

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC CENTRE, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE ON WEDNESDAY 1 SEPTEMBER 2010 AT 6.00PM

PRESENT:

The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor of
Newcastle upon Tyne (Councillor Brenda Hindmarsh)

Councillors: Ahad, Ali, Pauline Allen, Peter Allen, Allison, Armstrong, Bailey, Bartlett, Bell, Boyle, Burke, Carter, Clark, Cook, Cookson, Cooper, Cott, Cross, Curthoys, Down, Faulkner, Forbes, K Graham, Higgins, Hillicks, B Hunter, L Hunter, James, Kane, Keating, Kemp, Lambert, Langfield, Laverick, Leggott, A Lower, P Lower, Lowson, Lynch, McCarty, Murison, Packham, Pagan, G Pattison, S Pattison, Psallidas, Rahman, Renton, Risk, Robinson, Shepherd, Shipley, J Slesenger, D Slesenger, Stokel-Walker, Stone, Taylor, Todd, Walker, White, D Wood, M Wood and Wright

41 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 7 JULY 2010

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2010 were agreed as a correct record.

42 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Beecham, Breakey, Daglish, Donnelly, Dunn, Emery, Kingsland, Huddart, McStravick, Middleton, Stephenson, Woodward and The Sheriff.

43 OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

i. Exam results

On behalf of the City Council, the Lord Mayor congratulated all those children and young people who had achieved excellent results in their summer tests and exams. She also noted the important role of relatives, carers and teachers in supporting the young people with their studies.

ii. Flooding in Pakistan

The Lord Mayor drew attention to the success of a fund raising event which had been organised by Councillor Ali for the victims of the flooding in Pakistan. A collection box was available in the foyer for those who wished to make a donation.

iii. Ramadan

Members were reminded that as the meeting fell during Ramadan, a Halal tea would be available after the meeting for those Members that had confirmed their attendance.

iv. Gifts and hospitality returns

Members were reminded that when submitting their gifts and hospitality return in the Council papers, to indicate that the form applied to both July and August.

v. Congratulations - Councillors Jackie and David Slesenger

On behalf of the Council, the Lord Mayor congratulated Councillors Jackie and David Slesenger on celebrating their golden wedding anniversary the previous month.

vi. 72 Engineers Regiment

Several members of the 72 Engineers Regiment would be marching 550 miles around the boundary of the North East Brigade to raise money for charities. The Lord Mayor pledged her support and invited Members who wished to make a donation to sign the form in the foyer.

vii. West End Women and Girls Centre visit

The Lord Mayor welcomed young people and staff from West End Women and Girls Centre who were attending the meeting.

44 **CORRESPONDENCE**

No official correspondence had been received since the last meeting.

45 **DEPUTATIONS AND PETITIONS**

The Lord Mayor called upon the following Members to address Council and/or present petitions:-

- i. Councillor Laidler from Dinnington Parish Council on behalf of residents requesting the restoration of the bus service between the villages of Dinnington and Brunswick. He drew attention to the difficulties posed by the loss of service connecting the northern villages and outlined the efforts made by Dinnington Parish Council and local residents to take the matter forward.
- ii. Councillor M. Wood on behalf of Parents and Friends of Monkchester Road Nursery School and Family Centre about services for pre-school children in Walker.
- iii. Councillor Lawson on behalf of residents of Pinewood Close, Walkerville regarding the need for a public seat.

RESOLVED – That the petitions be forwarded to the relevant Director and Executive Member for consideration. (The Dinnington Parish Council petition also being referred to the Tyne and Wear Integrated Transport Authority)

46 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No requests had been received.

47 **APPOINTMENT OF NEW LEADER OF THE EXECUTIVE**

At the invitation of the Lord Mayor, Lord Shipley confirmed his resignation as Leader of the Executive with immediate effect. He thanked colleagues and officers for their support during his tenure as Leader of the Council, which had been a privilege. He stated his intention to remain an active local Councillor and hoped that his appointment to the House of Lords would provide further opportunities to promote the City and region at a national level.

Councillor P. Lower moved, seconded by Councillor Renton, that Councillor Faulkner be elected Leader of the Executive. There being no other nominations, it was

RESOLVED – That Councillor Faulkner be appointed Leader of the Executive for the remainder of his current term of office.

Councillor Faulkner thanked Council for his appointment as Leader of the Executive which he described as an honour and paid tribute to the inspired leadership of his predecessor.

On behalf of the opposition, Councillor Forbes paid tribute to Lord Shipley as a fantastic ambassador for the City. In wishing Lord Shipley well in his new role, Councillor Forbes congratulated Councillor Faulkner on his appointment and looked forward to working with him to deal with future challenges.

48 **EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORTS**

(a) **Former Leader of Council - Lord Shipley**

In introducing his report, Lord Shipley provided an update on Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPS). He emphasised the advantages of a single LEP for the region, however should more than one LEP replace the Regional Development Agency, he stressed the importance of having clear structures underpinning regional cooperation.

Councillors Lambert, Higgins and Forbes took part in the discussion and debate on the report which was responded to by Lord Shipley.

With reference to the evolving national policy agenda, Lord Shipley emphasised the importance of retaining regional assets and highlighted the potential for a wider role for the City Council.

RESOLVED – That the report be received for information.

(b) **Culture, Leisure & Customer Service - Councillor Pauline Allen**

In introducing her report, Councillor Pauline Allen drew attention to the diverse range of cultural venues and events in the City, with particular mention to the

success of the Great North Museum and the achievement of Green Flags for 10 of the city's parks.

Councillors Bell, Todd and Leggott took part in the discussion and debate on the report.

Councillor Pauline Allen responded by outlining the situation with regard to Exhibition Park, the Guild Hall and the Kenton Bunker. With reference to youth facilities she explained that the issue fell within the remit of the Children and Young People Portfolio.

RESOLVED – That the report be received for information.

49 **APPOINTMENTS**

Details of proposed changes to memberships circulated at the meeting were considered.

RESOLVED - That the proposed changes to Committee Memberships and Appointments to Outside Bodies be approved as circulated.

50 **QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS**

The Lord Mayor indicated that ten questions marked for written reply had been received and these together with the responses had been circulated and were displayed in the foyer. She highlighted that the attachment referred to in question 6 had been omitted and would therefore be circulated in the Members' courier.

51 **NOTICE OF MOTION - REFERENDUM ON THE ALTERNATIVE VOTE SYSTEM**

In accordance with notice previously given Councillor Faulkner moved, seconded by Councillor Leggott that:-

"Council notes:

- 1) That a record 434 (67%) of winning candidates in the 2010 General Election achieved less than 50% of the vote in their constituency
- 2) That none of the successful candidates in the Newcastle constituencies received 50% or more of the votes cast
- 3) The unfair distribution of seats won against votes cast - and that it took an average of 33,370 votes to elect a Labour MP, 34,979 to elect a Conservative MP and 119,994 for each Liberal Democrat MP
- 4) That a referendum on the Alternative Vote was proposed both by the Labour Party in its manifesto for the 2010 General Election and by the Coalition Government which emerged from that election.

Council welcomes the fact that in May 2011 there will now be a referendum on replacing the First Past The Post voting system with the Alternative Vote system."

As an amendment Councillor Cook moved, seconded by Councillor Forbes that the Notice of Motion be amended by such deletions and/or insertions or additions as may be necessary so that the amended Motion would read:-

"Council notes:

- 1) That a record 434 (67%) of winning candidates in the 2010 General Election achieved less than 50% of the vote in their constituency;
- 2) That none of the successful candidates in the Newcastle constituencies received 50% or more of the votes cast;
- 3) That a referendum on the Alternative Vote was proposed both by the Labour Party in its manifesto for the 2010 General Election and by the Coalition Government which emerged from that election.

Council welcomes the prospect of a referendum on the Alternative Vote system in this Parliament.

Council regrets that the enabling legislation for the referendum includes the entirely separate issue of the number of constituencies, and believes that the referendum should not be linked to measures that would confuse or undermine the case for change to the electorate and its timing should be subject to consultation before a date is finally set.

Council condemns the Government's plans to reduce the City's representation in Parliament by redrawing constituency boundaries using electoral register not census population. Council believes public inquiries on new boundaries should not be curtailed, and that due process should not be undermined by the coalition to secure political advantage.

Council therefore resolves to write to the Deputy Prime Minister requesting that the Government separates the referendum on reform of the voting system from the redrawing of constituency boundaries. "

Councillors Cott and Stokel-Walker took part in the discussion and debate on the item.

In responding Councillor Faulkner indicated his rejection of the amendment.

Prior to a vote being taken on the amendment ten members of the Council required that a named vote be taken in accordance with Standing Order 5(a)(ii) and the votes were recorded as follows:-

In Favour

Ahad, Allison, Ali, Bartlett, Bell, Burke, Carter, Cook, Forbes, K Graham, Higgins, B Hunter, James, Kemp, Lambert, McCarty, Murison, G Pattison, S Pattison, Rahman, Risk, Stokel-Walker, Todd, White, D Wood, M Wood and Wright (27)

Against

Pauline Allen, Peter Allen, Armstrong, Bailey, Boyle, Clark, Cookson, Cooper, Cott, Cross, Curthoys, Down, Faulkner, Hillicks, L Hunter, Keating, Kane, Langfield, Laverick, Leggott, A Lower, P. Lower, Lynch, Packham, Pagan, Psallidas, Renton, Robinson, Shepherd, Shipley, D. Slesenger, J. Slesenger, Stone, Taylor and Walker (35)

The amendment was lost with 27 votes in favour and 35 against.

As a second amendment Councillor Murison moved, seconded by Councillor McCarty that the Notice of Motion be amended by such deletions and/or insertions or additions as may be necessary so that the amended Motion would read:-

“Council notes:

- 1) That a record 434 (67%) of winning candidates in the 2010 General Election achieved less than 50% of the vote in their constituency;
- 2) That none of the successful candidates in the Newcastle constituencies received 50% or more of the votes cast;
- 3) That a referendum on the Alternative Vote was proposed both by the Labour Party in its manifesto for the 2010 General Election and by the Coalition Government which emerged from that election;
- 4) That the government proposes to make the autumn 2010 electoral register the basis for recalculating the size and boundaries of parliamentary constituencies at Westminster rather than using census figures.
- 5) That the Electoral Commission estimates 3.5 million eligible voters are missing from the electoral roll in England and Wales alone, and notes that the problem of under-registration is most acute among specific social groups, in particular 17–24 year olds (56% not registered), private sector tenants (49%) and black and minority ethnic (BME) British residents (31%).

Council believes that this year’s electoral register must be as comprehensive as possible.

City Council resolves

- 1) To write to the Deputy Prime Minister asking why a Newcastle citizen’s voice should count less than one in the leafy home counties simply by virtue of them statistically being more likely to be young, in private rented housing or black;
- 2) To call on Constitutional Committee and the Executive to ensure that additional efforts are made to increase voter registration for the December 2010 Electoral Roll, with a particular focus on efforts to increase the number of young people, people from ethnic minorities and those in social housing who are registered to vote.”

In accordance with Standing Order 17(b)iv the Lord Mayor allowed Councillor Faulkner, as the mover of the original Motion, to respond to the second amendment. In responding Councillor Faulkner indicated his rejection of the second amendment.

Prior to a vote being taken on the amendment ten members of the Council required that a named vote be taken in accordance with Standing Order 5(a)(ii) and the votes were recorded as follows:-

In Favour

Ahad, Ali, Allison, Bartlett, Bell, Burke, Carter, Cook, Forbes, K Graham, Higgins, B Hunter, James, Kemp, Lambert, McCarthy, Murison, G Pattison, S. Pattison, Rahman, Risk, Stokel-Walker, Todd, White, D Wood, M Wood and Wright (27)

Against

Pauline Allen, Peter Allen, Armstrong, Bailey, Boyle, Clark, Cookson, Cooper, Cott, Cross, Curthoys, Down, Faulkner, Hillicks, L Hunter, Kane, Keating, Langfield, Laverick, Leggott, A Lower, P. Lower, Lynch, Packham, Pagan, Psallidas, Renton, Robinson, Shepherd, Shipley, D Slesenger, J Slesenger, Stone, Taylor and Walker (35)

The amendment was lost with 27 votes in favour and 35 against.

Prior to a vote being taken on the substantive Motion ten members of the Council required that a named vote be taken in accordance with Standing Order 5(a)(ii) and the votes were recorded as follows:-

In Favour

Pauline Allen, Peter Allen, Allison, Armstrong, Bailey, Boyle, Clark, Cookson, Cooper, Cott, Cross, Curthoys, Down, Faulkner, Hillicks, L. Hunter, Kane, Keating, Langfield, Laverick, Leggott, A Lower, P. Lower, Lynch, Packham, Pagan, Psallidas, Renton, Robinson, Shepherd, Shipley, D Slesenger, J Slesenger, Stone, Taylor and Walker (36)

The substantive Motion was carried with 36 votes in favour and none against.

RESOLVED – That Council notes:-

- 1) That a record 434 (67%) of winning candidates in the 2010 General Election achieved less than 50% of the vote in their constituency
- 2) That none of the successful candidates in the Newcastle constituencies received 50% or more of the votes cast
- 3) The unfair distribution of seats won against votes cast - and that it took an average of 33,370 votes to elect a Labour MP, 34,979 to elect a Conservative MP and 119,994 for each Liberal Democrat MP
- 4) That a referendum on the Alternative Vote was proposed both by the Labour Party in its manifesto for the 2010 General Election and by the Coalition Government which emerged from that election.

Council welcomes the fact that in May 2011 there will now be a referendum on replacing the First Past The Post voting system with the Alternative Vote system.

52 NOTICE OF MOTION - CONCESSIONARY BUS FARE SCHEME

Prior to the introduction of the Notice of Motion, the Head of Corporate Law provided members with legal advice on declaring personal and prejudicial interests with regard to the item.

(In addition to all Members over the age of 60, Councillor Psallidas declared a personal interest in the item).

In accordance with notice previously given Councillor Taylor moved, seconded by Councillor Langfield that:-

“Council believes that the free Concessionary Bus Fare Scheme for pensioners and disabled people has been extremely successful and encourages a more active and healthy lifestyle. Council strongly supports the continuation of the scheme.

Council notes:-

- 1) The high use of the Concessionary Travel scheme in Tyne and Wear, which is related to lower car ownership
- 2) That there is a need to avoid compounding the thoughtless and costly way in which concessionary fares were introduced by the last Government, which disadvantaged areas with high public transport usage such as the north east.
- 3) That by encouraging the use of public transport, the scheme makes an important contribution to the Climate Change strategy, reducing congestion and improving air quality.
- 4) The concern expressed by NEXUS that future cost increases within the bus industry, together with the attractiveness of free travel, is resulting in potential costs growing at a greater rate year on year than the increase in grant to fund the scheme.
- 5) That changes to the funding mechanism used to calculate the grant payable amongst local authorities could adversely affect Newcastle and the Tyne and Wear area.
- 6) That Metropolitan District councils that see a reduction in their Formula Revenue Grant from 2011/12 onwards will face considerable pressure to pass this on to the ITA and NEXUS, putting significant extra stress on concessionary fare and secured bus service budgets.
- 7) Work done by NEXUS that suggests a potential shortfall between grant and costs of £5.5m per annum by 2013/14

- 8) The current consultation by DCLG on the distribution of formula grant to local authorities, which includes options for concessionary travel.

Council resolves to:-

- 1) Continue to lobby with Tyne and Wear ITA, NEXUS and other local authorities (such as the PTEG group) for continuation of the scheme and for a fairer funding formula, that will take full account of actual costs of concessionary fares and need, for example by linkage to data on numbers of pass-holders/journeys made or by basing grant more directly on the number of people over 60 with no car or van, rather than simply on population figures.
- 2) To work with the ITA and other authorities to respond to the current DCLG consultation by the deadline of 6 October.”

As an amendment Councillor D. Wood moved, seconded by Councillor Wright that the Notice of Motion be amended by such deletions and/or insertions or additions as may be necessary so that the amended Motion would read:-

“Council believes that the free Concessionary Bus Fare Scheme for pensioners and disabled people has been extremely successful and encourages a more active and healthy lifestyle. Council strongly supports the continuation of the scheme.

Council notes:-

- 1) The high use of the Concessionary Travel scheme in Tyne and Wear, which is related to lower car ownership
- 2) That by encouraging the use of public transport, the scheme makes an important contribution to the Climate Change strategy, reducing congestion and improving air quality.
- 3) The concern expressed by NEXUS that future cost increases within the bus industry, together with the attractiveness of free travel, is resulting in potential costs growing at a greater rate year on year than the increase in grant to fund the scheme.
- 4) That changes to the funding mechanism used to calculate the grant payable amongst local authorities could adversely affect Newcastle and the Tyne and Wear area.
- 5) Work done by NEXUS that suggests a potential shortfall between grant and costs of £5.5m per annum by 2013/14.
- 6) The current consultation by DCLG on the distribution of formula grant to local authorities, which includes options for concessionary travel.

Council resolves to:-

- 1) Continue to lobby with Tyne and Wear ITA, NEXUS and other local authorities (such as the PTEG group) for continuation of the scheme and for

a fairer funding formula, that will take full account of actual costs of concessionary fares and need, for example by linkage to data on numbers of pass-holders/journeys made or by basing grant more directly on the number of people over 60 with no car or van, rather than simply on population figures.

- 2) To work with the ITA and other authorities to respond to the current DCLG consultation by the deadline of 6 October.
- 3) In the event of changes to the funding mechanism adversely affecting Newcastle and the Tyne and Wear area to insist that the government continue with the special grants introduced by the previous administration in 2008 to ensure the scheme is fully funded.”

Councillor Stone took part in the discussion and debate on the item.

In responding Councillor Taylor indicated her rejection of the amendment.

Prior to a vote being taken on the amendment ten members of the Council required that a named vote be taken in accordance with Standing Order 5(a)(ii) and the votes were recorded as follows:-

In Favour

Ahad, Ali, Allison, Bartlett, Bell, Burke, Carter, Cook, Forbes, K Graham, B Hunter, Kemp, Lambert, McCarthy, Murison, S Pattison, Rahman, Risk, Stokel-Walker, Todd, White, D Wood and M Wood and Wright (24)

Against

Pauline Allen, Peter Allen, Armstrong, Bailey, Boyle, Clark, Cooper, Cookson, Cott, Cross, Curthoys, Down, Faulkner, L Hunter, Keating, Kane, Langfield, Laverick, Leggott, A Lower, P. Lower, Lynch, Packham, Pagan, Renton, Robinson, Shepherd, Shipley, D Slesenger, J Slesenger, Stone, Taylor and Walker (33)

The amendment was lost with 24 votes in favour and 33 against.

The substantive Motion was agreed without further vote.

RESOLVED – That:-

Council believes that the free Concessionary Bus Fare Scheme for pensioners and disabled people has been extremely successful and encourages a more active and healthy lifestyle. Council strongly supports the continuation of the scheme.

Council notes:-

- 1) The high use of the Concessionary Travel scheme in Tyne and Wear, which is related to lower car ownership
- 2) That there is a need to avoid compounding the thoughtless and costly way in which concessionary fares were introduced by the last Government, which disadvantaged areas with high public transport usage such as the north east.

- 3) That by encouraging the use of public transport, the scheme makes an important contribution to the Climate Change strategy, reducing congestion and improving air quality.
- 4) The concern expressed by NEXUS that future cost increases within the bus industry, together with the attractiveness of free travel, is resulting in potential costs growing at a greater rate year on year than the increase in grant to fund the scheme.
- 5) That changes to the funding mechanism used to calculate the grant payable amongst local authorities could adversely affect Newcastle and the Tyne and Wear area.
- 6) That Metropolitan District councils that see a reduction in their Formula Revenue Grant from 2011/12 onwards will face considerable pressure to pass this on to the ITA and NEXUS, putting significant extra stress on concessionary fare and secured bus service budgets.
- 7) Work done by NEXUS that suggests a potential shortfall between grant and costs of £5.5m per annum by 2013/14
- 8) The current consultation by DCLG on the distribution of formula grant to local authorities, which includes options for concessionary travel.

Council resolves to:-

- 1) Continue to lobby with Tyne and Wear ITA, NEXUS and other local authorities (such as the PTEG group) for continuation of the scheme and for a fairer funding formula, that will take full account of actual costs of concessionary fares and need, for example by linkage to data on numbers of pass-holders/journeys made or by basing grant more directly on the number of people over 60 with no car or van, rather than simply on population figures.
- 2) To work with the ITA and other authorities to respond to the current DCLG consultation by the deadline of 6 October.

53 NOTICE OF MOTION - SOCIAL MOBILITY

In accordance with notice previously given Councillor Stone moved, seconded by Councillor Langfield that:-

“Council

- Endorses recent Government recognition of the importance of social mobility
- Recognises the importance of ensuring that children born in this city are not constrained by the circumstances of their birth, family, or neighbourhood, and of successfully integrating this objective into the city's Regeneration Strategy in order to challenge social segregation and inertia and maximise opportunity and aspiration for all individuals and communities in Newcastle

- Welcomes the appointment of Alan Milburn - raised in the West End - to the role of independent examiner of Government social mobility policy, and the agreement that he will produce an annual report scrutinising performance to be debated in Parliament
- Agrees to identify opportunities to work with Mr Milburn and Government to fulfil this agenda in Newcastle, and resolves to receive a similar annual report to Council identifying progress made towards this goal in the city."

As an amendment Councillor Todd moved, seconded by Councillor Forbes that the Notice of Motion be amended by such deletions and/or insertions or additions as may be necessary so that the amended Motion would read:-

"City Council:

Endorses continued Government recognition of the importance of social mobility;

Recognises that social inequality, and in particular the wideness of the gap between those on the lowest and highest incomes, is a significant barrier to social mobility;

Notes that under the former Labour Government, six hundred thousand children were lifted out of poverty, record numbers of young people were able to attend university, one in three people of working age became a member of a profession, and the gender pay gap narrowed, and endorses that Government's aim to ensure that a further 130,000 young people from poorer families should be supported in reaching college and university by 2012;

Recognises that the present Government has promised to continue Labour's pursuit of social mobility but records concern that one-tenth of all the ministers in the Coalition Government attended just one public school (Eton), that two-thirds of ministers were educated partly or entirely outside the mainstream state school system, and one in five went to one of the old established top public schools;

Notes the Institute for Fiscal Studies report on "*The distributional effect of tax and benefit reforms to be introduced between June 2010 and April 2014: A revised assessment*" which demonstrated that the coalition budget, despite claims by the Chancellor and Deputy Prime Minister, was not progressive;

Further notes that the progressive tax rises that will be introduced over the next two years were announced by the previous government, that the Budget measures scheduled to come in between 2012 and 2014 are generally regressive and that the distributional analysis in the Budget documentation did not include the effects of some cuts to housing benefit, Disability Living Allowance and tax credits that are likely to affect the least well off the most;

Welcomes the efforts of the Fawcett Society and of the UK's principal poverty-fighting charities and voluntary organisations, in highlighting the adverse impacts of the Coalition Government's first budget on the poor and on women, and agrees to urge the Government to reconsider their budget;

Notes the report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions, led by Alan Milburn, born in Co Durham and educated in Newcastle, which challenged the previous Labour Government to do more to ensure that people with ability, creativity and talent can succeed in the professions, regardless of their social or economic background;

Notes that the report was implemented almost in its entirety, with the creation of a national Internship Service, structured assistance at secondary school for 130,000 of the brightest from low income groups from 2012, the creation of a Social Mobility Commission and the creation of the Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum;

Welcomes the appointment of Mr Milburn to the role of independent examiner of Government social mobility policy, and the agreement that he will produce an annual report scrutinising performance to be debated in Parliament;

Agrees to identify opportunities to work with Mr Milburn and the Government to fulfil this agenda in Newcastle, and requests the relevant Executive member to present a similar annual report to Council identifying progress made and obstacles to achieving this goal in the city;

Resolves to conduct an audit on the impact of the Council's budget for 2010 – 2011 on social inequality and social mobility during the public consultation phase of the budget setting process, so that members have information on which to judge how progressive or regressive it is during the March budget-setting meeting;

Recognises the importance of ensuring that children born in this city are not constrained by the circumstances of their birth, family or neighbourhood, gender, disability, ethnicity or sexuality, and of successfully integrating this objective into policies, strategies and action taken by the Council, in order to challenge social segregation and inertia and maximise opportunity and aspiration for all individuals and communities in Newcastle.”

Councillors Bartlett, J. Slesenger, D. Wood, Shepherd, McCarty and Murison took part in the discussion and debate on the item.

In responding Councillor Stone indicated his rejection of the amendment.

Prior to a vote being taken on the amendment ten members of the Council required that a named vote be taken in accordance with Standing Order 5(a)(ii) and the votes were recorded as follows:-

In Favour

Ahad, Ali, Allison, Bartlett, Bell, Burke, Carter, Cook, Forbes, K Graham, Higgins, B Hunter, Kemp, Lambert, McCarty, Murison, G Pattison, S Pattison, Rahman, Risk, Stokel-Walker, Todd, White, D Wood and M Wood and Wright (26)

Against

Pauline Allen, Peter Allen, Armstrong, Bailey, Boyle, Clark, Cookson, Cooper, Cott, Cross, Curthoys, Down, Faulkner, L Hunter, Kane, Keating, Langfield, Laverick,

Leggott, A Lower, P. Lower, Lynch, Packham, Pagan, Psallidas, Renton, Robinson, Shepherd, Shipley, J Slesenger, Stone, Taylor and Walker (33)

The amendment was lost with 26 votes in favour and 33 votes against.

The substantive Motion was agreed without further vote.

RESOLVED – That Council

- Endorses recent Government recognition of the importance of social mobility
- Recognises the importance of ensuring that children born in this city are not constrained by the circumstances of their birth, family, or neighbourhood, and of successfully integrating this objective into the city's Regeneration Strategy in order to challenge social segregation and inertia and maximise opportunity and aspiration for all individuals and communities in Newcastle
- Welcomes the appointment of Alan Milburn - raised in the West End - to the role of independent examiner of Government social mobility policy, and the agreement that he will produce an annual report scrutinising performance to be debated in Parliament
- Agrees to identify opportunities to work with Mr Milburn and Government to fulfil this agenda in Newcastle, and resolves to receive a similar annual report to Council identifying progress made towards this goal in the city.

54 NOTICE OF MOTION - COUNCIL HOUSE TENANCIES

Prior to the debate, it was moved by Councillor Bartlett, and duly seconded that Standing Order 19(b) (General limit on Length of Meetings) (Guillotine) be suspended in accordance with Standing Order 27 to enable the business on the agenda to be completed. The suspension of Standing Order 19(b) was unanimously agreed.

In accordance with notice previously given Councillor Forbes moved, seconded by Councillor K. Graham that:-

“Council notes the Prime Minister’s recent announcement that the Government is to replace lifetime Council house tenancies with fixed term tenancies.

Council believes that, if implemented in Newcastle for all tenancies, it would lead to thousands of Council tenants in the city losing their homes – causing unprecedented crisis and distress.

Council believes that removing security of tenure will not resolve shortages in affordable housing, and this announcement detracts from the need to build more affordable homes in the city.

Council therefore resolves to write to the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of State for Housing urging the Government to reconsider this regressive proposal.”

As an amendment Councillor Keating moved, seconded by Councillor A. Lower that the Notice of Motion be amended by such deletions and/or insertions or additions as may be necessary so that the amended Motion would read:-

“Council notes that;

1. During the last 25 years the supply of council housing has been reduced in Newcastle by about one third due to the Right to Buy and demolition.
2. For much of that period, while Labour was in office, the number of new council homes built was nil.
3. Under the Labour Government, house-building hit the lowest national level for 90 years.
4. Whilst the demand for council housing has fluctuated during this period it has risen rapidly since 2000 as the cost of private housing has risen well above inflation so that there are often many hundreds of applications for one available family dwelling.

Council further notes that the Prime Minister’s recent suggestion reflected this very serious situation and identified that one way to break the logjam, especially in London where it is worst, may be to look at length of tenancy and the right of inheritance, to better ensure housing availability can be matched to housing need and family size.

However, Council further notes that this suggestion:

- a) is not currently Government policy and is not a Liberal Democrat policy
- b) was expressed to apply only to future, and not current, tenants, and
- c) envisages any change being permissive, not coercive, so that local authorities would decide whether and how to operate it.

Council believes that implementation of this suggestion, if it were enacted by Parliament and adopted by the Council, would have no effect on existing tenants and little effect on future tenants apart from those who were under occupying a large family house and for whom alternative accommodation such as a bungalow would in any event have to be made available.

Council welcomes ideas from any party or organisation that may help create a more dynamic and flexible housing market, responsive to need, whilst maintaining cohesive neighbourhoods and a commitment to vulnerable tenants.

Finally, Council believes that the real issue is the need to build more affordable housing of all tenure types, the lack of which is the cause of the current crisis. Council notes the success of the current Liberal Democrat administration in Newcastle in building new council homes despite current funding restraints and the

Right to Buy, and resolves to continue to implement this policy, especially as new bungalows often free up family accommodation.”

Councillors Allison and Faulkner took part in the discussion and debate on the item.

In responding Councillor Forbes indicated his rejection of the amendment.

Prior to a vote being taken on the amendment ten members of the Council required that a named vote be taken in accordance with Standing Order 5(a)(ii) and the votes were recorded as follows:-

In Favour

Pauline Allen, Peter Allen, Armstrong, Bailey, Boyle, Clark, Cookson, Cooper, Cott, Cross, Curthoys, Down, Faulkner, Keating, Kane, Langfield, Laverick, Leggott, A Lower, P. Lower, Lynch, Packham, Pagan, Psallidas, Renton, Robinson, Shepherd, Shipley, D Slesenger, J Slesenger, Stone, Taylor and Walker (33)

Against

Ahad, Ali, Bartlett, Bell, Burke, Carter, Cook, Forbes, K Graham, Higgins, B Hunter, L Hunter, Kemp, Lambert, Lawson, McCarty, Murison, G Pattison, S Pattison, Risk, Stokel-Walker, Todd, White, D Wood and M Wood and Wright (26)

The amendment was carried with 33 votes for and 26 against.

The substantive Motion was agreed without further vote.

RESOLVED – that Council notes that:-

1. During the last 25 years the supply of council housing has been reduced in Newcastle by about one third due to the Right to Buy and demolition.
2. For much of that period, while Labour was in office, the number of new council homes built was nil.
3. Under the Labour Government, house-building hit the lowest national level for 90 years.
4. Whilst the demand for council housing has fluctuated during this period it has risen rapidly since 2000 as the cost of private housing has risen well above inflation so that there are often many hundreds of applications for one available family dwelling.

Council further notes that the Prime Minister’s recent suggestion reflected this very serious situation and identified that one way to break the logjam, especially in London where it is worst, may be to look at length of tenancy and the right of inheritance, to better ensure housing availability can be matched to housing need and family size.

However, Council further notes that this suggestion:

- a) is not currently Government policy and is not a Liberal Democrat policy
- b) was expressed to apply only to future, and not current, tenants, and

- c) envisages any change being permissive, not coercive, so that local authorities would decide whether and how to operate it.

Council believes that implementation of this suggestion, if it were enacted by Parliament and adopted by the Council, would have no effect on existing tenants and little effect on future tenants apart from those who were under occupying a large family house and for whom alternative accommodation such as a bungalow would in any event have to be made available.

Council welcomes ideas from any party or organisation that may help create a more dynamic and flexible housing market, responsive to need, whilst maintaining cohesive neighbourhoods and a commitment to vulnerable tenants.

Finally, Council believes that the real issue is the need to build more affordable housing of all tenure types, the lack of which is the cause of the current crisis. Council notes the success of the current Liberal Democrat administration in Newcastle in building new council homes despite current funding restraints and the Right to Buy, and resolves to continue to implement this policy, especially as new bungalows often free up family accommodation.

(The meeting ended at 8.50pm)

This page is intentionally left blank