

Local Government Act 1972

Borough of North Tyneside

Thursday, 17 March 2022

At the meeting of the Council of the Borough of North Tyneside duly convened and held on Thursday, 17 March 2022 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 (Chair)
N Redfearn (Elected Mayor)

Councillor L Arkley	Councillor L Bartoli
Councillor G Bell	Councillor L Bell
Councillor L Bones	Councillor T Brady
Councillor S Brockbank	Councillor B Burdis
Councillor C Burdis	Councillor K Clark
Councillor D Cox	Councillor S Cox
Councillor N Craven	Councillor J Cruddas
Councillor E Darke	Councillor L Darke
Councillor S Day	Councillor P Earley
Councillor S Graham	Councillor M Green
Councillor J Harrison	Councillor T Hallway
Councillor Janet Hunter	Councillor John Hunter
Councillor C Johnson	Councillor H Johnson
Councillor C Johnston	Councillor J Kirwin
Councillor W Lott	Councillor G Madden
Councillor M Madden	Councillor P McIntyre
Councillor A McMullen	Councillor T Mulvenna
Councillor M Hall	Councillor J Mole
Councillor J Montague	Councillor A Newman
Councillor P Oliver	Councillor J O'Shea
Councillor A Percy	Councillor S Phillips
Councillor B Pickard	Councillor M Rankin
Councillor P Richardson	Councillor W Samuel
Councillor J Shaw	Councillor M Thirlaway
Councillor J Walker	Councillor J Wallace
Councillor Westwater	Councillor M Wilson

Apologies: Councillor J Allan, Councillor K Barrie, Councillor J Cassidy, Councillor C Davis, Councillor F Lott and Councillor E Parker-Leonard

C74/21 Minute Silence

A minute's silence was observed in respect of the passing of former Councillor John Carter,

who had represented North Shields & Riverside Wards from 1995 – 2004 and served as Deputy Mayor and Chair of Council.

C75/21 To receive any Declarations of Interest

Declarations of interest were reported as follows:

Councillor L Bones – Item 5 – North Tyneside Pay Policy 2022/23 - non-registerable personal interest as he has a relation employed by the Authority.

Councillor M Madden - Item 5 – North Tyneside Pay Policy 2022/23 - non-registerable personal interest as she has relatives employed by the Authority.

**C76/21 Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January & 17 February 2022
(previously circulated)**

Resolved that the minutes of the Council meetings held on the 20 January & 17 February 2022 be taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chair.

**C77/21 Motion 1 - The retirement of Phil Scott Director of Environment,
Housing and Leisure**

It was moved by the Elected Mayor and seconded by Councillor S Brockbank:

North Tyneside Council is rightly proud of its apprenticeship programme which has, over many years, been extremely successful, and has produced many excellent employees. However, perhaps the Council's most accomplished apprentice began his employment in 1980 as an apprentice joiner.

In the following 42 years, Phil Scott has deservedly risen to the role of Director of Environment, Housing and Leisure, and has provided outstanding service to both the Council and the residents of the Borough. The scope of his portfolio, together with the previous roles he has held, means that there is no part of the Borough that Phil has not influenced or helped to shape. Whether through his careful stewardship of the Council's physical environment, his care for our tenants and the housing stock portfolio, his work on the Council's highways network, or through the leisure service which he leads and in which he served, Phil's impact on the Council's work over the past four decades is immeasurable.

In his service, Phil has worked with scores of Members from all sides of the Chamber. He has done so with the utmost professionalism, dedication, and humour. He is rightly respected by Members and colleagues alike, both locally and regionally.

Next month, Phil retires from the Council, and it is only right that the Council recognises his extraordinary service through this unprecedented cross-party Motion of Commendation.

North Tyneside Council is therefore proud to formally Commend Phil Scott for his dedication to the Borough and for his outstanding service.

The motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 54 votes to 0 votes.

C78/21 Urgent Motion - Ukraine

It was moved by Councillor C Johnson and seconded by Councillor S Brockbank that:

Reason for request for motion to be heard under emergency procedure: The situation in Ukraine is ever evolving and has done significantly since the deadline for motions passed it will likely shift significantly by the next time this council meets in an ordinary session in June.

All Members of North Tyneside Council are shocked by the unprovoked attack on Ukraine and the devastating humanitarian situation which has resulted.

We ask the Elected Mayor to:

1. Write to the Ukrainian Ambassador in the UK, expressing North Tyneside Councils support and solidarity, and respect for his nation's sovereignty and freedom.
2. Make all necessary preparations in North Tyneside to welcome refugees fleeing Ukraine, including encouraging residents to sign up to the Homes for Ukraine scheme through the Councils social media strategy.
3. Write to the Prime Minister of the UK, to express our readiness as a Council to do all that we can to support refugees and the humanitarian effort nationally.

The motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 54 votes to 0 votes.

C79/21 Motion 2 - Furlough Fraud

It was moved by Councillor W Samuel and seconded by Councillor M Wilson that:

North Tyneside Council notes

- Over 4 billion pounds may have been lost due to fraud during the pandemic.
- Chancellor Rishi Sunak appears to have so little appetite to pursue the fraudsters.
- That fake claims to furlough payments were made for staff that continued working and the pressures that organisations who perpetuated this fraud placed upon their employees, customers and others associated with them.

North Tyneside council believes

- That organisations in North Tyneside and beyond who were complicit in this fraud should be exposed.

North Tyneside council calls upon the elected Mayor to:

- Write to Chancellor Sunak both to express our dismay at his inactivity to date and to demand more robust actions against fraudsters.

The motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 46 votes to 8 votes.

C80/21 Motion 3 - North Tyneside Council Core Spending Power

It was moved by Councillor M Rankin and seconded by Councillor P Earley that:

North Tyneside council notes:

- The core spending power per dwelling in NTC is £1,984
- The national average core spending power for all local authorities is £2,155 per dwelling
- North Tyneside would receive £17.142m of funding if it had even the average core spending power of all local authorities.
- The vast majority of recent increases to core spending power have come as a direct result of the Conservative Government telling the Authority to increase council tax.

North Tyneside council believes:

- The lower-than-average core spending power, Government forced council tax rises and £127 million worth of cuts from the Conservative government is a triple hammer blow to the authorities' finances.

North Tyneside council calls upon the elected Mayor to:

- Write to Chancellor Rishi Sunak asking him to increase North Tyneside's per dwelling spending power to match the average in all local authorities.

A recorded vote on the Motion, was requested by two Members present.

Votes for the Motion,

N Redfearn, Elected Mayor and Councillors G Bell, L Bell, T Brady, B Burdis, C Burdis, K Clark, D Cox, S Cox, N Craven, J Cruddas, E Darke, L Darke, S Day, D Drummond, P Earley, S Graham, M Green, M Hall, T Hallway, J Harrison, Janet Hunter, John Hunter, C Johnson, H Johnson, J Kirwin, W Lott, G Madden, M Madden, A McMullen, J Mole, J Montague, T Mulvenna, A Newman, P Oliver, J O'Shea, N Percy, S Phillips, B Pickard, M Rankin, P Richardson, W Samuel, J Shaw, M Thirlaway, J Walker and M Wilson.

Votes against the Motion

Councillors L Arkley, L Bartoli, L Bones, S Brockbank, C Johnston, P McIntyre, J Wallace and G Westwater.

The motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 46 votes to 8 votes.

C81/21 Motion 4 - Transport

It was moved by Councillor M Thirlaway and seconded by Councillor C Johnson that:

North Tyneside Council notes:

- In 2020/21, transport spending in London was £877 per person, compared with just £314 per person in the North East.
- The Conservative Government have refused to extend bus recovery funding which will lead to many bus routes around being slashed.
- Labour in North Tyneside recently voted through a budget which increased funding to Nexus allowing them to save local bus routes while the Conservatives voted against.

North Tyneside Council believes:

- That such a huge regional disparity in public spending on transport is unfair and only

serves to further entrench regional inequalities.

- The Conservative Government has continued to ignore the North East on Transport, nothing for the North East of significant investment in the Integrated rail plan and now refusing to extend recovery buses funding, slashing bus routes right around the borough.

North Tyneside Council calls on the Elected Mayor to:

- Write to the Prime Minister, demanding a dramatic increase in public transport spending in the North East.

A recorded vote on the Motion, was requested by two Members present.

Votes for the Motion,

N Redfearn, Elected Mayor and Councillors G Bell, L Bell, T Brady, B Burdis, C Burdis, K Clark, D Cox, S Cox, N Craven, J Cruddas, E Darke, L Darke, S Day, D Drummond, P Earley, S Graham, M Green, M Hall, T Hallway, J Harrison, Janet Hunter, John Hunter, C Johnson, H Johnson, J Kirwin, W Lott, G Madden, M Madden, A McMullen, J Mole, J Montague, T Mulvenna, A Newman, P Oliver, J O'Shea, N Percy, S Phillips, B Pickard, M Rankin, P Richardson, W Samuel, J Shaw, M Thirlaway, J Walker and M Wilson.

Votes against the Motion

Councillors L Arkley, L Bartoli, L Bones, S Brockbank, C Johnston, P McIntyre, J Wallace and G Westwater.

The motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 46 votes to 8 votes.

C82/21 Motion 5 - Nationality and Borders

It was moved by Councillor by A Newman and seconded by Councillor S Day that:

North Tyneside Council believes:

We are a community where everyone can thrive, whoever they are.

We are proud that North Tyneside is a welcoming community, in which people treat each other with care and solidarity.

We know that unaccompanied child refugees have been welcomed in North Tyneside and that the Authority is committed to providing shelter and safety to those who need it.

We are concerned that the Government's Nationality and Borders Bill will make it harder for people seeking sanctuary to get the protection they need.

We also note that the government voted down the Jarvis / Mercer amendment to remove visa fees (currently just under £2500 per person) for commonwealth veterans and their families. Whilst the government has now removed these fees for veterans who serve 6 years or more the government has refused to remove them for family members.

North Tyneside Council calls upon the Elected Mayor to write to the Prime Minister to:

- a) Remove Clause 11 of the Bill which states that refugees should be treated differently

according to how they arrive.

- b) Review the Nationality and Borders bill to ensure everyone has safe and dignified accommodation, enough food and essentials to live, and the right to work and to contribute to their community.
- c) Remove the visa fees for the immediate family members of commonwealth veterans once their spouse / parent reaches 6 years of service

A recorded vote on the Motion, was requested by two Members present.

Votes for the Motion,

N Redfearn, Elected Mayor and Councillors G Bell, L Bell, T Brady, B Burdis, C Burdis, K Clark, D Cox, S Cox, N Craven, J Cruddas, E Darke, L Darke, S Day, D Drummond, P Earley, S Graham, M Green, M Hall, T Hallway, J Harrison, Janet Hunter, John Hunter, C Johnson, H Johnson, J Kirwin, W Lott, G Madden, M Madden, A McMullen, J Mole, J Montague, T Mulvenna, A Newman, P Oliver, J O'Shea, N Percy, S Phillips, B Pickard, M Rankin, P Richardson, W Samuel, J Shaw, M Thirlaway, J Walker and M Wilson.

Votes against the Motion

Councillors L Arkley, L Bartoli, L Bones, S Brockbank, C Johnston, P McIntyre, J Wallace and G Westwater.

The motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 46 votes to 8 votes.

C83/21 North Tyneside Council Pay Policy 2022/23

The Council received a report which presented the Pay Policy statement 2022/23 that set out the Authority's policies on a range of pay matters relating to the workforce, including senior employees (Chief Officers).

The Pay Policy had not changed significantly during the previous 12 months, with the main change being the update to the North Tyneside Council Living Wage as agreed by the full Council on 26 November 2020. The pay multiple and the gender pay gap had been calculated as at 31 March 2021.

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

It was moved by Councillor M Rankin and seconded by Councillor C Johnson that:

- (1) the Pay Policy statement 2022/23 be approved; and
- (2) the publication of the Pay Policy be authorised.

The Motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 54 votes to 0 votes.

C84/21 Designation to Statutory Roles

The Council received a report requesting the designation of an officer of the Authority to the statutory role of Monitoring Officer and to appoint an officer of the Authority to undertake the roles of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer for the Authority.

The responsibility for the designation and appointment of the roles were reserved to full

Council.

It was moved by the Elected Mayor and seconded by Councillor C Johnson that:

- (i) Council designate Jacqueline Laughton, Assistant Chief Executive as the Monitoring Officer for the Authority with effect from 17 March 2022
- (ii) Council appoint Paul Hanson, Chief Executive as Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer for the Authority with effect from 17 March 2022.

The Motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 54 votes to 0 votes.

C85/21 Chair's Announcements

The Chair wished Members who were to stand in the Election in May the best of luck. He offered any Members who were not seeking re-election the opportunity to address the meeting if they wished.

The following Councillors not seeking re-election accepted and addressed the meeting.

Councillor L Darke
Councillor M Madden
Councillor P Earley

C86/21 Elected Mayor's Announcements

We have all seen the tragic scenes unfolding in the Ukraine, the harrowing realities of war ripping communities apart, terrified families fleeing as their homes are destroyed and the devastating images of loss and heartbreak.

It is impossible to understand what the people of the Ukraine are going through.

My deepest sympathies and condolences go out to every family affected, including those Ukrainian nationals who call North Tyneside home.

On behalf of North Tyneside Council, I would like to say that we stand in solidarity with the people of the Ukraine and strongly condemn the Russian invasion of the country.

I am personally proud that we are flying the Ukrainian flag in locations across the Borough, including here in the Council Chamber this evening.

We have illuminated buildings with the colour of the Ukrainian flag and shown our full support wherever we can.

North Tyneside has already displayed incredible generosity to the people of Ukraine.

I am extremely proud and I would like to thank Councillors from all sides of the chamber for their efforts in collecting items from their communities.

For anyone who is still hoping to donate the most beneficial way is to make a financial donation to well established organisations such as UNICEF or the Red Cross.

These organisations will get the right support, to the right people, at the right time.

North Tyneside has a long-standing history of supporting people who are looking for safety and sanctuary.

We are ready to welcome any refugee into our Borough and will continue to support the Government's plans and local organisations who can provide support to anyone arriving in North Tyneside.

Our thoughts will continue to be with anyone affected by this conflict which, I hope will be resolved soon.

I am sure you will join me in a moment of reflection before we move onto the next item of business.

C87/21 Questions by Members of the Council

1. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor L Bones

“At the Council meeting in January the Mayor stated that she uses her red fiesta to get her around the borough and only uses the civic car for civic business.

Can the Mayor therefore confirm if she or her cabinet use the civic car for authority appointments to outside body meetings.”

Councillor C Johnson responded on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

As has been the case for all previous Elected Mayors, the civic car can be used for attendance at civic business. This includes attendance at outside body meetings where they are attending and representing the Borough. The civic car is not available for private use.

We have to reflect that the civic car has been used constantly whether it's the Conservative or Labour party in the Mayoralty and has been used by different Mayors and Chairs of Council. It is mainly used by the Chair of the Council as opposed to the Mayor or Cabinet. The Chair have their Chains which are valuable and if the civic car was not available the Chain would require increased insurance premium.

Councillor L Bones asked the following supplementary question:

Given the answer we've just had about the use of the civic car to outside bodies there is clearly a log of when, where and why the car is used will the Mayor commit to provide the public with a clear overview of where their council tax is being spent by publishing the log for the past four years of the car use and every year going forward.

Councillor C Johnson responded as follows:

I note that Councillor Bones quite deliberately did not include any time when the conservatives were using the car. The civic car is used by both the conservatives and labour for civic business.

We will look at the log and will publish the records as far back as we have available.

2. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor E Darke

The Members enquiries system was set up to be used as a tool to ensure members had an appropriate casework system to ensure residents got responses to queries from members, with that in mind, what percentage of members enquiries from Conservative councillors were genuine enquiries from residents and what percentage were from the councillor?

The Elected Mayor responded as follows:

The Members Enquiry system can be used by members to raise queries either on behalf of residents or in their own name.

For members of Conservative Group, the proportion of enquiries raised on their own behalf for the period from May 2021 to date ranges from 8% to 87%.

There is a table available if members wish to see it with a breakdown, the Labour group is also available and ranges from 0% to 90%. The Constitution sets out the purpose of the members enquiry system which records the queries on behalf of residents and for members in their own name. This was further confirmed to all members in an email sent on the 6 August 2021.

3. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor G Westwater

At the November 2021 meeting of Full Council Cllr Johnson proposed an amendment to the motion on Covid Memorials to read “on the conclusion of the consultation report back to a cross party working group to decide how to proceed with the memorial” - this was unanimously agreed.

Can the Mayor confirm when this meeting will take place, as we are looking forward to working collaboratively on this project, and would she agree with me that the current proposals of five concrete circles costing £250,000 do not represent good value for money for taxpayers when compared with our proposal of 20 Covid Memorial Trees, in line with the Council's tree planting policy, which would be more accessible to residents and more appropriate during a cost of living crisis.

Councillor C Johnson responded on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

Council will recall following the meeting in November 2021, the Commemoration Project proposals were to be the subject of public engagement rather than full consultation. All residents were offered the opportunity to choose their preferred choice of artwork for the centre of the compasses in each locality of the borough.

All feedback received from our residents and the wider community has been extremely positive. There was a clear preference on the choice of the artwork in all four localities.

These areas for reflection and the compasses that are central to them are all about the spirit of North Tyneside which is something that always shines through within our communities and is something which I'm incredibly proud to be a part of. The current preparation, the installation of stonework and associated materials and the provision of seating and interpretation boards is all part of the cost and is also wider works in terms of our wagonways that also forms part of this cost, not £250k for stones

Council will be aware that as part of the Ambition for North Tyneside proposals, agreed by Cabinet in November 2018, investing in our mining heritage (including the Wagonways) was key to our proposals. This was also agreed by Cabinet in February 2022, where an update report was considered in which specific reference was made to link the Covid Memorial with the Wagonways scheme.

As it is only fitting that the Authority has the first central commemoration area ready for our residents in time for the National Day of Reflection on 23rd March, I asked officers to progress the work required to secure the early delivery of the commemoration areas rather than delaying matters for further cross-party consideration. I was however confident that I had full Council support for the proposals which I explained and were also on display outside the Chamber in November.

If Councillor Westwater said that this was the case I would like to apologise but it was quite clearly a cross party motion that was passed in November 2021.

I am also pleased to confirm that officers are working to plant almost nine thousand trees across the Borough this planting season, in line with the Authority's Tree Planting Policy and which all our residents can enjoy.

Councillor G Westwater asked the following supplementary question:

Does the Cabinet Member or the Mayor agree that unanimous cross party decisions agreed in the chamber should be carried through?

Councillor C Johnson responded as follows:

I believed that in this decision we agreed to have a Covid Memorial. This Covid Memorial is very important that it is in place for the 23 March, a National Reflection Day. It was for this reason why we went ahead, we thought we had cross party support.

We wanted a memorial that was fitting for the lives that have been impacted in this last year. The £250k is not just for stones, it is about improvements to the Wagonways. It is about the memorial itself and the areas around the wagonways and linking them. We anticipate that £75k of the cost will be met by Section 106 contribution. All the resources used were locally prepared, made and the public consultation concluded in 2022 was entirely positive about the proposals.