

CIVIC CENTRE,
SUNDERLAND
12 MARCH 2021

TO THE MEMBERS OF SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL

YOU ARE SUMMONED TO ATTEND A MEETING of Sunderland City Council on
WEDNESDAY 24 MARCH 2021 at 4.00 p.m.

This meeting will be held remotely. Joining details will be emailed to all participants.

The meeting will be livestreamed for the public to view on the Council's YouTube channel, 'sunderlandgov' at:- <https://youtu.be/CvGRb4GU9sw>

It is proposed that the following business be considered and transacted:-

Item	Page
1. To read the Notice convening the meeting.	-
2. To approve the Minutes of the last meeting of the Council held on 3 March 2021 (copy attached).	1
3. Receipt of Declarations of Interest (if any).	-
4. Announcements (if any) under Rule 2(iv).	-
5. Apologies.	-
6. Covid-19 - Verbal Update by the Leader of the Council.	-
7. Citywide approach to carbon reduction – Verbal update by the Deputy Leader of the Council	-

8.	Reception of Petitions.	-
9.	Written Questions by members of the public (if any) under Rule 9.	-
10.	Report of the Cabinet (copy attached).	29
11.	Report of the Audit and Governance Committee (copy attached).	55
12.	Report of the Human Resources Committee (copy attached).	89
13.	Written Questions (if any) under Rule 10.2.	-
14.	To consider a report on action taken on petitions (copy attached).	105
15.	To consider the attached Motions (copy attached).	113
16.	To consider the following reports:-	
(i)	Report on Special Urgency Decisions – Report of the Leader (copy attached).	121
(ii)	Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies – Report of the Assistant Director of Law and Governance (copy attached).	123



PATRICK MELIA, CHIEF EXECUTIVE.

Minutes

Sunderland City Council

At a meeting of SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL held REMOTELY on WEDNESDAY
3 MARCH 2021 at 4.00pm

Present: The Mayor (Councillor David Snowdon) in the Chair
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor H Trueman).

Councillors	Armstrong	Gibson, E	Mann	Smith, G
	Atkinson	Gibson, P	Marshall	Smith, P
	Blackburn	Greener	McClennan	Snowdon, D E
	Blackett	Haswell	McDonough	Speding
	Butler	Heron	McKeith	Stewart
	Chequer	Hodson	Miller, F	Taylor
	Crosby	Howe	Miller, G	Thornton
	Davison	Jackson	Mordey	Trueman, D
	Dixon, D	Jenkins	Mullen	Tye
	Dixon, M	Johnston	Noble	Walker, P
	Doyle	Kelly	O'Brien	Williams
	Fagan	Lauchlan	Oliver	Wilson, D
	Farthing	Lawson	Potts	Wood, A
	Fletcher	Leadbitter	Rowntree	Wood, P
	Foster	MackKnight, D	Samuels	
	Francis	MackKnight, N	Scanlan	

The notice convening the meeting was read.

Minutes

Councillor Doyle referred to the two sets of votes detailed on Pages 13 and 14 of the minutes which showed that he had voted to abstain on both occasions. Councillor Doyle advised that he had voted against in each case. The Mayor advised that this would be checked following the meeting.

49. RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 29 January 2021 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Note: The electronic votes were subsequently checked, and the system indicated that Councillor Doyle had abstained on each occasion.

Declarations of Interest

The following Councillors declared interests as indicated below: -

Cllr Atkinson

- as a Governor of Richard Avenue Primary School.
- as a Member of G.M.B.

Cllr Blackburn

- as a Member of G.M.B.

Cllr Chequer

- as a Member of Unite.

Cllr Davison

- as a Governor of Willow Fields Primary School.
- as a Member of G.M.B.

Cllr Doyle

- as a Governor at Fulwell Junior School.

Cllr Farthing

- Capital Programme
- CP0536 HISCA (Housing Innovation construction & Skills Academy) and Appendix 7 Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2021/22 as a Governor of EPNE (Sunderland College).
- as a Governor of Rickleton Primary School.
- as a Member of Unison.

Cllr Fletcher

- Capital programme as a Board Member of Sunderland Care and Support (SCAS).

Cllr Haswell

- - Capital Programme
- CP0536 HISCA (Housing Innovation construction & Skills Academy) and Appendix 7 Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2021/22 as an attendee at EPNE (Sunderland College).

Cllr Heron

- as a Council appointed representative to the Tyne and Wear Pension Fund.

Cllr Jackson

- as Member of the N.A.S.U.W.T.

Cllr Johnston

- as a governor of Houghton Community Nursery.
- as a Member of Unite.

Cllr Kelly

- as a Member of G.M.B.

Cllr Lauchlan

- as a Member of Unite.

Cllr Lawson

- as a Member of Unison.

Cllr McClellan

- as a Member of Unite.
- as a recipient of a pension from the Tyne and Wear Pension Fund.

Cllr D. McKnight

- as a Governor of Hylton Castle Primary School.

Cllr N. McKnight

- as a Director of Aim High Academy Trust.
- as a Member of Unison.

Cllr G. Miller

- Regarding the proposed amendment grant of £30,000 to Oak Learning Trust schools as a Governor/Trustee.
- as Member of G.M.B.

Cllr F. Miller

- as a Governor for Oak Learning Trust.
- as a Member of Unite.

Cllr Mordey

- as a Member of G.M.B.

Cllr Rowntree

- as a Member of Unison.

Cllr Samuels

- as a Member Unite.
- as a Member of the Community Union.

Cllr D.E. Snowdon

- as a Governor of JFK Primary School (ref P.92 CP0506).
- as a Member of Unison.

Cllr Speding

- as a Member of the Football Association, Chair of the Durham County Football Association and a Trustee of the Sunderland Football Trust Board.
- as a Member of G.M.B.

Cllr Stewart

- Capital programme –
- replacement for Willow Fields Primary school P 46/90 - as Chair of Governors of Willow Fields Primary School.
- works to Bishopwearmouth Nursery P105 – as Chair of Bishopwearmouth Co-operative that occupy the site of the Nursery.
- as Member of Unison.

Cllr Thornton

- Capital programme P 105
- CP0432 Daycentre Transformation and Improvement.
- CP0484 Bishopwearmouth Horticultural Nursery Carpark and Lighting Improvements.
- CP0080 Disabled Facilities grant.
(all as a Director of SCAS).
- as a Governor of Eppleton Primary School
- as a Member of Unison.

Cllr H. Trueman

- as a Governor of Columbia Grange School.

Cllr Walker

- Capital programme CP0326 Chester road highway as a Gentoo employee.
- Revenue Budget 4.11 housing benefit overpayment as a Gentoo employee.
- a general declaration having been a unison union member.

Cllr Williams

- Capital programme P 105
- CP0432 Daycentre Transformation and Improvement.
- CP0484 Bishopwearmouth Horticultural Nursery Carpark and Lighting Improvements.
- CP0080 Disabled Facilities grant.
(all as a Director of SCAS).
- P92, CP0452 Oxclose Community Academy Internal Refurbishment, as a Governor of Oxclose Community Academy.
- as Chair of Governors of Lambton Primary School.
- as a Trustee of the Sunderland Football Trust Board.

Announcements

Councillor Geoffrey Walker

It was with sadness that the Mayor referred Council to the recent and sudden death of Councillor Dr. Geoffrey Walker.

Councillor Walker was first elected in May 2015 for the Shiney Row Ward and was re-elected in May 2019. He was appointed Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Health and Social Care in May 2018 which became the Healthy City Portfolio in 2020. As the Council's Cabinet Member for Healthy City and lead on public health and adult social care, as well as a Member of the City's Outbreak Control Board, Councillor Walker was at the forefront of the City's fight against Covid-19.

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

Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Bewick, Hunt, Turner, Waller, Watson and A. Wilson and on behalf of Aldermen Arnott, Greenfield and Tate.

Report of the Cabinet

The Cabinet reported and recommended as follows: -

That they had referred the initial proposals on the Revenue Budget to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee:

- On 5 November 2020, Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee considered the Budget Planning Framework and Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/2022 – 2024/2025 report which was referred from the October Cabinet meeting:

The Scrutiny Coordinating Committee was satisfied with the budget planning framework and the medium-term financial strategy as set out in the report. The Committee recognised the various spending pressures and Central Government funding uncertainties that existed for the Council and the impact of Covid-19 on all Council services and funding.

The Committee was pleased to note that it would again be consulted on the results of the budget consultation and looked forward to receiving this at a future meeting.

The Committee placed on record its appreciation for the hard work and diligence of officers and members in the budget planning process, particularly in the difficult times that they all found themselves in at present.

- On 14 January 2021, Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee considered the Revenue Budget 2021/2022 to 2024/2025 – Update and Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2021/2022 report which was referred from the January Cabinet meeting.

The Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee acknowledged that the Council continued to operate in very challenging circumstances and the current pandemic had put additional pressures on all council services. Therefore, the Committee was satisfied with the contents of the report and acknowledged that a number of funding uncertainties remained and that the continued response to the pandemic only added to these uncertainties.

The Committee also acknowledged the revised version of the City Plan in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and requested that updates on progress were provided to the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee as and when appropriate.

The Committee placed on record its appreciation to all Members and Officers who continued to work extremely hard on budget planning and development of the Council's financial plans; and that an update be provided on Derwent Hill to the Scrutiny Committee.

On 11 February 2021, Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee considered the Revenue Budget and Proposed Council Tax for 2021/2022 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/2022 to 2024/2025 report which was referred from the February Cabinet meeting. The Committee received a verbal update from the Executive Director of Corporate Services to advise that at its meeting on 9 February, Cabinet agreed an amendment to the proposals to be recommended to Council, namely the removal of proposal DL4 for additional parking permit income of £40,000, with a corresponding adjustment to the proposed use of reserves.

The Scrutiny Coordinating Committee noted the financial information contained in the various reports presented. The Committee also continued to recognise the financial pressures the Council faced including from the impacts of the pandemic and noted the recommended Council Tax increase for 2020/21, which must be approved by Council. The Committee also acknowledged the budget consultation that was undertaken and recognised the importance of the various support funds including the local council tax support grant to assist our most vulnerable residents.

Finally, the Committee thanked all the officers and members for their diligence and professionalism in preparing the detailed reports and had no further comment to make.

That they had also referred the proposals for Capital Programme Planning 2021/2022 – 2024/2025 to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee

- On 14 January 2021, Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee considered the Capital Programme Planning 2021/2022 – 2024/2025 and Capital Strategy report which was referred from the December Cabinet meeting:

The Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee noted the capital programme including the additional projects that provided an ambitious programme over the next four years and also recognised the importance of the updated capital strategy to oversee and manage the risks associated with the capital expenditure projects and acknowledged the importance of clear governance mechanisms, outlined in the strategy, to provide accountability of the capital programme.

- On 11 February 2021, Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee considered the Capital Programme 2021/2022 to 2024/2025 and Treasury Management Policy and Strategy 2021/2022, including Prudential Indicators for 2021/2022 to 2024/2025 report which was referred from the February Cabinet meeting.

The Committee again acknowledged the ambitious capital programme including the additional projects as well as the detailed information on treasury management, prudential indicators and borrowing which ensured the Council complied with statutory and regulatory requirements.

That they had also submitted the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy and prudential indicators within the attached report numbered 1 to the meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee.

- On 5 February 2021, the Audit and Governance Committee was consulted specifically on the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2021/2022.

The Committee noted the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2021/2022 and the Prudential Treasury Management Indicators for 2021/2022 to 2024/2025.

The Committee noted the Borrowing and Investment Strategies contained within the report and that the Council continued to follow and adhere to fundamental principles in relation to the prudent investment of treasury balances.

The Committee noted their responsibility for ensuring effective scrutiny of the treasury management strategy and policies and that they would continue to receive quarterly performance reports.

Subsequently

The precept figures had been confirmed as those set out in the report to Cabinet on 9 February 2021:

- The precept figures of the Police and Crime Commissioner Northumbria (PCCN) would mean an increase of 4.99% in the precept level for 2021/2022;
- The precept figures of the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority (TWFR) would mean an increase of 1.99% in the precept level for 2021/2022; and
- The precept figures of the Parish of Hetton Town Council would mean an increase of 0% in the precept level for 2021/2022.

The position set out at Item 3 of the report as Determination of Council Tax 2021/2022 reflected the above notified 2021/2022 precept levels in respect of all of the Precepting Authorities and the figures as reported remained unchanged.

1. Capital Programme 2021/2022 to 2024/2025 and Treasury Management Policy and Strategy 2021/2022, including Prudential Indicators for 2021/2022 to 2024/2025

That they had considered the attached report of the Executive Director of Corporate Services on:

- the proposed Capital Programme for 2021/2022;
- the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2021/2022 (including specifically the Annual Borrowing and Investment Strategies);
- the Prudential Indicators for 2021/2022 to 2024/2025; and
- the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement for 2021/2022.

Accordingly, the Cabinet recommended the Council to approve: -

- (i) the proposed Capital Programme for 2021/2022;
- (ii) the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2021/2022 (including specifically the Annual Borrowing and Investment Strategies);
- (iii) the Prudential Indicators for 2021/2022 to 2024/2025; and
- (iv) the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement for 2021/2022.

2. Revenue Budget and Proposed Council Tax for 2021/2022 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/2022 to 2024/2025

That they had considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Services on:

- (a) the overall revenue budget position for 2021/2022;
- (b) the projected reserves position as at 31 March 2021 and 31 March 2022 and advise on their sufficiency;
- (c) a risk analysis of the Revenue Budget 2021/2022;
- (d) a summary of the emerging medium term financial position facing the Council from 2021/2022 to 2024/2025, and associated Council Efficiency strategy; and
- (e) any views received from the local Business Sector, Trade Unions and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.

Cabinet determined to make an amendment to the proposed Revenue Budget as set out in the report, in respect of the removal of proposal DL4 for additional parking permit income, with a corresponding adjustment to the proposed use of reserves. The attached report of the Executive Director of Corporate Services to Council set out the proposed Revenue Budget and Council Tax for 2021/2022 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/2022 to 2024/2025 as recommended by Cabinet. Accordingly, the Cabinet recommended the Council to approve: -

- (i) the proposals set out in the attached report including the proposed Revenue Budget for 2020/2021 set out at Appendix J; and
- (ii) the Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/2022 to 2024/2025 including Efficiency Strategy as set out in Appendix G and the potential use of Capital Receipts Flexibility set out at section 9 of the report.

3. Determination of Council Tax 2021/2022

That they had considered a report of the Executive Director of Corporate Services making, subject to the approval of the Revenue Budget 2021/2022 (as set out at item 2 above), recommendations with respect to Council Tax levels for 2021/2022, and advised that the Council Tax was calculated using the tax bases for the areas of the City Council and Hetton Town Council as approved by Council on 27 January 2021, and set out a number of resolutions required to be made to determine the Council Tax, including the confirmed precepts from the Major Precepting Authorities and Hetton Town Council.

They therefore recommended Council: -

- i) to confirm the Council Tax Requirement for its own purposes is £108,110,255 (excluding Parish precepts), representing a 4.99% increase in Council Tax for 2021/2022, including the ringfenced social care precept of 3% which the Government allows councils to raise in addition to the basic council tax increase.
- ii) it be noted that at its meeting on 27 January 2021 the Council approved the following amounts for the year 2021/2022 in accordance with the amended regulations made under Section 31B(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (the 'Act'):
 - a) 70,045 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with the above regulation of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as amended by Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, as its Council Tax Base for the year (Item T).

- b) 3,803 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with the Regulations, as the amount of its Council Tax Base for the year for dwellings in the area of Hetton Town Council.
- iii) That the following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2021/2022 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended:
- a) £705,681,482 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
- b) £597,516,236 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act.
- c) £108,165,246 being the amount by which the aggregate at (iii) (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (iii) (b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act, as its Council Tax Requirement for the year including Parish precepts (Item R in the formula in Section 31A(4) of the Act).
- d) £1,544.2251 being the amount at (iii) (c) above (Item R) all divided by Item T ((ii) (a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B (1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
- e) £54,991 being the precept notified by Hetton Town Council as a special item under Section 34 (1) of the Act.
- f) £1,543.4400 being the amount at (iii) (d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (iii) (e) above by the Item T ((ii) (a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34 (2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.

- g) £1,557.8999 being the amount given by adding to the amount at (iii) (f) above, the amount at (iii) (e) divided by the amount at (ii) (b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 34 (3) of the Act as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in the area of the Parish of Hetton Town Council.

- h) Charges relating to the Council

Valuation Band	Hetton Town Council £	All other parts of the Council's area £
A	1,038.60	1,028.96
B	1,211.70	1,200.45
C	1,384.80	1,371.94
D	1,557.90	1,543.44
E	1,904.10	1,886.43
F	2,250.30	2,229.41
G	2,596.50	2,572.40
H	3,115.80	3,086.88

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at (iii) (f) and (iii) (g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5 (1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36 (1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

- (iv) it be noted that for the year 2021/2022, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria have confirmed the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings as follows:

Valuation Band	Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria £	Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority £
A	95.89	57.09
B	111.88	66.61
C	127.86	76.12
D	143.84	85.64
E	175.80	104.67
F	207.77	123.70
G	239.73	142.73
H	287.68	171.28

- (v) having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (iii) (h) and (iv) above and having received confirmation of the precept in paragraph (iv), the Council, in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2021/2022 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below.

Valuation Band	Hetton Town Council £	All other parts of the Council's area £
A	1,191.58	1,181.94
B	1,390.19	1,378.94
C	1,588.78	1,575.92
D	1,787.38	1,772.92
E	2,184.57	2,166.90
F	2,581.77	2,560.88
G	2,978.96	2,954.86
H	3,574.76	3,545.84

- (vi) To determine that under Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Authority's relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2021/2022 is not excessive in accordance with the principles determined under Section 52ZC(1) of the Act.

(i.e. the proposed council tax increase for 2021/2022 means that the Council does not need to hold a referendum on its proposed council tax. The provisions set out in Section 52ZC of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 require all billing authorities (councils and precept authorities (i.e. Fire and Police authorities)) to hold a referendum on their proposed level of basic council tax each year if they exceed government guidelines set out annually.)

It was then moved by Councillor G Miller and seconded by Councillor Stewart that the report of the Cabinet be approved and adopted. Councillor Stewart moved that the time limit for the Leader's speech to the motion be extended and upon being put to the meeting the procedural motion was agreed. The Leader, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holders having spoken on the report, the Mayor advised that there were amendments proposed by the Conservative Group in Opposition and the Liberal Democrats Group in Opposition.

The Mayor informed the meeting that Members had already been notified by the Chief Executive that in respect of the Conservative Group amendments, the proposal for each of the following schools should be moved, seconded, debated and voted on as a separate amendment. The schools were Richard Avenue Primary School, Willow Fields Community Primary School, Houghton Community Nursery, Oak Learning Trust/George Washington Primary School, Rickleton Primary School and Lambton Primary School.

As explained in the Chief Executive's notification to Members, this was necessary because if the Conservative Group's proposals were considered as a single amendment, this would be likely to prevent all but one Member of the Cabinet from taking part in the debate and vote on the amendment, due to their membership of the Governing bodies of the schools affected by the proposals. It was important that, so far as possible, Cabinet Members were able to undertake their statutory role and participate in the debate and vote on the Cabinet's budget proposals to Council along with any amendments proposed.

Councillor Atkinson having previously declared her interest in the following amendment, left the meeting during its consideration, taking no part in any discussion or decision thereon.

The following proposed Amendment to the Capital Budget from the Conservative Group in Opposition was moved by Councillor Mullen and seconded by Councillor Doyle.

Capital Budget
Spending Proposal

- i) CCTV network funding for Richard Avenue Primary School £30,000.00
To be funded from a corresponding reduction in the F-pit capital scheme

In accordance with the requirement of the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) (Regulations) 2014, Amendment i) on the Capital Budget proposals was put to the vote with 19 Members voting in favour: -

Councillors	Blackett	Francis	McDonough	Potts
	Crosby	Greener	McKeith	Smith, G
	Dixon, M	Haswell	Mullen	Wood, A
	Doyle	Hodson	O'Brien	Wood, P
	Fagan	Leadbitter	Oliver	

39 Members voting against: -

Councillors	Blackburn	Heron	McClennan	Stewart
	Butler	Jackson	Miller, F	Taylor
	Chequer	Johnston	Miller, G	Thornton
	Davison	Kelly	Morley	Trueman, D
	Dixon, D	Lauchlan	Rowntree	Trueman, H
	Farthing	Lawson	Samuels	Tye
	Fletcher	MackKnight, D	Scanlan	Walker
	Foster	MackKnight, N	Smith, P	Williams
	Gibson, E	Mann	Snowdon, D E	Wilson, D
	Gibson, P	Marshall	Speding	

And 2 Members abstaining, Councillors Armstrong and Jenkins.

The Amendment was defeated.

Councillor Atkinson was re admitted to the meeting.

Councillors Stewart and Davison having previously declared their interests in the following amendment, left the meeting during its consideration, taking no part in any discussion or decision thereon.

The following proposed Amendment to the Capital Budget from the Conservative Group in Opposition was moved by Councillor Mullen and seconded by Councillor Doyle.

Capital Budget

Spending Proposal

- ii) Funding for outdoor physical education apparatus to support mental wellbeing for Willow Fields Community Primary School £30,000.00
To be funded from a corresponding reduction in the F-pit capital scheme

Amendment ii) on the Capital Budget proposals was put to the vote with 20 Members voting in favour: -

Councillors	Blackett	Francis	Leadbitter	Oliver
	Crosby	Greener	McDonough	Potts
	Dixon, M	Haswell	McKeith	Smith, G
	Doyle	Hodson	Mullen	Wood, A
	Fagan	Howe	O'Brien	Wood, P

38 Members voting against: -

Councillors	Atkinson	Heron	McClennan	Taylor
	Blackburn	Jackson	Miller, F	Thornton
	Butler	Johnston	Miller, G	Trueman, D
	Chequer	Kelly	Mordey	Trueman, H
	Dixon, D	Lauchlan	Rowntree	Tye
	Farthing	Lawson	Samuels	Walker
	Fletcher	MackKnight, D	Scanlan	Williams
	Foster	MackKnight, N	Smith, P	Wilson, D
	Gibson, E	Mann	Snowdon, D E	
	Gibson, P	Marshall	Speding	

And 2 Members abstaining, Councillors Armstrong and Jenkins.

The Amendment was defeated.

Councillors Stewart and Davison were re admitted to the meeting.

Councillor Johnston having previously declared his interest in the following amendment, left the meeting during its consideration, taking no part in any discussion or decision thereon.

The following proposed Amendment to the Capital Budget from the Conservative Group in Opposition was moved by Councillor Mullen and seconded by Councillor Doyle.

Capital Budget

Spending Proposal

- iii) Repairs and maintenance fund for Houghton Community Nursery
£30,000.00
To be funded from a corresponding reduction in the F-pit capital scheme

Amendment iii) on the Capital Budget proposals was put to the vote with 20 Members voting in favour: -

Councillors	Blackett	Francis	Leadbitter	Oliver
	Crosby	Greener	McDonough	Potts
	Dixon, M	Haswell	McKeith	Smith, G
	Doyle	Hodson	Mullen	Wood, A
	Fagan	Howe	O'Brien	Wood, P

40 Members voting against : -

Councillors	Armstrong	Gibson, E	Marshall	Speding
	Atkinson	Gibson, P	McClennan	Stewart
	Blackburn	Heron	Miller, F	Taylor
	Butler	Jackson	Miller, G	Thornton
	Chequer	Jenkins	Mordey	Trueman, D
	Davison	Kelly	Rowntree	Trueman, H
	Dixon, D	Lauchlan	Samuels	Tye
	Farthing	Lawson	Scanlan	Walker
	Fletcher	MacKnight, D	Smith, P	Williams
	Foster	Mann	Snowdon, D E	Wilson, D

And 1 Member abstaining, Councillor MacKnight, N.

The Amendment was defeated.

Councillor Johnson was re admitted to the meeting.

Councillors G. Miller and F. Miller having previously declared their interests in the following amendment, left the meeting during its consideration, taking no part in any discussion or decision thereon.

The following proposed Amendment to the Capital Budget from the Conservative Group in Opposition was moved by Councillor Mullen and seconded by Councillor Doyle.

Capital Budget

Spending Proposal

- iv) Repairs and maintenance fund for Oak Learning Trust / George Washington Primary School £30,000.00
To be funded from a corresponding reduction in the F-pit capital scheme

Amendment iv) on the Capital Budget proposals was put to the vote with 20 Members voting in favour: -

Councillors	Blackett	Francis	Leadbitter	Oliver
	Crosby	Greener	McDonough	Potts
	Dixon, M	Haswell	McKeith	Smith, G
	Doyle	Hodson	Mullen	Wood, A
	Fagan	Howe	O'Brien	Wood, P

39 Members voting against : -

Councillors	Armstrong	Gibson, E	MacKnight, N	Speding
	Atkinson	Gibson, P	Mann	Stewart
	Blackburn	Heron	Marshall	Taylor
	Butler	Jackson	McClennan	Thornton
	Chequer	Jenkins	Mordey	Trueman, D
	Davison	Johnston	Rowntree	Trueman, H
	Dixon, D	Kelly	Samuels	Tye
	Farthing	Lauchlan	Scanlan	Walker
	Fletcher	Lawson	Smith, P	Williams
	Foster	MacKnight, D	Snowdon, D E	

And 0 Members abstaining.

The Amendment was defeated.

Councillors G. Miller and F. Miller were re admitted to the meeting.

Councillor Farthing having previously declared her interest in the following amendment, left the meeting during its consideration, taking no part in any discussion or decision thereon.

The following proposed Amendment to the Capital Budget from the Conservative Group in Opposition was moved by Councillor Mullen and seconded by Councillor Doyle.

Capital Budget

Spending Proposal

- v) Repairs and maintenance fund for Rickleton Primary School £30,000.00
To be funded from a corresponding reduction in the F-pit capital scheme

Amendment v) on the Capital Budget proposals was put to the vote with 20 Members voting in favour: -

Councillors	Blackett	Francis	Leadbitter	Oliver
	Crosby	Greener	McDonough	Potts
	Dixon, M	Haswell	McKeith	Smith, G
	Doyle	Hodson	Mullen	Wood, A
	Fagan	Howe	O'Brien	Wood, P

39 Members voting against: -

Councillors	Atkinson	Heron	McClennan	Stewart
	Blackburn	Jackson	Miller, F	Taylor
	Butler	Johnston	Miller, G	Thornton
	Chequer	Kelly	Morley	Trueman, D
	Davison	Lauchlan	Rowntree	Trueman, H
	Dixon, D	Lawson	Samuels	Tye
	Fletcher	MackKnight, D	Scanlan	Walker
	Foster	MackKnight, N	Smith, P	Williams
	Gibson, E	Mann	Snowdon, D E	Wilson, D
	Gibson, P	Marshall	Speding	

And 2 Members abstaining, Councillors Armstrong and Jenkins.

The Amendment was defeated.

Councillor Farthing was re admitted to the meeting.

Councillor Williams having previously declared her interest in the following amendment, left the meeting during its consideration, taking no part in any discussion or decision thereon.

The following proposed Amendment to the Capital Budget from the Conservative Group in Opposition was moved by Councillor Mullen and seconded by Councillor Doyle.

Capital Budget

Spending Proposal

- vi) Repairs and maintenance fund for Lambton Primary School £30,000.00
To be funded from a corresponding reduction in the F-pit capital scheme

Amendment vi) on the Capital Budget proposals was put to the vote with 20 Members voting in favour: -

Councillors	Blackett	Francis	Leadbitter	Oliver
	Crosby	Greener	McDonough	Potts
	Dixon, M	Haswell	McKeith	Smith, G
	Doyle	Hodson	Mullen	Wood, A
	Fagan	Howe	O'Brien	Wood, P

38 Members voting against : -

Councillors	Atkinson	Gibson, P	Marshall	Speding
	Blackburn	Heron	McClennan	Stewart
	Butler	Jackson	Miller, F	Taylor
	Chequer	Johnston	Miller, G	Thornton
	Davison	Kelly	Mordey	Trueman, D
	Dixon, D	Lauchlan	Rowntree	Trueman, H
	Farthing	Lawson	Samuels	Tye
	Fletcher	MacKnight, D	Scanlan	Walker
	Foster	MacKnight, N	Smith, P	
	Gibson, E	Mann	Snowdon, D E	

And 2 Members abstaining, Councillors Armstrong and Jenkins.

The Amendment was defeated.

Councillor Williams was re admitted to the meeting.

Councillor Mullen, seconded by Councillor Doyle then moved the Conservative Group's proposed amendments the Revenue Budget and remaining amendments to the Capital budget as follows:-

Revenue Budget	Savings
Reduction in Corporate Affairs and Communications (to include a reduction in the £100,000 spent on outsourced PR work)	£281,844.00
Reduction in councillors' allowances (as set out below)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanently merge Deputy Leader and Cabinet Secretary roles and re-establish the Environment and Transport Portfolio • Reduce the Leader's SRA by £2,667 (leading to an automatic Reduction in Major Opposition Leader SRA) • Delete the Minority Opposition Leader's SRA • Delete the Deputy Cabinet Member posts • Reduce the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Chair SRA by £9,556 • Reduce the Thematic Scrutiny Chair SRAs – totalling £6,537 • Reduce the five Area Committee Chair SRAs – totalling £36,750 • Reduce the Licensing Committee Chair SRA by £5,369 • Reduce the Planning and Highways Chair SRAs – totalling £6,554 • Delete the SRAs for Vice Chairs of Scrutiny Co-ordinating, Licencing, and Area Committee - £41,846 • Reduce the Mayoral allowance by £7,500 and the Deputy Mayoral allowance by £6,000 • Delete the Adoptions Panel (£8,368) and Fostering Panel (£8,368) SRAs 	£197,574.00
Abolish all councillors' expenses	£35,000.00
Reduction in Business Investment Team budget achieved by cutting the Japan/America funding and reducing the travel budget	£80,045.00

Revised port deficit reduction	£100,000.00
End Council advertising in Vibe Magazine	£20,000.00
Cancel International Air Show and the Festival of Light this year for COVID security reasons and move to for-profit/sponsorship model in future years	£781,154.00
Reduction in the Neighbourhood Fund (to reinvest, as set out below)	£500,000.00
Reduction in trade union facility time	£150,000.00
Reduction in Carbon Reduction budget (to reinvest, as set out below)	£92,000.00

Total £2,237,617.00

Spending

Insert five Park and Cemetery Wardens	£157,660.00
Free means-tested pest control in residential areas	£80,500.00
Insert 30 rat baiting bins across the city's parks and green spaces (not including those locations that already have them)	£19,500.00
Free larger green household waste bin replacements for families of four or more, upon request. An initial trial of 1,000 bins over the year to measure demand	£42,000.00
Move to a more pro-active environmental enforcement policy	No cost
Tree-lined streets and wildflower planting programme (to be funded via the Carbon Reduction budget)	£92,000.00
School mental health counselling pilot scheme	£15,000.00
Reduction in Labour's proposed Council Tax increase	£1,830,957.00

Total £2,237,617.00

Capital Budget

Savings

Delete the F Pit proposal	£4,650,000.00
Sale of the Roker Pods Market for sale	

Total £4,650,000 +

Spending

Washington children's activity centre development fund	£2,000,000.00
Thornhill Park School car park development (based on quotes obtained by North East Autism Society)	£200,000.00
Derwent Hill glamping pod development (subject to planning permission)	£114,000.00
Together for Children residential home development fund	£2,000,000.00
Increased capital spend on Barnes Junior School	£140,000.00

Total £4,454,000.00

It was moved by Councillor Stewart and duly seconded that the time limit for the Leader's speech in reply to the amendments be extended. Councillor O'Brien seconded by Councillor Hodson requested that the motion was put to a formal vote.

Upon being put to the vote the motion was carried with 40 Members voting in favour:-

Councillors	Atkinson	Gibson, P	Marshall	Speding
	Blackburn	Heron	McClennan	Stewart
	Butler	Jackson	Miller, F	Taylor
	Chequer	Jenkins	Miller, G	Thornton
	Davison	Johnston	Mordey	Trueman, D
	Dixon, D	Kelly	Rowntree	Trueman, H
	Farthing	Lauchlan	Samuels	Tye
	Fletcher	Lawson	Scanlan	Walker
	Foster	MacKnight, D	Smith, P	Williams
	Gibson, E	MacKnight, N	Snowdon, D E	Wilson, D

20 Members voting against:-

Councillors	Blackett	Greener	Mann	Oliver
	Crosby	Haswell	McDonough	Potts
	Dixon, M	Hodson	McKeith	Smith, G
	Fagan	Howe	Mullen	Wood, A
	Francis	Leadbitter	O'Brien	Wood, P

And 2 Members abstaining, Councillors Armstrong and Doyle.

The Conservative Group's proposed amendments to the Revenue Budget and remaining amendments to the Capital budget were then put to the vote with 21 Members voting in favour:-

Councillors	Blackett	Greener	McDonough	Smith, G
	Crosby	Haswell	McKeith	Wood, A
	Dixon, M	Hodson	Mullen	Wood, P
	Doyle	Howe	O'Brien	
	Fagan	Leadbitter	Oliver	
	Francis	Mann	Potts	

39 Members voting against:-

Councillors	Armstrong	Gibson, E	Marshall	Speding
	Atkinson	Gibson, P	McClennan	Stewart
	Blackburn	Heron	Miller, F	Taylor
	Butler	Jackson	Miller, G	Trueman, D
	Chequer	Johnston	Mordey	Trueman, H
	Davison	Kelly	Rowntree	Tye
	Dixon, D	Lauchlan	Samuels	Walker
	Farthing	Lawson	Scanlan	Williams
	Fletcher	MacKnight, D	Smith, P	Wilson, D
	Foster	MacKnight, N	Snowdon, D E	

And 1 Member abstaining, Councillor Jenkins.

The Amendment was defeated.

The proposed Amendment to the Revenue and Capital Budgets from the Liberal Democrats Group in Opposition was moved by Councillor Hodson and seconded by Councillor O'Brien.

The Amendment to the proposals was as follows: -

Revenue Budget

Additional Savings Proposals	£ Savings
Reduction of support costs for Area Committees linked to the reduction in the number of Area Committees from 5 to 3, as outlined in proposal number 2.	-100,000
Reducing number of Area Committees to three committees, coterminous with parliamentary constituencies (giving a saving of 2 Chairs and 2 Vice Chairs). Will also mean a reduction in the number of new Neighbourhood Boards as only 3 Vice Chairs to Chair them)	-33,254
Review and reduction of basic and special responsibility allowances (SRAs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove Deputy Cabinet Members Remove Vice Chair Scrutiny Coordinating Committee Reduction in SRAs of all other roles 15% Reduce Basic Allowance by 5% 	-137,584
Roles of Mayor and Deputy Mayor to be replaced by unpaid elected Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson and allowances removed	-22,940
Reduce Councillors' expenses, food and drink provision, subsistence allowance and broadband and home phone allowances	-35,000
Reduce Corporate Communications budget by 25%	-271,844
Remove budget for carbon reduction	-1,000,000
TOTAL ADDITIONAL SAVINGS	-1,600,622

Priority investments	£
Reduce Council Tax rise to 3.99%	1,024,000
Increased funding for disabled education support (Travel or IT)	100,000
Introduce a single free bulky item collection service for those in receipt of council tax support	95,000
Introduce a discretionary fund to allow for the increasing of lighting levels or installation of additional lighting for partially sighted residents as part of Health & Social Care budget	8,000

Funding to reinstate the number 18 Sunderland Royal Hospital bus service with 3 services per day commencing September 2021 (note this is a part year impact)	75,000
Introduce single free annual visitor parking permit in permit parking zones for carless households	50,000
Reverse the 2018/19 and 2019/20 Brown Bin charge increase	146,000
Introduce scheme to allow autorenewal of Brown Bin service and Parking Permits	0
Reinstate voluntary community sector contracts support for agencies supporting disabled and young people	65,000
Within Environmental Services Staffing Review, allocate £157,660 for 5 additional officers (dog wardens) from existing budget.	0
Museum and Winter Gardens - increase budget for community arts participation	37,622
TOTAL PRIORITY INVESTMENTS	1,600,622

Capital Budget	£
CP0495 - Strategic Acquisitions and Developments reallocation from this budget	10,000,000
Priority Investments: Improving Sunderland's public leisure offer in light of Covid-19	
Establish a working group to put together a 5-year Leisure Investment Strategy for Sunderland, with a budget to make improvements to public leisure space including:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing an annual fund for maintenance and improvement of smaller suburban parks 	(200,000 per year for 5 years)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhancing the existing Cycle Way investment scheme – including breaking ground on a keynote route linking the Riverside development with a Hylton Road cycleway to Pennywell Industrial Estate (estimated £7m) 	Est. 7,000,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing a programme of creating dog parks at sites in North Sunderland, South Sunderland, Houghton and Washington 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquiring and/or developing a city centre skatepark (meanwhile use) and investigating providing further skatepark facilities at sites around the City Council area 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility study for the acquisition and/or development of a motocross track 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget for strategic working group 	30,000
Total reallocated from CP0495 - Strategic Acquisitions and Developments Budget.	10,000,000

The proposed Amendment to the Revenue and Capital Budgets from the Liberal Democrats Group in Opposition was put to the vote with 19 Members voting in favour:-

Councillors	Blackett	Francis	McDonough	Potts
	Crosby	Greener	McKeith	Smith, G
	Dixon, M	Haswell	Mullen	Wood, A
	Doyle	Hodson	O'Brien	Wood, P
	Fagan	Leadbitter	Oliver	

40 Members voting against:-

Councillors	Armstrong	Gibson, E	Marshall	Speding
	Atkinson	Gibson, P	McClennan	Stewart
	Blackburn	Jackson	Miller, F	Taylor
	Butler	Johnston	Miller, G	Thornton
	Chequer	Kelly	Mordey	Trueman, D
	Davison	Lauchlan	Rowntree	Trueman, H
	Dixon, D	Lawson	Samuels	Tye
	Farthing	MackKnight, D	Scanlan	Walker
	Fletcher	MackKnight, N	Smith, P	Williams
	Foster	Mann	Snowdon, D E	Wilson, D

And 1 Member abstaining, Councillor Jenkins.

The Amendment was defeated.

The original motion that the report of the Cabinet be approved and adopted was then put to the vote with 41 Members voting in favour:-

Councillors	Armstrong	Gibson, P	McClennan	Taylor
	Atkinson	Jackson	Miller, F	Thornton
	Blackburn	Jenkins	Miller, G	Trueman, D
	Butler	Johnston	Mordey	Trueman, H
	Chequer	Kelly	Rowntree	Tye
	Davison	Lauchlan	Samuels	Walker
	Dixon, D	Lawson	Scanlan	Williams
	Farthing	MackKnight, D	Smith, P	Wilson, D
	Fletcher	MackKnight, N	Snowdon, D E	
	Foster	Mann	Speding	
	Gibson, E	Marshall	Stewart	

19 Members voting against: -

Councillors	Blackett	Francis	McDonough	Potts
	Crosby	Greener	McKeith	Smith, G
	Dixon, M	Haswell	Mullen	Wood, A
	Doyle	Hodson	O'Brien	Wood, P
	Fagan	Leadbitter	Oliver	

And 0 Members abstaining.

Accordingly it was: -

50. RESOLVED that the report of the Cabinet be approved and adopted.

(Signed) D. SNOWDON
Mayor

Report of the Cabinet

The CABINET reports and recommends as follows:-

1. Update to Constitution – Council Procedure Rules

That they will be giving consideration to a report of the Assistant Director of Law and Governance (copy attached) on proposals to amend the Council Procedure Rules.

Cabinet's recommendations to Council will be set out in a supplementary Report.

2. Corporate Parenting Review

That they will be giving consideration to a report of the Director of Children's Services (copy to be circulated separately) to seek approval to an updated approach to Corporate Parenting in Sunderland.

Cabinet's recommendations to Council will be set out in a supplementary Report.

CABINET

23 MARCH 2021

UPDATE TO CONSTITUTION - COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To present proposals to amend the Council Procedure Rules.

2 Description of decision

- 2.1 To recommend Council to:

- 2.1.1 amend the Council Procedure Rules as set out in the report, to take effect immediately following the Council meeting at which their amendment is approved and
- 2.1.2 authorise the Assistant Director of Law and Governance to make the associated amendments to the Constitution, including any amendments that may be required to ensure consistency between the updated provisions and the remainder of the Constitution.

3. Background

- 3.1 Members will be aware that Council meetings have become lengthy, regularly lasting in excess of four to five hours. The Council Procedure Rules have therefore been reviewed, with the aim of facilitating the efficient conduct of Council business, whilst ensuring that the democratic process is not compromised.

4. Proposals

- 4.1 Draft amended Rules for the consideration of members are set out in the Appendix to this report.
- 4.2 Members' attention is drawn in particular to the following proposed changes:

Rule 2: Amendment of the order of business to deal with questions from members straight after questions from the public.

Rule 3.3: Grounds have been added on which the Chief Executive may reject a request for an Extraordinary Council Meeting.

Rule 8.1 - 8.3: Meetings will adjourn after three hours unless Council agrees otherwise. Business will continue either at a meeting to be fixed by the Mayor or, if none is arranged, at the next ordinary meeting. Members will see from the footnote to this Rule that while the Mayor retains their discretion with regard to the date and time of any reconvened meeting, ordinarily it will be expected to take place the following morning at 11 a.m.

Rule 10.2 and 11.4: Questions must be submitted five working days before the meeting (which will normally be the Wednesday before the meeting).

Rule 11.1: Questions on reports on the agenda can only be of two minutes duration. (In other words, they should truly be questions and not amount to speeches or statements.)

Rules 11.3 and 11.4: Addition of grounds for rejection of questions from members, in similar terms to those that apply to questions from the public, plus an additional ground that where appropriate, members must first have tried to obtain the information concerned from the appropriate member or officer. It should be noted that members of the public and elected members remain free to request information from Portfolio Holders, Committee Chairs and officers, as they do now, outside formal Council meetings. In addition, there is the ability to submit requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The addition to the Rules of these grounds for rejection of a question will not therefore prevent either members of the public or members of Council from obtaining information to which they are entitled.

Rule 12.5: Other than in respect of the Leader and Leader of the main opposition group, a member can only propose one motion. This does not prevent a member from speaking on a motion proposed by another member; it simply limits the number of motions a member can propose themselves.

Rule 14.5: The duration of speeches has been reduced to five minutes, unless the Mayor agrees an extension, which may be for a further three minutes. There is an exception to this in respect of the Budget meeting, at which the Leader, Cabinet Members and Majority Opposition Leader may speak for up to twenty minutes.

Rule 14.27: Scope has been introduced for the Mayor to bring the debate to a close when they consider that there has been sufficient discussion. The Mayor is given discretion to vary the order of speeches in this regard, for example, to ensure there has been reasonable opportunity for views to have been expressed by representatives of different political groups.

Rule 17.3 - 17.8 More options have been introduced for the method of voting, at the Mayor's discretion, to prevent a recorded vote being taken when this is unnecessary. Individual members retain the ability to request that the way they themselves have voted, is recorded in the minutes.

5 Reasons for Decision

- 5.1 The proposed changes will be conducive to the efficient conduct of Council meetings.

6 Alternative Options

- 6.1 To leave the Council Procedure Rules unchanged. This is not recommended as the proposals are considered to provide for more efficient arrangements.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the proposal to amend the Council Procedure Rules.

8. Background Papers

None

APPENDIX

Part 4: Section 1 – Rules of Procedure

1. The Council Procedure Rules

1 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Timing and Business

- 1.1 In a year when there is an ordinary election of Councillors, the Annual Meeting will take place within 21 days of the retirement of the outgoing Councillors. In any other year, the Annual Meeting will take place in May.
- 1.2 The Annual Meeting will:
 - 1.2.1 elect a person to preside if the Mayor is not present;
 - 1.2.2 elect the Mayor;
 - 1.2.3 elect the deputy Mayor;
 - 1.2.4 approve the minutes of the last meeting;
 - 1.2.5 receive any announcements from the Mayor and/or Chief Executive;
 - 1.2.6 elect the Leader where their term of office has expired;
 - 1.2.7 note the decision of the Leader on the number of Members to be appointed to the Cabinet and those Members appointed by the Leader to the Cabinet and note any amendments to the arrangements for the delegation of executive functions made by them;
 - 1.2.8 appoint the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, a Standards Committee and such other committees as the Council considers appropriate to deal with matters which are neither reserved to the Council nor are executive functions (as set out in this Constitution);
 - 1.2.9 agree amendments (if any) to the scheme of delegation (as set out in this Constitution) in respect of Council functions;
 - 1.2.10 approve a programme of ordinary meetings of the Council for the year; and
 - 1.2.11 consider any business set out in the notice convening the meeting.

Selection of Councillors on Committees and Outside Bodies

- 1.3 At the Annual Meeting, the Council will:
 - 1.3.1 decide which committees to establish for the municipal year;
 - 1.3.2 decide the size of those committees;

- 1.3.3 decide the allocation of seats to political groups in accordance with the political balance rules;
- 1.3.4 receive nominations of Councillors to serve on each committee and outside body; and
- 1.3.5 appoint to those committees and outside bodies, except where appointment to those bodies has been delegated by the Council or is exercisable by the Cabinet or Leader.

2 ORDINARY MEETINGS

- 2.1 Ordinary meetings of the Council will take place in accordance with a programme decided at the Council's Annual Meeting. Ordinary Meetings will:
 - 2.1.1 elect a person to preside if the Mayor and deputy Mayor are not present;
 - 2.1.2 receive apologies;
 - 2.1.3 approve the minutes of the last meeting;
 - 2.1.4 receive any declarations of interest from Members;
 - 2.1.5 receive any announcements from the Mayor, Leader, Members of the Cabinet or the Chief Executive;
 - 2.1.6 deal with any business from the last Council meeting;
 - 2.1.7 receive petitions;
 - 2.1.8 deal with questions asked by members of the public under Rule 10;
 - 2.1.9 deal with questions asked by Members under Rule 11;
 - 2.1.10 receive reports from the Cabinet and the Council's committees and receive questions and answers on any of those reports;
 - 2.1.11 receive reports on action taken on petitions;
 - 2.1.12 debate petitions required to be debated by Council;
 - 2.1.13 receive reports from officers;
 - 2.1.14 consider motions; and
 - 2.1.15 consider any other business specified in the summons to the meeting, including consideration of proposals from the Cabinet in relation to the Council's Budget and Policy Framework and reports of the Overview and Scrutiny committees for debate.

3 EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS

Calling Extraordinary Meetings

- 3.1 Those listed below may request the Chief Executive to call Extraordinary Council Meetings in addition to Ordinary Meetings:
- (a) the Council by resolution;
 - (b) the Mayor;
 - (c) the Monitoring Officer; or
 - (d) any five Members of the Council if they have signed a requisition presented to the Mayor and, within seven days of the presentation of the requisition, they have refused to call a meeting or have failed to call a meeting.

Business

- 3.2 The business to be conducted at an Extraordinary Council Meeting shall be restricted to the item of business contained in the request for the Extraordinary Council Meeting and there shall be no consideration of previous minutes or reports from Committees etc. except that the Mayor may at their absolute discretion permit other items of business to be conducted for the efficient discharge of the Council's business.
- 3.3 The Chief Executive may reject the business set out in the request for an Extraordinary Council Meeting on the following grounds, that it:
- 3.3.1 is not about a matter for which the Council has a responsibility or which affects the City;
 - 3.3.2 is potentially defamatory, vexatious, frivolous or offensive;
 - 3.3.3 refers to applications for or objections to planning permission or any licence, notice or order issued, served or made by the Council;
 - 3.3.4 is substantially the same as a motion which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months;
 - 3.3.5 relates to individual staffing matters or the personal information of Members or Officers; or
 - 3.3.6 is in some other respect considered to be out of order, illegal, irregular or improper.
- 3.4 Where business has been rejected the Chief Executive shall provide those who brought the request for the Extraordinary Council Meeting containing that business with written explanation as to the grounds and reasons for that rejection.
- 3.5 The effect of a rejection of an item of business is that the requested Extraordinary Council Meeting will not be called.

4 TIME AND PLACE OF MEETINGS

The time and place of meetings will be determined by the Chief Executive and notified in the summons.

5 NOTICE OF THE SUMMONS TO MEETINGS

The Chief Executive will give notice to the public of the time and place of any meeting in accordance with the Access to Information Rules in this Constitution.

6 CHAIR OF MEETING

The person presiding at the meeting may exercise any power or duty of the Mayor under the procedure rules. Where these Rules apply to committee and sub-committee meetings, references to the Mayor also include the Chair of committees and sub-committees.

7 QUORUM

The quorum of an Ordinary Meeting or an Extraordinary Council Meeting will be one quarter of the whole number of Members. During any meeting if the Mayor counts the number of Members present and declares there is not a quorum present, then the meeting will adjourn immediately. Remaining business will be considered at a time and date fixed by the Mayor. If they do not fix a date, the remaining business will be considered at the next ordinary meeting.

8 DURATION OF MEETINGS

- 8.1 Unless the majority of Members present vote for the Meeting to continue, any Meeting that has lasted for three hours (excluding adjournments) will adjourn immediately upon the completion of any speech being made at that time.
- 8.2 Any business under consideration at that time shall stand adjourned and shall (together with any remaining business) be considered at a reconvened Meeting to take place at a time and date fixed by the Mayor. ¹
- 8.3 If the Mayor does not fix a date for the reconvened Meeting to take place, any adjourned item and the remaining business will be dealt with at the next Ordinary Meeting of Council.

9 RECEIPT OF PETITIONS

On receipt of a petition by the Council, there shall be no debate or discussion and, subject to the consent of the Council, the petition shall be referred to the relevant Chief Officer for consideration and decision about any appropriate action, subject to any relevant requirements of any Petition Scheme adopted by the Council.

10 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

- 10.1 At each Ordinary Meeting of the Council (other than the Annual Meeting and Budget Council Meeting) a period of up to 30 minutes shall be available to allow questions that have been submitted by members of the public who live, work or study in the City, to be asked of the Leader of the Council or a Cabinet Member and for the relevant Member to respond.
- 10.2 Any person who wishes to ask a question shall give written notice of the question to the Chief Executive by noon on the fifth working day prior to the meeting. Each question must give the name and address of the questioner.
- 10.3 If the Chief Executive considers that the number of questions received is such that they cannot all be answered within 30 minutes, they will, after consulting with the Mayor, select those which are to be put to the Council meeting. Any question which cannot be dealt with at the meeting because of lack of time will be dealt with by a written answer to be sent within five working days of the Council meeting by the Member of whom the question was asked.
- 10.4 The Mayor will determine the order in which questions under this section will be put and may group together similar questions.
- 10.5 A question may be rejected if it:
- 10.5.1 is not relevant to a matter for which the Council has a responsibility or which affects the City;
 - 10.5.2 is illegal, improper, irregular, frivolous or offensive;
 - 10.5.3 is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the previous six months;
 - 10.5.4 will, if answered, disclose confidential or exempt information;
 - 10.5.5 relates to a development control or licensing application;
- ¹ While the date and time of a reconvened meeting is at the discretion of the Mayor, ordinarily, reconvened meetings will commence at 11.00 a.m. the following day.
- 10.5.6 relates to a matter or issue in respect of which a response has already been given under the Council's complaints procedure or which is currently being dealt with in accordance with the complaints procedure or other formal process, such as court or tribunal proceedings or which is the subject of threatened court or tribunal proceedings by the person asking the question or a person or group which they represent;
 - 10.5.7 relates to a matter or issue of a purely personal concern to the individual asking the question or their family members;
 - 10.5.8 is lengthy or a speech; or
 - 10.5.9 is an unintelligible question.

- 10.6 If the Chief Executive considers that a question submitted may be rejected under these Rules, they will advise the Mayor, who will then decide whether to allow the question to be put. If the Mayor decides not to allow a question, their reasons will be notified to the questioner in writing.
- 10.7 No person may submit more than one question to any one meeting and no more than one question may be asked on behalf of an organisation at any one meeting. No question may be sub-divided into more than two related parts.
- 10.8 Questions that have been accepted will be read out at the relevant meeting by the Mayor.
- 10.9 Questions that have been accepted and the name of the questioner will be published on the Council's website.

11 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

On reports of the Cabinet or Committees

- 11.1 A Member of the Council may ask the Leader or the Chair of a committee any question without notice upon an item of the report of the Cabinet or a committee when that item is being received or under consideration by the Council. with the following exceptions:
- 11.1.1 Only Members who are not Cabinet Members shall be allowed to ask Cabinet Members questions on the Cabinet report, to enable Council to hold the Cabinet to account.
- 11.1.2 Cabinet Members may only question the Leader on any matters which have not previously been considered at Cabinet.

Questions are limited to two minutes duration

- 11.2 The Mayor shall have discretion to ensure that the questions asked under Rule 11.1 are representative of the views of Members, and where, in the Mayor's belief, the questions that have already been put shall have represented the views of the Members, the Mayor shall intervene to limit further questions in order not to impede proper attention to further business.

Questions on notice at full Council

- 11.3 Subject to Rule 11.4, a Member of the Council may ask:
- (a) the Leader;
 - (b) a Member of the Cabinet;
 - (c) the Chair of any committee, a question on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the City; or
 - (d) the Member of the Council nominated to respond on behalf of the Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue Authority, the North East Combined Authority, the Police and Crime Panel or any other joint authority, committee or panel, any question on the discharge of the functions of the relevant joint authority, committee or panel.

Notice of Questions

- 11.4 A Member may only ask a question under Rule 11.3 provided:
- (a) that notice in writing of the question has been given to the Chief Executive by noon on the fifth working day prior to the meeting or with the consent of the Mayor given on the grounds that they are of the opinion that the matter is urgent and the content of the question is given to the Chief Executive by noon on the day of the meeting; and
 - (b) the Chief Executive does not reject the question on any of the following grounds, namely that it:
 - (i) is not about a matter for which the Council has a responsibility or which affects the City;
 - (ii) relates to a matter regarding which the Chief Executive considers it would have been reasonable for the Member to try to obtain a response to their question in the first instance from any Member referred to in Rule 11.3 (a) to (d) or an officer, before submitting notice of the question to the Chief Executive
 - (iii) is potentially defamatory, vexatious, frivolous or offensive;
 - (iv) refers to applications for or objections to planning permission or any licence, notice or order issued, served or made by the Council;
 - (v) is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months; or
 - (vi) relates to individual staffing matters or the personal information of Members or officers.

Response

- 11.5 An answer may take the form of:
- (a) a direct oral answer;
 - (b) where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or
 - (c) where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner.

Supplementary Question

- 11.6 A Member asking a question under Rule 11.1 may only ask one further supplementary question without notice of the Member to whom the first question was asked. The supplemental question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply and will be restricted to two minutes duration.

Order of Questions

- 11.7 The Mayor will determine the order in which questions under this section are put.

Duration of Question Time

- 11.8 The length of time for questions by Members under this Rule 11, including the giving of answers, shall be limited to 30 minutes in total unless the Council agrees to an extension.

Written Answers

- 11.9 Any question which cannot be dealt with because of lack of time will be dealt with by a written answer to be sent within five working days of the Council meeting by the Member of whom the question was asked.

12 MOTIONS ON NOTICE

Notice

- 12.1 Except for motions which can be moved without notice under Rule 13, written notice of every motion, signed by at least two Members, must be delivered to the Chief Executive not later than noon on the ninth working day before the date of the next meeting of the Council. The Chief Executive will date the notice, number it in the order in which it is received and will enter it in a book open to public inspection. A copy will be sent to the Leader of each political group on the Council.

Scope

- 12.2 Motions must be about matters for which the Council has a responsibility or which affect the City.
- 12.3 The Chief Executive may reject the motion on the following grounds, that it:
- 12.3.1 is not about a matter for which the Council has a responsibility or which affects the City;
 - 12.3.2 is potentially defamatory, vexatious, frivolous or offensive;
 - 12.3.3 refers to applications for or objections to planning permission or any licence, notice or order issued, served or made by the Council;
 - 12.3.4 is substantially the same as a motion which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months
 - 12.3.5 relates to individual staffing matters or the personal information of Members or Officers; or
 - 12.3.6 is in some other respect considered to be out of order, illegal, irregular or improper

Motion set out in Agenda

- 12.4 Motions for which notice has been given will be listed on the agenda in the order in which notice was received, unless the Member giving notice states, in writing, that they propose to move it to a later meeting or withdraw it.

Number of Motions

- 12.5 Any Member may give notice as proposer of not more than one motion for consideration at any meeting of the full Council. The Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Main Opposition Group on the Council, if any, may give notice of more than one motion for consideration at any meeting of the full Council.

13 MOTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

- 13.1 The following motions may be moved without notice:

- 13.1.1 to appoint a chair of the meeting at which the motion is moved;
- 13.1.2 in relation to the accuracy of the minutes;
- 13.1.3 to change the order of business in the agenda;
- 13.1.4 to refer something to an appropriate body or individual;
- 13.1.5 to appoint a committee or Member arising from an item on the summons for the meeting;
- 13.1.6 to receive reports or adoption of recommendations of committees or officers and any resolutions following from them;
- 13.1.7 to withdraw a motion;
- 13.1.8 to amend a motion;
- 13.1.9 to proceed to the next business;
- 13.1.10 that the question be now put;
- 13.1.11 to adjourn a debate;
- 13.1.12 to adjourn a meeting;
- 13.1.13 to suspend a particular Council procedure rule;
- 13.1.14 to exclude the public and press in accordance with the Access to Information Rules;
- 13.1.15 to not hear further a Member named under Rule 21.3 or to exclude them from the meeting under Rule 21.4; and
- 13.1.16 to give the consent of the Council where its consent is required by this Constitution.

14 RULES OF DEBATE

- 14.1 A motion may be moved by a signatory or someone authorised on their behalf.

No speeches until motion seconded

- 14.2 No speeches may be made after the mover has moved a proposal and explained the purpose of it until the motion has been seconded.

Right to require motion in writing

- 14.3 Unless notice of the motion has already been given, the Mayor may require it to be written down and handed to them before it is discussed.

Seconders' speech

- 14.4 When seconding a motion or amendment, a Member may reserve their speech until later in the debate.

Content and length of speeches

- 14.5 Speeches must be directed to the question under discussion or to a personal explanation or point of order. Subject to the provisions of Rule 14.13, the mover of a motion may speak for no longer than five minutes. No speech may exceed five minutes without the consent of the Mayor, who may agree an extension of up to a further three minutes.

When a Member may speak again

- 14.6 A Member who has spoken on a motion may not speak again whilst it is the subject of debate, except:
- 14.6.1 to speak once on an amendment moved by another Member;
 - 14.6.2 to move a further amendment;
 - 14.6.3 if their first speech was on an amendment moved by another Member, to speak on the main issue (whether or not the amendment on which they spoke was carried);
 - 14.6.4 in exercise of a right of reply;
 - 14.6.5 on a point of order; and
 - 14.6.6 by way of personal explanation.

Amendments to motions

- 14.7 An amendment to a motion must be relevant to the motion and will be:
- 14.7.1 to refer the matter to an appropriate body or individual for consideration or reconsideration;
 - 14.7.2 to leave out words;

14.7.3 to leave out words and insert or add others; or

14.7.4 to insert or add words

as long as the effect of Rules 14.7.2 to 14.7.4 is not to negate the motion.

- 14.8 Only one amendment may be moved and discussed at any one time. No further amendment may be moved until the amendment under discussion has been disposed of.
- 14.9 When an amendment has been disposed of, other amendments to the original motion may be moved.
- 14.10 If an amendment is carried, the motion as amended takes the place of the original motion. This becomes the substantive motion to which any further amendments are moved.
- 14.11 After an amendment has been carried, the Mayor will read out the amended motion before accepting any further amendments, or if there are none and no other Member wishes to exercise the right to speak, put it to the vote.
- 14.12 No amendments to a motion or recommendation that relates to the Budget or Policy Framework may be moved unless written notice which sets out the amendment or amendments proposed has been given by the Member(s) proposing the amendment(s) and has been delivered to the Chief Executive's Office not later than noon on the second working day before the date of the meeting. Following receipt of such notice, a copy of the notice will be circulated to all Members as soon as reasonably practicable. If the proposed amendment is carried, this Rule will not apply to any further amendment(s). If the Mayor is satisfied that for reasons of urgency or for other good reason that it is not practicable for notice to be given in accordance with this Rule, they may waive the requirement.
- 14.13 At the meeting(s) of the Council which set(s) the Budget for the following financial year, including the Council Tax base, Council Tax levy and Capital Programme (Budget Meeting(s)), at the Mayor's discretion, each Cabinet Member may be invited to speak on the Budget in relation to their area of responsibility. At Budget Meeting(s), the Mayor may authorise
- (a) the member moving the report of the Cabinet, when they so move it,
 - (b) any Cabinet Member responding to an invitation to speak on the Budget in relation to their area of responsibility, and
 - (c) the first speaker for the Main Opposition Group, when they speak for the first time to speak for up to 20 minutes each.

Each amendment shall be moved, seconded and debated in turn in the order determined by the Mayor. The Leader (or other Member moving the original motion relating to the Budget) shall have a right of reply at the end of the debate on each amendment. At the conclusion of the debate on an amendment, the amendment shall be voted on. When all amendments have been disposed of, the vote will be taken on the original / substantive motion.

Alteration of motion

- 14.14 A Member may alter a motion of which they have given notice with the consent of the meeting. The meeting's consent will be signified without discussion.
- 14.15 A Member may alter a motion which they have moved without notice with the consent of both the meeting and the seconder. The meeting's consent will be signified without discussion.
- 14.16 Only alterations which could be made as an amendment may be made.

Withdrawal of motion

- 14.17 A Member may withdraw a motion which they have moved with the consent of both the meeting and the seconder. The meeting's consent will be signified without discussion. No Member may speak on the motion after the mover has asked permission to withdraw it unless permission is refused.

Right of reply

- 14.18 The mover of a motion has a right to reply at the end of the debate on the motion, immediately before it is put to the vote.
- 14.19 If an amendment is moved, the mover of the original motion has the right of reply at the close of the debate on the amendment, but may not otherwise speak on it.
- 14.20 The mover of the amendment has no right of reply to the debate on his or her amendment.
- 14.21 In exercising a right of reply, the mover may not introduce any new matter.

Motions which may be moved during debate

- 14.22 When a motion is under debate, no other motion may be moved except the following procedural motions:
 - 14.22.1 to withdraw a motion;
 - 14.22.2 to amend a motion;
 - 14.22.3 to proceed to the next business;
 - 14.22.4 that the question be now put;
 - 14.22.5 to adjourn a debate;
 - 14.22.6 to adjourn a meeting;
 - 14.22.7 to exclude the public and press in accordance with the Access to Information Rules; and
 - 14.22.8 to not hear further a Member named under Rule 21.3 or to exclude them from the meeting under Rule 21.4.

Closure motions

- 14.23 A Member may move, without comment, the following motions at the end of a speech of another Member:
- 14.23.1 to proceed to the next business;
 - 14.23.2 that the question be now put;
 - 14.23.3 to adjourn a debate; or
 - 14.23.4 to adjourn a meeting.
- 14.24 If a motion to proceed to the next business is seconded and the Mayor thinks the item has been sufficiently discussed, they will give the mover of the original motion a right of reply and then put the procedural motion to the vote.
- 14.25 If a motion that the question be now put is seconded and the Mayor thinks the item has been sufficiently discussed, they will put the procedural motion to the vote. If it is passed they will give the mover of the original motion a right of reply before putting their motion to the vote.
- 14.26 If a motion to adjourn the debate or to adjourn the meeting is seconded and the Mayor thinks the item has not been sufficiently discussed and cannot reasonably be so discussed on that occasion, they will put the procedural motion to the vote without giving the mover of the original motion the right of reply.

Duties of the Mayor or Person Presiding

- 14.27 Where, in the Mayor's belief, any debate shall already have represented the views of Members, the Mayor shall, notwithstanding that no closure motion has been moved under Rules 14.23 to 14.26, have discretion to intervene to limit any further debate in order not to impede proper attention to further business. The Mayor will have discretion to vary the order of speakers prior to limiting further debate, so that they may be satisfied that the debate has represented the views of Members, in particular that there has been reasonable opportunity for views from different political groups to be expressed.

Point of Order

- 14.28 A Member may raise a point of order at any time. The Mayor will hear them immediately. A point of order may only relate to an alleged breach of these Council Rules of Procedure or the law. The Member must indicate the Rule or law and the way in which they consider it has been broken. The ruling of the Mayor on the matter will be final.

Personal Explanation

- 14.29 A Member may make a personal explanation at any time. A personal explanation may only relate to some material part of an earlier speech by the Member which may appear to have been misunderstood in the present debate. The ruling of the Mayor on the admissibility of a personal explanation will be final.

15 THE CITY DEBATE

Calling of debate

- 15.1 The Leader may call a City debate annually on a date and in a form to be agreed with the Mayor.

Form of debate

- 15.2 The Mayor and the Leader will decide the form of the debate with the aim of enabling the widest possible public involvement and publicity.

Chairing of debate

- 15.3 The debate will be chaired by the Mayor or a person nominated by the Mayor to facilitate debate.

Results of debate

- 15.4 The results of the debate will be:
- 15.4.1 disseminated as widely as possible within the community and to agencies and organisations in the area; and
 - 15.4.2 considered by the Leader in proposing the Budget and Policy Framework to the Council for the coming year.

16 PREVIOUS DECISIONS AND MOTIONS

Motion to rescind a previous decision

- 16.1 A motion or amendment to rescind a decision made at a meeting of Council within the past six months cannot be moved unless the notice of motion is signed by at least ten Members.

Motion similar to one previously rejected

- 16.2 A motion or amendment in similar terms to one that has been rejected at a meeting of Council in the past six months cannot be moved unless the notice of motion or amendment is signed by at least ten Members. Once the motion or amendment is dealt with, no one can propose a similar motion or amendment for six months.
- 16.3 This Rule does not apply to a motion moved whilst the Council has before it a relevant report or recommendation of the Cabinet or a committee.

17 VOTING

Majority

- 17.1 Unless this Constitution provides otherwise, any matter will be decided by a simple majority of those Members voting and present in the room at the time the question is put.

Mayor's casting vote

- 17.2 If there are equal numbers of votes for and against, the Mayor will have a second or casting vote. There will be no restriction on how the Mayor chooses to exercise a casting vote.

Voting at Council Meetings

- 17.3 The mode of voting at meetings of the Council shall be at the discretion of the Mayor and may include by way of:
- 17.3.1 show of hands;
 - 17.3.2 electronic equipment installed in the Council Chamber or the venue in which the Meeting is taking place;
 - 17.3.3 an electronic voting application or software on personal or mobile devices; or
 - 17.3.4 such other means as the Mayor considers appropriate.
- 17.4 If there is no dissent, agreement may be signalled by acclamation.
- 17.5 If there is dissent, but it is clear to the Mayor that a majority of Members are in agreement, the consent of the Meeting may be signalled by acclamation.
- 17.6 Rules 17.4 and 17.5 are without prejudice to a Member's right to have their individual vote recorded in accordance with Rule 17.13.
- 17.7 When a named vote is taken on any question at a meeting of the Council, the voting shall be recorded so as to show whether each Member present gave their vote for or against that question, provided that if a Member wishes to have an abstention from voting recorded they shall so indicate to the Mayor at the time of voting. If a majority of the Members eligible to vote present at the meeting demand it, the names for and against the motion or amendment or abstaining from voting will be taken down in writing and entered into the minutes.
- 17.8 Whenever a vote is about to be taken at a meeting of the Council the Chief Executive shall cause a bell to be rung in the main corridor of the Civic Suite and the vote shall not be taken for a period of one minute from the commencement of the ringing of the bell, except that a vote shall not be invalidated for breach of this standing order unless the Mayor at their sole discretion immediately after the vote has been taken so declares whereupon the vote shall be re-taken.

Voting in relation to setting the Budget

- 17.9 At a Budget decision meeting of the Council:-
- 17.9.1 Immediately after any vote is taken there must be recorded in the minutes of the proceedings of that meeting the names of the Members who cast a vote for or against the decision or who abstained from voting.

- 17.9.2 Reference to a “Budget decision meeting” for the purposes of this Rule means a meeting of the Council at which it makes a calculation (whether originally or by way of substitute) in accordance with any of sections 31A, 31B, 34 to 36A, or 52ZJ of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and includes a meeting where making the calculation was included as an item of business on the agenda for that meeting.
- 17.9.3 Reference to a “vote” for the purposes of this Rule are references to a vote on any decision related to the meeting or the calculation as the case may be including a vote on any amendment to a proposal.

Voting at Other Meetings

- 17.10 Unless a ballot or recorded vote is demanded under Rules 17.11 or 17.12 the Chair will take the vote by show of hands, or if there is no dissent, by the affirmation of the meeting.

Ballots

- 17.11 The vote will take place by ballot if a majority of the Members eligible to vote at the meeting demand it. The Chair will announce the numerical result of the ballot immediately after the result is known.

Recorded vote

- 17.12 If a majority of the Members eligible to vote present at the meeting demand it, the names for and against the motion or amendment or abstaining from voting will be taken down in writing and entered into the minutes. A demand for a recorded vote will override a demand for a ballot.

Right to require individual vote to be recorded

- 17.13 Where any Member requests it immediately after the vote is taken, their vote will be so recorded in the minutes to show whether they voted for or against the motion or abstained from voting.

Voting on appointments

- 17.14 If there are more than two people nominated for any position to be filled and there is not a clear majority of votes in favour of one person, then the name of the person with the least number of votes will be taken off the list and a new vote taken. The process will continue until there is a majority of votes for one person.

18 MINUTES

Signing the minutes

- 18.1 The Mayor will sign the minutes of the proceedings at the next suitable meeting. The Mayor will move that the minutes of the previous meeting be signed as a correct record.
- 18.2 The only part of the minutes that can be discussed is their accuracy.

No requirement to sign minutes of the previous meeting at an extraordinary meeting

- 18.3 Where in relation to any meeting, the next meeting for the purpose of signing the minutes is a meeting called under paragraph 3 of Schedule 12 to the Local Government Act 1972 (an Extraordinary Meeting), then the next following meeting (being a meeting called otherwise than under that paragraph) will be treated as a suitable meeting for the purposes of paragraph 41(1) and (2) of Schedule 12 relating to signing of minutes.

Form of minutes

- 18.4 Minutes will contain all motions and amendments in the exact form and order the Mayor put them.

19 RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

All Members present during the whole or part of a meeting must sign their names on the attendance sheets before the conclusion of every meeting to assist with the record of attendance.

20 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

Members of the public and press may only be excluded either in accordance with the Access to Information Rules in this Constitution or Rule 22 (Disturbance by Public).

21 MEMBERS' CONDUCT

Standing to speak

- 21.1 When a Member speaks at full Council they must stand and address the meeting through the Mayor. If more than one Member stands, the Mayor will ask one to speak and the others must sit. Other Members must remain seated whilst a Member is speaking unless they wish to make a point of order or a point of personal explanation.

Mayor standing

- 21.2 When the Mayor stands during a debate, any Member speaking at the time must stop and sit down. The meeting must be silent.

Member not to be heard further

- 21.3 If a Member persistently disregards the ruling of the Mayor by behaving improperly or offensively or deliberately obstructs business, the Mayor may move that the Member be not heard further. If seconded, the motion will be voted on without discussion.

Member to leave the meeting

- 21.4 If the Member continues to behave improperly after such a motion is carried, the Mayor may move that either the Member leaves the meeting or that the meeting is adjourned for a specified period. If seconded, the motion will be voted on without discussion.

General disturbance

- 21.5 If there is a general disturbance making orderly business impossible, the Mayor may adjourn the meeting for as long as they think necessary.

22 DISTURBANCE BY PUBLIC

Removal of member of the public

- 22.1 If a member of the public interrupts proceedings, the Mayor will warn the person concerned. If they continue to interrupt, the Mayor will order their removal from the meeting room.

Clearance of part of meeting room

- 22.2 If there is a general disturbance in any part of the meeting room open to the public, the Mayor may call for that part to be cleared.

23 SUSPENSION, AMENDMENT AND INTERPRETATION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

Suspension

- 23.1 All of these Council Rules of Procedure except Rule 17.8 and 18.3 may be suspended by motion on notice or without notice if at least one half of the whole number of Members of the Council are present. Suspension can last for the duration of an item or items of business being dealt with at a meeting or may at most be for the duration of the meeting.

Amendment

- 23.2 Any motion to add to, vary or revoke these Council Rules of Procedure will, when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

Interpretation

- 23.3 The ruling of the Mayor as to the construction or application of any of these Rules of Procedure, or as to any proceedings of the Council, shall not be challenged at any meeting of the Council.

24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WITHDRAWAL FROM MEETINGS

A Member must withdraw from the meeting room (including from the public gallery) during the whole of the consideration of any item of business in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or other personal interest, except where permitted to remain as a result of a dispensation.

25 APPLICATION TO COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

All of the Council Rules of Procedure except Rules 17.10 – 17.12 apply to meetings of full Council. None of the Rules apply to meetings of the Cabinet. Rules 4, 6 and 7, 16 – 23 (except Rule 17.3 – 17.6 and Rule 21.1) apply to meetings of committees and sub-committees.

Report of the Audit and Governance Committee

THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE reports and recommends as follows.

1. Annual Report on the work of the Audit and Governance Committee 2019/2020

That the Audit and Governance Committee have given consideration to a report by the Assistant Director of Business and Property Services (copy attached) on the work of the Audit and Governance Committee during 2019/2020 demonstrating how they have fulfilled their delegated responsibilities.

Accordingly, the Committee recommends Council to note the Annual Report on the Work of the Audit and Governance Committee 2019/2020.

2. Annual Audit Letter 2019/2020

That they have given consideration to the Annual Audit Letter (copy attached) covering the year 2019/2020 prepared by the Council's external auditor Mazars LLP.

The Committee welcomes the positive report and accordingly, the Committee recommends Council to note the Annual Audit Letter for 2019/2020.

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

16 October 2020

ANNUAL REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE 2019/2020

Report of the Assistant Director of Business and Property Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the work undertaken by the Audit and Governance Committee during 2019/20 and the outcome of this work. The purpose of this report is to demonstrate how the Committee has fulfilled its role and will be presented to Council once agreed by this committee.

2. Role of the Committee

- 2.1 The Audit and Governance Committee is a key component in the Council's Corporate Governance Arrangements. Its role is to:
- approve the Authority's Statement of Accounts, income and expenditure, and balance sheet or record of receipts and payments (as the case may be);
 - consider the effectiveness of the authority's corporate governance arrangements, risk management arrangements, the control environment and associated anti-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements and seek assurance that action is being taken on risk-related issues identified by auditors and inspectors;
 - be satisfied that the authority's assurance statements, including the Annual Governance Statement, properly reflect the risk environment and any actions required to improve it;
 - receive, consider and monitor reports on treasury management policy, strategy and practices.

3. Matters Considered

- 3.1 The Committee has met four times in the year. Appropriate officers of the Council have been in attendance at the meetings to present reports and provide additional information in order to clarify issues and respond to questions from members of the Committee. Regular attendees at the meetings were the Executive Director of Corporate Services, Assistant Director of Business and Property Services, Chief Accountant, Senior Manager - Assurance and the Council's External Auditors.

3.2 To enable the Committee to fulfil its role as set out in paragraph 2.1, a range of reports were considered, as follows:

- a) The Committee endorsed the Risk and Assurance Map for 2019/20 which sets out the key risk areas for the Council, the assurance that would be gathered in relation to them and where the assurance would be sought from. The report included the plans of work for the year for the Internal Audit and Risk and Assurance teams, and the performance indicators for Internal Audit. The Committee was also given the opportunity to identify any areas of work to be considered for the year.
- b) Progress reports in relation to the Risk and Assurance Map were presented on a quarterly basis. These provided details of the level of assurance for the strategic and corporate risk areas from management, specialist assurance functions, Internal Audit, Risk and Assurance, the external auditor and other external agencies. The Risk and Assurance Map was refreshed mid-way through the year to reflect changes made to the City Plan, which resulted in updates to the Strategic Risk Areas.
- c) Specific key issues were highlighted within the Risk and Assurance Map update reports for members to consider further, specifically in relation to the improvement of the financial management arrangements within Together for Children Sunderland Limited (TfC). The Executive Director of Corporate Services confirmed that the working relationship between the Council and the Company was effective and the financial position was continuing to improve over time.
- d) Further updates were provided in relation to the actions taken to improve the administration of Adult Social Care Personal Budgets, with actions being completed by the end of the financial year.
- e) External Auditors provided progress reports to each meeting, the Annual Audit Letter, Audit Completion report, and the Review of the Council's arrangements for securing value for money. These reports provided a very positive opinion and members of the committee commented that they found the reports to be re-assuring. The External Auditor also presented their Audit Strategy Memorandum setting out their work for the coming year.
- f) The results of the Annual Governance Review for 2018/19 were presented, which summarises the overall governance arrangements in place within the Council, and made recommendations for further improvement. The head of internal audit's opinion on the Council's internal control environment was positive. The resultant Annual Governance Statement highlighted the good corporate governance arrangements in place, apart from those improvements being made in relation to Children's Safeguarding and was approved by the Committee and included within the Council's Statement of Accounts. A revised Local Code of Corporate Governance was also agreed.

- g) The annual Statement of Accounts 2018/19 (subject to audit) was issued to the Committee members by the end of May 2019. The audited accounts were presented at the July 2019 meeting. The External Auditor commented positively on the arrangements the Council has in place with regard to the production of the accounts and the good relationship which allowed the audit to be completed within the restricted timeframe.
- h) The Committee received reports in relation to the Council's Treasury Management arrangements to receive assurance that they are appropriate and approved the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy. The Committee asked questions in relation to various aspects of the reports.
- i) The Committee received a report in relation to the review of the effectiveness of Internal Audit which had been undertaken by the Council's external auditors. The review concluded that *'the IA is compliant with the requirements of the PSIAS [Public Sector Internal Audit Standards] and the application note'*.
- j) Included within the Risk and Assurance Map update reports the Committee was provided with information regarding the areas of counter fraud work undertaken and the results of this work. No particular concerns were highlighted.
- k) The Committee received the Data Protection Annual Report 2018/19 which will be reported to the Committee on an annual basis moving forward. Members asked questions in relation to the arrangements in place. In addition, a report presenting the positive outcome of an inspection of the Council's arrangements to comply with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act was provided.

3.3 From the reports presented the Committee has been proactively monitoring activity in a number of important areas, as follows:

- *Risk and Assurance Map* – The Committee closely monitored activity in relation to the implementation of improvements in the financial arrangements of Together for Children Sunderland Ltd and the systems in place for administering Adult Social Care Personal Budgets. Senior Officers provided updates in relation to these areas.
- *Treasury Management* – The Committee has received regular updates regarding the Council's performance in relation to Treasury Management.
- *Internal Audit* - The Committee has received independent assurance that the Internal Audit service complies with the relevant professional standards.

- 3.4 It can be seen that the work of the committee is wide ranging with members monitoring performance more closely in those areas where it was deemed appropriate.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 The Committee is asked to consider the report and provide any comments for inclusion prior to the report being presented to Council.

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**5 February 2021****ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2019/2020****Report of the Executive Director of Corporate Services****1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report details the external auditor's (Mazars) Annual Audit Letter (AAL) covering the year 2019/2020. A copy is attached. The AAL will subsequently be referred to Council in March for information.

2.0 Description of Decision

- 2.1 Members are recommended to:
- Consider the Annual Audit Letter and note its contents.

3.0 Introduction

- 3.1 The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice issued by the National Audit Office require auditors to prepare an AAL and issue it to each audited body. The purpose of the AAL is to communicate any key issues arising from the auditor's work to the audited body and its external stakeholders, including members of the public.
- 3.2 The AAL summarises the findings of the 2019/2020 audit, which comprises of two key elements:
- The audit of the Council's financial statements;
 - An assessment of the Council's arrangements to achieve Value For Money in the use of its resources.

4.0 Summary Position

- 4.1 The AAL is positive overall, providing a strong endorsement of the financial management and governance arrangements in place across the Council.
- 4.2 The key findings arising from the audit work were:
- The financial statements give a true and fair view of the Council and the Group's financial position as at 31 March 2020;
 - The financial statements have been prepared properly in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/2020;
 - All other information in the Statement of Accounts is consistent with the audited financial statements;

- That the Council's Whole of Government Accounts Assurance Statement has been unable to be completed yet due to issues with the new system introduced by central government. However, no significant issues are anticipated, subject to the agreed amendments;
- That the auditors did not use powers under s24 of the 2014 Act to issue a report in the public interest or to make written recommendations to the Council.

4.3 The Auditor continues to issue an 'except for' qualification in relation to children's safeguarding services on the Council's Value For Money conclusion. The auditor concluded that the Council had put proper arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, 'except for' the areas highlighted as inadequate by Ofsted in relation to children's safeguarding services. This issue is fully set out on page 17 of the Auditor's correspondence.

5. Alternative Options

5.1 Not applicable as the report is for information only.

6. List of Appendices

6.1 Appendix A - Sunderland City Council Annual Audit Letter 2019/2020.

Annual Audit Letter

Sunderland City Council

Year ending 31 March 2020





Contents

- 01** Executive summary
- 02** Audit of the financial statements
- 03** Value for money conclusion
- 04** Other reporting responsibilities
- 05** Our fees
- 06** Forward look

Our reports are prepared in the context of the 'Statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies' issued by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd. Reports and letters prepared by appointed auditors and addressed to members or officers are prepared for the sole use of the Council. No responsibility is accepted to any member or officer in their individual capacity or to any third party. Our written consent must first be obtained before this document, or any part of it, is disclosed to a third party.

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of the Annual Audit Letter

Our Annual Audit Letter summarises the work we have undertaken as the auditor for Sunderland City Council (the Council) for the year ended 31 March 2020. Although our letter is addressed to the Council, it is designed to be read by a wider audience including members of the public and other external stakeholders.

Our responsibilities are defined by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the 2014 Act) and the Code of Audit Practice issued by the National Audit Office (the NAO). The detailed sections of this letter provide information on those responsibilities, the work we have done to discharge them, and the key findings arising from our work. These are summarised below.

Area of responsibility	Summary
Audit of the financial statements	<p>Our auditor's report issued on 20 November 2020 included our opinion that the financial statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• give a true and fair view of the Council and Group's financial position as at 31 March 2020 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended; and• have been prepared properly in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/20.
Other information published alongside the audited financial statements	<p>Our auditor's report included our opinion that the other information in the Statement of Accounts is consistent with the audited financial statements.</p>
Value for money conclusion	<p>Our auditor's report concluded that we are satisfied that in all significant respects, the Council has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2020, except for the areas assessed as inadequate by Ofsted in their report on Children's Services in July 2018.</p>
Reporting to the group auditor	<p>We have not yet been able to complete our work in line with the group audit instructions, in respect of the Council's WGA return; this is due to issues with the new system. However we do not anticipate any significant issues, subject to the agreed amendments.</p>
Statutory reporting	<p>Our auditor's report confirmed that we did not use our powers under s24 of the 2014 Act to issue a report in the public interest or to make written recommendations to the Council.</p>



2. AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS: Sunderland City Council

Opinion on the financial statements

Unqualified

The scope of our audit and the results of our work

The purpose of our audit is to provide reasonable assurance to users that the financial statements are free from material error. We do this by expressing an opinion on whether the statements are prepared, in all material respects, in line with the relevant financial reporting framework and whether they give a true and fair view of the Council's financial position and of its financial performance.

Our audit was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Audit Practice issued by the NAO, and International Standards on Auditing (ISAs). These require us to consider whether:

- the accounting policies are appropriate to the Council's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed;
- the significant accounting estimates made by management in the preparation of the financial statements are reasonable; and
- the overall presentation of the financial statements provides a true and fair view.

Our auditor's report stated that, in our view, the financial statements give a true and fair view of the Council and Group's financial position as at 31 March 2020 and of its financial performance for the year then ended. We emphasised material uncertainties in our auditor's report, as set out below:

Key Audit Matter - material uncertainty relating to Property, plant and equipment and investment property valuations (Group and Council)

We drew attention to Note 4 of the financial statements, which described the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the valuation of the Council's assets (Land and Buildings / Investment Property) as at 31 March 2020. As disclosed in note 4, the Council's valuers were faced with an unprecedented set of circumstances and considered that less weight could be attached to market evidence which would usually be relied upon to inform valuations. The asset valuations were therefore provided on the basis of 'material valuation uncertainty' and the Council's valuers stated that valuations should be considered with less certainty and a higher degree of caution than usual. Our opinion was not modified in respect of this matter.

Key Audit Matter - material uncertainty relating to the defined benefit liability valuation (Group and Council)

We drew attention to Note 4 of the financial statements, which described the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the valuation of the Authority's share of Tyne and Wear Pension Fund's direct property and pooled residential property investments valuations as at 31 March 2020. As disclosed in Note 4 of the financial statements, the outbreak of Covid-19 has had a significant impact on the number of transactions in the market and consequently the relevant observable data available upon which to base a valuation judgement. As such the Pension Fund's property investment manager included a material valuation uncertainty clause in some of their 31 March 2020 valuation reports, due to the possible impact of Covid-19. Therefore, there was less certainty and a higher degree of caution should be attached to valuations of unquoted property assets than would normally be the case. Our opinion was not modified in respect of this matter.



2. AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS: Sunderland City Council

Opinion on the financial statements

Unqualified

The scope of our audit and the results of our work (continued)

Our approach to materiality

We apply the concept of materiality when planning and performing our audit, and when evaluating the effect of misstatements identified as part of our work. We consider materiality in particular when determining the nature, timing and extent of our audit procedures, and when evaluating the effect of uncorrected misstatements. An item is considered material if its misstatement or omission could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users of the financial statements.

Judgements about materiality are made in the light of surrounding circumstances and are affected by both qualitative and quantitative factors. We set materiality for the financial statements as a whole (financial statement materiality) and a lower level of materiality for specific items of account (specific materiality) because of the nature of certain items or because they attract public interest. We also set a threshold for reporting identified misstatements to the Audit and Governance Committee. We call this our trivial threshold.

The table below provides details of the materiality levels applied in the audit of the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2020:

		Council	Group
Financial statement materiality	Our financial statement materiality is based on 2% of Gross Operating Expenditure at the surplus/deficit on provision of services	£13.538m	£13.898m
Trivial threshold	Our trivial threshold is based on 3% of financial statement materiality	£0.406m	£0.417m



2. AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS: Sunderland City Council

Our response to key audit matters and significant risks

As part of our continuous planning procedures we considered whether there were risks of material misstatement in the Council and Group's financial statements that required special audit consideration. We reported key audit matters, significant risks and key areas of management judgement identified at the planning stage to the Audit and Governance Committee within our Audit Strategy Memorandum and provided details of how we responded to those risks in our Audit Completion Report.

The following tables summarise the identified matters and risks, the work we carried out and our conclusions for the following:

- **key audit matters:** defined benefit liability valuation and property, plant and equipment and investment property valuations;
- **significant risks:** management override of controls, risk of fraud in revenue recognition (fees, charges and other service income), valuation of long and short-term debtors; and
- **key management judgement:** valuation of unquoted equity investments.

Identified key audit matter	Our response	Our findings and conclusions
Defined benefit liability valuation The financial statements contain material pension entries in respect of retirement benefits. The calculation of these pension figures, both assets and liabilities, can be subject to significant volatility and includes estimates based upon a complex interaction of actuarial assumptions. This results in an increased risk of material misstatement. The risk has increased as a result of the economic downturn arising from COVID-19.	How we addressed the key audit matter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we critically evaluated the Council's arrangements (including relevant controls) for making estimates in relation to pension entries within the financial statements; • we challenged the reasonableness of the Actuary's assumptions that underpin the relevant entries made in the financial statements, through the use of an expert commissioned by the National Audit Office; • we assessed the competency, objectivity and independence of the Actuary; • we liaised with the auditors of the Pension Fund to gain assurance that the controls in place at the Pension Fund are operating effectively, in particular given the triennial valuation; • we compared assumptions to expected ranges, using information provided by the consulting actuary engaged by the National Audit Office; and • we agreed data in the Actuary's valuation report for accounting purposes to the relevant accounting entries and disclosures in the Council's financial statements. 	As set out earlier in this letter, we drew attention to the material uncertainty disclosed by the Council in relation to pension fund property investment valuations, as disclosed in the financial statements. Our opinion was not modified in respect of this matter. We did not identify any material misstatement of the Group and Council's pensions liability.



2. AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS: Sunderland City Council

Our response to key audit matters

Identified key audit matter risk	Our response	Our findings and conclusions
<p>Property, Plant and Equipment and Investment Property valuations</p> <p>The financial statements contain material entries on the balance sheet as well as material disclosure notes in relation to the Council's holding of Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE) and Investment Properties (including the Council's PFI shared waste facility).</p> <p>The Council employs a valuation expert to provide information on valuations, however, there remains a high degree of estimation uncertainty associated with the (re)valuations of PPE and Investment Properties due to the significant judgements and number of variables involved.</p> <p>The risk has increased as a result of the economic downturn arising from COVID-19. We note also the Valuation Practice Alert issued by the valuation body The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) recently. This highlighted the use by Valuers, where appropriate, of material uncertainty declarations in their valuation reports.</p>	<p>How we addressed this key audit matter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we assessed the Council's arrangements for ensuring that property, plant and equipment and investment property valuations are reasonable; • we critically assessed the basis of valuations, using third party trend data where appropriate, as part of our challenge of the reasonableness of the valuations provided by Valuer(s), including the PFI shared waste facility; • we considered the competence, skills and experience of the Valuer(s) and the instructions issued to the Valuer(s); • we substantively tested capital expenditure additions and disposals during the year; • we substantively tested the Council's property, plant and equipment and investment properties to gain assurance that they exist and are owned by the Council; • we substantively tested revaluations, including critically reviewing the Council's own consideration of assets not revalued in the year and why they are not materially misstated; • we carried out procedures to gain assurance over the consolidation adjustments for group accounts which impact on property, plant and equipment and associated financial statement areas; • we critically considered any material uncertainties expressed by the Valuer(s) used by the Council and considered any implications on our audit work; and • where necessary, we performed further audit procedures on individual assets to ensure the basis of valuations is appropriate. 	<p>PFI shared waste facility</p> <p>Additional work was required in order for us to gain sufficient and appropriate evidence.</p> <p>Sample testing</p> <p>Our sample testing identified various errors. Based upon an extrapolation these were not material.</p> <p>Significant matters discussed with management</p> <p>We discussed with management arrangements in place for valuations and responding to audit queries. There were issues with the timeliness of information provided, which the Council is seeking to address for future years.</p> <p>Overall</p> <p>As set out earlier in this letter, in our auditor's report, we drew attention to the material uncertainty disclosed by the Council's Valuers.</p> <p>We did not identify any material misstatement of the Group and Council's Property, Plant & Equipment and Investment Properties.</p>



2. AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS: Sunderland City Council

Our response to significant risks

Identified significant risk	Our response	Our findings and conclusions
Management override of controls Management at various levels within an organisation are in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of their ability to manipulate accounting records and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. Because of the unpredictable way in which such override could occur there is a risk of material misstatement due to fraud on all audits.	We addressed the management override of controls risk through performing audit work over accounting estimates, journal entries and significant transactions outside the normal course of business or otherwise unusual.	There were no significant issues arising from our work that we were required to report to you.
Revenue recognition – fees, charges and other service income Our audit methodology incorporates this risk as a significant risk at all audits, although based on the circumstances of each audit, it is rebuttable. We have concluded that we can rebut the presumption of a revenue recognition risk for the majority of the Council's revenue streams, consisting largely of taxation, business rates and grant income. However, we do not feel that sufficient scope exists to rebut this risk in respect of the recognition of fees, charges and other income. This does not imply that we suspect actual or intended manipulation but that we continue to deliver our audit work with appropriate professional scepticism.	We: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> substantively tested fees, charges and other income to ensure they had been correctly classified and recognised; tested journals; and obtained direct confirmation of year-end bank balances and tested the reconciliations to the ledger. 	There were no significant issues arising from our work that we were required to report to you.
Valuation of short and long-term debtors There is an increased risk that the valuation of debtors, both short and long-term, will be impacted by the economic downturn. The Council's long-term debtors includes loans to other bodies and Newcastle Airport. The Council also has provided for the potential impairment of short-term debtors which may be impacted by the economic downturn.	We: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> critically reviewed the basis of valuation of short and long-term debtors, including the Council's assessment of expected credit losses (the latter including the Airport loans); critically reviewed the adequacy of the impairment of debtors allowance; challenged the assumptions made by the Council, in particular in light of the economic downturn. 	There were no significant issues arising from our work that we were required to report to you.



2. AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS: Sunderland City Council

Our response to key management judgements

Identified management judgement	Our response	Our findings and conclusions
Unquoted equity investment valuations The Council has to make judgements in respect of the fair value measurements of unquoted equity investments it holds, including those in Newcastle Airport.	We: <ul style="list-style-type: none">critically reviewed the basis of valuation for the Council's unquoted equity investments; andassessed whether disclosures were in line with the Code of Audit Practice.	There were no significant issues arising from our work that we were required to report to you.



2. AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS: Sunderland City Council

Internal control recommendations

As part of our audit we considered the internal controls in place that are relevant to the preparation of the financial statements. We did this to design audit procedures that allow us to express our opinion on the financial statements, but this did not extend to us expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal controls. We identified the following deficiencies in internal control as part of our audit.

Description of deficiency	Arrangements in place for asset valuations – level 2 (medium priority)
	<p>The Valuer's formal year-end report is a key document, summarising the Valuer's approach and key assumptions. This report was not available until part way through the audit; as it is a key document, it should be available to management before the accounts are authorised for issue. In addition, the Council should consider the capacity within the property section to respond to audit queries promptly, given significant delays experienced this summer. We recognise the pressures during this period, however, there were significant delays in obtaining individual asset valuation reports, which should be readily available in an electronic format.</p> <p>Other issues were identified from our testing, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one piece of land, a car park, for which the Council did not have Land Registry deeds for all parts of the land. Whilst we are satisfied this asset belongs to the Council, formal evidence via Land Registry deeds should be in place; • three assets where there was insufficient evidence of floor plans used in the valuation calculations; and • two assets where the incorrect asset life had been input to the asset register when comparing the information provided by the valuer. There was no impact on the 2019/20 accounts as the incorrect figures would only affect future years' depreciation calculations.
Potential effects	<p>Management do not have sight of the formal year-end Valuer's report before authorising for issue the draft financial statements.</p> <p>Insufficient evidence to support valuations, resulting in errors.</p> <p>Delays to the audit opinion.</p>
Recommendation	<p>Consider the capacity within the Property section in order to ensure that valuations are available on a timely basis, in particular the formal year-end Valuer's report.</p> <p>Consider also the errors arising and strengthen controls in these areas e.g. review of assets to ensure evidence of floor plans is available and also that all relevant assets have been registered with the Land Registry.</p>
Management response	<p>Management accept the issues set out which have arisen due to additional pressures resulting from significant capacity issues within property services, COVID-19 and additional requirements of the external auditors. Action has already been taken to put in place additional capacity to resolve these issues for future years.</p>

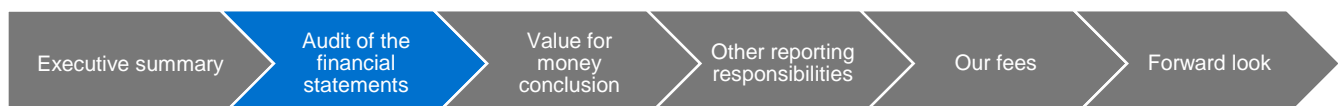


2. AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS: Sunderland City Council

Prior year internal control recommendations

Description of deficiency	Housing benefits system walkthrough - level 2 (medium priority) Our walkthrough of a new claim within the housing benefits system identified two errors, namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none">evidence of Child Tax Credit income was not retained on the system as required; andthe assessment of income incorrectly included a figure for the claimant's capital, resulting in an underpayment of benefit. We were able to obtain evidence for the Child Tax Credit income at the time of our walkthrough, however, this should have been retained on file. We note the assessment of income for benefits is prone to error due to its complexity.
Potential effects	Non-compliance with subsidy requirements. Incorrect calculation of benefits.
Recommendation	The Authority should consider strengthening quality assurance and training in relation to the assessment of income.
Position for 2019/20	No similar issues were identified based on our 2019/20 audit work.

Description of deficiency	Journal controls - level 2 (medium priority) Journals are a key control to prevent and detect fraud and / or error. Within the Council's general ledger, the same person can input and authorise a journal. There are various controls in place around journals, including a review of year-end journals over £1m by senior officers. This control should be extended to cover the full-year including any year-end journals post-March. It is also important that evidence is retained of this check i.e. a clear audit trail.
Potential effects	Risk of fraud and / or error.
Recommendation	The review of material journals should cover the full year, including the closedown period.
Position for 2019/20	This was actioned during the prior year.



2. AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS: Sunderland City Council

Prior year internal control recommendations

Description of deficiency	Reporting actual versus planned savings at the year-end - level 2 (medium priority) The Council has robust monitoring arrangements for the delivery of savings required during the year. At the year-end, the Council reports its outturn position overall, which takes into account the achievement of savings. However, it is not clear which savings were achieved and which were compensated for by other budget underspends.
Potential effects	Lack of clarity on savings, impacting on decision-making.
Recommendation	The Council should expand existing monitoring reports on planned and actual savings to report on year-end outcomes.
Position for 2019/20	The Council refreshed its budget monitoring and reporting approach in 2019/20, with the aims of improved transparency and oversight.

Description of deficiency	Evidence of Treasury Management reconciliation review - level 3 (housekeeping) A monthly reconciliation of the Treasury Management system to the general ledger is carried out. This is checked and authorised by a second person, however, no evidence is retained of this review. Treasury Management is a key system, with highly material figures, therefore such evidence should be retained (this does not have to be via a hardcopy working paper, but could be electronic).
Potential effects	Risk of fraud and / or error.
Recommendation	Retain evidence of the approval of the monthly Treasury Management system reconciliation to the general ledger.
Position for 2019/20	This was actioned in the prior year.



2. AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS: Sunderland City Council

Prior year internal control recommendations

Description of deficiency	<p>Completeness of bank account confirmations - level 3 (housekeeping)</p> <p>Testing identified that the direct confirmation provided to us by the Council's bank had omitted one bank account in respect of a school. In this particular case, the letter we received listed all accounts (including schools) where there was a right of set-off in one section of the letter, but had then omitted one of the schools' actual bank balance in the earlier section of the letter in error. Whilst we were able to gain the assurance required, the completeness and accuracy of bank confirmations is an important source of assurance.</p>
Potential effects	Lack of assurance over bank accounts - a key area.
Recommendation	The Council should liaise with its relationship manager at the bank to discuss the controls in place for ensuring bank confirmations provided are accurate and complete.
Position for 2019/20	<p>This was actioned. There were some issues arising during the 2019/20 audit, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools bank confirmations: the bank confirmation provided this year did not list school bank accounts, therefore these were requested separately; upon receipt, the assurance sought was obtained, with no issues arising as per the prior year. Closed bank accounts: a different issue arose this year, whereby the bank confirmation included an account balance of nil for an account which the Council records showed as 'closed'. The Council has addressed this discrepancy. Bank mandates out of date: in addition, issue arising from obtaining direct confirmations for investments (a linked issue) highlighted that the operational mandate held by the bank (Lloyds) was out of date, therefore, assurance could not be provided to us until this was updated.



3. VALUE FOR MONEY CONCLUSION

Value for money conclusion

Qualified (Except For)

Our audit approach

We are required to consider whether the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The NAO issues guidance to auditors that underpins the work we are required to carry out in order to form our conclusion, and sets out the criterion and sub-criteria that we are required to consider.

The overall criterion is that, 'in all significant respects, the Council had proper arrangements to ensure it took properly informed decisions and deployed resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people.' To assist auditors in reaching a conclusion on this overall criterion, the following sub-criteria are set out by the NAO:

- informed decision-making;
- sustainable resource deployment; and
- working with partners and other third parties.

Our auditor's report, stated that, in all significant respects, the Council put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31st March 2020, except for those areas assessed as inadequate in Ofsted's re-inspection report of July 2018 on children's safeguarding services.

Sub-criteria	Commentary	Arrangements in place?
Informed decision-making	<p><i>City Plan</i></p> <p>Alongside changes in senior management over the last year, the Council has refreshed its strategic approach, as encapsulated in its new City Plan. The City Plan 'Sunderland 2019-2030' will replace the existing Corporate Plan which covers up to and including 2019/20 and will be the Council's overarching strategic plan for the period 2019/2020 to 2029/2030 as well as for the city's Strategic Partnership arrangements.</p> <p>The detail behind the new City Plan is currently being developed; it is important that appropriate measures and targets are in place to help the Council measure progress and inform its decision-making.</p> <p><i>Medium-term financial strategy</i></p> <p>The Council has a robust medium-term financial strategy in place, supported by regular financial reporting in the year. We comment further on the financial resilience of the Council overleaf.</p> <p><i>Risk assurance and mapping</i></p> <p>The Council's system of internal control is subject to Internal Audit using an in-house function, and for 2018/19, the Council's internal auditors have given an opinion that there continues to be an adequate system of internal control.</p> <p>The Council continues to develop its risk assurance and mapping, which provides a useful oversight of the activities of the Council, as well as encompassing its interests in other entities.</p> <p>An Audit and Governance Committee is in place to oversee the governance framework, including risk management and internal audit, and approval of the Council's financial statements.</p>	Yes



3. VALUE FOR MONEY CONCLUSION

Value for money conclusion		Qualified (Except For)
Sub-criteria	Commentary	Arrangements in place?
Informed decision-making (continued)	<p><i>Risk assurance and mapping</i></p> <p>The Council's system of internal control is subject to Internal Audit using an in-house function, and for 2019/20, the Council's internal auditors have given an opinion that there continues to be an adequate system of internal control.</p> <p>The Council continues to develop its risk assurance and mapping, which provides a useful oversight of the activities of the Council, as well as encompassing its interests in other entities. An Audit and Governance Committee is in place to oversee the governance framework, including risk management and internal audit, and approval of the Council's financial statements.</p>	Yes
Sustainable resource deployment	<p>The Council has continued to make good progress in addressing the financial challenges from public sector austerity and has a proven track record of strong budget management and delivering planned budget reductions.</p> <p><i>Financial resilience</i></p> <p>The final revenue outturn for 2019/20 was an underspend of £0.496 million (prior year £0.682 million). The Council has maintained comparatively healthy levels of usable reserves; these have increased to £168.685 million as at 31 March 2020 (£154.022 million at 31 March 2019). Although these are earmarked for specific purposes, they do provide flexibility to manage the short to medium-term financial position.</p> <p>The Council continues to face a funding gap to address in coming years, therefore further savings and / or sources of additional income continue to be required. We comment on this further in the next section on VfM significant risks.</p> <p><i>Capital programme</i></p> <p>The Council has maintained a substantial capital programme of investment projects. The final outturn for 2019/20 was a capital spend of £120.813 million (prior year £80.9 million), and the capital programme for 2020/21 is £155 million.</p> <p>A major part of the Council's asset management strategy involves its interests in Siglion and it's joint venture with South Tyneside Council, IAMP (International Advanced Manufacturing Park). Progress by Siglion and IAMP has continued in 2019/20, with the notable completion of the site which became the North East Nightingale Hospital at the end of March 2020.</p> <p><i>Workforce development</i></p> <p>The Council has placed on record it's formal appreciation to both its staff and those of partner agencies, highlighting the outstanding levels of dedication, commitment, innovation and flexibility shown during this extraordinary period.</p> <p>The sudden changes to ways of working present both a challenge and an opportunity for organisations to make a cultural shift in ways of working.</p>	Yes

3. VALUE FOR MONEY CONCLUSION

Value for money conclusion		Qualified (Except For)
Sub-criteria	Commentary	Arrangements in place?
Working with partners and other third parties	<p>As set out earlier, the Council's City Plan sets out its strategic direction, as well as for its strategic partnership arrangements.</p> <p>Local Resilience Forum arrangements in the North East were formalised towards the end of March, with continued close working to ensure a coordinated response across the region.</p> <p>Continuing to build upon working arrangements with the local health economy is important, with work continuing in 2019/20 to develop the new 'All Together Better' alliance set up from 1 April 2019 in Sunderland which brings together health and social care professionals together in commissioning services in the most effective manner to support individuals.</p> <p>The Council continues to work closely with its various interests, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Together for Children (TfC); • Sunderland Care and Support (SCAS); • Sunderland Homes; • Siglion; • Sunderland Lifestyle Partnership; and • International Advanced Manufacturing Park. <p>The Council has in particular worked closely with TfC and SCAS following COVID-19, recognising their core role in responding to the pandemic and supporting the residents of Sunderland.</p> <p>The use of separate entities and joint ventures by the Council to achieve its aims presents both opportunities and challenges. It is important that good governance arrangements continue to be maintained in respect of these various interests, as well as wider partnership working arrangements.</p>	Yes - other than in respect of those aspects of Children's Services rated as inadequate by Ofsted (see significant risks section overleaf).



3. VALUE FOR MONEY CONCLUSION

Significant audit risks

The NAO's guidance requires us to carry out work to identify whether or not a risk to our conclusion exists. Risk, in the context of our work, is the risk that we come to an incorrect conclusion rather than the risk of the arrangements in place at the Council being inadequate. In our Audit Strategy Memorandum, we reported that we had identified two significant Value for Money (VFM) risks:

- responding to financial pressures; and
- Ofsted's inspection of Children's Services.

The work we carried out in relation to significant risks is outlined below.

Risk	Work undertaken	Conclusion
Responding to financial pressures The Council faces financial pressures from reduced funding and continues to identify plans to deliver future savings and improvements, including alternative models of service delivery. Without robust budgetary control and delivery of its action plans, the Council's financial resilience and service performance could deteriorate.	We reviewed budget monitoring and reporting and we also considered the adequacy of plans that are developed to deliver savings and improvements. The Council set out it needed to deliver savings of approximately £17.36 million for 2019/20. It reported it had delivered £10.59 million or 61% of this target by the year-end, as compared to 85% in the prior year. However, the Council was able to mitigate the shortfall via other underspends, delivering an overall underspend of £0.496 million for 2019/20. <i>Review of updated medium-term financial strategy (MTFS)</i> The Council is developing plans to meet the funding gap identified for future years and recognises this remains very challenging, in particular given the scale of savings already delivered to date and the impact of the pandemic. It is in the process of updating its medium-term financial strategy; this is a key part of ensuring it continues to have appropriate arrangements in place.	We obtained the assurance sought, with no significant issues arising.



3. VALUE FOR MONEY CONCLUSION

Significant audit risks (continued)

Risk	Work undertaken	Conclusion
Ofsted inspection: Children's Services There is a risk Council does not make the required improvements to Children's Services, or does not make the improvements rapidly enough.	<p>We considered the progress made by the Council in relation to Children's Services. This requires an expert judgement, therefore, we have relied on the updated assessment of Ofsted made in July 2018. This concluded that whilst some improvement had been made, their overall assessment remained that Children's Services was 'inadequate'.</p> <p>We note the most recent Ofsted monitoring visit which reported in early 2020; this highlighted some areas of improved performance, but does not constitute a re-inspection.</p> <p>As a result of the pandemic, the decision to pause all national Ofsted activity has impacted on the Council's planned future Ofsted visits. We understand graded inspections will recommence from April 2021, which means there will have been a whole year without graded inspections.</p>	<p>Children's Services have been rated as 'inadequate' by Ofsted.</p> <p>This resulted in a qualification of our VFM conclusion, on an 'except for' basis (i.e. that adequate arrangements are in place, except for those aspects assessed as inadequate by Ofsted).</p>



4. OTHER REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES

Exercise of statutory reporting powers	No matters to report
Completion of group audit reporting requirements	See below
Other information published alongside the audited financial statements	Consistent

The NAO's Code of Audit Practice and the 2014 Act place wider reporting responsibilities on us, as the Council's external auditor. We set out below, the context of these reporting responsibilities and our findings for each.

Matters on which we report by exception

The 2014 Act provides us with specific powers where matters come to our attention that, in our judgement, require reporting action to be taken. We have the power to:

- issue a report in the public interest;
- make statutory recommendations that must be considered and responded to publicly;
- apply to the court for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to law; and
- issue an advisory notice under schedule 8 of the 2014 Act.

We have not exercised any of these statutory reporting powers.

The 2014 Act also gives rights to local electors and other parties, such as the right to ask questions of the auditor and the right to make an objection to an item of account. We did not receive any such objections or questions.

Reporting to the NAO in respect of Whole of Government Accounts consolidation data

The NAO, as group auditor, requires us to complete the WGA Assurance Statement in respect of its consolidation data, and to carry out certain tests on the data. We have not yet been able to complete our work in line with the group audit instructions, in respect of the Council's WGA return; this is due to issues with the new system. However we do not anticipate any significant issues, subject to the agreed amendments.

Other information published alongside the financial statements

The Code of Audit Practice requires us to consider whether information published alongside the financial statements is consistent with those statements and our knowledge and understanding of the Council. In our opinion, the other information in the Statement of Accounts is consistent with the audited financial statements.



5. OUR FEES

Fees for work as the Council's auditor

We reported our proposed fees for the delivery of our work in the Audit Strategy Memorandum, presented to the Audit and Governance Committee in August 2020.

For the 2019/20 financial year, our fees are as follows:

Area of work	2019/20 proposed fee	2019/20 final fee
Delivery of audit work under the NAO Code of Audit Practice	£104,546	See note*
Housing Benefit subsidy claim: agreed upon procedures	£10,000	See note**
Other non-Code work		
• Skills Funding Agency annual return	£3,726	£3,726
• Teachers' Pension annual return	£4,000	£4,000

* At the time of preparing this report, we are proposing additional fees to meet additional work required for:

- additional regulatory requirements in respect of land and building and investment property valuations, including additional considerations for material uncertainty disclosures made by the Valuer as a result of the pandemic;
- additional regulatory requirements in respect of the defined benefit liability valuation, including additional considerations for material uncertainty disclosures in respect of the Council's share of the Pension Fund assets as a result of the pandemic;
- specific additional work in 2019/20 for the Council's valuation of its shared waste facility; and
- additional work as a result of the Council's status as a 'public interest entity'.

We are not able to confirm the final amount, as any fee variations are subject to challenge and scrutiny by Public Sector Audit Appointments at the time of issuing this report.

** At the time of preparing this report, this work, which has a revised deadline of 31 January 2021, is on-going.



6. FORWARD LOOK

Financial outlook

The COVID-19 pandemic and the consequences of local and regional lockdowns and restrictions will have a significant impact on the UK economy for years to come. The pandemic has created significant uncertainties and pressures in the Council's medium term financial planning arrangements. Clarity over the impact will only be obtained when the virus has been brought under control and the impact on the economy becomes clearer. The Council is monitoring and updating plans but is anticipating future pressures in the income it receives. In particular, Collection Fund income is likely to be affected by any negative impact to the local and national economy. Public spending is also likely to be tightly controlled as the Government begins to manage the levels of borrowing incurred.

There is also uncertainty stemming from the UK's new trading arrangements with the European Union. While this may not directly impact on the Council's supply chains, the impact on the overall economy may create indirect pressures.

It is critical that the Council continues to monitor and refresh its medium term financial strategy, so that potential funding shortfalls can be identified as early as possible and mitigations identified to minimise the impact on services.

Strategic and operational challenges

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the services provided by the Council. Services have either been suspended or redesigned in order for them to be delivered in a safe manner for officers and users. It is likely that these measures will continue until the roll out of a vaccine and coronavirus is brought under control.

The Council has set out that its key priority continues to be the health and wellbeing of Sunderland residents, staff and businesses. Following the pandemic, the Council is refocusing its plans to focus on recovery, in particular the local economy and continued support to its communities, with the core ambitions of the City Plan remaining central to its plans in the recovery phase.

As a result of COVID-19, Cabinet approved a Health Inequalities Strategy in order to have an evidence-based approach that engages the wider Council and partners, strengthening the recovery response to reduce the impact of Covid-19 on identified at risk groups and reducing the impact on existing health inequalities.

How we will work with the Council

In terms of the technical challenges around the production of the statement of accounts, we will continue to offer accounting workshops to finance officers, and the audit team will continue to share our knowledge of new accounting developments. We will also be on hand to discuss any issues as and when they arise.

Given the impact of COVID-19 on the 2019/20 reporting timetable, there is some uncertainty in respect of the 2020/21 completion dates. We will continue to work with the finance team to ensure timely completion of our audit work.

We will also share relevant insights that we have as a national and international accounting and advisory firm with experience of working with other public sector and commercial service providers.



6. FORWARD LOOK

Changes to the Code of Audit Practice

The Code of Audit Practice (the Audit Code), issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General, prescribes the way we carry out our responsibilities as your auditors. On 1st April 2020 a new Code came in to force and will apply to our work from 2020/21 onwards.

The new Audit Code continues to apply the requirements of International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) to our audit of the financial statements. While there are changes to the ISAs that are effective from 2020/21 the Audit Code has not introduced any changes to the scope of our audit of the financial statements. We will continue to give our opinion on the financial statements in our independent auditor's report.

There are, however, significant changes to the work on value for money arrangements, and the way we report the outcomes of our work to you.

The auditor's work on value for money arrangements

From 2020/21 we are still required to satisfy ourselves that you have made proper arrangements for securing the economy, efficiency and effectiveness in your use of resources, however, unlike under the 2015 Audit Code, we will no longer report in the form of a conclusion on arrangements. Instead, where our work identifies significant weaknesses in arrangements, we are required to report those weaknesses to you, along with the actions that need to be taken to address those weaknesses.

Our work on value for money arrangements will focus on three criteria, specified in the revised Audit Code:

- financial sustainability: how the body plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services;
- governance: how the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks; and
- improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness: how the body uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services.

Under the new Audit Code we will be expected to report and make recommendations as soon as we identify a significant weakness in arrangements, as opposed to reporting our conclusion on arrangements at the end of the audit cycle as has previously been the case.

Reporting the results of the auditor's work

We currently issue you with an Annual Audit Letter which provides a summary of our work across all aspects of our audit. From 2020/21 the Annual Audit Letter will be replaced by the Auditor's Annual Report. This will continue to provide a summary of our work over the year of audit but will also include a detailed commentary on your arrangements in place to achieve economy, efficiency and effectiveness. This commentary replaces the conclusion on arrangements that was previously provided and will include details of any significant weakness identified and reported to you, follow up of any previous recommendations made, and the our view as to whether recommendations have been implemented satisfactorily.

The guidance supporting the new Audit Code is being developed by the National Audit Office and we will provide you with any further updates to our approach arising from this guidance when it is release. In particular we will communicate any increases in work which will impact on the audit fees charged.



6. FORWARD LOOK

Redmond Review

In September 2020, Sir Tony Redmond published the findings of his independent review into the oversight of local audit and the transparency of local authority financial reporting. The report makes several recommendations that, if implemented, could affect both the financial statements that local authorities are required to prepare and the work that we as auditors are required to do.

The report and recommendations are wide-ranging, and includes:

- the creation of the Office of Local Audit and Regulation (OLAR), be created to manage, oversee and regulate local audit;
- reviewing reporting deadlines;
- reviewing governance arrangements in local authorities, including the membership of the Audit Committee; and
- increasing transparency and reducing the complexity of local authority financial statements.

The recommendations and findings will now be considered by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and we look forward to working with all stakeholders to implement changes to ensure the development and sustainability of local audit.

The full report is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-financial-reporting-and-external-audit-independent-review>



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Mazars is an internationally integrated partnership, specialising in audit, accountancy, advisory, tax and legal services*. Operating in over 90 countries and territories around the world, we draw on the expertise of 40,400 professionals – 24,400 in Mazars' integrated partnership and 16,000 via the Mazars North America Alliance – to assist clients of all sizes at every stage in their development.

*where permitted under applicable country laws

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Report of the Human Resources Committee

The HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE reports and recommends as follows:-

1. Pay Policy Statement 2021-2022

That at its meeting on 25 February 2021, the Human Resources Committee considered a report of the Executive Director of Corporate Services (copy attached) on the Pay Policy Statement for 2021-2022 and seeking approval for its publication.

Accordingly, the Human Resources Committee recommended to Council that the Pay Policy Statement 2021-2022 be approved and published on the Council's website by 31 March 2021.

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

25 FEBRUARY 2021

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2021-22

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to recommend that HR Committee approve for publication, after agreement by Council on 24th March 2021, the Pay Policy Statement for 2021-22.

2. Description of Decision (Recommendation)

- 2.1 The HR Committee is invited to consider the information set out in this report and approve for publication, after agreement by Council on 24th March 2021, the Pay Policy Statement for 2021-22.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Localism Act 2011 includes the requirement for local authorities to produce a Pay Policy Statement; to be updated, approved by full Council and published annually on the Authority's website. The Council has complied with this requirement each year since March 2012.
- 3.2 The Pay Policy Statement now needs to be updated, approved by Council at their meeting on 24th March 2021 and published by 31st March 2021. The 2020-21 Pay Policy is currently published on the Council's website, alongside the Statement of Accounts. This can be accessed at: <https://www.sunderland.gov.uk/pay-policy>.
- 3.3 There are other, related requirements which are set out here for background information. On 3rd October 2014 the Government issued a revised Local Government Transparency Code. This came into force on 31st October 2014 under Section 2 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980. As part of the Code, local authorities are now required to publish certain data sets. The HR implications of the mandatory information are the annual publication of:
- An **Organisation chart** covering employees in the top three levels of the organisation (including grade, job title, local authority department and team, whether permanent or temporary staff, contact details, salary in £5,000 brackets, consistent with the details published for Senior Salaries, and the maximum salaries for the grade).

- Annual publication of **Trade union facility time** (including total number and full time equivalent of staff who are union representatives, and the total number and full time equivalent of union representatives who devote at least 50% of their time to union activity.)
- Senior salaries.
- Pay multiple – the ratio between the highest paid salary and the median salary of the whole of the authority's workforce.

The information must be published at least annually and not later than one month after the year to which the data and information is applicable.

These data sets are published on the Council's website under Transparency alongside the Senior Pay information and can be accessed at:

<http://www.sunderland.gov.uk>, or by clicking [Transparency](#)

- 3.4 In preparing the Pay Policy Statement for approval and publication, the Council must have regard to the guidance and supplementary guidance issued by the (former) DCLG:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/85886/Final_Supplementary_Pay_Accountability_Guidance_20_Feb.pdf

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5956/2091042.pdf

- 3.5 Since 2018 requirements on Gender Pay Gap reporting apply to organisations with 250+ employees, in accordance with Regulations made in 2017 under the umbrella of the Equality Act 2010.

4. Proposal

- 4.1 The proposed draft Pay Policy Statement 2021-22 is attached as an Appendix to this report. The amendments in comparison with the 2020-21 Pay Policy Statement are: changes to dates, a national increase in JNC pay rates, and minor changes to the presentation of the statement. The information contained in the Statement is required to be that which applies at the date of publication, i.e. 31st March 2021.

- 4.2 One way of measuring pay relationships is to use a pay multiple. It is mandatory to publish the Median Pay Multiple (the ratio between the highest paid taxable earnings for the given year and the median earnings figure of the whole of the Council's workforce). This is shown in the pay policy statement. The highest paid is £191,600.00 and the median paid is £21,748.00, therefore the ratio is 8.81:1. This is largely unchanged from the previous year, when the ratio was 8.80:1.

5. Reason for Decision

- 5.1 The Localism Act 2011 includes the requirement for local authorities to produce and publish a Pay Policy Statement.

6. Alternative Options

- 6.1 There are no alternative options recommended.

DRAFT

Sunderland City Council

Pay Policy Statement 2021-22

1. Introduction and Purpose

This Pay Policy Statement sets out the Council's approach to pay policy in accordance with the requirements of section 38 of the Localism Act 2011.

The purpose of this statement is to provide transparency with regard to the Council's approach to setting the pay of its employees by identifying:

- The methods by which salaries of all employees are determined.
- The detail and level of remuneration of the Council's most senior staff, i.e. 'chief officers' as defined by the relevant legislation.
- The remuneration of the lowest paid employees.
- The relationship between the remuneration of its Chief Officers and the remuneration of employees who are not Chief Officers.

This Pay Policy Statement has been approved by the Council and applies to the financial year 2021 – 2022.

The arrangements set out within this document do not extend to those employees who are employed within the control of school governing boards.

2. Other Legislation Relevant to Pay and Remuneration

Under section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to appoint officers on such reasonable terms and conditions as the authority thinks fit, subject to Section 41 of the Localism Act 2011 (requirement for determinations relating to terms and conditions of chief officers to comply with the pay policy statement.)

In determining the pay and remuneration of all of its employees, the Council will comply with all relevant legislation. This includes legislation such as the Equality Act 2010, Part Time Employment (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000 and where relevant, the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Earnings) Regulations. There is also significant legislation relating to pensions and payments upon termination of employment.

Sunderland Council is mindful of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and is an equal opportunity employer. This Pay Policy Statement forms part of our policies to promote equality in pay practices. By ensuring transparency of senior pay and the relationship with pay of other employees, it will help ensure a fair approach which meets our equality objectives.

The Local Government Transparency Code 2014, published by the Government and which came into force on 31st October 2014 under section 2 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980, builds on the requirement for local authorities in creating greater transparency through the publication of public data. This includes publishing details of senior employee salaries, including a list of responsibilities, the inclusion of bonus details for all senior employees whose salary exceeds £50,000 and publication of the data on the authority's website. In line with this Code, the pay multiple in this Pay Policy now measures the ratio between the highest paid salary and the median salary of the whole of the authority's workforce.

These related data sets are published annually, including:

- An Organisation chart covering the top three levels of the organisation (including grade, job title, local authority department and team, whether permanent or temporary staff, contact details, salary in £5,000 brackets, consistent with the details published for Senior Salaries, and the maximum salaries for the grade). Link to - Organisation Chart
- Senior Salaries – Senior employees (remuneration in the previous financial year, and Responsibilities). Link to - Senior Salaries
- Median Pay Multiple (the ratio between the highest paid taxable earnings for the given year and the median earnings figure of the whole of the council's workforce). The highest paid is £191,600.00 and the median paid is £21,748.00, therefore the ratio is 8.81:1.

Further information on senior pay is also published on the Council's website, alongside the Statement of Accounts. This can be accessed at:

<http://www.sunderland.gov.uk> and search for Senior Pay, or Website URL:
<http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=4773>

3. Pay

Pay Policy

Pay policy is determined by the Council, following consideration of recommendations of the Council's HR Committee which is composed of elected members. This ensures that decisions in relation to workforce pay are taken by those who are directly accountable to local people.

Pay Structure

The Council operates a graded salary structure of incremental salary scales with a range of spinal column points (pay points), using the nationally negotiated pay spines as the basis for its local pay structures, together with some locally determined rates.

The large majority of the Council's workforce are covered by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) pay spine (spinal column points 3-43), plus some additional local spinal column points (44-52).

The salary figures in this report are gross salary figures before deductions, such as under salary sacrifice schemes, which are made at the discretion of the employee.

Pay Awards

National and Provincial Agreements for the Council's workforce include the negotiation of collective agreements on pay and conditions, which are reviewed and negotiated annually, through agreements of the relevant national bodies such as the National Employers' Organisation for Local Government Services, on behalf of all local authorities in England and Wales, and the signatory Trade Unions. The annual pay awards, if any, take account of a number of issues, including central government guidance, what can be agreed with the relevant trade unions, the general economic situation, the results of consultation, the affordability position of local authorities, the average rate of pay settlements across the economy, the employee relations climate, etc. While the Council as an Employer is consulted as part of the negotiation process, it does not control the level of any national pay award.

Grading of Posts

The grading of posts is approved by either the HR Committee or under delegated powers by the Executive Director of Corporate Services. During 2016 all posts in the council were subject to a grading review following which the grades of all posts are determined using a job evaluation approach called job family modelling.

Appointment to New and Existing Posts

Appointments are made in accordance with the Council's policies and procedures on recruitment and selection. For posts graded on incremental scales, appointments are normally made at the minimum of the salary grade, with employees progressing to the maximum point of the salary range via annual incremental progression where applicable, subject to relevant criteria being met. While provision exists to appoint above the minimum of the grade, this is applied in exceptional circumstances only. The equality impact of the decision is a key issue. In cases where the criteria to appoint above the minimum of the grade is met, records are maintained for use in assessing recruitment and retention trends and for monitoring purposes.

Market Pay Supplements

From time to time it may be necessary to take account of the external pay levels in the labour market in order to attract and retain employees with particular experience, skills and capability. Where necessary, the Council will ensure the requirement for such is objectively justified by reference to clear and transparent evidence of relevant market comparators, using data sources available from within the relevant sector.

4. Senior Management Pay

Definition of Senior Management

For the purposes of this statement, senior management means 'chief officers' as defined within the Localism Act.

Specifically:

- “2 (a) The head of its paid service designated under section 4(1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989;
(b) its monitoring officer designated under section 5(1) of that Act;
(c) a statutory chief officer mentioned in section 2(6) of that Act;
(d) a non-statutory chief officer mentioned in section 2(7) of that Act;
(e) a deputy chief officer mentioned in section 2(8) of that Act.”

Key Principles

The Chief Officer pay structure is designed to be easily understood and be transparent to the post holders, key stakeholders and the public.

The structure and level of the pay arrangements is designed to enable the Council to attract, motivate, and retain key senior staff for the authority within a national recruitment context, to lead the Council's workforce and delivery of the Council's plans and priorities.

The pay structure is based upon salaries with clear differentials between levels of work/job size, within a range that is affordable now, will remain so for the medium term, and will be subject to review to ensure it continues to remain fit for purpose. The remuneration for roles at this level has been set following independent advice from external consultants. In setting the relevant pay levels a range of background factors were taken into consideration for senior pay alongside the significant scope and scale of the Authority in the national context.

For example, the scope and scale of the Chief Executive's post encompasses responsibilities commensurate with a large city authority, including responsibility for:

- The provision of wide-ranging services to 277,417 residents of Sunderland. (Source: Office for National Statistics 2019 Mid-Year Estimate)
- An overall budget of £669.2million for service commissioning and delivery.
- Undertaking the role of the Head of Paid Service to 4408 employees. (* Figures include maintained schools. This data is accurate at 1st January 2021 but changes on a week by week basis).
- Lead Policy Advisor to the Council's 75 Elected Members

From time to time it may be necessary to pay supplements to individual employees as part of their employment contract where specific circumstances require this, such as market pay supplements.

Other terms and conditions of employment for this group are as defined within the Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Executives, and the Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Officers, of Local Authorities Conditions of Service handbooks, with discretion to set actual pay levels at a local level, but within a national negotiating framework and nationally agreed pay awards. These national provisions are supplemented by the Council's local employment policies. Like all council employees, holders of these posts are eligible to join the nationally defined Local Government Pension Scheme.

The individual elements of the remuneration package are:

a) Chief Executive

The current salary of the post is £191,600.

b) Executive Directors

The current salary of these posts falls within a range called Leadership 3 of £108,259 rising to a maximum of £128,481. The post of Executive Director of Public Health & Integrated Commissioning salary is £128,481. The following posts are paid an additional market supplement to give a spot salary of £140,044 for the current posts: Executive Director of Neighbourhoods; Executive Director of Corporate Services (section 151 Officer); Executive Director of Children's Services (Chief Executive of Together for Children), and £150,552 for the Executive Director of City Development.

c) The designated Monitoring Officer, which is the Assistant Director of Law and Governance, is paid within a range called Leadership 5 of £84,383 - £95,439.

d) Assistant Directors and other officers reporting directly to one of the statutory or non-statutory chief officers listed in (b) and (c) above.

The current salaries of these posts fall within four different ranges: Leadership 4 (£95,439 - £108,259), Leadership 5 (£84,383 - £95,439); Leadership 6 (£72,424 - £84,383); Leadership 7 (£60,838 - £72,424). For certain posts, a market supplement is paid, in line with the principles above.

Election Fees

The designated Returning Officer for the Council, who is currently the Chief Executive, also carries out the role of Acting Returning Officer at UK parliamentary elections and local returning/counting officer at European elections and at other referenda or electoral processes that occur from time to time. These additional roles usually carry an entitlement to payment from central government budgets at levels set by order in relation to each poll. The payment scales for national elections are set out in a Statutory Instrument laid before Parliament in respect of each individual election and are applied to both national and local elections. The Statutory Instruments are published on www.legislation.gov.uk

5. Lowest Paid Employee Information

The definition of the lowest paid employees are those employed in jobs which are paid at Grade 1, spinal column point 3, (£18,562 per annum for a full time 37 hour week post as at 31st March 2021), this being the lowest salary paid to employees, other than apprentices, in line with the Council's decision to comply with the recommended minimum hourly rate of the Living Wage Foundation.

The salaries attributable to apprentices depend on age and are those set out within the National Minimum Wage legislation. (Given the specific nature of these appointments, the Council does not include apprentices within the definition of lowest paid employees for the purposes of this policy statement).

6. Pay Multiple

One way of measuring pay relationships is to use a pay multiple. The Median Pay Multiple (the ratio between the highest paid taxable earnings for the given year and the median earnings figure of the whole of the Council's workforce) is 8.81:1.

(The highest pay is £191,600 and the median pay is £21,748).

7. Pension Schemes

There are three pension schemes covering the Council's employees.

The majority of employees are entitled to join the Local Government Pension Scheme and receive benefits in accordance with the provisions of that Scheme as applied by the Council.

Centrally employed Teachers are entitled to join the Teachers' Pension Scheme and receive benefits in accordance with the provisions of that Scheme.

Public Health employees are members of the NHS Pension Scheme and continue to receive benefits in accordance with the provisions of that Scheme.

8. Payments on Termination of Employment

The Council's approach to discretionary payments on termination of employment or ceasing to hold office is set out within the Council's policy statement on discretions in accordance with the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006.

There are also occasions when settlement agreements may need to be put in place to resolve employment matters and to protect the Council's interests, in line with value for money criteria, and the efficient exercise of the Council's functions. Decisions on such matters are delegated to the Assistant Director of Law and Governance under the Council's Constitution, and are taken, where appropriate, in consultation with the Head of Paid Service and Section 151 Officer.

Action on Petitions

ACTION TAKEN ON PETITIONS

Council Members are asked to note the action taken in relation to the under-mentioned petitions which were presented to Council:-

(i) Petition from residents requesting the Council to consider introducing traffic calming to Briar Lea and Bowes Lea

At the meeting of the Council on 29 January 2021, an e-petition was presented by Councillor Lawson containing 129 signatures from residents asking the Council to provide traffic calming measures at Briar Lea and Bowes Lea to discourage traffic from using these streets as a short cut.

The roads stated in the petition are residential streets that can be used as an alternative route from Golf Course Road to Chester Road in Shiney Row.

Traffic may find it difficult to leave Golf Course Road due to the amount of traffic driving through Shiney Row from the shopping area, especially during peak hours.

There is currently no traffic calming measures to deter drivers from cutting through the residential estate to access Chester Road.

The Golf Course Road and Chester Road junction has recently been widened to improve junction capacity as a result of the ongoing housing developments in the area.

Officers considered the prioritisation of traffic management schemes using the following criteria which are being reviewed:-

- Number of road traffic accidents/collisions on the road or area in question resulting in personal injury, in the past 3 years (Using Police generated information). This includes an analysis of the cause and a detailed assessment of the incident to determine if the accident/collision could have been avoided using engineering measures.
- Proximity of schools in relation to the route of concern. Exposure of vulnerable road users to significant levels of vehicular traffic and a high level of potential conflict between pedestrians and vehicles on the route.
- The level of vehicle speeds in relation to the route's speed limit
- Improving access and reducing congestion especially in the commercial and industrial areas of the City

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

Briar Lea and Bowes Lea will be included in the list for investigation when the new prioritisation criteria is introduced.

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

(ii) Petition requesting the shortening the bus stop clearway at 3 – 10 Smith's Terrace, Easington Lane

At the meeting of the Council on 29 January 2020, a petition was presented by Councillor Turner containing 211 signatures from customers, residents and the business at 3 – 10 Smith's Terrace, Easington Lane asking for the length of marked bus stop clearway at Smiths Terrace (bottom of Pemberton's Bank, Easington Lane) to be shortened.

The street in question has residential properties and a local convenience store which has been located there for 23 years. A bus stop clearway was introduced to assist the movement of public transport outside these properties. The street is located on the A182. The rear of the residential properties back onto a very narrow back lane which limits the parking provision. The residents park only on one side generally and therefore also park at the front of the properties on the A182.

Following investigation by officers it was agreed that this bus stop clearway be reduced in length by 14 metres and this will still enable buses to manoeuvre in and out of the stop while creating parking provision for customers of the shop and residential properties. The relining costs to be taken from the road marking budget.

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

(iii) Petition requesting the installation of traffic calming on Ramsgate Road, Red House and further correspondence for measures on the ring road including Redcar Road, Redhill Road and Rhodesia Road

At the meeting of the Council on 25 March 2020, a petition was presented by Councillor Stewart containing 106 signatures from residents asking the Council to introduce traffic calming on Ramsgate Road, Red House including Redcar Road, Redhill Road and Rhodesia Road.

The Council has plans to improve the area of the Willowfields Primary School development. This part of the scheme is located on Redcar Road between Ramsgate Road / Beechwood Crescent and comprises a school safety zone, a humped zebra crossing, speed cushions, no stopping on school keep clear and bus stop clearway road markings, no waiting at any time restrictions and road narrowings with priority / give way shuttle working.

In addition, there is an established 20 mph zone in the area with accompanying signs and traffic calming. It was deemed appropriate to look at the entire area to discuss if any further measures could be introduced.

Officers will continue to work with Councillors to establish the appropriate solutions for this petition. Any proposals will be reported to residents via the consultation process.

(iv) Petition requesting the Council to make Tunstall Hope Road safer for Local Residents

At the meeting of the Council on 23 September 2020, a petition was presented by Councillor P. Smith containing 333 signatures from local residents asking the Council to make Tunstall Hope Road safer for local residents.

The road is in a rural setting that links Leechmere Road to Paddock Lane in Silksworth. There are two residential properties and one farm located on this road. One property is accessed by a short road.

The current speed limit is 40mph and the road has hazard signs and reflective marker posts along its route.

There have been no recorded personal injury accidents during the previous 10-year period to suggest there is a safety issue.

Following receipt of the petition, a detailed investigation has been carried out.

The existing 40mph speed limit begins to the south of Harperley Drive. Consideration has been given to reducing the speed limit partially on the northern section of road as you enter the rural surroundings.

Speed surveys have been undertaken at northern and southern points along Tunstall Hope Road at locations where speeds would be at a maximum. Both surveys indicated that most drivers are travelling within the existing 40mph speed limit.

It was therefore concluded that it may be beneficial to partially reduce the existing 40mph speed limit to 30mph on the northern section of Tunstall Hope Road to the access road of the first property at Tunstall Hope Lodge. This could have a downward influence on vehicle speeds through this section of road. There is vehicle access on either side of this section which also has double white line road markings. Works will be funded from the programme of minor works scheme budget.

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

(v) Petition from residents requesting the upgrade of the Chester Road / Holborn Road Junction

At the meeting of Council on 23 September 2020 a petition was presented by Councillor Haswell, on behalf of Ward Councillors in Pallion and Sandhill Wards, containing 36 signatures from residents requesting the upgrade of the Chester Road / Holborn Road Junction.

The petition called on the Department for Transport to approve the Transforming Cities Fund application to upgrade Chester Road / Holborn Road to make it a fully signalised junction.

A bid has been submitted by the Council to the Transforming Cities Fund to the Department for Transport. The fund is to be used on improvements to productivity and to spread prosperity through investment in public and sustainable transport in some of the largest English city regions.

The petition has been forwarded to the Department for Transport as supplementary evidence in support of the funding application. If unsuccessful, the Council will continue to actively seek suitable funding to deliver a scheme to deliver improvements to this junction.

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

(vi) Petition from residents requesting the introduction of a pedestrian crossing island on Fordfield Road

At the meeting of Council on 18 November 2020 a petition was presented by Councillor Haswell containing 14 signatures from residents requesting the Council to install a pedestrian island outside Dovecote Meadows on Fordfield Road to aid the elderly residents cross the road.

The area of road stated in the petition is outside Dovecote Meadows, which provides retirement housing and extra care for older people. The road is subject to a 20mph speed limit and there has recently been dropped crossing points with tactile paving installed outside this housing facility. Additionally, there have been warning signs installed to indicate that vulnerable pedestrians may be crossing.

The measures above were introduced in response to a petition submitted in 2019.

Officers have investigated the possibility of installing pedestrian refuge, however the road is under 7.5 metres which is too narrow to safely accommodate a refuge.

Due to the number of vulnerable pedestrians likely to use this crossing, the road width prevents an acceptable sized refuge to accommodate wheelchair users and their accompanying carer from being installed.

Consideration must also be given to larger vehicles such as HGVs, ambulances etc to ensure that their turning and movement is not impeded by the installation of such crossings. This would also create a safety concern for any pedestrians using this type of crossing facility.

Given the reasons outlined above, the petition was declined.

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

Motions on Notice

MOTIONS ON NOTICE

Council Members are asked to consider the under-mentioned Motions:-

1. Vaccines for All

This Council notes that in order to address the coronavirus pandemic and strengthen public health efforts, the coronavirus vaccine must be safely accessible to everyone, regardless of immigration status, ID or proof of address.

The Government has stated that everyone is able to access the coronavirus vaccine, but in practice, people are being asked for ID, are unable to register with a GP, and are afraid to access services because of longstanding and entrenched barriers to healthcare.

Without further action, the pandemic will continue to have a disproportionate impact on all marginalised groups, including migrant communities, people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness and BME communities.

This Council therefore agrees to sign up to the Vaccine for All campaign calling on the Department of Health and Social Care to ensure the vaccine programme works for everyone, and seeks to address the specific barriers faced by these communities

Councillor K. Chequer (Proposer)
Councillor K. Johnston (Seconder)

Signed by:-

Councillor P. Stewart
Councillor D.E. Snowdon
Councillor M. Butler

Councillor L. Williams
Councillor D. Waller
Councillor C. Rowntree

2. Eliminating the use of pesticides - Notice of Motion

This council notes

- the increasing concerns raised by residents of this city over the use of pesticides such as glyphosate and the impact they have on human, animal and environmental health through their use on our streets, housing estates, parks and gardens.
- That these concerns are now increasingly supported by a growing body of scientific evidence that show potential links of glyphosate to cancer, liver disease, as well disruption to reproduction and fertility in the human population.

- That there is also increasing scientific evidence of a steep decline of a number of insect species, ranging from Bees through to Butterflies, caused by the use of glyphosate.
- That due to recent scientific evidence many towns and cities across the UK are considerably reducing, if not completely eradicating the use of such pesticides in urban spaces and switching to non-chemical methods of weed control.

This council therefore agrees to:

- Produce an action plan on the elimination of the use of all pesticides by the council, inclusive of glyphosate, within no more than 3 calendar years following the adoption of this motion by full Council.
- Support our key partners and anchor institutions to follow suit and develop their own strategy for ending the use of pesticides on land under their control.
- Encourage the general public to stop the use of pesticides in gardens, allotments and other areas.
- Develop a wider pollination strategy that will show how as a city we will encourage biodiversity and local ecosystems through regeneration and protection of local habitats. For example, through development of local community orchards/gardens, introduction of a wild flowering programme or simple re-wilding areas of the city.

Councillor L. Farthing (Proposer)
Councillor R. Atkinson (Seconder)

Signed by:-

Councillor P. Stewart
Councillor L. Williams

Councillor C. Rowntree

3. Scrutiny Review

This Council recognises the importance of robust scrutiny and believes that good scrutiny is vital to improving policy, transparency, and accountability.

To improve the effectiveness of scrutiny within the Council, we resolve to:

- Instruct the Chief Executive to ask the LGA to recommend an appropriate expert to conduct of a review of the Council's scrutiny process. This review should hear representations from councillors of all parties represented on the Council and to make recommendations to improve how scrutiny works.

- Agree to adopt the recommendations of the external expert report (unless it is impractical or impossible to do so), including if the report recommends that scrutiny should be led by opposition parties.

Councillor Dr A. Mullen (Proposer)
Councillor J. Doyle (Seconder)

Signed by:-

Councillor Dr A. Mullen
Councillor P. Wood
Councillor M. Dixon

Councillor H. Greener
Councillor D. McDonough
Councillor S. Leadbitter

4. Action on Fly Tipping

Fly-tipping incidents blight our community and cause undeserved stress and suffering for our residents. As well as making our streets, back lanes and green spaces untidier, fly-tipping also contributes to the city's rat problem.

We believe the Council's 'encouragement over punishment' approach to environmental enforcement should be replaced with a more proactive and punitive policy – as well as wishing to see more proactive enforcement relating to other environmental crimes, such as dog fouling.

This Council believes in punishing those who do wrong and rewarding those in the right. It therefore resolves to:

- Invest in new CCTV in fly-tipping hot spots across the city;
- Introduce harsher punishments for those caught fly-tipping, including increased fines;
- Establish a fly-tipping hardship fund, to reimburse residents who can demonstrate that they have paid to have fly-tipped rubbish removed from their neighbourhood or, where they can demonstrate they have removed it themselves, to reimburse their fuel costs.

Councillor D. McDonough (Proposer)
Councillor J. McKeith (Seconder)

Signed by:-

Councillor H. Greener
Councillor D. McDonough
Councillor M. Dixon
Councillor P. Wood

Councillor A. Mullen
Councillor J. Doyle
Councillor S. Leadbitter

Reports

COUNCIL

24 MARCH 2021

Update on Special Urgency Decisions

Report of the Leader

The Council's Constitution requires that a quarterly report be submitted to Council on executive decisions which have been taken as a matter of special urgency. The relevant provisions are now contained in Regulations 11 and 19 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

These are the special urgency provisions under which key decisions may be taken by the executive, although not contained in the 28 day Notice of Key decisions (whether proposed to be taken in public or private), where compliance with Regulation 10 (the general exception) was also impracticable.

There have been no such instances since the last report.

Recommendation

That the Council notes the content of this report.

APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to a number of proposed changes to various committees and outside bodies that have arisen since the last meeting.
- 1.2 The full list of appointments to committees and outside bodies will be published on the Council's website in the Year Book at <https://www.sunderland.gov.uk/committees/cm55/PublicDocuments.aspx>, following the meeting.

2.0 Changes to Appointments on Committees

- 2.1 Following the appointment of Councillor Chequer as the Healthy City Portfolio Holder, for her to be appointed to the following Committees in addition to the existing Committees to which she was appointed when Deputy Cabinet Member for Healthy City for the time being until the next Annual Meeting:-

Human Resources Committee
School Organisation Committee of Cabinet
Sunderland Health and Wellbeing Board – as Chair

- 2.2 Following the appointment of Councillor Butler as Chair of the Planning and Highways (East) Committee, to appoint a Vice Chair.

3.0 Changes to Outside Bodies

- 3.1 Following the appointment of Councillor Chequer as the Healthy City Portfolio Holder, for her to be appointed to the following outside bodies in addition to the existing outside bodies to which she was appointed when Deputy Cabinet Member for Healthy City for the time being until the next Annual Meeting:-

Health and Wellbeing Board Chairs Network
Sunderland Autism Partnership Board
Sunderland Safeguarding Adults Board
World Health Organisation Healthy Cities Network

4.0 Recommendations

The Council is accordingly invited to:-

- (i) approve the appointments to the Committees and Outside Bodies detailed in paragraphs 2.1 and 3.1; and
- (ii) to appoint Councillor D. Wilson as the Vice Chair on the Planning and Highways (East) Committee.

