

FULL COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 15TH MARCH 2023 – 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 MARCH 2023 at 7.15 p.m.**

PRESENT

Councillor Ken Robson (Chairman)

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

OFFICERS

Mr. Dan Austin (Town Clerk)
Mrs. Tracey Woodhead (Finance Manager)
Miss. Amanda Donald (Corporate and Policy Officer)
Mrs. Sharna Stretch (Senior Administration Officer)

IN ATTENDANCE

One member of the public.

114. NOTICE OF MEETING

The notice convening the meeting was taken as read.

115. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Clark, Bob Fleming, Wendy Hillary and Sandra Kirby.

116. MEMBERS' DISPENSATIONS

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

117. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

118. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

119. MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Andy Hill, and seconded by Councillor Neville Jones and

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on the 25th January 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

120. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor submitted a list of appointments for the period 19th January to 8th March 2023 for information.

RESOLVED – that the information be received.

121. COMMITTEE MINUTES

(a) Recreation Committee

It was proposed by Councillor Carl Robinson, and seconded by Councillor George Gray and;

RESOLVED – as follows:

- i) that the minutes of the meeting of the Recreation Committee held on the 1st March 2023 be received, and
- ii) that the said minutes be approved and adopted.

(b) Environment Committee

It was proposed by Councillor Phillip Hawkins 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 March 2023 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 Lindsey Aston and;

RESOLVED – as follows:

- i) that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on the 8th March 2023 be received, and
- ii) that the said minutes be approved and adopted.

Councillor Tony Armstrong joined the meeting at this point.

122. NOTICE OF MOTION

A Notice of Motion was submitted for consideration by Councillor Arun Chandran and seconded by Councillor Ken Robson:

'In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct and the Civility and Respect Pledge this Council adopted on 27th July 2022, and to help facilitate the smoother running of meetings and effective management of interruptions and disruption, I propose that this Council considers updating Standing Order 6(j) on Points of Order to include the following wording:

(j) Points of Order

Members can, at any time, raise points of order.

Points of order relate only to alleged breaches of Standing Orders or statutory provisions and members raising them must specify the Standing Order or statutory provision and why they consider they have been broken.

When a Councillor raises a Point of Order in a meeting, the Chairman will bring in the Town Clerk as the Proper Officer of the Council to immediately decide on the issue.

The Town Clerk will determine if it is a valid Point of Order, and if it is deemed to be valid, advise on how to proceed further in accordance with the Standing Orders.

If it is not a valid point of order, the Town Clerk will state so, and the Chairman will decide in conjunction with the meeting on how to proceed in dealing with the interruption and / or disorderly conduct in accordance with Standing Order 10'.

An amendment to the motion was proposed by Councillor Eddy Adam and seconded by Councillor Jim Atkinson:

The amendment proposed changing the text to read:

"When a Councillor raises a Point of Order in a meeting, the Chairman will 'immediately stop the proceedings and hear the Point of Order'."

"The Chairperson in consultation with the Town Clerk as the Proper Officer will verify and satisfy the point of order is valid in relation to an appropriate Standing Order. They will scrutinise the problem and proceed to a decision for the Chairperson to rule on".

A lengthy discussion took place with various members voicing their concerns around the Town Clerks' and the Chairman's roles and responsibilities regarding points of order and the clarification of Standing Orders during meetings.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran and seconded by Councillor Carl Robinson to move to the vote.

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

For:	Against:
Cllr Eddy Adam	Cllr Martin Ashcroft
Cllr Tony Armstrong	Cllr Peter Bergg
Cllr Lindsey Aston	Cllr Dorothy Bowman
Cllr Jim Atkinson	Cllr Arun Chandran
Cllr Neil Collinson	Cllr George Gray
Cllr Ian Gray	Cllr Brian Haigh
Cllr Jed Hillary	Cllr Sandra Haigh
Cllr Joanne Jones	Cllr Phillip Hawkins
Cllr Neville Jones	Cllr Andy Hill
Cllr Michael Stead	Cllr John Moore
Cllr Anne Woodward	Cllr Carl Robinson
Cllr John Woodward	Cllr Ken Robson

The result of the vote was a tie: 12 votes for and 12 votes against.

The Chairman had the casting vote and voted against the amendment.

The amendment failed.

A named vote then took place on the original motion with the following results:

For:	Against:	Abstention:
Cllr Martin Ashcroft	Cllr Eddy Adam	Cllr Tony Armstrong
Cllr Lindsey Aston	Cllr Jim Atkinson	Cllr Neil Collinson
Cllr Peter Bergg	Cllr Ian Gray	
Cllr Dorothy Bowman	Cllr Jed Hillary	
Cllr Arun Chandran	Cllr Joanne Jones	
Cllr George Gray	Cllr Neville Jones	
Cllr Brian Haigh	Cllr Michael Stead	
Cllr Sandra Haigh		
Cllr Phillip Hawkins		
Cllr Andy Hill		
Cllr John Moore		
Cllr Carl Robinson		
Cllr Ken Robson		
Cllr Anne Woodward		
Cllr John Woodward		

The result of the vote was 15 votes for, 7 votes against with 2 abstentions.

The motion was carried.

RESOLVED – as follows:

- i) that the following motion be agreed, and Standing Order 6(j) be updated as follows:

(j) Points of Order

Members can, at any time, raise points of order.

Points of order relate only to alleged breaches of Standing Orders or statutory provisions and members raising them must specify the Standing Order or statutory provision and why they consider they have been broken.

When a Councillor raises a Point of Order in a meeting, the Chairman will bring in the Town Clerk as the Proper Officer of the Council to immediately decide on the issue.

The Town Clerk will determine if it is a valid Point of Order, and if it is deemed to be valid, advise on how to proceed further in accordance with the Standing Orders.

If it is not a valid point of order, the Town Clerk will state so, and the Chairman will decide in conjunction with the meeting on how to proceed in dealing with the interruption and / or disorderly conduct in accordance with Standing Order 10.

123. NOTICE OF SPECIAL MOTION

Members considered the following Special Motion proposed by Councillor Arun M Chandran and seconded by Councillor Peter Bergg:

‘That in accordance with Standing Order 11(a) the Full Council Minute 83 (c) from the Meeting on 2nd November 2022, with specific reference to the agreement of Minute 62 from the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting on 26th October 2022 that “the 2023/24 Draft Policy and Resources Revenue and Capital Budgets - Appendix 2 Savings Proposals - Works Overtime £823 for Opening and Closing the Council Offices for Political Group Meetings”, be rescinded’.

A lengthy discussion followed regarding costs, savings and budgetary pressures within the Town Council and Councillor Michael Stead requested a named vote.

A named vote was taken on the motion with the following results:

For:	Against:	Abstention:
Cllr Martin Ashcroft	Cllr Eddy Adam	Cllr Tony Armstrong
Cllr Peter Bergg	Cllr Lindsey Aston	
Cllr Dorothy Bowman	Cllr Jim Atkinson	
Cllr Arun Chandran	Cllr Ian Gray	
Cllr Neil Collinson	Cllr Jed Hillary	
Cllr George Gray	Cllr Joanne Jones	
Cllr Brian Haigh	Cllr Neville Jones	
Cllr Sandra Haigh	Cllr Michael Stead	
Cllr Phillip Hawkins	Cllr Anne Woodward	
Cllr Andy Hill	Cllr John Woodward	
Cllr John Moore		
Cllr Carl Robinson		
Cllr Ken Robson		

The result of the vote was 13 votes for, 10 votes against with 1 abstention.

The motion was passed.

RESOLVED – as follows:

- i) that the following motion be agreed:

“That in accordance with Standing Order 11(a) the Full Council Minute 83 (c) from the Meeting on 2nd November 2022, with specific reference to the agreement of Minute 62 from the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting on 26th October 2022 that “the 2023/24 Draft Policy and Resources Revenue and Capital Budgets - Appendix 2 Savings

124. NOTICE OF MOTION

A Notice of Motion was submitted for consideration by Councillor Arun Chandran and seconded by Councillor Ken Robson:

'Having approved the 2023/24 Council Precept and Revenue and Capital Budget, The Council resorts back to normal practice in relation to the consideration and approval of capital spending and that Policy and Resources Minute 48 iv) "in light of the current financial situation, all capital works be reported to committee for approval with the exception of any urgent spending relating to health and safety issues or breakdowns", be rescinded.

A short debate took place on this motion and the Finance Manager advised members that any capital spend over £5,500 would still come to the relevant Council Committee for consideration.

A vote was carried out on the motion and was passed with a majority decision.

RESOLVED – as follows:

- i) that Policy and Resources Minute 48 iv) "in light of the current financial situation, all capital works be reported to committee for approval with the exception of any urgent spending relating to health and safety issues or breakdowns" be rescinded.

125. BUSINESS RISKS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2022/23

A report was submitted with a full list of current corporate business risks for the Town Council for the Financial Year April 2022 to March 2023 for member's approval.

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

RESOLVED – as follows:

- i) that the report be received
- ii) that the Outturn Business Risk Register for the year end 2022/23 be approved.

126. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL

A report was put forward for the consideration and approval of Members outlining the annual review of the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal control for the 2022/23 financial year.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran and seconded by Lindsey Aston and

RESOLVED – as follows:

- i) that the annual review of the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal control in respect of the 2022/23 financial year is approved by the Council; and
- ii) that the review is taken into account in providing the assurance that the Council requires in order to approve the 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement, as set out in Section 1 of the 2022/23 Annual Governance and Accountability Return later in the year.

127. OUTSIDE BODIES

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

(a) Youth Council

There had been no meeting. Councillor Tony Armstrong asked if the Corporate and Policy Officer could contact local schools to see if there is interest in resuming the Youth Council.

Councillor Martin Ashcroft left the meeting at this point.

(b) County Durham Association of Local Councils

Councillor Arun Chandran notified members of the appointees to the Durham County Council Standards Board and advised that the meeting minutes were available via the Town Clerk.

(c) Aycliffe Village Hall Association

Councillor Neville Jones had attended a meeting and the minutes were available from the Town Clerk.

(d) Woodham Village Community Association

There had been no meetings. It was requested that officers chase up the community association for a list of meetings.

(e) Great Aycliffe and Middridge Local Councils' Committee

There had been no meetings.

(f) Larger Local Councils' Forum

Councillor Arun Chandran advised that minutes and reports were available from the Town Clerk if required.

(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

Councillor Ken Robson gave an update report.

128. EXEMPT BUSINESS

It was proposed by Councillor Carl Robinson, and seconded by Eddy Adam and

RESOLVED – that it was in the opinion of the Council that due to the confidential nature of the following item, it was advisable to exclude the press and public.

The Town Clerk left the meeting at this point.

129. ITEM FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE AND PERSONNEL SUB COMMITTEE; COUNCILLOR ARUN CHANDRAN

A discussion took place regarding the Town Clerks' incremental pay progression.

The Finance Manager advised that appropriate incremental pay progression is in place for all staff and is budgeted for, subject to management approval.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran, and seconded by Councillor Ken Robson and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that the Town Clerk receives an incremental pay progression to the next point.

130. RE-ADMISSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed by Councillor Carl Robinson, seconded by Councillor Ken Robson and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that the press and public be readmitted to the meeting.

CHAIRMAN.