

COUNCIL

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

12 December 2024

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm in the Civic Centre

The Ceremonial Mayor (Councillor Thompson) presiding:

COUNCILLORS:

Allen	Bailey-Fleet	Boddy
Buchan	Clayton	Cranney
Creevy	Darby	Dunbar
Feeney	Hall	Hargreaves
Harrison	Holbrook	Jorgeson
Leedham	Lindridge	Little
Morley	Nelson	Oliver
Reeve	Riddle	Roy
Scarborough	Smith	C Wallace
S Wallace		

Officers: Denise McGuckin, Managing Director
Hayley Martin, Director of Legal, Governance and Human Resources
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

55. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENT MEMBERS

Councillors Cook, Dodds, Male, Martin-Wells Moore, Sharp and Young

56. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

None

57. BUSINESS REQUIRED BY STATUTE TO BE DONE BEFORE ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

58. MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

The minutes of the last meeting of the Council, held on 3 October 2024 having been laid before the Council.

RESOLVED - That the minutes be confirmed.

59. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL ON THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

None

60. BUSINESS REQUIRED BY STATUTE

None

61. ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

62. TO DISPOSE OF BUSINESS (IF ANY) REMAINING FROM THE LAST MEETING AND TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF ANY COMMITTEE TO WHICH SUCH BUSINESS WAS REFERRED FOR CONSIDERATION.

None

63. TO CONSIDER REPORTS FROM THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES AND TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON ANY OF THOSE REPORTS

None

A Member referred to a recent decision taken by Neighbourhood Services Committee to which the Director of Legal, Governance and Human Resources advised that this issue should be considered later in the agenda under agenda item 15.

64. TO CONSIDER ANY OTHER BUSINESS SPECIFIED IN THE SUMMONS OF THE MEETING

None

65. REPORTS FROM THE POLICY COMMITTEES

- (a) proposals in relation to the Council's approved budget and policy framework;

1. Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) 2024/26 – Report of Finance and Policy Committee

The Finance and Policy Committee had considered a report at its November meeting in relation to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for the forthcoming financial year (2025/26). The current simplified scheme, which had been introduced in April 2024 and therefore had only been in operation for a number of months. It appeared to be bedding in well and had resulted in a reduced administrative burden on the Council as well as greater clarity for council tax payers. In view of the new scheme having no significant issues and the need to establish the change in order to provide stability for working age claimants, it was proposed that no change be made to the scheme for 2025/26, save for an inflationary uplift.

Finance and Policy Committee recommended that Full Council agree the 2025/26 Local Council Tax Support Scheme as presented to and agreed by the Finance and Policy Committee on 25 November 2024.

A recorded vote was taken on the recommendations of the Finance and Policy Committee:-

Those for:-

Councillors Allen, Bailey-Fleet, Boddy, Buchan, Clayton, Cranney, Creevy, Darby, Dunbar, Feeney, Hall, Hargreaves, Harrison, Holbrook, Jorgeson, Leedham, Lindridge, Little, Morley, Nelson, Oliver, Reeve, Riddle, Roy, Scarborough, Smith, Thompson, C Wallace and S Wallace

Those against:-

None.

Those abstaining:-

None.

The vote was carried, unanimously.

2. Council Tax Base 2025/26 – Report of Finance and Policy Committee

The Finance and Policy Committee had received a report to its November meeting setting out the calculation of the Council Tax Base for the forthcoming year and inform precepting authorities, Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland and Cleveland Fire authority, and local precepting authorities (Parish

Councils) before 31 January 2025. The Council Tax Base was expressed as the number of Band D equivalent properties.

The proposed Tax Base for the Council area for 2025/26 was £26,455. This was an increase of 675 (2.62%) from the current base. The calculation and relevant commentary was included in the report to Finance and Policy Committee, attached at Annex 1.

Finance and Policy recommended that Full Council:-

- a) Approve a Council Tax Base for Hartlepool for 2025/26 of £26,455 as detailed in Annex 1 of Appendix 1.
- b) Approve a Council Tax Base for 2025/26 for Parishes who may levy a precept upon the Council's Collection Fund as follows:-

Brierton	15.9
Claxton	13.7
Dalton Piercy	134.1
Elwick	237.6
Greatham	274.1
Hart	489.2
Headland	810.7
Newton Bewley	33.9
Wynyard	1,129.0

A recorded vote was taken.

Those for:-

Councillors Allen, Bailey-Fleet, Boddy, Clayton, Creevy, Dunbar, Feeney, Hall, Hargreaves, Harrison, Holbrook, Jorgeson, Lindridge, Morley, Nelson, Oliver, Riddle, Roy, Scarborough, Thompson, C Wallace and S Wallace

Those against:-

Buchan, Cranney, Darby, Reeve and Smith,

Those abstaining:-

Leedham and Little

The vote was carried.

- (b) Proposals for departures from the approved budget and policy framework;

None

21. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS IN THE ORDER IN WHICH NOTICE HAS BEEN RECEIVED

None

MANAGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

22. OUTSIDE BODY VACANCIES

Nominations were sought in relation to the following outside body vacancies:-

Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education – 1 vacancy
Age UK Teesside – 1 vacancy
Teesside Airport Consultative Committee – 1 vacancy
Henry Smith Education Charity – 1 vacancy
Furness Seaman's Pension Fund – 2 vacancies

RESOLVED – Given that no nominations were received the outside body vacancies were noted.

23. CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE – RESIGNATION OF VICE-CHAIR

The Managing Director reported that notification had been received that Councillor Sharp had resigned as Vice-Chair of Children's Services Committee and that Councillor Dunbar be appointed as his replacement for the remainder of the municipal year.

RESOLVED – that Councillor Dunbar replace Councillor Sharp as Vice-Chair of the Children's Services Committee for the remainder of the municipal year be noted.

24. RESINGATION FROM COUNCILLOR BUCHAN – AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Council was advised that notification had been received that Councillor Buchan had resigned as a Member and Vice-Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee. Nominations were therefore sought to replace Councillor Buchan (non-majority Group appointment) and to also appoint a Vice-Chair for the remainder of the municipal year.

RESOLVED – Given that no nominations were received the committee vacancies were noted.

25. PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON POLICY COMMITTEES

The Leader of the Council and Managing Director wrote to the Parish Clerks of all Hartlepool Parish Councils seeking nominations for a representative from each Parish Council to be co-opted onto each of the Council's Policy Committees. Following appointments made at the last meeting of Full Council to Economic Growth (1 appointment) and Neighbourhood Services (2 appointments) further nominations have been received for consideration by Council:-

Parish Councillor Elizabeth Hurst (Wynyard Parish Council) to serve as a co-opted member on Economic Growth and Regeneration Committee

Parish Councillor Sam Lee (Headland Parish Council) to serve as a co-opted member on Economic Growth and Regeneration Committee

Parish Councillor Scott Gaiety (Headland Parish Council) to serve as a co-opted member on the Adult and Community Based Services Committee

RESOLVED – The nominations received were approved.

26. NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE – RESIGNATION OF VICE-CHAIR

The Managing Director reported that notification had been received that Councillor Clayton had resigned as Vice-Chair of Neighbourhood Services Committee and that Councillor Cook be appointed as his replacement for the remainder of the municipal year.

RESOLVED – that Councillor Cook replace Councillor Clayton as Vice-Chair of the Neighbourhood Services Committee for the remainder of the municipal year be noted.

27. PUBLIC QUESTION

The following question had been received from Veronica Jane Rowsell to the Chair of Neighbourhood Services Committee and Chair of Adults and Community Based Services Committee:-

My question is, what procedure do you have to combat the issues raised below?

I wish for this question and letter to be read out at a full council meeting.

1)

I pity the people growing old in Hartlepool today
There's not much in the way of helping hands
You've taken away the mobility scooter shop
Which gave the elderly and infirmed a bit of a chance
Dropped kerbs are a big issue for me
'Cause as far as I see only half the job has been done
There's still an inch or so lip on most of them
And trying to mount the pavement isn't fun

2)

Some of the pavements and walkways are buckled
For example along the bottom of Catcote Road
I think I'm on a bouncy castle
As I shake from my head to my toes
The pavements are all cracked, uneven and in a poor state
And the kerbs are not easy to see
Where there is no grass verge there should be a white line painted
For those with poor sight like me

3)

Pressing the button to work the traffic lights
Can be quite a danger zone
For the control panel is on the edge of the pavement
And I have to stop well back from the road
This means that I have a job to reach the control pad
Because I'm scared to get close to the edge
It feels safer to wait for a passer-by
To work the control panel instead

4)

Shopping whether in a wheelchair or not,
is a battle older people have to put up with
Even the supermarkets put what you want on the top shelf
And the fear of dropping something puts you right off.
The clothes shops are geared to squash in as many rails as they can
And it's like walking around in a narrow maze
Primark is the place that springs to mind
And I leave buying nothing and my mind's in a daze

5)

Tesco Express shop on the Fens is another nightmare
As they seem to be filling the shelves all day long.
They have tall wide trollies which take up the aisle space
And I think that it's all wrong
They should make sure their shelves are all stocked up from the start

And refill at the end of the day
 As it makes life hard for wheelchair users to cope
 There has to be a better way.

6)

I feel it is wrong to park a car half on the pavement and half on the road
 As driving a wheelchair through a narrow gap can be a problem
 So you either have to go and ask politely if it can be moved
 Or risk life and limb by going around it
 (I must admit that families pushing prams, pushchairs etc must be experiencing similar problems)
 It's not much fun when your legs don't work.
 And you have to rely on others for aid
 So let's have something done about the things mentioned above
 And make life a little less of a problem

7)

Growing old is a sad fact of life
 And sometimes it brings you sorrow
 So let's do something for the elderly today
 Because it may be your turn tomorrow.

The Chair of Neighbourhood Services Committee responded in the following terms:-

Support for Older People

There is a significant range of support available for older people in Hartlepool including the Hartlepool Older People Engagement (HOPE) Project and a variety of social activities at Community Hubs (including bingo, chair exercises, a social dance, the Community Kitchen, knit and natter and reading groups). We also have a Home Library Service, a Befriending Network, advice and support for people living with dementia and their families, a dementia friendly choir, support for older people who are carers and support for people with sight or hearing loss. We commission support that is provided in people's own homes as well as a day centre for people living with dementia, extra care housing and residential care. We have Social Workers and Occupational Therapists who support older people and provide aids and equipment to support people to live independently. We also support people to return home safely after a hospital admission with our Direct Care and Support and Reablement services.

Shop Mobility has not been 'taken away' by the Council as it was never a service provided by the Council. I understand that it ceased to operate as it was not financially sustainable.

Dropped Kerbs

The current design standards require that new installations have a 6mm check between the carriageway and the top of the kerb.
 This is so that visually impaired pedestrians can delineate between the footpath and the carriageway, and also for drainage reasons, so that ponding

problems can be kept to a minimum.

There are some kerbs around the Borough that have a slightly higher check as they pre-date the standards for new installations, and these will be amended as and when maintenance requires their replacement, however there is no requirement for a blanket replacement programme.

Pavements / Walkways

Most footpaths are subject to a routine highway inspection every 6 months, with busier areas having a higher frequency. The defect level for footpaths is 20mm, and anything at or approaching this depth is repaired.

Where verges have been tarmacked/paved, there is generally a pin kerb or other change in material to denote where the main part of the footpath finishes.

Traffic Lights / Crossings

The positioning of traffic signal poles is governed by national design standards, however they should be accessible for people in wheelchairs albeit this may occasionally require additional manoeuvring.

Supermarkets / Shops

The Council does not have a role in relation to how shops operate but the Equality Act 2010 sets out the measures that shops and businesses need to put in place to help disabled people access them. Any concerns about accessibility should be raised with the shop or business concerned.

Parking on Pavements

Where a parked vehicle means that a wheelchair/pushchair is prevented from travelling along the footpath, this would be considered an obstruction offence which can be enforced by the Police. If there are specific locations where this is the case then these can be passed to them for their attention.

As a Council, we believe that older age can and should be an opportunity for an active, independent and thriving time of life.

In concluding the response, the Chair of Neighbourhood Services Committee indicated that she was willing to visit any areas of concern with the questioner along with relevant Council officers and also agreed to explore the issues raised in further detail following the meeting.

27. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

None.

- a) Questions to the Chairs about recent decisions of Council Committees and Forums without notice under Council Procedure Rule 10.1

That following concerns raised in relation to the safety implications of a decision taken by the Neighbourhood Services Committee on 4 November 2024 not to proceed with a zebra crossing at Elizabeth Way, the Chair of

Neighbourhood Services agreed that this issue be considered by the Road Safety Scheme.

RESOLVED – that the issue be considered by the Road Safety Scheme.

- b) Questions on notice to the Chair of any Committee or Forum under Council Procedure Rule 10.2

None.

- c) Questions on notice to the Council representatives on the Police and Crime Panel and Cleveland Fire Authority

None.

- d) The minutes of the meeting held by the Cleveland Fire Authority on 7 June 2024 and Police and Crime Panel on 9 July 2024 and 17 September 2024 were noted.

The meeting concluded at 7.35 pm.

CEREMONIAL MAYOR