

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 13 JANUARY 2020

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NORTH EAST DERBYSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

HELD ON 13 JANUARY 2020

Present:

Councillor C D Huckerby Chair

Councillor P Antcliff..... Vice Chair

Councillor N Barker

“ J Barry
“ J Birkin
“ K Bone
“ P Bone
“ S Clough
“ A Cooper
“ S Cornwell
“ C Cupit
“ A Dale
“ L Deighton
“ P Elliott
“ M Emmens
“ A Foster
“ M Foster
“ J Funnell
“ O Gomez Reaney
“ D Hancock
“ L Hartshorne
“ E A Hill
“ A Hutchinson

Councillor J Kenyon

“ P R Kerry
“ B Lewis
“ H Liggett
“ J Lilley
“ G Morley
“ S Pickering
“ M Potts
“ A Powell
“ T Reader
“ C Renwick
“ J Ridgway
“ D Ruff
“ R Shipman
“ L Stone
“ K Tait
“ M E Thacker MBE
“ R Welton
“ N Whitehead
“ B Wright
“ P Wright

Also in attendance:-

D Swaine - Chief Executive
K Hanson - Strategic Director (Place)
L Hickin - Strategic Director (People)
S Sternberg - Head Corporate Governance & Monitoring Officer
J Dethick - Chief Accountant
N Calver - Governance Manager

446 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors W Armitage, R Hall, P A Holmes, C Hunt, M Jones, P Parkin, M Roe, K Rouse and P Windley.

447 Declarations of Interest

Members were requested to declare the existence and nature of any disclosable pecuniary interest and/or other interest, not already on their register of interests, in any item on the agenda and withdraw from the meeting at the appropriate time.

Councillor J Funnell declared a non-significant other interest in Item 6 – Presentation Voluntary and Community Organisations – as a trustee on the Board of Trustees for Citizens Advice.

448 Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 11 November 2019

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 11 November 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

449 Chair's Announcements

The Chair welcomed all those present to the meeting and wished them a belated, but happy and prosperous new year.

Before making her announcements the Chair of the Council, Councillor C Huckerby, invited the Leader of the Council, Councillor M Thacker MBE JP, to offer thanks for the life of Geoff Butler, a former elected member of North East Derbyshire District Council and North Wingfield Parish Council who sadly passed away at the end of November.

In speaking about Geoff Butler the Leader highlighted the numerous ways in which he gave back to the community in addition to his dedicated support to the District and Parish Councils. Members echoed the Leader's kind words and tributes were made by Leaders of all political groups with the consensus that former Councillor Butler had made a difference to the people of the District and offered plaudits for his genuine care for those communities.

The Leader of the Council led all those present in a one minute silence to be at one with their thoughts and memories of Geoff Butler.

The Chair of the Council reported on her visits and events over the festive period where she once again visited PACT, the charity she had chosen for her charity appeal. She offered her thanks to her member colleagues and the public for their generosity so far to her appeal fund and she looked forward to presenting PACT with a sizable donation later in the year.

The Chair had also attended the Employee Celebration Awards, alongside the Leader of the Council, where the Authority offers recognition for the hard

work and dedication to its members of staff. She expressed her congratulations to all award winners, the runners-up and the nominees.

Further, the Chair announced that she would soon be visiting the Clay Cross Angling Club to present the awards at their annual fishing competition, and expressed her thanks to the club for their generous donation to her charity appeal.

450 Appointment of Civic Cadets

The Chair of the Council had made two appointments for Civic Cadets whose role would be to support the Chair and the Authority at future civic events. Cadet Lance Corporal John Martin was in attendance and the Chair presented him with a civic cadet badge, pledge and certificate.

Members offered Lance Corporal John Martin their congratulations and noted that Cadet Lance Corporal Noah Thackeray would be attending the forthcoming meeting of the Council for his official appointment.

451 North East Derbyshire Citizens Advice Bureau

The Chair of the Council welcomed Phil Morris from the North East Derbyshire Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) to the meeting to talk about the work of the CAB within the District.

The North East Derbyshire CAB were based in various offices around the District, including GP surgeries, with a telephone service that covered the entire District. They covered areas such as:-

- Benefits and Tax Credits;
- Universal Credit;
- Debt;
- Legal;
- Consumer Goods and Services;
- Housing;
- Relationships and Family.

They were working alongside partners to deliver projects, such as 'food bank support' with Feeding Britain and 'Derbyshire Scan Watch' alongside Derbyshire Police and Crime Commissioner.

Mr Morris updated Members on a recent audit that had been undertaken showing a national comparison and scoring well in every outcome.

He also informed those present that he would be retiring shortly and introduced Gillian Slade, who would take on his role going forward. Members expressed their thanks for the hard work he had undertaken during his time at the CAB and the benefits that the Bureau had brought to the people of North East Derbyshire.

Councillor B Lewis noted from an earlier slide within Mr Morris' presentation that those residents living on the eastern side of the District were not as often engaging with the CAB. Many people across the District suffered with rural isolation and deprivation and it was questioned how this might be addressed going forward. Mr Morris confirmed that the majority of the District was covered through GP surgeries, however, the CAB were branching out to working within libraries and were always actively looking for different venues where there was an identified need.

452 North East Derbyshire District Council Website

The Chair welcomed David Vickers from the Communications Team to the meeting to present to Members the new NEDDC website.

Members were given an overview and practical demonstration of the new NEDDC website, which had been updated to ensure its mobile compatibility, simplicity, and accessibility. Additional search features had been added as well as "do it online" functions and implanting telephone numbers. The new website had been simplified, and was compatible with new Government guidelines.

It was noted that one in five people have an impairment, and these may present challenges to accessing public information through the website. This had been taken into consideration through its development to make it successful in every way possible.

Members considered disabilities and impairments and how access to Council information and services could be improved, and it was confirmed that a screen reader function was available on the new website and the Leader of the Council made a pledge to investigate the viability of sub-titling for recorded Council meetings.

Thanks was expressed to the Communications Team for developing an excellent website ahead of schedule.

453 Interpreters for Deaf Residents

With the permission of the Chair, the Leader of the Council welcomed James Townsend of Sign Video to the meeting, as well as his sign language interpreter.

Mr Townsend explained to the meeting the different services provided by Sign Video for facilitating deaf residents to engage with local services and businesses.

Sign Video was described as an "interpreter in your pocket" as the first and leading video relay service ever established within the UK. It was an on demand interpreter service for British Sign Language, accessible via mobile device apps, desktops and the internet. There were two options available:-

- (1) Video Remote Interpreting (VRI); and
- (2) Video Relay Service (VRS).

VRI, or Video Remote Interpreting, was a service that could be accessed by a deaf person in the presence of a hearing person using video technology to sign between the deaf person and the BSL interpreter, who would then relay to the hearing person the conversation.

VRS, or Video Relay Service, was applicable where a hearing person and deaf person were not together and the deaf person would sign by video link to a live BSL interpreter, who would in turn talk to a hearing person on the phone.

This was a service that could be easily embedded into any business or Government service to provide equality of access.

Members in the Chamber were fully supportive of the company and their application and thanked Mr Townsend for his attendance.

454 Public Participation

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No 8 members of the public were allowed to ask questions about the Council's activities for a period of up to 15 minutes. The replies to any such questions will be given by the appropriate Cabinet Member. Questions must be received in writing or by email to the Monitoring Officer by 12 noon seven clear working days before the meeting.

No questions from the public had been submitted.

455 Questions from Members under Procedure Rule No 9.2

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No 9.2 Members were permitted to ask the Chair of the Council or relevant Committee or the appropriate Cabinet Member questions about Council activities.

No questions had been submitted under Procedure Rule No 9.2 for this meeting.

456 Motions from Members under Procedure Rule No 10

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No 10 to consider motions on notice from Members. Motions must be received in writing or by email to the Monitoring Officer by 12 noon seven clear working days before the meeting.

Three motions had been submitted under Procedure Rule No 10 for this meeting and were considered in the order submitted.

(a) Motion proposed by Councillor D Hancock and seconded by Councillor P Windley

"Council notes:-

- *The increased reports of rat problems around the District over the last 12 months.*

- *Concerns raised by residents to elected Members of both District and Parish Councils, to the Council's charging structure.*

Council believes that the removal of this fee would:-

- *Enable a more consistent approach to tackling pest control;*
- *Better protect the environment by ensuring that the most appropriate and safest methods are being used;*
- *Ensure that those in our poorer communities are not suffering disproportionately because of their inability to pay.*

Council resolves:-

- *To trial a 12 month waiver of fees in relation to pest control;*
- *To monitor whether there is an increased take-up of the pest control service;*
- *To monitor whether there is an increased effectiveness of pest control during this trial period;*
- *That, should the trial demonstrate an increased effectiveness in the number of residents taking up the service and a resulting decrease in the overall number of pests, then Council will effect a continuing waiver”*

In presenting his motion to Council, Councillor D Hancock expressed his view that there was a rat problem in the District and a 12 month trial to waive pest control fees was the most appropriate way to address this. Councillor R Shipman duly seconded the Motion and added his view that rat control was becoming a national issue.

Councillor N Barker felt that the rat problem in the District had been exaggerated by Councillor D Hancock and he believed that Councillor D Hancock's opinion had been coloured by hearsay and social media posts. He added that in response to one particular post on Facebook, independent surveys were carried out and the situation was addressed with assistance from the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change.

Members were informed by Councillor N Barker that the District had seen six rat cases in 2018 and eight in 2019, which he felt was not the severe situation suggested by Councillor D Hancock. He added the main weapon against rats was prevention by way of not littering or fly-tipping.

Councillor S Cornwell believed that a consistent approach was necessary for pest control. She felt that the extent of the District's rat problem had been stoked because of the story in the Derbyshire Times mistakenly using a rat photograph from Ireland instead of North East Derbyshire, which had then been shared on Facebook.

Councillor C Cupit, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change, thanked Councillor D Hancock for the submitted motion and efforts to tackle pest control issues but she believed it failed to address what it was aiming to. She added that Council data showed no significant increase in annual pest

control figures, although seasonal increases did occur when the temperature was colder. Councillor C Cupit advised that in terms of the motion's proposal to waive the pest control fee there was already a concessionary rate within the Council's pest control service, and she also felt the service was superior to most private services. She added that the vast majority of local authorities charge for the service as well. A removal of the fee could lead to a 50% to 80% increase in phone calls, which would be demand that the Council could not deal with.

Councillor C Cupit stated her belief that the motion missed the point in putting the responsibility with the Council because there were many factors that led to rats appearing. She believed the motion was not environmentally or financially responsible.

Councillor N Barker advised the pest control service charge was introduced when he was a member of the Cabinet and alternative options at the time were considered thoroughly and carefully.

Councillor D Hancock stated that his motion was not about causing panic but was simply an attempt to solve an issue. He added that he strongly disagreed with Councillor S Cornwell's assertion that the fears were based on mistaken photographs and Facebook sharing because he had heard the information from a Board meeting.

On being put to the vote the motion was defeated.

(b) Motion proposed by Councillor R Shipman and seconded by Councillor P Windley

"Council notes:-

- *Disabled facilities grants aid North East Derbyshire families for the care of their disabled relatives by funding necessary adaption to properties, such as room conversions and specialised equipment;*
- *That the Council place a legal clawback on properties if they are sold on within 10 years of the grant being issued;*
- *That, under certain qualifications (such as financial hardship), Council will waive this fee;*
- *That, under the current policy, bereavement of the claimant is not one of the criteria in which the legal charge would be waived.*

Council believes:-

- *That it is not unreasonable for families to move home following the death of a loved one.*

Council resolves:-

- *To add 'bereavement of the individual on whose behalf the application was made' as one of the criteria for waiving the legal charge".*

In presenting his motion to Council, Councillor R Shipman expressed his view that the Council's current disabled facilities grant policy did not take into account when someone died in these situations. He added that by amending the policy as proposed in the motion the Council could lead the way in supporting people who had lost their loved ones.

Councillor D Hancock duly seconded the motion and added that the relevant legislation stated that the local authority may demand the payment which gave the Council enough room for interpretation to amend its own policy. He believed that people who lost their loved ones had already suffered enough and the motion would allow them some comfort.

Councillor C Cupit thanked Councillor R Shipman for the motion and agreed it highlighted a heart rending subject. She advised that an ongoing Environmental Health Review of the Council had included the Council's Disability Facilities Grant Policy and how it would interpret the relevant legislation, so she felt the Council should allow this review to conclude rather than accept the motion because the motion could restrict how the Council's policy operated.

On being put to the vote the motion was defeated.

(c) Motion proposed by Councillor N Barker

Council notes:-

That given three meetings of the Local Plan Steering Group have been cancelled since the District Election, the Council needs to clarify what is happening with the Local Plan and when is it likely to be adopted.

With these questions in mind this Council resolves:-

'That at the earliest opportunity, it will make public the consequences of pausing the Local Plan and publish a revised timetable of when it will be adopted'.

In presenting his motion to Council, Councillor N Barker stated that progression of the Council's Local Plan had been going on a long time and he felt clarification on its direction was necessary.

Councillor T Reader seconded the motion and reserved her right to speak.

Councillor R Shipman believed that Councillor N Barker was playing politics with an important issue instead of trying to clarify its progress. He added that residents he had spoken to were not confident that the current Cabinet could deliver the Local Plan.

Councillor C Cupit stated that the previous Labour administration did not deliver the Local Plan in 10 years. She added that the current Administration was committed to delivering the Local Plan and the motion would not make this happen any faster because the Local Plan Steering Group had no formal

powers or obligations, instead the current Administration would establish new public forums to listen to residents and be united in protecting the District's landscape.

Councillor A Foster believed that Councillor R Shipman was sharing untruths on social media about the current Administration's plans to build on Green Belt land which would result in lost credibility for Councillor Shipman with the public and other Members.

Councillor D Hancock stated his support of the motion because it mentioned producing a Local Plan timetable which he felt would inform Members of the Plan for the Local Plan's progression.

Councillor T Reader felt that the public were weary of waiting on the political disagreements on this matter and she believed that a revised Local Plan timetable would clarify matters.

On being put to the vote the motion was defeated.

457 Outside Bodies

The Leader of the Council, Councillor M Thacker MBE JP, offered an update to Members on the work of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Board over the last two meetings that he had attended.

The key item of business at the LEP had been the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS), where work was in progress around the three principles of the Strategy, which were:-

- Enhanced skills and capability;
- Most ambitious carbon turnaround;
- Deliver connectively led growth across the region.

Within these principles it was proposed for work to be undertaken to:

- enhance skills, capability, and potential of local businesses and work forces;
- to build on regional innovation;
- utilisation of national assets including the Peak District;
- a clear and innovative construction and housing supply;
- improving social mobility; and
- supporting the growth of our local areas to improve wider prosperity.

It was important for the LIS to reflect the actions for the wider area, and be balanced to show challenges, aspirations and impact. It detailed apprenticeships with enhanced links to schools to ensure opportunities were maximised. The Leader advised that the LEP wanted to make the Strategy distinctive and to reflect the cultural history and visitor economy.

An indicative timeline for the LIS required formal dialogue with Government with an aim to have it ready by the end of January 2020.

458 Local Offer for Children in Care and Leavers Offer

Council considered a report of Councillor A Dale, Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Council Services, which informed Members of the District Council's support and commitment to a countywide District and Borough 'Local Offer for Children in Care and Care Leavers' and the development of a countywide 'Care Leaver Covenant'.

In presenting his report Councillor A Dale reported that there were over 800 children in care across Derbyshire with 120 of these children within North East Derbyshire and Bolsover districts. Many of those children had a disadvantaged start to life, often facing unspeakable challenges and the prospect of a life of uncertainty, worry and fear.

Whilst most young people continue to rely on their families into early adulthood and beyond, young people leaving care often do so without the support of a loving family. For a care leaver there was a very high risk that without continued support and people who care about them that they would never reach their potential.

Recent legislation requires for all local authorities to work together as co-corporate parents and collaboration has taken place to create a singular Local Children in Care and Care Leaver Offer which has been submitted to each of the District and Borough Councils within Derbyshire for consideration and adoption.

The offer requested for agreement was for:-

- A Council Tax discount to be awarded on the main residence of a care leaver up until their 25th birthday;
- Offering free access to some Council leisure facilities;
- Actively sign-posting care leavers to apprenticeships;
- Work placements and experience opportunities within the Authority and partner organisations;
- Reviewing and refreshing joint working protocols;
- Actively supporting and promoting recruitment of foster carers and supported lodgings.

The report also requested a pledge to introduce a care leaver covenant to which all the Derbyshire organisations would commit to ensure that care leavers:-

- Are better prepared and supported to live independently;
- Have improved access to employment, education and training;
- Experience stability in their lives and feel safe and secure;
- Have improved access to health and emotional support; and
- Achieve financial stability.

Upon discussing the report Members were whole heartedly supportive of the content detailed therein.

RESOLVED – That:-

- (1) The Local Offer for Children in Care and Care Leavers be approved.
- (2) The development of a county wide Care Leaver Covenant be noted and supported.

(Strategic Director – People)

459 The Children and Adults at Risk Safeguarding System

Council considered a report of Councillor B Lewis, Portfolio Holder for Partnerships and Leisure, which informed Members of the local and countrywide system, structure and arrangements in place to safeguard children and adults at risk in both North East Derbyshire, and Derbyshire as a whole.

It was noted that the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Childrens Partnership (DDSCP) and Derbyshire Safeguarding Adults Board (DSAB) were newly established statutory bodies with the role to co-ordinate and monitor the effectiveness of the safeguarding work of agencies and bodies represented on the Boards.

The Boards were under-pinned by sub-groups with each sub-group represented by a range of agencies supporting the key themes and priorities.

The report set out the organisation and reporting systems of the Boards, which were robust.

In seconding the report Councillor A Dale re-enforced that safeguarding was everyone's business and detailed the importance of the role of Districts in supporting this approach.

RESOLVED – That:-

- (1) The revised arrangements be noted.
- (2) The approach and training undertaken be endorsed.

(Strategic Director – People)

460 Chair's Urgent Business

There was no urgent business to be considered at this meeting of Council.