

COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 28th OCTOBER 2020 – 7.15 p.m.

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, and virtually, on Wednesday, 28th October 2020 at 7.15 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor Wendy Hillary (Chairman) and

Councillors Eddy Adam, M. Ashcroft, Derek G Atkinson, Jim Atkinson, Kathy Beetham, P.J. Bergg, Bill Blenkinsopp, Mrs. D. Bowman, Arun M. Chandran, B.A. Clare, J.D. Clare, J. Clark, R.S. Fleming, George C. Gray, I. Gray, Dave Hardaker, Mrs. I. Hewitson, Jed Hillary, Kate Hopper, M. Iveson, Mrs. S.J. Iveson, Mrs. V.M. Raw, Ken Robson and Michael Stead.

OFFICERS

Mr A Bailey (Town Clerk)
Mr. D. Austin (Finance Manager)
Mrs. C. Walton (Corporate and Policy Officer)
Miss C. Ryder (Senior Admin. Officer)

165. NOTICE OF MEETING

The notice convening the meeting was taken as read.

166. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs. M. Dalton, B. Hall, Paul Symons and Sally Symons.

167. MEMBERS' DISPENSATION

No dispensation requests had been received.

168. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

169. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

170. MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor M. Iveson, seconded by Councillor M. Ashcroft and

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Extra-Ordinary Meeting of the Council, held on the 16th September 2020, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following:-

- (i) Minute No. 161 (In regards to Minute 154 Notice of Motion of the 2nd September 2020)
Councillor M. Iveson recorded that he had queried that the Town Clerk had not informed the meeting that the procedure was incorrect.
- (ii) Minute No. 159 – Declarations of Interest
It be noted that this item should have stated that there had been no Declarations of Interest submitted.

171. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements from the Mayor and Town Clerk.

RESOLVED – that the information be received.

172. COMMITTEE MINUTES

(a) Environment Committee

It was proposed by Councillor M. Ashcroft, seconded by Councillor Bill Blenkinsopp and

RESOLVED – as follows:

- (i) That the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee held on the 14th October 2020 be received, and
- (ii) That the said minutes be approved and adopted.

(b) Recreation Committee

It was proposed by Councillor Bill Blenkinsopp, seconded by Councillor M. Iveson and

RESOLVED – as follows:

- (i) That the minutes of the meeting of the Recreation Committee held on the 14th October 2020 be received, and
- (ii) That the said minutes be approved and adopted.

(c) Policy and Resources Committee

It was proposed by Councillor R.S. Fleming, seconded by Councillor M. Iveson and

RESOLVED – as follows:-

- (i) That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on the 21st October 2020 be received and
- (ii) That the said minutes be approved and adopted.

173. EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT ON THE COUNCIL'S 2019/20 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN

The Finance Manager submitted a report setting out, for approval, the external Auditor's report and certificate in respect of the Council's Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the 2019/20 financial year.

RESOLVED – as follows:

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That the external Auditor's Audit Completion Letter, External Audit Report and Certificate in respect of the 2019/20 Annual Governance and Accountability Return be received.
- (iii) That the arrangements made by the Finance Manager to publish the public notice of the competition of the audit and the audited Annual Governance and Accountability Return on the Council website be noted.
- (iv) That the unqualified external audit opinion highlighting that *'the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislative and regulatory requirements have not been met'* be noted.
- (v) That it be recorded that the Finance Manager and his staff be complimented on the remarkable achievement and how well the finances are being managed.

174. PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE CONSULTATION RESPONSES

The Corporate and Policy Officer had submitted a report to provide Members with proposed responses for consideration and approval for the current Planning for the Future Consultation.

At the Environment Meeting held on the 14 October 2020 Members had requested that a corporate response be prepared for consideration at this meeting.

The closing date for comments is the 29 October and members had been notified that they could respond individually in addition to the corporate responses.

The responses have been prepared with the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan and its extensive consultation as the basis for these comments.

Members were asked to consider the proposed responses as per the attachment Appendices. Discussion took place on those responses and were agreed along with the following two amendments:-

Question 4 – What are your top three priorities for planning in your local area?

Response to read: Protection of green spaces, more bungalow provision and supporting the high street.

Question 22 (a) – Should the Government replace the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 planning obligations with a new consolidated infrastructure Levy, which is charged as a fixed proportion of development value above a set threshold?

Response to read: That the Section 106 planning obligations be retained as a loss of money would effect our ability to undertake Community Projects.

That the Corporate and Policy Officer be commended for the excellent work and time that had obviously been taken to produce these responses.

RESOLVED – as follows:

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That the proposed responses and two amendments be forwarded to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

175. LOCAL GREEN SPACES AND VILLAGE GREENS

The Corporate and Policy Officer had submitted a report for Members to consider with regards to the possibility of designating appropriate areas of open space within the Parish as Village Green and to consider if this is an avenue the Town Council would wish to pursue.

Members had a lengthy discussion as to whether the proposed areas should be protected by village green status.

It was also considered that the greens in questions were already protected under the Neighbourhood Plan as open spaces not to be developed upon.

A vote was taken on Village Green Status being persued or left as open spaces in the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Corporate and Policy Officer was thanked for the excellent report and work undertaken to give members information for possible designation of Village Greens.

RESOLVED – as follows:-

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That Village Green Status be not persued.

176. NOTICE OF MOTION – REVISION TO STANDING ORDERS

The following Notice of Motion was submitted by Councillor Arun M. Chandran on Standing Order No. 15 – Committees and was seconded by Councillor Ken Robson.

Existing Standing Order No. 15

- “(o) Any member of the Council may attend any meeting of a Committee or Sub-Committee (except for the Personnel and Appeals Sub-Committee) of which he/she is not a member, but shall not speak thereat except by the permission of the Committee or Sub-Committee”.

Proposed Amendment: That Standing Order 15 (o) shall read:

“(o) Any member of the Council may attend any meeting of a Committee or Sub-Committee (except for the Personnel and Appeals Sub-Committees) of which he/she is not a member, but shall not speak thereat except as a member of the public at the Public Participation item on the Agenda”.

A discussion took place on the amendment of the Standing Order 15(o) which resulted in a vote being taken on whether it should remain unchanged.

RESOLVED – that the Notice of Motion to amend Standing Order No. 15 (o) be not agreed and the Standing Order remain unchanged.

177. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINT

The Town Clerk had submitted a report to advise the Council that a Code of Conduct complaint had been made against a Member of the Council and is pending an investigation by Durham County Council Governance Solicitor (Ref. Standing Order No. 32 – Code of Conduct.)

RESOLVED – that the information be received.

178. HUMPHREY CLOSE – SCHOOL KEEP CLEAR PROPOSALS

Durham County Council had submitted three Options for the area outside of Woodham School to improve congestion.

Plan 1 - was to remove the parking bays and section of SKC (School Keep Clear markings). Introduce SKC around the full section next to the kerb line.

This would stop all vehicles stopping in the location, and improve vehicle manoeuvres.

Plan 2 – was to remove section of SKC and all but one parking bays for a proposed Disabled Parking bay and to introduce SKC around the remaining section next to the kerb line.

This would stop vehicles parking in this area, except for Blue Badge holders (disabled bay) and allow improved vehicle manoeuvres.

Plan 3 – for the area to remain in its current layout with SKC and parking bays with no restrictions.

RESOLVED – that Durham County Council be informed that the Council wished to approve the Plan 2 proposals.

179. NOTICE OF MOTION

The following Notice of Motion Reference Standing Order No. 11 – Rescission of Previous Resolutions was proposed by Councillor R.S. Fleming and seconded by Councillor M. Iveson.

“That the Resolution agreed at Minute No. 161 – Minutes, Extraordinary Council Meeting of the 16th September 2020 in regard to Minute No. 154 – Minutes, Council Meeting of the 2nd September 2020 be rescinded”.

Councillor R.S. Fleming outlined the reasons as to why he felt that the minutes be rescinded.

Discussion took place on the proposal and a named vote was requested by Councillor Arun Chandran which resulted as follows:-

For the Motion: Councillors M. Ashcroft, Derek G. Atkinson, Jim Atkinson, Kathy Beetham, P.J. Bergg, Bill Blenkinsopp, B.A. Clare, J.D. Clare, J. Clark, R.S. Fleming, I. Gray, Dave Hardaker, Mrs. I. Hewitson, Jed Hillary, Wendy Hillary, Kate Hopper, M. Iveson, Mrs. S.J. Iveson and Mrs. V.M. Raw.

Against the Motion: Councillors Eddy Adam, Mrs. D. Bowman, Arun M. Chandran, George C. Gray, Ken Robson and Michael Stead.

RESOLVED – that the Notice of Motion be carried and the amendment in reference to Minute No. 161 of the 16th September 2020 be rescinded, i.e:

“On advice from the Town Clerk it was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran and seconded by Councillor Eddy Adam that as the Motion did not follow procedure as indicated in Standing Orders, it be minuted as such, and that motion be set aside.”

180. NOTICE OF MOTION – STANDING ORDERS

The following Notice of Motion reference to Standing Orders of the Council was proposed by Councillor R.S. Fleming and seconded by Councillor M. Iveson.

“That Officers look at all Standing Orders of the Council, in particular item No. 18 and the procedure involving Extra-ordinary Meetings of the Council”.

Discussion took place on the need to have Officers look at Standing Orders with a view to them being amended appropriately. Emphasis to be on Standing Order 18 and the procedures for Extra-Ordinary meetings of the Council.

RESOLVED – as follows:-

- (i) That the Notice of Motion be agreed.
- (ii) That Officers be tasked to review the Standing Orders of the Business of the Council by April 2021.

181. OUTSIDE BODIES

To receive reports from representatives on the following Outside Bodies:

- (a) Youth Council
No meeting.
- (b) County Durham Association of Local Councils
No meeting.
- (c) Aycliffe Village Community Association
Representative was unable to attend the meeting.
- (d) Woodham Village Community Association
No report.

- (e) Great Aycliffe and Middridge Local Councils' Committee
No meeting.
- (f) Larger Local Councils' Forum
Meeting to be called shortly.
- (g) Aycliffe and District Bus Preservation Society
Councillor I. Gray gave an update report.
- (h) Friends of Byerley Park Local Nature Reserve
Councillor I. Gray gave an update report.
- (i) Friends of Stockton and Darlington Railway
Councillor Dave Hardaker gave an update report.
- (j) GAMP – Community Safety Task Group
No report.

CHAIRMAN.