

FULL COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 15TH JUNE 2022 – 7.15 p.m.

Minutes of the proceedings of the **ORDINARY MEETING** of the **COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, on **WEDNESDAY 15TH JUNE 2022** at 7.15 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor Neville Jones (Chairman)

Councillors Eddy Adam, Martin Ashcroft, Lindsey Aston, Jim Atkinson, Peter Bergg, Dorothy Bowman, Arun M. Chandran, John Clark, George Gray, Ian Gray, Brian Haigh, Andy Hill, Phillip Hawkins, Jed Hillary, Joanne Jones, John Moore, Carl Robinson, Michael Stead, Anne Woodward and John Woodward.

OFFICERS

Mr. D. Austin (Town Clerk)

Mrs. T Woodhead (Finance Manager)

Mrs. S. Stretch (Senior Administration Officer)

28. NOTICE OF MEETING

The notice convening the meeting was taken as read.

29. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Neil Collinson, Sandra Haigh, Wendy Hillary, Kate Hopper, Ken Robson, Maureen Shelton.

30. MEMBERS' DISPENSATIONS

There had been no requests for dispensations under disclosable or non-disclosable interests.

31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

32. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

33. MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran, and seconded by Councillor Martin Ashcroft and

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Council held on the 18th May 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

34. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor had submitted a list of appointments from the 18th May to the 8th June 2022. Councillors Eddy Adam and Neville Jones wanted it to be recorded that the new Mayor, Councillor Ken Robson, has been excellent in his role so far and commended his social media presence and efforts during the busy Platinum Jubilee Bank Holiday.

Town Clerk updated members on the planned launch of the Community Recognition Awards Scheme and circulated the draft press release and one of the 'Local Hero' medals which would be presented to successful nominees.

RESOLVED – that the information be received.

35. COMMITTEE MINUTES

(a) Environment Committee

It was proposed by Councillor Martin Ashcroft, and seconded by Councillor Andy Hill and

RESOLVED – as follows:

- (i) that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee held on the 18th May 2022 be received, and
- (ii) that the said minutes be approved and adopted.

(b) Recreation Committee

It was proposed by Councillor George Gray, and seconded by Councillor Martin Ashcroft and

RESOLVED – as follows:

- (i) that the minutes of the meeting of the Recreation Committee held on the 18th May 2022 be received, and
- (ii) that the said minutes be approved and adopted.

(c) Policy and Resources Committee

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran, and seconded by Councillor Martin Ashcroft and

RESOLVED – as follows:

- (i) that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on the 18th May 2022 be received, and
- (ii) that the said minutes be approved and adopted.

(d) Environment Committee

It was proposed by Councillor Martin Ashcroft, and seconded by Councillor Andy Hill and

RESOLVED – as follows:

- (i) that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee held on the 1st June 2022 be received, and
- (ii) that the said minutes be approved and adopted.

(e) Recreation Committee

It was proposed by Councillor George Gray, and seconded by Councillor Andy Hill and

RESOLVED – as follows:

- (i) that the minutes of the meeting of the Recreation Committee held on the 1st June 2022 be received; and
- (ii) that the said minutes be approved and adopted.

(f) Policy and Resources Committee

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran, and seconded by Councillor Martin Ashcroft and

RESOLVED – as follows:

- (i) that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on the 8th June 2022 be received, and
- (ii) that the said minutes be approved and adopted.

36. POST ANNUAL MEETING CONSTITUTION CHANGES

The Town Clerk gave a report requesting members approval of various changes to the Council's Constitution, as agreed at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 18th May 2022 relating to voting methods, proportional representation on committees, sub-committees and working groups, and the deletion of a number of working groups, as well as the proposed listing of the threshold for member involvement in officer appointments.

Councillor Eddy Adam pointed out the number sequencing would need updating following the changes and requested that consideration be given to removing gender specificity from the Constitution at a future review.

Councillor Arun Chandran stated that he did not agree with the removing of gender specificity and that this was not required.

It was proposed by Councillor Eddy Adam, and seconded by Councillor Martin Ashcroft and

RESOLVED – as follows:

- (i) that the report be received.
- (ii) that the proposed amendments to the three Articles be confirmed, subject to the updating of the number sequencing, and that the Constitution of the Council be re-adopted.
- (iii) that a full copy of the Constitution of the Council, be made available for Members in the Council Chamber.
- (iv) that Members note the information will also be made available via the Council's Website.

37. TOWN CLERK APPRAISAL ARRANGEMENTS

A report was submitted for consideration setting out background research relating to the appraisal process for the Town Clerk in order to assist the Council in reviewing the current arrangements and agreeing an appropriate future appraisal mechanism for the Town Clerk.

A debate took place on the numbers and representatives that should be appointed to the appraisal panel and the date of the appraisal with suggestions that all members should be able to have some input to the appraisal.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran, and seconded by Councillor Martin Ashcroft that

- (i) the recommendations of the report be agreed and that the appraisal panel should comprise of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Personnel Sub Committee plus three representatives from each group.

An amendment was proposed by Councillor Jed Hillary, and seconded by Councillor Eddy Adam that

- (i) the recommendations of the report be agreed and that the appraisal panel should comprise of the Chair of the Personnel Sub Committee, plus two members from the remaining groups and an HR representative, with the appraisal to proceed in early March.

A vote was taken on the amendment with the following results:

For: 5 Against: 12

The amendment failed.

A vote was then taken on the original proposal with the following results:

For: 12 Against: 5

The original proposal was carried and

RESOLVED – as follows:

- (i) that the report be received;
- (ii) that an appraisal panel be appointed comprising of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Personnel Sub Committee plus three representatives from each group.
- (iii) That the recommendations within the report relating to the Town Clerk appraisal process be agreed as follows:-
 - The Town Clerk be appraised using the same Appraisal Scheme as used for the Council staff;
 - The Corporate and Policy Officer to provide training to the appraisal panel
 - The appraisal takes place annually in February or March.

38. APPROVAL OF THE 2021/22 ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

A report was received from the Finance Manager requesting that the Council approve the Annual Internal Audit Report, which forms part of the Council's Annual Governance and Accountability Return, for the 2021/22 financial year.

Members wished to record their thanks and appreciation to Kirsten Bertram, the Internal Auditor for her dedicated work to the Council, and also thanks to the Finance Manager for her work to complete the annual reports.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran, and seconded by Councillor Martin Ashcroft and

RESOLVED – as follows:

- (i) that the report be received; and
- (ii) that the Annual Internal Audit Report be approved.

39. APPROVAL OF THE 2021/22 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

A report was received from the Finance Manager requesting that the Council approve the Council's Annual Governance Statement, which forms part of the Council's Annual Governance and Accountability Return, for the 2021/22 financial year.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran, and seconded by Councillor Phillip Hawkins and

RESOLVED – as follows:

- (i) that the report be received;
- (ii) that the Annual Governance Statement in respect of the 2021/22 financial year, as set out in Section 1 of the 2021/22 Annual Governance and Accountability Return, is approved; and
- (iii) that the Annual Governance Statement is signed off by the Town Clerk and the Chairman of the Council.

40. APPROVAL OF THE 2021/22 ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

A report was received from the Finance Manager requesting that the Council approve the Council's Accounting Statements for the 2021/22 financial year, as set out in Section 2 of the 2021/22 Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran, and seconded by Councillor Eddy Adam and

RESOLVED – as follows:

- (i) that the report be received.
- (ii) the 2021/22 Accounting Statements set out in Section 2 of the Annual Return, and at Appendix 1, are approved;
- (iii) the supporting financial documents to be submitted to the external auditors with the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, attached at Appendix 2, are approved;
- (iv) the Annual Governance and Accountability Return and supporting documents are sent to the external auditor on Thursday 16th June, following their approval;
- (v) the unaudited Annual Governance and Accountability Return is published on the Council website and Council notice boards on Thursday 16th June;
- (vi) the thirty-day public inspection period in relation to the statement of accounts will commence on Friday 17th June, and run until Thursday 28th July 2022;
- (vii) notice of the publication of the accounts and the public inspection rights and period will be advertised on the Council website on Thursday 16th June;
- (viii) following the completion of the external audit by Mazars LLP, and receipt of the signed audit opinion and certificate, the Annual Governance and Accountability Return to be published in accordance with the statutory framework.

41. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINT DECISION NOTICE

The Town Clerk submitted a report as required by Council Standing Order 33 – Code of Conduct Complaints to advise the Council that a Code of Conduct complaint had been made against a Member of the Council. The outcome of the investigation by the Durham County Council Solicitor was that local resolution is required in respect of this complaint.

RESOLVED – as follows:

- (i) that the report be received

42. CDALC NOMINATIONS

The Town Clerk submitted an email request from CDALC informing of nominations to its Executive Committee for members consideration.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran, and seconded by Councillor Jed Hillary and

RESOLVED – as follows:

- (i) that the report be received; and
- (ii) that the Town Council advise CDALC that they support the nominations.

43. OUTSIDE BODIES

Reports were given by representatives on the undermentioned Outside Bodies:-

- (a) **Youth Council**
There had been no meeting.
- (b) **County Durham Association of Local Councils**
Councillor Arun Chandran had attended a meeting but there was nothing to report back. He advised that the agenda, reports and minutes are available from the Town Clerk if members wish to view them.
- (c) **Aycliffe Village Community Association**
Councillor Neville Jones gave an update.
- (d) **Woodham Village Community Association**
Councillor John Moore gave an update.
- (e) **Great Aycliffe and Middridge Local Councils' Committee**
Councillor Arun Chandran gave an update.
- (f) **Larger Local Councils' Forum**
Councillor Arun Chandran had attended a meeting but there was nothing to report back. He advised that the agenda, reports and minutes are available from the Town Clerk if members wish to view them.
- (g) **Aycliffe and District Bus Preservation Society**
Councillor Ian Gray gave an update report.
- (h) **Friends of Stockton and Darlington Railway**
Councillor Jim Atkinson gave an update report.
- (i) **Western Area Partnership**
There had been no meeting.

CHAIRMAN.