

Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Civic Hall Square, Shildon, County Durham, on 29th March 2010.

Present: Councillor G M R Howe
Councillors A Hammond, T M Bannister, G Swinbank,
A Walker, D M Hancock, V Chapman, H Nicholson,
B Stoker, G Lewis, S Bird, L Iddon and J G Huntington.

TC132/09 Public Question Time

There were no questions from members of the public.

TC133/09 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor F Timmiss.

TC134/09 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

TC135/09 Minutes of Ordinary Council Meeting

Resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 22nd February 2010 be approved and adopted.

TC136/09 Committees

Resolved that the minutes of the following Committees be approved and adopted:-

- a) Service & Amenities - 8th March 2010
- b) Resources - 8th March 2010

TC 137/09 Police Report

Sergeant Clarke was unable to attend the meeting but provided a written report, a copy of which is attached to the minutes.

Members **resolved** that the following concerns be raised with Sergeant Clarke:-

- a) On Sunday 28th March, 'travellers' took part in pony and trap racing at Cheapside, Shildon. Traffic police attended the incident and Members are concerned that such activities should not be allowed to be repeated. In addition, as a consequence, there was a significant amount of horse manure deposited throughout the area concerned.
- b) A number of complaints have been received regarding youngsters climbing on the roofs, etc at Lilburn Close, Shildon.
- c) Concern was also expressed at fires being lit in the fields to the rear of Dale Road.

TC 138/09 Report from representatives on outside bodies

- a) Minutes of the meeting of the Shildon Community Safety Group held on 20th January 2010 – **resolved** that the minutes be noted.
- b) Minutes of the meeting of the Shildon Children and Young People's Action Network held on 10th February 2010 – **resolved** that the minutes be noted.

TC 139/09 Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Audit

Resolved that the Town Council confirms the effectiveness of the current internal audit service.

TC 140/09 Corporate Risk Report and Action Plan

Resolved that the Corporate Risk Report and Action Plan be approved and reports be presented to the Town Council during 2010/11, detailing progress in the delivery of the action plan.

TC 141/09 Consultation on the Strategic Review of Residential Care Homes and Older People's Services

The Town Clerk advised Members that despite a request for a relevant officer from Durham County Council to be present at the meeting to aid consideration of this matter the County Council had advised that officer attendance would only be afforded to the meetings of the Area Action Partnership Board.

Members considered the report to the Cabinet of Durham County Council at its meeting held on 20th January 2010 and following detailed discussion it was **resolved** that the following comments/queries be submitted to Durham County Council and that this matter be further considered at the April meeting of the Town Council:-

- a) The County Council be advised of the Town Council's deepest concern at the decision not to attend the meeting of the Town Council to enable a fully informed consideration of the matter to be undertaken. The County Council to also be advised that this decision is contrary to the provisions of the recently signed Charter between the County Council and the local councils in County Durham. In addition a further request be made for attendance at the meeting of the Town Council to be held in April 2010.
- b) A provision of some £6m has been made in capital programmes for investment in residential care homes of which only £340,000 has been committed. Is there any reason why so little of the allocation has been committed and if the full allocation had been committed would not at least some of the homes have attained the required standard?
- c) As the number of bed spaces occupied by dementia cases is increasing could the closure programme, if agreed, become a case of false economy?

- d) Can details be provided for each in-house residential care home of the performance against the established performance criteria, eg environmental standards, quality of care, etc?
- e) Can an analysis be provided of the causes of the significant variation in the average weekly cost per bed between in-house and independent provision?
- f) Are the professional qualifications of staff employed in independent care homes equivalent to the qualifications of in-house staff?
- g) Can details be provided of the works required to in-house care homes to meet the national standards and are all identified works mandatory?
- h) If in-house provision was to be discontinued what measures are in place to prevent the independent homes from materially increasing charges?
- i) Whilst the policy of seeking to allow the elderly to remain in their own homes is worthy of support can a guarantee be given that the numbers and availability of carers is sufficient to provide a full care service to the increasing number of elderly requiring such support?
- j) Can details be provided of the way in which the closure programme, if agreed, is to be managed, ie immediate closure, closure over a specified period of time etc? This is a critical matter because for the residents and their families the manner of the management of the closure programme can have a significant impact on their physical and emotional well-being.

TC 131/09 Appreciations and Congratulations

Resolved that the schedule of mayoral engagements be noted.