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Local Government Act 1972

Borough of North Tyneside

Thursday, 19 January 2023

At the meeting of the Council of the Borough of North Tyneside duly convened and held on Thursday, 19 January 2023 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 P Oliver (Chair)
N Redfearn (Elected Mayor)

Councillor L Arkley	Councillor K Barrie
Councillor L Bartoli	Councillor G Bell
Councillor L Bell	Councillor L Bones
Councillor B Burdis	Councillor C Burdis
Councillor K Clark	Councillor D Cox
Councillor N Craven	Councillor J Cruddas
Councillor E Darke	Councillor C Davis
Councillor S Day	Councillor D Drummond
Councillor P Earley	Councillor L Ferasin
Councillor M Fox	Councillor S Graham
Councillor M Hall	Councillor T Hallway
Councillor John Hunter	Councillor V Jamieson
Councillor C Johnson	Councillor H Johnson
Councillor C Johnston	Councillor J Kirwin
Councillor F Lott	Councillor W Lott
Councillor G Madden	Councillor L Marshall
Councillor P McIntyre	Councillor A McMullen
Councillor J Montague	Councillor J Mudzingwa
Councillor T Mulvenna	Councillor M Murphy
Councillor T Neira	Councillor A Newman
Councillor R O'Keefe	Councillor J O'Shea
Councillor E Parker-Leonard	Councillor A Percy
Councillor S Phillips	Councillor B Pickard
Councillor M Rankin	Councillor W Samuel
Councillor O Scargill	Councillor J Shaw
Councillor M Thirlaway	Councillor J Walker
Councillor J Wallace	Councillor G Westwater
Councillor M Wilson	

Apologies: Councillor M Green, Councillor J Harrison, Councillor Janet Hunter and Councillor P Richardson

1. Question to the Elected Mayor from Mr Turner of Wallsend

Please can I ask why there seems to be less investment in Wallsend aimed at footfall increase.

There has been a mention of artwork relating to Segedunum & new shop fronts for those that have aged.

But primarily there already is not enough footfall in and around Wallsend it's merely become like ghost town.

Yet I know personally when we have arranged events or I have been part of events in Wallsend that people come out in great numbers.

So surely some of the allocated finance needs to be aimed more at holding more events ie a music concert in Wallsend park would be an ideal event which can be done with relative ease I'm sure or maybe something similar at Segedunum fort.

Please can we find a way to hold discussions with someone who may be able to make such ideas a reality and in turn bring Wallsend back to life.

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

The Our North Tyneside Plan sets out our bold and ambitious plans to make North Tyneside an even greater place to live, work and visit by 2025. As part of this plan Wallsend has been identified as a place for investment as a result of a key component of our ambition and regeneration strategy. To date the Council has worked alongside partners to look at facilities to bring back vacant buildings into use to increase footfall into the town centre.

Hadrian Health Centre has been developed alongside the NHS and the department is now open. The Customer First Centre located on the high street provides a library facility, the Spirit of North Tyneside wing and a home for VODA.

Private sector contributions have delivered an Aldi, Wetherspoons and Burger King, the conversion of 11 derelict properties in Charlotte Street into new homes. TEDCO now occupies space in the Town Hall and provides a drop in venue for startup businesses and social enterprises' looking for guidance.

In addition, the Council organised an number of exciting events to drive footfall in the town to increase dwell time and attract new and repeat visitors.

In 2022, Wallsend CFC hosted the premiere of The World of Peter Storytime Trail which ran for 5 weeks and attracted nearly 4,000 visitors.

Families flocked to the Under the Stars event in Richardson Dees Park in February to see a beautiful fire installation, evocative soundtrack and the appearance of a larger-than-life mythical being made of stars.

In June, Wallsend was chosen to host a beacon lighting ceremony to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, attracting large crowds.

A visit from Raymond Briggs' Father Christmas to the Forum in December kicked off the festive season which also saw Christmas lights along the High Street.

New technology is being embraced to encourage people to explore the town and its attractions. The Roaming Romans Augmented Reality trail app was launched at the end of 2022 and has been used over 500 times since then with plans to expand the concept further in 2023.

This was in addition to a programme of organised events by the Council's Skills and Employability Team that support people back into work and a programme of Adult Community Learning to help digital and language skills.

The Council has placed footfall monitors in four locations in the town, to monitor footfall patterns as well as monitoring vacancies from the town for retail premises too.

Positively, the vacancies rate is well below the natural average of 40% and operates at a healthy 11 % in line to policy objectives for the town. The Council has been successful in securing £1.94m funding from North Tyneside Combined Authority. The robust work programme that includes the key objectives to maintain and increase footfall visits that records numbers and spend that can be seen in town centres and high streets.

The work package is currently in development and is set to launch before spring includes a dedicated and sport business support resource for startup SME's including free incubator programmes and the appointment of a Business Liaison Officer.

A shop front improvement scheme fund for a total of £100k in grants for business to improve the external façade of properties. Animation programme that builds on the successful event particularly the augmented reality trail that brings Segedunum into the town centre., strengthening the connectivity between Segedunum and the town centre and creating an improve route which will enable also the use of Hadrian Wall cycle route to provide access to the rest of the towns assets to increase footfall including animated trails.

As a result of the High Street Partnership Board including representatives from local businesses and the Council has also been established and provides a forum for key stakeholders in the town to get together to ensure innovations and contributions to the objectives of the project. Increased footfall being the key one.

In addition, the Government's High Street Task Force, who are also providing advice and support to building capacity of businesses to become more involved in their town. Building a successful work and well hub in North Shields, the Council is also planning to restore one in Wallsend which would generate footfall.

Work continues to prepare the Wallsend Master Plan which was approved by Cabinet in November 2022, which should be in public engagement in January and February 2023. This looks at improvements in the town in terms of roads and footpaths in High Street East and West, Station Road. Improvements to the Segedunum museum, increased cycling provision, business support events and further partnership working and the owners of the former shopping centre to support further investment from them. All contributing to improve the environment for the visitors and residents that come and enjoy the town.

Sadly, we also submitted to the levelling up fund application in June 2022 for £20m of much needed funds for Wallsend. Sadly, the Conservative Government chose to give this money to leafy Richmond and Rishi Sunak's constituency instead of the much needed work in Wallsend.

2. Question to the Elected Mayor from Mr Thorn of Monkseaton

I am very interested to understand why, since March 2020, very little if no work has been done to ensure that road signs in the Borough are clear from the foliage or overgrowth of nearby trees and bushes? The situation is frankly ridiculous and, in my opinion, will lead to a serious incident with potential harm to person(s) as a direct result. It is particularly noticeable on the approaches at Holystone roundabout.

Councillor S Graham responded on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

We take the management of our highway network very seriously and road safety is a vital part of this. Each year we undertake a substantial program of maintenance and management works on the highway network, including extensive vegetation management work.

As part of this the Authorities highway inspectors undertake periodic inspections of all streets in the borough, which includes road signs and where vegetation cutbacks are identified they will be added to our works program. Landowners are also notified of their obligations to cutback foliage where appropriate. We also take routine management works on our highway network such as gully cleansing, litter removal sweeping and vegetation clearance. This included for example the A1058 Coast Road and the A188/A189 Salters Lane corridor, where management works are carried out twice a year.

One-off works such as thorough vegetation cutback are also undertaken as and when required. Our vegetation management program includes works in the vicinity of highway junctions to maintain visibility and support road safety.

We will continue to work to ensure our highways are managed and maintained to support road safety and to the benefit of residents and visitors.

3. Question to the Elected Mayor from Mr Cadman of North Shields

A number of Ash trees around the region have been removed from residential streets after suffering from Ash Dieback. The current NTC tree policy is to replace each removed tree with at least one other. What is the action plan to assess and remove Ash trees in the region and when will replacement trees be re-instated to the residential streets in their place?

Councillor S Graham responded on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

Thank you, Mr Cadman, for your question.

Whilst there is not a regional action plan to assess and remove Ash trees I would like to explain our planned approach within North Tyneside. Our inspection regime takes place between April and September when the trees are in leaf.

The first phase of Ash tree inspections began in July 2022 where we assessed the severity of the disease in each tree following nationally recognised guidance, which categorise trees into bands 1 to 4.

Any tree categorised as either 3 or 4 has been identified for removal. I'm pleased to report that the work fell to Ash trees identified in phase one of the inspection program began in October last year and will be completed by the end of March this year.

The inspection of Ash trees will continue to take place annually and will commence again in April this year and any further trees identified for removal will be added to the work program.

With regards to tree planting, I can confirm the list of locations has been agreed for this

current season where a further 280 trees will be planted. Planting of these trees commenced in November 2022 and will be completed by March this year. This will include replacements in some residential streets, where residents have asked for them to be replaced.

As part of our ongoing commitment to annual tree planting across the borough, members of the public can suggest new locations, which will be considered in line with our strategy. I hope this demonstrates the Council's commitment to the management of trees across the borough. Thank you once again for your question

4. Question to the Elected Mayor from Mrs Harrison of North Shields

My question is in regard to disability accessibility in my vicinity. I use a mobility scooter which is invaluable but being able to get around my area is a challenge. A lot of streets don't have disability pavement slopes which means having to use driveway ramps which are steep.

Beachcroft Ave, Beach Road slip road, which I have to use to get to Morrisons in order to use the controlled crossing point. There are many areas that need re-assessed. Some streets have a ramp on one side but no ramp on the opposite side.

Councillor S Graham responded on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows

The Council's Transport Strategy and Highway Asset Management Plan aims to have a well-maintained highway network for the enjoyment of all highway users including members of the public who may have mobility issues.

As such we allocate funding every year for a rolling programme of work to install dropped kerbs at junctions and other key locations in order to make routes more viable for mobility scooters.

The Council's highways team have made an assessment of the dropped kerb requirements at Beach Croft Avenue and the Beach Road route to the Morrisons pedestrian crossing. I am pleased to confirm that the improvements will be included in the next phase of dropped kerb work which will commence later this year.

5. Question to the Elected Mayor from Mr Cummings of Whitley Bay

My understanding is that local authorities have a legal duty to remove graffiti from public buildings and structures but (unless the graffiti is offensive) there is no legal time limit to do so.

As a matter of good practice and consistent with making North Tyneside a great place to live, work and visit, will the council put a policy in place to set their own internal targets for graffiti removal and report performance back to residents (say) annually?

My reasons for asking:-

I have lived in North Tyneside for over 34 years. In that time, there has been a steady increase in the levels of criminal damage (especially graffiti) affecting high profile locations such as road signs, transport infrastructure, coastal leisure facilities (sea walls, seats, shelters) as well as many other public structures. It's easy to report such instances.

I have done so and, to their great credit, North Tyneside Council are generally responsive (certainly compared to Newcastle for example). But there are still many very obvious ugly examples of graffiti in the Borough. Visual impressions make a big impact on residents' perceptions of safety, wellbeing Page 4 and in their opinions of 'what their council does for them'. In addition, there's little point spending public money to attract visitors to coastal areas if we allow graffiti to spoil the visitors' experience.

I appreciate that there are many demands on council resources and that any commitment would probably require some zoning or area prioritisation- but surely, good councils should target and measure their performance in these aspects and report back.

If this is already being done, thank you and please pass on the details. However, I cannot find a record of any such commitment and having reported several things over recent months and spoken to councillors about specifics, I can see that there is a positive response but it appears to be without policy or plan.

Councillor S Graham responded on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

Thank you for your question.

I can confirm that the Authority does have a statutory obligation to remove graffiti, and to help us meet these obligations, we have a set of environmental maintenance standards in place which includes graffiti removal. These standards are published on the council's website. I am pleased to confirm that the Authority does have response targets in place.

For example, we aim to respond to any reports of graffiti within 3 working days. However, for reports of offensive graffiti the response target is much quicker where we aim to remove graffiti within an hour of receiving a report.

The majority of the graffiti reports received are removed by our dedicated graffiti removal team however, on some occasions, external specialist removal is required to avoid causing damage to property, structures and road signs.

We manage performance against our graffiti removal targets internally and report our performance to the Association of Public Service Excellence.

I hope the information that I have provided provides reassurance of the council's commitment and approach to the removal of graffiti from across the borough, to ensure that North Tyneside remains a great place to live, work and visit. Thank you once again for your question.

6. Question to the Elected Mayor from Mr Steele of Tynemouth

I read with interest the claim that the council 'cuts carbon' by 53% and is 'ahead of schedule' for its 100% target. I note that the council's emissions represent less than 2% of the borough's emissions and this figure is derived from a base line set in 2010. Can you report on carbon emission reduction since the declaration of a climate emergency in 2019?

Councillor S Graham responded on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

Thank you for your question. Responding to the climate emergency is a top policy priority for

this Council and I am proud of the work we are doing.

The statements we make about our action to tackle the climate emergency rather than claims are measured impacts in line with national and international methods such as the Greenhouse gas reporting protocol and I am confident in our numbers.

When a climate emergency was declared at full Council in July 2019, the Council's carbon footprint was already down by 45%. The declaration of a climate emergency was not the start of our ambitious programme of work, and we had already made significant achievements.

The Council's most recently reported carbon footprint for the year 2021/22 is 53% down and we are projecting a further reduction to 55% at the end of this financial year.

Over the next 12 to 18 months, we will see further significant reductions as we convert more streetlights to LED, enjoy full year benefits of our Solar PV scheme at Killingworth depot and our air source heat pumps 'go live' at four leisure centres. An annual data set is provided to the Authority by Central Government detailing the carbon footprint of the Borough.

This is usually 18 months after the end of the reporting period. At the time of declaring the climate emergency in July 2019, Borough-wide carbon emissions had decreased by 39% in real terms and by 42% per head of population. The most recent data set available to us is for the calendar year 2020 and shows that the carbon footprint of the Borough has decreased by 47% in real terms and by 51% per head of population.

The Council publishes an annual performance report on its website that details the year-on-year measurement of the Authority's and Borough's respective carbon footprints. You can also find our Carbon Net-Zero 2030 Action plan on our website. Thank you again for your question.

Mr Steele asked the following supplementary question.

What other targets do you have, and challenges do you see to get to the ambitious target to 2030?

Councillor S Graham responded as follows:

We have a climate emergency board both internally with the Council and externally.

We have 158 actions on our Carbon 2030 action plan. If you look at the plan Mr Steele, you will find there is a huge ambitious target this authority has on every front. There is nothing that we do in this local authority that does not involve climate change it's at the back of our minds at every juncture, every decision we make we consider climate change.

7. Question to the Elected Mayor from Ms Remfry of Whitley Bay

Has North Tyneside Council considered, as part of its zero-carbon Transport Strategy, a partnership with a local Car Club to enable its staff to have access to a car without having to have one of their own, thereby reducing borough carbon emissions and improving air quality?

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

The Authority has considered the option to seeking an arrangement of a car club in relation to staff travel. We firstly support our employees to travel to work by walking, cycling and public transport in accordance with the approach taken in North Tyneside Transport Strategy and wider North East Transport Plan.

We have a number of initiatives in place to make it easier and more affordable for staff to use more sustainable modes of transport for their journey to work, and as part of work. These include a Cycle to Work salary sacrifice scheme, and options for employees to purchase public transport season tickets. Car sharing the journey to work is a further option to reduce costs and carbon emissions and many of our employees can take part in this through the Cobalt Park car sharing scheme.

When our employees need to travel as part of their work they do, we are increasingly converting our fleet used to electric vehicles and they also pool vehicles arrangements in place to support the operational requirements of service areas within the authority and its partners.

In addition, our employee team have access to car leasing via salary sacrifice arrangement that helps employees to obtain more modern vehicles which are likely to be lower emission than older cars. As part of our Carbon Net-Zero 2030 Action Plan, we will be looking at options to increase the take-up of zero-emission vehicles through this scheme.

On Cobalt we have two car club providers in operation and right around the borough both Co-Wheels and Enterprise have car clubs' operations that not just North Tyneside staff but any member of the public can sign up to and we would encourage them to do so.

The measures which I have discussed will complement the wider measures set out in our Carbon Net-Zero 2030 Action Plan to deliver carbon reduction and support improved local air quality in the borough.

C64/22 Minute Silence

A minutes silence was held in memory of former Councillor Keith Smiles who was a Councillor for Cullercoats Ward from 1995-1999.

C65/22 Announcement from the Chair regarding the Elected Mayor

The Chair invited members to join her in congratulating the Elected Mayor on being awarded a Damehood in this year's New Year's Honour List in recognition of her work in Political and Public Service.

C66/22 To receive any Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

C67/22 Minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2022

Resolved that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 24 November 2022 be taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chair.

C68/22 Motion 1

It was moved by Councillor L Bartoli and seconded by Councillor L Bones that:

Recording of Cabinet and Council Committees

Since the introduction of the recording and publication of Full Council meetings there has been an increased level of scrutiny and accountability. As more residents are able to see discussions for themselves, political debate within the borough has been enriched.

North Tyneside Council would like to further increase levels of transparency and accountability and therefore asks the Mayor and Council to:

1. Commit to the recording and publishing online of all Cabinet meetings and Council committee meetings, before the start of the new municipal year in May 2023, subject to the Members attending those meetings not passing a resolution to exclude the public from such meetings.
2. Invite the Monitoring Officer to advise Members on any copyright issues that might arise from all recordings of public meetings being made available to Members, the public and the press in relation to the sharing of extracts from Cabinet or Council Meetings on Social Media and anywhere else.

An amendment was moved by Councillor C Johnson and seconded by Councillor W Samuel as follows:

In paragraph 1, to add the following after Council Committee Meetings: 'when the new technology which the council is in the process of installing is up and running and fully tested which is due to be May 2023', and remove 'before the start of the new municipal year in May 2023'.

To add the following sentence to the end of paragraph 2: 'Furthermore, invite the monitoring officer to advise of any legal or standards issues which may arise from sharing edited clip or taking clips out of context while sharing them.'

The amended motion therefore read:

Recording of Cabinet and Council Committees

Since the introduction of the recording and publication of Full Council meetings there has been an increased level of scrutiny and accountability. As more residents are able to see discussions for themselves, political debate within the borough has been enriched.

North Tyneside Council would like to further increase levels of transparency and accountability and therefore asks the Mayor and Council to:

1. Commit to the recording and publishing online of all Cabinet meetings and Council committee meetings when the new technology which the council is in the process of installing is up and running and fully tested which is due to be May 2023, subject to the Members attending those meetings not passing a resolution to exclude the public from such meetings.
2. Invite the Monitoring Officer to advise Members on any copyright issues that might arise from all recordings of public meetings being made available to Members, the public and the press in relation to the sharing of extracts from Cabinet or Council Meetings on Social Media and anywhere else. Furthermore, invite the monitoring officer to advise of any legal or standards issues which may arise from sharing edited clip or taking clips out of context while sharing them.

The amendment, on being put to the meeting, was approved unanimously.

The substantive motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved unanimously.

C69/22 Motion 2

It was moved by Councillor M Thirlaway and seconded by Councillor G Bell that:

Ukraine

North Tyneside Council notes that Friday 24th February 2023 marks the one-year anniversary of Russia's illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. We reiterate our absolute support for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. The resulting conflict has had a devastating impact on Ukraine, and we will continue to support all Ukrainian refugees here in North Tyneside.

We ask the Elected Mayor to:

1. Write to the Ukrainian Ambassador in the UK, reiterating North Tyneside Council's support and solidarity, and respect for his nation's sovereignty and freedom.
2. Commit to continue supporting all Ukrainian refugees here in North Tyneside for as long as necessary.

The motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved unanimously.

C70/22 Motion 3

It was moved by Councillor C Davis and seconded by Councillor M Fox that:

"We are in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis and a crisis in our NHS made by the Conservatives Government.

Council believes all primary school children should get free school meals in response to the rising cost-of-living pressures on families and our shared ambitions of tackling child poverty and ensuring no child goes hungry in school.

Council believes in addition to rising food, fuel and housing costs, childcare costs are increasingly forcing growing numbers of parents out of work and see more children missing out on additional learning, and enriching activities as well as some pupils going hungry at school due to not receiving breakfasts at home, there is a well-established link between adequate food and educational attainment in schools.

Council notes that the Councils Equally Well strategy which works with partners across the borough to improve health and education outcomes recently led to the council adopting the Healthy Weight Declaration.

Up to 500 people a week are dying unnecessarily due to delays in receiving emergency treatment according to the Royal College of Emergency Medicine.

Council calls upon the Mayor to write to the Prime Minister calling on him to;

- Implement Universal Free School meals for all Primary School children
- Make all recipients of Universal Credit eligible to receive free school meals
- Implement Labour's plan for every child to be offered a free place at breakfast clubs.
- Urgently ask the Health Secretary to set out a plan to bring down NHS waiting lists and A&E wait times immediately."

The motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 48 votes to 9.

C71/22 Motion 4

It was moved by Councillor L Bones and seconded by Councillor L Bartoli that:

EV on street charging

Electric vehicles are one of the best ways that households can reduce their emissions. Across the country, many people are making the swap to EV - with over 30% of all new car sales being battery powered electric vehicles. However, for many people across North Tyneside without access to off street parking, owning an electric vehicle with the ability to charge it at home is just a pipe dream.

North Tyneside Council believes that finding a sustainable solution to the issue of on-street EV charging is significant in our borough's journey to net zero.

North Tyneside Council notes the scheme which has been set up in Oxford (gul-e) gives residents the opportunity to have gullies installed on the pavement - allowing charging cables to run safely from the property to the roadside without causing a trip hazard.

North Tyneside Council asks the Mayor to set up a cross-party working group to look at establishing a similar scheme in North Tyneside, particularly looking to reflect the dropped curb scheme (which includes a one-off charge for residents allowing them to have a gully installed). The group should produce a report to be presented to Full Council before the end of 2023 with plans to begin offering this to residents in early 2024.

An amendment was moved by Councillor S Graham and seconded by Councillor C Johnson that:

Paragraph 4 be amended to:

- delete 'at establishing a similar scheme in North Tyneside', and replace with 'holistically at all options available to improve EV provision in North Tyneside';
- to delete 'which includes a one of charge for residents allowing them to have a gully installed'; and
- to delete 'with plans to begin offering this to residents in early 2024' and replace with 'setting out a plan to submit to Cabinet'.

The amended motion therefore read:

EV on street charging

Electric vehicles are one of the best ways that households can reduce their emissions. Across the country, many people are making the swap to EV - with over 30% of all new car sales being battery powered electric vehicles. However, for many people across North Tyneside without access to off street parking, owning an electric vehicle with the ability to charge it at home is just a pipe dream.

North Tyneside Council believes that finding a sustainable solution to the issue of on-street EV charging is significant in our borough's journey to net zero.

North Tyneside Council notes the scheme which has been set up in Oxford (gul-e) gives residents the opportunity to have gullies installed on the pavement - allowing charging cables to run safely from the property to the roadside without causing a trip hazard.

North Tyneside Council asks the Mayor to set up a cross-party working group to look holistically at all options available to improve EV provision in North Tyneside, particularly looking to reflect the dropped curb scheme. The group should produce a report to be presented to Full Council before the end of 2023 setting out a plan to submit to cabinet.

The amendment, on being put to the meeting, was agreed unanimously.

The amended substantive motion, on being put to the meeting, was agreed unanimously.

C72/22 Motion 5

It was moved by Councillor O Scargill and seconded by Councillor C Johnston that:

'Litter and dog mess in North Tyneside has got to an unacceptable level after years of neglect by North Tyneside's Labour-run Council. Not only does this ruin how our area looks, but it also poses health and hygiene risks.

Council notes that litter and dog mess has got to an unacceptable standard in North Tyneside.

Council believes new public bins need to be sited across the borough, with many existing public bins needing emptying more often.

Council asks the Mayor to:

- Set up an all party group to establish which bins need emptied more often, where new bins should be sited, which areas are particularly bad for dog mess and what

can be done about it

- Set a target for 100 new bins across the borough before the summer, when littering is at its worst
- Introduce a refreshed public awareness campaign about dog mess within North Tyneside
- Increase the number of staff able to issue dog fouling Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs).'

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

Votes for the Motion:

Councillors L Arkley, K Barrie, L Bartoli, L Bones, C Johnston, P McIntyre, O Scargill, J Wallace and G Westwater.

Votes against the Motion:

Dame N Redfearn, Elected Mayor and Councillors G Bell, L Bell, B Burdis, C Burdis, K Clark, D Cox, N Craven, J Cruddas, E Darke, C Davis, S Day, D Drummond, P Earley, L Ferasin, S Graham, M Hall, T Hallway, John Hunter, V Jamieson, C Johnson, H Johnson, J Kirwin, F Lott, W Lott, G Madden, L Marshall, A McMullen, J Montague, J Mudzingwa, T Mulvenna, M Murphy, T Neira, A Newman, P Oliver, R O'Keefe, E Parker-Leonard, J O'Shea, N Percy, S Phillips, B Pickard, M Rankin, W Samuel, J Shaw, M Thirlaway, J Walker and M Wilson.

Abstentions:

Councillor M Fox

The motion, on being put to the meeting, was rejected by 47 votes to 9 votes with 1 abstention.

C73/22 Urgent Motion 6

It was moved by Councillor C Johnson and seconded by Councillor H Johnson that:

'The Conservative Government have refused to back two high-quality £20 Million levelling up bids for North Shields and Wallsend which would have enabled further regeneration of each town and secured the historic cross Tyne ferry's future. The Tories have let our area down while giving £19 Million to Rishi Sunak's leafy Richmond constituency.

Council believes The Conservative Government made us bid with one hand tied behind our back by capping our bid score at 80% deeming us not a priority while the Prime Ministers own constituency and many marginal seats with Conservative MPs are deemed a priority.

Council calls upon the Mayor to write to the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to ask them to:

- Urgently review the decision to not award the funding to North Shields and Wallsend.
- Urgently commit to a review of the allocation criteria to Levelling up funds to ensure funds get to where they are needed.
- Immediately place North Tyneside into the priority 1 category ahead of any future rounds

of levelling up funding as opposed to the current second rate priority so our bid score is not capped at 80%.’

An amendment was moved by Councillor L Bartoli and seconded by Councillor L Bones as follows:

To remove paragraphs 1 and 2 and replace with ‘North Tyneside has unfortunately lost out in the Government’s Levelling up fund round two allocations which included two £20 Million leveling up bids for North Shields and Wallsend. These would have enabled further regeneration of each town and secured the historic cross Tyne ferry’s future.

The amended motion therefore read:

North Tyneside has unfortunately lost out in the Government’s Levelling up fund round two allocations which included two £20 Million leveling up bids for North Shields and Wallsend. These would have enabled further regeneration of each town and secured the historic cross Tyne ferry’s future.

Council calls upon the Mayor to write to the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to ask them to:

- Urgently review the decision to not award the funding to North Shields and Wallsend.
- Urgently commit to a review of the allocation criteria to Levelling up funds to ensure funds get to where they are needed.
- Immediately place North Tyneside into the priority 1 category ahead of any future rounds of levelling up funding as opposed to the current second rate priority so our bid score is not capped at 80%.

The amendment, on being put to the meeting was rejected by 47 votes to 9 votes.

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

Votes for the Motion,

Dame N Redfearn, Elected Mayor and Councillors G Bell, L Bell, B Burdis, C Burdis, K Clark, D Cox, N Craven, J Cruddas, E Darke, C Davis, S Day, D Drummond, P Earley, L Ferasin, M Fox, S Graham, M Hall, T Hallway, John Hunter, V Jamieson, C Johnson, H Johnson, J Kirwin, F Lott, W Lott, G Madden, L Marshall, A McMullen, J Montague, J Mudzingwa, T Mulvenna, M Murphy, T Neira, A Newman, P Oliver, R O’Keefe, J O’Shea, N Percy, S Phillips, B Pickard, M Rankin, W Samuel, J Shaw, M Thirlaway, J Walker and M Wilson.

Abstentions:

Councillors L Arkley, K Barrie, L Bartoli, L Bones, C Johnston, P McIntyre, O Scargill, J Wallace and G Westwater.

The substantive Motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 47 votes to 0 with 9 abstentions.

C74/22 Timetable of Meetings 2023/24

Council received a report which set out a draft programme of Council and committee meetings for the 2023/24 municipal year.

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

- Council agree the programme of meetings for 2023/24 set out in Appendix A of the report.
- Council agree that the meetings of the full Council proposed for 20 July 2023, 23 November 2023 and 18 January 2024 be those at which questions will be taken from members of the public.

The motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved unanimously.

C75/22 Chair's Announcements

The Chair of Council made the following announcement:

To remind members that they are invited to the Holocaust Memorial event that will be taking place next Friday 27 January.

C76/22 Elected Mayor's Announcements

There were no announcements.

C77/22 Questions by Members of the Council

1. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor L Bones

In December 2021, councillors were given advice that it was safe to resume face to face ward surgeries. From experience, we all know just how effective these sessions can be to hearing the views of the residents we are here to serve. Despite this guidance, the Mayor has yet to hold a single surgery or 'Mayor listens' event since the pandemic. When will the Mayor resume these crucial events?

The Elected mayor responded as follow:

Thank you for your question Councillor Bones.

I am delighted to be able to engage with many of our residents each month in many different ways, not just through the Listens Events. Residents can make direct contact with me via the phone, email, letter or by talking to me when I am out and about at various locations across the borough or at the broad range of different events I attend.

I am sure that you will agree that the one thing that the pandemic has allowed us all is an opportunity to look at the way in which we deliver services and make adjustments that better meet the needs of our residents. That has included how best to engage with our residents.

When I first started the listening events when campaigning for the first Mayoral elections and some residents commented that we engaged only at election time, that they were never listened too and that some councillors were unapproachable.

So when first elected as Mayor I decided to have Listening Events and although the Listen's Event initially attracted high numbers the most recent at the Killingworth Centre on 11 January 2020 had only 11 residents. Prior to this event at the Beacon Centre, North Shields on 9 November 2019 prior I spoke to 6 residents with 3 with the same concern.

This compares to over 1,400 enquiries made directly to me in 2020, 1,140 in 2021 and 1,300 in 2022.

As Members will be aware I attend many many different events during the year which provide an excellent way for hundreds of residents to speak to me directly – this includes the recent Spirit of North Tyneside celebration event, the very successful North Tyneside Together event in the summer last year as well of course as the State of the Area Event which you also attended. I also meet regularly with different organisations such as the Business Forum, Community Groups right across the borough.

I hope that this assures Councillor Bones that our residents can and do contact me about any matter that they consider important to them in this borough.

I have found over the last few years that the best way to make contact with your residents and meet them face to face is to introduce street surgeries and discuss what's concerning the residents and get lots of queries that I can deal with very quickly.

So of course I will keep this under review and if I feel that it would be appropriate to return to the Listens Events I will do so.

Councillor L Bones asked the following supplementary question:

The Mayor does not hold listening events anymore, my question is what is the Mayor afraid of?

The Elected Mayor responded as follows:

If I was such a terrible Mayor, I would not have been elected three times with an increased majority.

2. Urgent Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor O Scargill

The allocation of Levelling-Up Fund grants has seen millions of pounds investment to Northumberland to our north, the North East Combined authority to our south and Gateshead's Labour-run council (which has received almost £20 million to fund regeneration).

Does the mayor accept that, based on these facts, funding has not been allocated on party political grounds and instead acknowledge that other authorities have submitted higher quality bids for this funding?

The Elected Mayor responded as follows.

No, Councillor Scargill.

Councillor O Scargill asked the following supplementary question:

When will the Mayor and her administration accept responsibility for their own failures rather than blaming everyone else around them?

The Elected Mayor responded as follows.

I have never blamed anyone for anything that I was responsible for Councillor Scargill.

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