Group Member to the Appeals Committee in place of Councillor Curtis;
- (xiii) the appointment of Councillor Edgeworth to the Port Board in place of Councillor G Smith;
- (xiv) the appointment of Councillor Scanlan to the East Sunderland LMAPS in place of Councillor Wood;
- (xv) the appointment of Councillor Burnicle to the Health Scrutiny Joint Committee between South Tyneside and Sunderland Local Authorities in place of Councillor Walton;
- (xvi) the appointment of Councillor Ayre to the North East and North Cumbria ICS and North of Tyne and Gateshead and Durham, South Tyneside and Sunderland Area Integrated Care Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee in place of Councillor Bond;
- (xvii) the appointment of Councillor A Smith to Sunderland Care and Support Limited in place of Councillor Thornton;
- (xviii) the appointment of Councillor Mullen to the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority in place of Councillor G Smith;
- (xix) the appointment of Councillor Samuels as Chair of the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee in place of Councillor Guy;
- (xx) the appointment of Councillor Foster as Vice-Chair of Planning and Highways Committee in place of Councillor Ali; and
- (xxi) the appointment of Councillor Dixon as Vice-Chair of East Area Committee in place of Councillor Hodson; and

Motions on Notice

(i) Notice of Motion – Credit Their Service

Councillor Hunter, duly seconded by Councillor M Herron, moved the following motion: -

“This Council notes the Royal British Legion "Credit their Service" campaign, demanding an end to the treatment of military compensation as income by welfare benefit means tests, which results in many veterans and their families missing out on thousands of pounds a year.

Sunderland council therefore agrees:

- To use what discretionary powers it has available to ensure that military compensation is never treated as income in means tests for all locally administered benefits.
- Where such discretion is not available, formally request the government:
 - (a) amend benefit regulations to ensure that military compensation is not considered income by means tests; and,
 - (b) Compensate financially those councils that use their discretion to support veterans when applying for benefits.”

Upon being moved the motion was declared to be carried unanimously and accordingly it was: -

36. RESOLVED that: -

This Council notes the Royal British Legion "Credit their Service" campaign, demanding an end to the treatment of military compensation as income by welfare benefit means tests, which results in many veterans and their families missing out on thousands of pounds a year.

Sunderland council therefore agrees:

- To use what discretionary powers it has available to ensure that military compensation is never treated as income in means tests for all locally administered benefits.
- Where such discretion is not available, formally request the government:
 - (c) amend benefit regulations to ensure that military compensation is not considered income by means tests; and,
Compensate financially those councils that use their discretion to support veterans when applying for benefits

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

**(Signed) D TRUEMAN
Mayor**

