

Minutes

Sunderland City Council

At a meeting of SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL held in the CIVIC CENTRE on
WEDNESDAY 25 MARCH 2020 at 4.00pm

Present: The Mayor (Councillor David Snowdon) in the Chair

Councillors	Atkinson	Hodson	Miller, G	Taylor
	Chequer	Jenkins	Mordey	Walker, P
	Doyle	Johnston	Mullen	Waller
	Fagan	Kelly	Oliver	Williams
	Foster	McDonough	Snowdon, D E	Wilson, A
	Haswell	Miller, F	Stewart	Wood, A

The notice convening the meeting was read.

The Mayor advised that in light of the current situation with the Covid-19 outbreak, members of the public and Councillors who had submitted questions had been informed that the questions would be held on file and written responses provided when resources permitted and asked the Council to endorse this decision.

Prior to the commencement of business, the Mayor invited the Leader of the Council, Councillor G Miller, to address the meeting in respect of the unprecedented situation faced in relation to Covid-19. The Leader thanked Council staff for their part in enabling the Council to respond to the situation and also thanked the Council's partners, especially the NHS and the voluntary and community sector organisations. He advised that the Council's emergency plans had been implemented to keep services operating and stated that safeguarding employees' health was the foremost priority. It was predicted that the infection levels would peak in the UK in the next two to three weeks and the Council had to be ready to keep critical services operating. Senior Council Officers were responding quickly to the guidance and legislative changes which were occurring daily. He had no doubt that the changes to the delegation scheme due to be considered at this meeting would help the Council to save residents from difficulty, suffering and hardship.

Minutes

54. RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 4 March 2020 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest

The following Councillors declared interests as follows: -

Councillor P. Walker	Item 14 – Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies	Employee of Gentoo
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Announcements

It was with great sadness that the Mayor informed Council of the death of former Councillor, Mayor and Freeman of the City John Mawston.

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

Councillor Atkinson advised the Council of the 'Clap for our Carers' minute's applause in support of NHS and other key workers that would be taking place on Thursday 26 March 2020 at 8pm and asked the Mayor to consider the Council undertaking a minute's applause at this meeting. The Mayor agreed to this and invited Council to join him in a minute's applause.

Citywide approach to carbon reduction

The Mayor advised that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda and the update would be provided at a future meeting of the Council.

Reception of Petitions

The Mayor advised that there would be no receipt of petitions at this meeting.

Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Armstrong, Bewick, Blackburn, Blackett, Butler, Crosby, Cunningham, Davison, D. Dixon, M. Dixon, Essl, Farthing, Fletcher, Francis, E. Gibson, P. Gibson, Greener, Heron, Howe, Hunt, Jackson, Lauchlan, Lawson, Leadbitter, D. MacKnight, N. MacKnight, Mann, Marshall, McClennan, McKeith, O'Brien, Potts, Rowntree, Samuels, Scanlan, Scaplehorn, G. Smith, P. Smith, Speding, Thornton, D. Trueman, H. Trueman, Turner, Tye, G. Walker, Watson, D. Wilson, K. Wood and P. Wood together with Aldermen Arnott, Forbes, Greenfield and Tate.

Written Questions by Members of the Public under Rule 9

It was agreed that no questions from the public would be asked at this meeting and the questions would be held on file and written responses would be provided when resources permitted, if the question was still relevant.

Report of the Cabinet

The Cabinet reported and recommended as follows: -

1. Sunderland City Council Annual Report 2019

That the Cabinet had given consideration to a report of the Chief Executive (copy circulated) on the Sunderland City Council Annual Report for 2019

which summarised some of the many developments and achievements that had occurred during the 2019 calendar year.

Accordingly, the Cabinet recommended Council to approve the report.

2. Update to Constitution – Changes to Committee Structure and Officer Delegation Scheme

That at its meeting held on 24 March 2020 Cabinet gave consideration to a report of the Assistant Director of Law and Governance (copy circulated) to: -

- (a) Present proposals to amend the Council's committee, sub-committee and area board structure in respect of planning, licensing, regulatory and area functions and to make associated changes to the Constitution; and
- (b) To update the functions delegated to the Chief Executive.

Further to the information contained in the report the Cabinet was advised that the report recommended that Council be asked to implement the changes to committee structures from Annual Council. In view of the current uncertainty over whether or not local authorities would be required to hold an annual meeting this year, a slight amendment to the recommendation was agreed, namely that the committee and board changes come into effect from 23.59 hours on 20 May 2020, as detailed in the supplementary report to Council.

Accordingly, the Cabinet recommended the Council to: -

- (i) Agree to implement the changes to the Council's committee, sub-committee and area board structure in respect of planning, highways, licensing, regulatory and area functions, as set out in the report, to come into effect from 23.59 hours on 20 May 2020;
- (ii) Update the functions delegated to the Chief Executive and approve the deputising arrangements as set out in the report, with immediate effect;
- (iii) Approve the temporary delegation of functions set out in the supplementary report with immediate effect; and
- (iv) Authorise the Assistant Director of Law and Governance to make associated amendments to the Constitution set out in the report, together with such other amendments as may be required to ensure consistency between the updated provisions and the remainder of the Constitution.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor G Miller, duly seconded by the Deputy Leader, Councillor Mordey, moved the report of the Cabinet. The Leader of the Council moved an additional recommendation that the temporary delegations of non-executive functions referred to within the supplementary report would be subject to renewal by Council, at the next opportunity it had to meet.

The recommendation was put to the meeting and with all Members present being in agreement it was: -

55. RESOLVED that the report of the Cabinet, including the additional recommendation moved by the Leader of the Council, be approved and adopted.

Report of the Human Resources Committee

The Human Resources Committee reported and recommended as follows: -

1. Pay Policy Statement 2020-2021

That at its meeting on 23 March 2020, the Human Resources Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of People, Communications and Partnerships (copy circulated) which sought approval for publication, subject to Council approval on 25 March 2020, of the Pay Policy Statement for 2020-21.

Accordingly, the Human Resources Committee having considered the information set out in the report, recommended Council to approve the Pay Policy Statement for 2020-21 and its publication on the Council website by 31 March 2020.

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

The recommendation was put to the meeting and with all Members present being in agreement it was: -

56. RESOLVED that the report of the Human Resources Committee be approved and adopted.

Written Questions under Rule 10.2

It was agreed that there would be no questions asked by Members at the meeting and that written responses would be provided when resources permitted.

Action 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 requesting the provision of a barrier rail on Houghton Road

At the meeting of the Council on 18 September 2019 a petition was presented by Councillor Cunningham containing 38 signatures from residents which asked the Council to reinstall a barrier rail outside News and Booze on A182 Houghton Road, opposite Hetton Cemetery. The residents stated that the absence of a barrier caused a safety risk to drivers and pedestrians and wished to have the barrier reinstalled at the earliest opportunity.

After consideration by Council Officers, the outcome of the petition was as follows: -

The guard rail was removed following collision damage and had not been replaced.

Officers had, for many years, assessed the need to replace damaged street furniture in line with the Department for Transport's national guidance on street decluttering. In addition, officers needed to prioritise allocated budgets to those areas of maintenance with provided the greatest asset and community benefit.

The original guard rail was installed when access to the shop was located at the side of the building and at that time, there would have been a benefit in its installation. The change to the shop's access arrangements now made any guard rail redundant and not conducive to pedestrian safety.

Based on these reasons, the petitioners' request to reinstall the barrier rail was declined.

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

(ii) Petition from residents calling on the Council to place cameras along Sea Road to monitor any anti-social behaviour and safety of residents and traders

At the meeting of Council of 20 November 2019, a petition was presented by Councillor G. Miller from residents calling on the Council to place cameras along Sea Road to monitor any anti-social behaviour and safety of residents and traders.

After consideration by Council Officers, the outcome of the petition was as follows: -

It was identified that the Sea Road Traders Association had installed three external CCTV cameras and a transmitter onto the side of Calvert's Euronics Store (60 Sea Road), with a receiver and recording equipment within Gray's Framing (101 Sea Road). The Traders Association appointed a contractor to install the equipment at a cost of nearly £1,400. The Council would like to support this project and as such, discussions had taken place with the Traders representative and Vivienne Metcalfe (Area Arrangements Lead) with a view to increasing the number of cameras in the area and investigating whether the traders would consider entering into a Service Level Agreement with the Council's City Alarm and Emergency Centre. The control room would then monitor these cameras both on behalf of the traders and the wider community and provide some levels of reassurance that CCTV was operational in the area and was being monitored.

At this point in time there were also two fully functioning cameras installed on lighting columns on Sea Road, one being at the junction of Sea

Road/Fulwell Road and one near the School/Public House. These were North Sunderland Area Committee environmental cameras which the Council deployed at their request and were currently monitoring until a full time dedicated North Environment Officer was appointed. However, these cameras were not permanent and could be moved at the request of the Area Committee as and when other crime/anti-social behaviour or fly tipping issues arose in the North area.

The North Sunderland Area Place Board had purchased three fully functional cameras and the Local Multi Agency Partnership (LMAPS North Area) also had another four cameras at their disposal, both of which the Council deployed and monitored on their behalf.

Northumbria Police were aware that there was a spike in the number of burglaries before Christmas and they had informed the Council that they had increased patrols in the area and Council CCTV operatives were proactively monitoring the two cameras mentioned above.

If problems arose again in the future, the local Members could approach and request a temporary deployment of cameras from either the North Sunderland Area Place Board or the LMAPS group.

Councillor G Miller and the Lead Petitioner had been advised of the outcome and it was hoped that this information was of assistance and would provide local residents and traders some level of reassurance that both the Council and Northumbria Police had taken on board local concerns and were responding accordingly.

(iii) Petition to include Westmoor Road and Midmoor Road (Pallion) in the Council Priority Gritting Routes or to make alternative gritting arrangements

At the meeting of the Council on 29 January 2020, a petition was presented by Councillor Haswell containing 71 signatures from residents asking the Council to include Westmoor Road and Midmoor Road in the council priority gritting routes or make alternative gritting arrangements.

After consideration by Council Officers the outcome of the petition was to include Westmoor Road and Midmoor Road, Pallion, to the pre-determined secondary gritting routes.

The local ward councillors, as lead petitioners, had been advised of the outcome.

57. RESOLVED the report detailing action on petitions be noted.

Notices of Motion

The Mayor advised the Council that the motions which had been included on the agenda had been withdrawn.

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, Councillor G Miller, duly seconded by the Deputy Leader, Councillor Mordey, moved the report and accordingly, it was: -

58. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Appointments to Committees

The Assistant Director of Law and Governance submitted a report which provided an update on changes to Gentoo's board arrangements designed to strengthen the Group's governance and requested the Council to consider appointments to the Board of Together for Children and the Sunderland Empire Theatre Trust and to note proposed changes to the Boards of the Siglion Group.

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

59. RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The change to Gentoo's board arrangements designed to strengthen the Group's governance arrangements be noted;
- (ii) The appointment of Catherine Hearn and Steven Mason as non-executive directors of TfC with effect from 1 April 2020 for a term of three years, subject to satisfactory DBS checks, be approved;
- (iii) The proposed changes to the Boards of the Siglion Group be noted and approved; and
- (iv) Paul Wilson, the Assistant Director of Finance of the Council be appointed to the Sunderland Empire Theatre Trust for a three year term of office ending 28 March 2023.

(Signed) D SNOWDON,
Mayor.

