

Local Government Act 1972

Borough of North Tyneside

Thursday, 19 March 2020

At the meeting of the Council of the Borough of North Tyneside duly convened and held on Thursday, 19 March 2020 at 6.00 pm in Chamber - Quadrant, The Silverlink North, Cobalt Business Park, North Tyneside, NE27 0BY at which a quorum of Members were present, that is to say: -

Present

Councillor D Drummond (Deputy Chair)

Councillor B Pickard (Deputy Mayor)

Councillor L Bartoli

Councillor J Cassidy

Councillor S Cox

Councillor P Earley

Councillor N Huscroft

Councillor J Kirwin

Councillor T Mulvenna

Councillor E Parker-Leonard

Councillor B Pickard

Councillor J Wallace

Councillor T Brady

Councillor D Cox

Councillor D Drummond

Councillor S Graham

Councillor C Johnson

Councillor P McIntyre

Councillor J Mole

Councillor S Phillips

Councillor J Stirling

Councillor M Wilson

Apologies: Elected Mayor N Redfearn, and Councillors J Allan, A Austin, K Barrie, G Bell, L Bell, S Brockbank, B Burdis, C Burdis, K Clark, N Craven, J Cruddas, E Darke, L Darke, C Davis, S Day, R Glindon, M Green, J Harrison, Janet Hunter, John Hunter, K Lee, F Lott, W Lott, G Madden, M Madden, A McMullen, M Hall, A Newman, L Miller, P Oliver, K Osborne, J O'Shea, A Percy, M Rankin, P Richardson, W Samuel, M Thirlaway, J Walker and F Weetman

The apologies listed were not in attendance on the basis of Government advice regarding the Coronavirus pandemic.

C57/20 Former Councillor Bill Schofield

Members observed a minute's silence in memory of Bill Schofield, a former Councillor for Camperdown ward, who had recently passed away.

C58/20 To receive any Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.

C59/20 Minutes of the meetings held on 16 January & 20 February 2020 (previously circulated)

Resolved that the minutes of the Council meetings held on 16 January (Ordinary meeting)

and 20 February 2020 (Extraordinary meeting) be taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chair.

C60/20 Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

Senior Officers of the Council gave a presentation on the updated position of the COVID-19 virus that included the plans and actions undertaken by the Authority to support the efforts to reduce its impact on communities.

RESOLVED that (1) the presentation be circulated to all Members of the Council; and (2) Members' thanks and appreciation of the efforts of officers during the current crisis be recorded.

C61/20 Motions

The Chair informed the Council that due to the continued situation with regards to COVID-19, the four accepted Motions had been withdrawn by the proposers.

C62/20 North Tyneside Council Pay Policy 2020/21

The Council received a report which presented the Pay Policy statement 2020/21, which set out the Authority's policies on a range of pay matters relating to the workforce, including senior employees (Chief Officers).

The main part of the Pay Policy had not changed during the last 12 months. This was because negotiations for a new pay scale were continuing at a national level but agreement had not yet been reached. Any increases would be back dated to 1 April 2020 when they had been agreed. The pay multiple and the gender pay gap had been calculated as at 31 March 2019.

The Authority had a statutory duty to publish the Pay Policy Statement following the approval by the full Council.

It was moved by Councillor B Pickard and seconded by Councillor J Stirling that:

- (1) the Pay Policy statement 2020/21 be approved; and
- (2) the publication of the Pay Policy be authorised.

The Motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 20 votes to 0 votes.

C63/20 Chair's Announcements

The Chair thanked Council staff for their professionalism in dealing with the Coronavirus epidemic and added that the thoughts of the Council were with all those affected.

C64/20 Elected Mayor's Announcements

The Deputy Mayor thanked officers for the comprehensive update on the Coronavirus epidemic.

He stated that the Council's first priority was the health and wellbeing of its residents; vital services would continue to be provided and support would continue to be prioritised to the

most vulnerable people in the Borough.

Some difficult decisions had been taken such as closing leisure centres and libraries to the public, but in the circumstances this was the right thing to do.

The Authority had acted on national Government guidance and would continue to do so in what was a rapidly changing environment.

Following the national announcement yesterday schools in the Borough would close this week, except for the children of key workers and vulnerable children. It was acknowledged this would cause disruption across North Tyneside for residents and employees, but he urged all residents to pull together during these unprecedented times.

The Deputy Mayor referred to the marvellous community spirit in North Tyneside and to the many offers of help and support that had been received. The Authority was working with the voluntary sector to provide a community hub to co-ordinate these generous offers of support.

Essential frontline services that were so important to all residents would continue to be provided. The Authority would work with the business community to provide advice and also to help companies to access additional financial support outlined by the Government.

The Deputy Mayor stated that many Councillors were observing the Government guidance around staying at home and setting a good example to residents. Those Members in attendance ensured the Council business could be undertaken and he added that this would be the last in-person Council meeting until further notice. The Government was considering bringing forward legislation to remove the requirement to hold annual council meetings to take place in person and to allow Council committee meetings to be held virtually for a temporary period.

The Deputy Mayor concluded by thanking Council officers and all those who were working tirelessly to help the Borough's residents each day.

C65/20 Questions by Members of the Council

The Chair announced that one valid question on notice had been received for the meeting; however due to the current circumstances the question would be responded to in writing.

C66/20 Approval for Absence

The Council received a report that sought to extend the attendance period from six month to twelve months, to ensure recommended and mandated absences by Central Government for the purpose of ensuring health and limiting the spread of COVID-19 did not cause members to be affected by the six month requirement, set out in Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Chair of Council had agreed to the report being considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

It was moved by Councillor B Pickard and seconded by Councillor J Stirling that:

1. the contents of the report be noted;
2. pursuant to Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, the absence of the Elected Mayor and all members from all meetings of the authority for an additional period of 6 months, from the date of their last attendance, be approved; and
3. pursuant to Section 85(3) of the Local Government Act 1972, the absence of the Elected Mayor and all Cabinet members from all meetings of the Cabinet for an additional period of 6 months, from the date of their last attendance, be approved.

The Motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 20 votes to 0 votes.