

NORTH DEVON COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of NORTH DEVON COUNCIL held at Virtual - Online meeting on Wednesday, 7th April, 2021 at 6.30 pm

PRESENT: Members:

Councillor Biederman (Chair)

Councillors Barker, Bulled, Bushell, Campbell, Cann, Chesters, Crabb, Davis, Davies, Fowler, Gubb, Henderson, Hunt, Jenkins, Knight, Lane, Leaver, Lovering, Lofthouse, Ley, Luggar, Mack, Mackie, Orange, Patrinos, Pearson, Phillips, Prowse, Roome, Saxby, D. Spear, L. Spear, Topham, Topps, Tucker, Turton, Walker, Wilkinson, Worden, Yabsley and York

Officers:

Chief Executive, Head of Resources and Senior Solicitor/Monitoring Officer

218. VIRTUAL MEETINGS PROCEDURE - BRIEFING AND ETIQUETTE

The Chair outlined the virtual meeting procedure and etiquette to Council and attendees.

The Senior Corporate and Community Services Officer confirmed the names of those Councillors and officers present and advised that members of the public were also in attendance.

219. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received.

220. TO APPROVE AS CORRECT RECORDS THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 17 FEBRUARY 2021 AND 24 FEBRUARY 2021 (ATTACHED)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 17 February 2021 and 24 February 2021 (circulated previously) be approved as correct records and signed by the Chair.

221. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chair's announcements.

222. BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD BY OR WITH THE CONSENT

OF THE CHAIR

There were no items of business brought forward by or with the consent of the Chair.

223. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS OF WHICH NOTICE HAS BEEN SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 4, COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES, PARAGRAPH 11 OF THE CONSTITUTION

(a) To consider the following notice of motion received by Councillor Mack:

Councillor Mack presented his notice of motion to Council.

It was moved by Councillor Mack and seconded by Councillor Worden “that the notice of motion be referred to the Policy Development Committee for consideration and to produce a full report”.

RESOLVED that the notice of motion be referred to the Policy Development Committee for consideration and to produce a full report.

(b) To consider the following notice of motion received by Councillor Luggar

It was moved by Councillor Luggar and seconded by Councillor Bushell that “North Devon Council notes with concern and alarm the number of times that environmental damage is caused to the natural environment during development despite the imposition of planning conditions on planning permissions that are meant to protect the same. Too often trees, hedgerows and important habitats are damaged or destroyed when they should be protected for the amenity benefit of the public at large and local residents in particular. North Devon council calls on officers to ensure that planning conditions designed to achieve environmental protection and enhancement are speedily enforced, including by the service of a breach of condition notice if necessary and/or tree protection orders.”

In response to the notice of motion, the Chief Executive advised that the Council already had a planning enforcement team in place to enforce planning conditions. Hedgerows were protected through planning conditions, planning policies and enforcement concordats. The Council employed specialist officers such as an arboriculturalist and a conservation officer. He suggested that a report providing an update on enforcement procedures be presented to the Policy Development Committee.

An amendment was moved by Councillor Prowse that “a report on the issue of enforcement procedures and practices be presented to the Policy Development Committee.”

Councillors Luggar and Bushell as the mover and seconder of the motion took the amendment on board.

RESOLVED that a report on the issue of enforcement procedures and practices be presented to the Policy Development Committee.

224. REPLIES TO ANY QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY THE PUBLIC AND/OR TO RECEIVE PETITIONS UNDER PART 4, COUNCIL PROCEDURES RULES, PARAGRAPHS 8 AND 9 OF THE CONSTITUTION

There were no questions submitted by the Public and/or to receive Petitions under Part 4, Council procedure Rules, Paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Constitution.

225. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest announced.

226. CHAIR'S REPLIES TO ANY QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL BY MEMBERS SUBMITTED UNDER PART 4, COUNCIL PROCEDURES RULES, PARAGRAPH 10 OF THE CONSTITUTION

There were no questions received by Members submitted under Part 4, Council Procedure Rules, Paragraph 10 of the Constitution.

227. REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Council noted a report by the Leader of the Council (circulated previously) regarding work that had been undertaken since the last Council meeting.

The Chief Executive advised that the Government was consulting with Local Authorities and calling for evidence regarding holding virtual meetings beyond May 2021 and would circulate the link to Members. The consultation response would be presented to a future meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee. It was proposed that for smaller Committees, meetings could be held at Brynsworthy Environment Centre, however social distancing requirements and additional measures would need to be put in place such as plastic screens. Further information would be provided to Members in due course.

Council requested that consideration is given to acoustics and accessibility for external venues used to hold Council meetings.

228. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

The following questions were submitted in advance of the meeting and responses provided by the Leader were circulated separately:

(a) Question to the Leader from Councillor Walker: "Following the murder of Sarah Everard, how will the council work to ensure that violence against women and girls is no longer seen as the norm and victim blaming is stopped."

If you look at the following figures for the UK from Action Aid, street harassment and violence against women and girls is endemic within the UK and North Devon is not immune to this:

- 80% of women of all ages have been sexually harassed in public, 90% of these women will not report it as they don't believe it will make a difference □ 97% of young women have suffered the same
- 1 in 2 women are sexually harassed in the workplace
- 1 in 3 women will experience domestic violence in their lifetime
- 1 in 5 women will be raped in their lifetime
- 2 women a week are killed by a current or former partner and 3 women a week take their own lives following domestic abuse

During lockdown domestic violence, particularly against women we know has been on the increase and support will be needed as we come out of lockdown. Are we prepared for the increase in this type of support as it is needed?" Councillor Worden's response "Thank you Councillor Helen Walker for your question. I am pleased to report the following: A number of our housing officers have recently received specialist training on this issue in light of the anticipated increase in need. They will be our specialist caseworkers moving forward. We also now meet with the Women's Refuge in Barnstaple on a weekly basis to jointly plan for the care and ongoing support of victims of domestic abuse. We are working with Devon County Council (DCC) and other housing authorities in Devon to implement the Domestic Abuse Bill. This places a new duty on DCC to assess the need for domestic abuse support in their area for all victims (and their children) who reside in relevant safe accommodation, including those who come from outside of their area. A strategy must be published by August. There is a requirement to report annually to the Secretary of State on this work. This will be informed by a needs assessment and a new Domestic Abuse partnership Board will also be established. DCC has been provided with £1.4m, each housing authority has been awarded £32k to implement these new responsibilities."

229. OUTSIDE BODIES - REPORT OF APPOINTEES

Council considered and noted the reports from appointees to Outside Bodies (circulated previously).

230. REPORT OF CHAIR OF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Council considered and noted the half yearly report by the Chair of Governance Committee (circulated previously).

231. STATUTORY PAY POLICY

Council considered a report by the Human Resources Manager (circulated previously) regarding the Statutory Pay Policy 2021.

It was moved by Councillor Worden and seconded by Councillor Hunt that the recommendation in the report be adopted.

RESOLVED that the report, its Appendix and Annex thereto in relation to the Statutory Pay Policy 2021 be approved.

232. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

(a) **Building Control Joint Committee**

RESOLVED that the following minutes of the Building Control Joint Committee (circulated previously) be noted and adopted as follows:

(i) 11 February 2021

(b) **Governance Committee**

RESOLVED that the following minutes of the Governance Committee (circulated previously) be noted and adopted as follows:

(i) 9 March 2021

(c) **Licensing and Community Safety Committee**

RESOLVED that the following minutes of the Licensing and Community Safety Committee (circulated previously) be noted and adopted as follows:

(i) 9 February 2021

(d) **Planning Committee**

RESOLVED that the following minutes of the Planning Committee (circulated previously) be noted and adopted as follows:

(i) 10 February 2021

(ii) 10 March 2021

(e) **Strategy and Resources Committee**

RESOLVED that the following minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee (circulated previously) be noted and adopted as follows:

(i) 1 March 2021

(A) Minute 272: Council Tax Discounts

Chair

The meeting ended at 7.29 pm

NOTE: These minutes will be confirmed as a correct record at the next meeting of Council.

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