

# NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

## COUNTY COUNCIL

At the meeting of the **County Council** held at Council Chamber - County Hall on Wednesday, 21 September 2022 at 3.00 pm.

### PRESENT

B Flux (Chair) (in the Chair)

### MEMBERS

C Ball	J Beynon
L Bowman	E Cartie
G Castle	T Cessford
E Chicken	T Clark
A Dale	W Daley
S Fairless-Aitken	D Ferguson
J Foster	B Gallacher
L Grimshaw	C Hardy
G Hill	C Horncastle
C Humphrey	I Hunter
Jl Hutchinson	V Jones
D Kennedy	J Lang
S Lee	M Mather
N Morphet	M Murphy
K Nisbet	N Oliver
K Parry	W Pattison
W Ploszaj	M Purvis
J Reid	G Renner-Thompson
M Richardson	J Riddle
M Robinson	G Sanderson
C Seymour	A Sharp
E Simpson	G Stewart
M Swinbank	M Swinburn
C Taylor	T Thorne
D Towns	H Waddell
A Watson	J Watson
R Wearmouth	R Wilczek

### OFFICERS

Binjal, S.	Monitoring Officer
Bradley, N.	Director of Adult Social Services
Furnell, L.	Interim Service Director HR/OD
Hadfield, K.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Hunter, P.	Interim Senior Service Director

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Kingham, A.	Interim Joint Director of Children's Services
Lancaster, H.	Deputy Monitoring Officer
Morgan, L.	Interim Executive Director for Public Health and Community Services
O'Farrell, R.	Interim Chief Executive
Roll, J.	Head of Democratic and Electoral Services
Taylor, M.	Interim Executive Director Communities and Business Development
Willis, J.	Interim Executive Director of Finance and S151 Officer

One member of the press was present.

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Bawn, Bridgett, Carr, Darwin, Dickinson, Dodd, Dunbar, Dunn, Ezhilchelvan, Jackson, Scott and Wallace.

2 **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the following meetings of County Council be confirmed as a true record, signed by the Business Chair and sealed with the Common Seal of the Council:-

(a) Wednesday 6 July 2022 (subject to the inclusion of Councillor A. Watson in the attendance); and

(b) Wednesday 27 July 2022 (extraordinary meeting)

3 **DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS**

Councillor Swinbank declared an interest in respect of Item 7 on the agenda (Motion No.2) as a member of the NIFCA Board.

4 **ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE BUSINESS CHAIR, LEADER OR HEAD OF PAID SERVICE**

The Business Chair reminded members that a member induction refresher event was planned for 2 November. There were also a number of policy briefings planned which he recommended to members.

The Leader informed members that work was progressing well on the Caller Review. A member oversight group was meeting every month to monitor progress and the Challenge Board would be starting its work soon.

Work on devolution had halted following the election of a new prime minister so he did not have any progress to report. He paid tribute to the other leaders in the LA6 who were working well together and once he had further information to share, he would do so.

5 **CORRESPONDENCE (IF ANY) TO DATE OF MEETING**

6 **QUESTIONS TO BE PUT TO THE BUSINESS CHAIR, A MEMBER OF THE CABINET OR THE CHAIR OF ANY COMMITTEE OR SUB COMMITTEE, IN**

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## **ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTION'S RULES OF PROCEDURE NO.9**

### **Question 1 from Councillor Castle to the Leader**

Councillor Sanderson, we all recognise that increasing economic pressures will hit the poorest in our community hardest. I commend our recent approach to identifying inequalities and possible solutions but ask that you inform the Council what measures the Council is able to implement promptly that will support those most in need of help

The Leader replied that addressing inequalities in Northumberland was an immediate and longer-term challenge. The current economic situation required the Council to work collaboratively and at pace to best support households most in need. Anyone looking for support was encouraged to contact Northumberland Communities Together. A lot of help had been given to those who had needed it particularly during the pandemic and this work continued.

In addition, officers were finalising a poverty and hardship action plan with a robust communications strategy and training tools – simple resources for everyone to use to support residents and for residents to support themselves. The Council would be pulling its business intelligence to ensure the resources available were where they were needed the most.

Councillor Castle asked if members identified any residents who needed help should contact NCT in the first instance. The Leader confirmed this was the approach which should be taken.

### **Question 2 from Councillor Fairless Aitken to Councillor Horncastle**

Since the beginning of the year Hexham, along with other towns and villages across the county, has seen a distinct rise in instances of anti-social behaviour. From serious acts of vandalism, like the attack on Hexham's bandstand, to the damaging of cars lawfully parked on our streets.

Will the administration undertake to work with Town and Parish councils to facilitate the positioning of CCTV, where appropriate, and to allow Members small schemes money to be used to purchase equipment?

Will the administration also undertake to lobby the PCC to allocate more resources to rural policing and arrange for a meaningful meeting with senior police officers and the LAC's to explore how better they can deter and respond to the scourge of anti-social behaviour? I despair of our rural police stations being '9-5' rather than round the clock as they used to be and should be.

Councillor Horncastle replied that anti-social behaviour remained of concern and unfortunately there had been a small increase within the Hexham area, but he was pleased to be able to advise that those responsible for the damage to the bandstand had been apprehended by the police, and the level of ASB had reduced in Hexham. At a local level, ASB would continue to be monitored through the Hexham Victim Offender Location meeting, where it was a standing agenda item.

As part of the recent Strategic Needs Assessment undertaken by the Safer Northumberland Partnership, ASB had been identified as one of the key priorities, and officers were actively working with partners to develop interventions to reduce

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the impact of ASB on communities. A pilot had also recently been launched with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the other five Tyne and Wear local authorities, to improve understanding and access by residents to the Community Trigger process.

With regard to CCTV:

- Officers were exploring the deployment of overt CCTV to monitor parts of the Sele.
- The Council was happy to work with Parish and Town councils on the siting of CCTV, but under the current arrangements, whilst the County Council had and would deploy mobile CCTV in response to specific concerns, the cost of any fixed public space CCTV, would need to be met by the Town or Parish Council.
- He confirmed that members small scheme could be used for the capital purchase of equipment, subject to the cost being greater than the minimum level of £2,000 set out within the scheme.
- The scheme could not be used to fund maintenance and revenue costs, which would need to be funded by a different means.

When he next met with the Police and Crime Commissioner, he would raise with her the issue of resources to support rural policing and hopefully come back with more information.

Councillor Fairless Aitken responded that when she had asked about the mobile units to be used at Wentworth car park she had been told that the lending library was quite busy and it was difficult to get them to come down even after an incident. She asked if this could be looked at.

Councillor Horncastle replied that recently he had visited a private CCTV scheme in Ashington which was very up to date and monitored 24 hours a day. Set up and running costs had been very small and he would speak to Councillor Fairless Aitken about this after the meeting.

### **Question 3 from Councillor Fairless Aitken to Councillor Riddle**

At Hexham Town Council we have been working towards being a Dark Skies Town with the International Dark Skies Association and have adopted their responsible lighting guidance in our Planning Committee.

Will the Administration undertake to work with the Planning and Highways departments to adopt this innovative and ground-breaking set of guidelines as council policy? Not only would it be fabulous for Northumberland with its Dark Skies National Park to have this rolled out for Astro-tourism and the health benefits to humans and the non-pollution of our natural environment, it would also be beneficial to energy saving costs.

Councillor Riddle replied that this was one of the areas of specific policy that would be formalised in Supplementary Planning Guidance documents, along with policy areas such as open play space, developer contributions and climate change. These would be attached to the Local Plan to set out NCC policy for determining planning applications.

The cross-party Member Local Plan Steering Group would be presented with the draft Supplementary Planning Guidance documents during the next 12 months,

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and would be subject to public consultation.

#### **Question 4 from Councillor Hill to the Leader**

The Queen's Garden (sometimes pluralised to the Queen's Gardens) in the West End of Tweedmouth is situated in the shadow of the Royal Tweed Bridge with stunning views across the river. It's magnificent backdrop also includes the Tweedmouth War Memorial and the iconic Berwick Old Bridge.

In 1956, Queen Elizabeth II visited The Queen's Garden with the Duke of Edinburgh and was presented with a salmon by the Mayor. Do you agree that this would be an ideal spot for a permanent memorial to the late Queen?

The Leader agreed this was a good suggestion, to go alongside lots of other suggestions which it was hoped would be submitted in response to the public consultation. A memorial in Berwick would be a good thing and he would support that.

Councillor Hill asked if the Leader agreed with the appropriateness of Berwick being a memorial to the late Queen given all the work she had done to support the Union and thereby cross border co-operation. The Leader agreed this was a valid point. The re-naming of the Union Chain Bridge which was due to open shortly could possibly provide an opportunity for this recognition.

#### **Question 5 from Councillor Dale to Councillor Pattison**

Complaints have been raised about the delivery of social care services in Northumberland. Please could you confirm what the Council is doing to respond to these concerns?

Councillor Pattison confirmed that it was proving challenging to secure sufficiency of some social care services in Northumberland currently, particularly home care (although there were now some indications that residential and nursing care may be affected as well). This situation was not unique to Northumberland and regionally and nationally it was the case that most Local Authorities were having similar issues to varying degrees. It was understood that some were facing significant worse pressures than were being managed in Northumberland currently.

There were about 220 clients in Northumberland where the teams could not immediately secure packages of home care to meet assessed need and the figure had remained above 200 for several months now. A number of measures were being put in place for those individuals and families who could not cope in the short term, including amongst other things, short term temporary residential placements, support from Northumberland Communities Together, and the use of Council internal rehabilitation services away from their normal core business. The key issue was lack of available workforce which appeared to be linked to competition for labour from other markets. The issues began almost immediately the restrictions on covid started to lift late last summer and providers started reporting staff leaving to take up posts in other sectors including pubs, restaurants, retail and leisure. The pressure was being felt most acutely in the North and West of the county, but there were issues right across Northumberland.

A number of things had been done to try and assist the market including support with recruitment, advertising and training for providers and this support was

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ongoing. There had been some financial support as well, the most significant being the Council offering funding to support providers to pay the “real living wage” from 1st April 2022.

Aside from the continuation of the various types of support mentioned above, senior officers were considering possible further options in relation to support for travel costs for home care workers. This could significantly benefit the more rural areas where recruitment and retention issues were the most challenging.

Councillor Dale asked whether the extra funding put into social services had been spent and hoped that no voluntary redundancies would be taken from social services. Councillor Pattison assured Councillor Dale that she would do all she could to ensure residents were looked after.

## 7 **MOTIONS**

### **Motion No.1**

In accordance with Council Rules of Procedure No.10, Councillor Pattison moved the following motion, received by the Democratic Services Manager on 9 August 2022:-

“Newcastle upon Tyne City Council has made the shortlist to host the Eurovision Song Contest in 2023. Sadly, this is due to war torn Ukraine being unable to host it themselves due to the Russian invasion.

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to welcome a huge number of international visitors, performers and media to the city of Newcastle upon Tyne.

If Newcastle's bid is successful, this would hugely benefit our own beautiful County of Northumberland and we would be delighted to welcome European visitors to come and explore our beautiful coastline and countryside and enjoy the County's full and rich heritage.

I propose that the Leader write to Newcastle upon Tyne City Council offering Northumberland County Council's support and good wishes for a successful and winning bid to host the Eurovision Song Contest in the Toon in 2023”.

This was seconded by

It was **RESOLVED** that that the Leader write to Newcastle upon Tyne City Council offering Northumberland County Council's support and good wishes for a successful and winning bid to host the Eurovision Song Contest in the Toon in 2023.

### **Motion No. 2**

In accordance with Council Rules of Procedure No.10, Councillor Hardy moved the following motion, received by the Democratic Services Manager on 9 August 2022:-

“This motion calls for Northumberland County Council to reply to the consultation on DEFRA proposals to install a Highly Protected Marine Area, a fishing ban,

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around Lindisfarne and the Farne Islands.

This proposals will have a devastating effect on Holy Island where there has been fishing since long before the Lindisfarne Gospels were written. Fishing is an integral part of the life and soul of the island. The proposal would threaten the livelihood of the young families who rely on fishing, making the island a less attractive place to live.

Northumberland County Council has done a fantastic job promoting tourism. Our pubs and restaurants are full of people who want to enjoy sustainable local crab and lobster. This proposal would close the main fishing grounds and make restaurants source shellfish further away.

This is an issue for our whole county. Fisherman from up and down the coast fish this area. If local fisherman are banned from here, they will move to other parts of coast, displacing the fisherman there and putting pressure on fish stocks elsewhere. It would have repercussions from Berwick to Blyth.

We all want to protect our seas. But this is not the answer. These small boats follow the rules to make our seas better for their children and grandchildren to follow them.

Northumberland County Council shall respond to the consultation on Highly Protected Marine Areas rejecting the proposals on environmental, social and economic grounds”.

This was seconded by Councillor Renner Thompson.

Councillor Cartie commented that this would affect a lot of other areas along the Northumberland coast, not just in one area. It needed further investigation because fishermen would be displaced and livelihoods would be lost, and over fishing would inevitably impact on marine life.

Councillor Swinbank commented that any effect on fishing businesses had to be mitigated by Defra who had handled the consultation poorly with a top down approach, and no proper engagement with local stakeholders. Government fishing policy had not been good for years. The consultation was an opportunity to understand how biodiversity could better recover so shouldn't be dismissed out of hand and would allow the benefits to be properly assessed. Council officers should engage with Defra over the consultation over the areas to be included. The proposal by Defra would tie in with the Council's own climate change agenda and he urged communication with Defra on this.

Councillor Renner Thompson commented on the devastating impact this proposal would have on the County's fragile coastal communities. Fishermen were terrified of losing their livelihoods and were already putting off investment decisions. The same was happening at the seafood processing plants in Berwick and Eyemouth. The inshore sea was already protected by legislation and IFCA had already prohibited bottom trawling fishing out to sea by six miles. The lobsterpot industry was already very healthy and the impact of the scheme would be negligible and would only put unnecessary pressure on other parts of the coast. He urged members to support the motion which would give a concrete mandate to reply to

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the consultation rejecting the latest proposal. The aims of the scheme were noble and he did not object to the one which was further out to sea. Further consultation would be good, but this consultation period closed next week and a response needed to be made

Councillor Hunter urged members to support this and referred to the knock on effect on other local businesses as well as the fishing industry.

Councillor Reid queried what the officer view was on this and whether a response had been made to the consultation which could potentially not endorse the member view. He urged caution in case there was no evidence to support the motion.

Councillor Dale felt the local MP view on the matter would be useful.

Councillor Ferguson appreciated the impact this would have on the local area. He agreed that there needed to be sustainability but this wasn't the answer.

Councillor Murphy felt evidence was key and asked for details of the numbers of families impacted and what the economic loss to communities would be. If the impact would be great, why would Defra do this? She felt there was more to this than members were aware of.

Councillor J. Watson commented that the town of Amble centred on the harbour and its fishing fleet. It was central to everything and he had been approached by a number of fishermen who were very worried about the potential effects. He would be supporting the motion.

Councillor Castle remarked that there was no evidence from Defra to show the Council what the impact would be, and in the face of that, the Council should respond rejecting the proposal.

Councillor Horncastle commented that Holy Island was one of the jewels in Northumberland's crown and felt that Defra just did not understand the local impact this would have, on top of the new planning regulations currently affecting six parishes. Members had to reject this on behalf of the people they represented.

With respect to the potential conflict with officer opinions, Councillor Towns reminded members that the Caller report had highlighted that power lay with the members of the Council, not with officers. It was within members' democratic power to respond to the consultation in the way which had been suggested. With regard to the evidence, he felt that was abundantly clear.

Councillor Mather supported the motion. This matter was not something which could just be switched off for a trial. If these local skills were lost, they would be lost forever as they could not be learned in university. This was local food produced by local people and that's what should be supported.

Councillor Grimshaw commented that the traditional fishing life had been largely lost in Newbiggin and it would be a travesty if this was repeated elsewhere. Whilst more information was welcome, she felt it was important to support these little communities.

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Councillor Robinson commented that he hadn't seen any evidence from Defra. If the motion was stop Defra from acting and force a rethink, then it should be rejected so Defra could respond with reasoned argument to support their proposals.

Mr O'Farrell advised members that the risk and disbenefits section of the Defra proposal identified loss in income to local communities of between £600,000 and £9m per year. It also listed various other risks to the wider fishing fleet including health and safety as smaller boats would need to fish in deeper waters.

Councillor Hardy commented that if Defra imposed a fishing ban then six fishing boats would be lost from Holy Island and would devastate the island's economy. The Council was already supporting the indigenous population to stay on Holy Island. If the fishermen were lost then eventually the heart of the island would go and it would become a museum. He had listened to the flawed evidence put forward by Defra. They had not even realised that Holy Island was reached by a tidal causeway and the lack of knowledge of the area had been staggering. He had the support of the local MP and most of the parishes in the area and he urged members to support it.

On being put to the vote, it was **RESOLVED** by a substantial majority that the County Council respond to the Defra consultation on Highly Protected Marine Areas, rejecting the proposals on environmental, social and economic grounds.

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## **REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES**

### **Northumberland Inequalities Plan 2022 - 2032**

The report presented the Northumberland Inequalities Plan 2022 – 2032 and shared with Council the proposals for system development and enablers, focused areas of action and short, medium and long-term indicators of progress. The report had been developed as a result of a series of locally based engagement workshops, triggered by the Leader's commitment to prioritise reducing inequalities, with a call to partners to tackle this key issue for the benefit of Northumberland residents. The report was a statement of intent to work on these actions and deliver better outcomes over the next 10 years. The report recognised the importance of governance and accountability, requesting that a cross party members group be established to monitor the progress of the plan.

Members received a presentation on the key point of the Plan from Liz Morgan, Executive Director of Public Health and Community Services.

- Councillor Morphet felt members should not underestimate the size of the challenge. The Plan was just the first step in reversing the harm done by many years of austerity but it was a step in the right direction. A critical element would be the provision of increased support to town and parish councils and community groups. His Group welcomed the plan for a transport equity audit. Given that 22% of households in Northumberland didn't own a car, improvements to public transport and active travel were critical steps on the path to equality. His group also welcomed the proposal for community allotments.

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- Councillor Hunter asked how the Council would actually deliver what was in the Plan. Only the voices of those who responded would be heard and as many parish councils were struggling to attract councillors, they couldn't always be relied upon to reach right across the community.
- Councillor Dale queried how this would relate to the Combined Authority wellbeing framework already in existence.

The Leader replied that the policy conference on the 12th October would allow members to feed in their ideas. He acknowledged that some of the proposals would take some time to implement but there was some funding available and a start had to be made. There was good joint working already ongoing on a number of projects with the Combined Authority and there was no reason why these should not continue.

In response to Councillor Hunter, Liz Morgan replied that in conducting the residents' survey, officers wanted to ensure that they did hear from those that didn't make themselves heard as often so a variety of approaches would be taken.

- Councillor Ball reported that 2 in 5 children in the north east were in poverty. She fully supported the Plan taking things into the longer term because this was not just a current issue and it was time now to get on with it. She looked forward to working with all members to make a difference to those who needed it.
- Councillor Pattison commented that the Council was extremely committed to closing the inequalities gap in Northumberland and officers from the relevant teams had worked very hard on this Plan. She was also concerned about the prevalence of child poverty.
- Councillor Reid asked what the volunteers were actually going to do to help the Council tackle inequality. In his view, the only way of doing this was to treat everyone fairly, making sure kids had the education they needed whatever it cost (such as keeping rural schools open), feeding them properly, advising people not to smoke or drink as much. He also felt these volunteers would be difficult to recruit.
- Councillor Dale felt that things had gone backwards and she referred to the work which had been done previously on the marmot review and every child matters. The best way of growing communities was giving them something to do and the report reflected on that. She felt the Council needed a briefing on the structure of the NHS and the Council's involvement in it. She also felt the Corporate Plan needed to be reviewed to align it with the Inequalities Plan. She supported the Plan and thanked Liz and her team for their work.
- Councillor Castle felt that the Government was not telling people what to do but enabling them to make choices which were better and more real. It was within the Council's power to improve the choices that were available. The role of Government was to enable people to live better lives and have better opportunities, and to make the economic conditions which made this possible. He was concerned about the levels of life expectancy and felt something had to be done to improve that.

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- Councillor Hill agreed with comments about the sense of urgency and the specific measures and interventions with the current cost of living crisis. The gravity of the situation couldn't be overstated and specific interventions were needed. She acknowledged that the Plan was a critical part of that.
- Councillor Jones congratulated Matfen Parish Council who had set up a support network across the Parish working with volunteers to support the community to provide future resilience against events such as the pandemic and storm Arwen. They had also accepted what they could not do for themselves and were working with NCT to provide some of the support they would need in such a situation.
- Councillor Bowman commented that communities did work together when there was a need and he looked forward to the Plan being put into action to rid communities of poverty.
- Councillor Gallacher commented that every ward in the County had this problem and there had been a deterioration in the position since 2010 because of the Government. In children under 3, the number of children in poverty was 50%. He welcomed the Plan and acknowledged that it would need to be adjusted as time progressed. He referred to an article on Sky News that morning about poverty in the north east and recommended that officers and members watch it. He agreed that some families would not admit that they were struggling and that this would be a problem. However, his Group would be happy to provide any information they could.
- Councillor Grimshaw commented that she had been shocked by the levels of deprivation in communities but she applauded the work which was being done by NCT. Her fear was that there wouldn't be sufficient funding from Government to deliver the Plan and she asked the Leader to lobby the Government for support for it.
- Councillor Wearmouth was frustrated that party politics was being brought into the discussion on this now especially when the Government had provided so much financial support to the Council recently. The Plan would work because it would be part of every policy.
- Councillor Fairless Aitken thanked the team for their work on the Plan and agreed that education, money and community involvement were key to making this work. There was a lot happening in her own area already on this.

As the member lead on this, Councillor Ferguson summed up the position for members. He understood that members would have questions about the specific details of the Plan and he urged members to attend the Policy Conference on 12 October. In response to some of the questions which had been raised he informed members that there were locality co-ordinators within NCT who were linking into different community groups and encouraging them to work together to have a better chance of securing investment. The Working Group would identify areas of existing good practice which could be shared.

The Government wouldn't be telling people how to live, the aim was for

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communities to identify what they wanted for themselves because they would know best what would work for them. The Council needed to work with the communities to identify the reasons behind the existing deprivation whilst at the same time providing the support which was needed through foodbanks etc and helping them to help themselves.

The Leader made some final remarks, encouraging all members to support the Plan and attend the Policy Conference on 12 October 2022.

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (a) the Northumberland Inequalities Plan 2022 – 2032 be agreed;
- (b) Council agree the proposals for the shorter-term culture change to support the enabling actions as set out in table 1 of the report:
  - a. Residents voice equal to data
  - b. Workforce development and coordination
  - c. Developing, commissioning and delivering services differently
  - d. Inequalities lens (includes a poverty and hardship dedicated action plan)
  - e. Maximising our civic/statutory level responsibilities;
- (c) Council agree proposed short, medium and long-term indicators as set out in table 2 of the report:
  - a. Best start in life (shorter term)
  - b. Living conditions (medium term)
  - c. Employment (medium term); and
- (d) Council agree to establish a cross party members group who will govern the plan (as set out in Appendix 4), detail of this to be delegated to the Executive Director for Public Health, in consultation Cllr David Ferguson.

9 **REPORT OF THE INTERIM HEAD OF PAID SERVICE AND LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

**Revised Executive Management Structure**

The report advised Council that due to the sad passing of Her Majesty the Queen, and the subsequent respectful mourning period until after the state funeral on 19<sup>th</sup> September, the meeting for consideration of the report by the Council's Staff and Appointments Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2022 was postponed.

The report of the Staff and Appointments Committee which met on 20 September 2022 to consider this matter had been circulated (copy attached to the sealed minutes). The meeting had been delayed due to the passing of HM the Queen.

The Leader presented the report and endorsed its proposals. There had already been a good response to the vacancies and this was the next step in moving forward. He moved the report's recommendations which was seconded by Councillor Chicken.

Councillor Morphet asked how the remaining £697,000 worth of savings to be found from tier three would involve. The Interim Chief Executive replied that some of these savings had already been identified. Tiers three and four were those

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below Executive Director level i.e. service directors and heads of service. Posts at that level would now be aligned to the new structure and he expected that there would be some savings made there. There had already been some approaches from staff at that level about moving on.

Councillor Renner Thompson supported the new structure, in particular the separation of Children's and Adults Services with a dedicated head of service for each very large area of Council activity.

The Leader reported that he had invited Group Leaders to participate in the interview process.

**RESOLVED** that the recommendations from the Staff and Appointments Committee held on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September 2022 be approved as follows;

- (a) Approve the revised Tier 1 & 2 structure as detailed in Appendix 1 of the Staff and Appointment Committee report. The structure will be led by a Chief Executive who will also be the Council's statutory Head of Paid Service and will also encompass the role of Electoral Returning Officer. As agreed at the Council's Staff and appointments Committee on 15th August 2022 this role is currently being externally recruited to;
- (b) That the Executive Director roles below are established at Band 18. This is an equivalent number of Executive Directors that were in place prior to the current interim arrangements that came into force in September 2021. All roles will be subject to external recruitment processes as there are no officers currently occupying substantive Executive Director roles.
  - a. Executive Director Place & Regeneration
  - b. Executive Director Transformation & Resources (S 151 Officer)
  - c. Executive Director Adults, Ageing & Wellbeing (DAS)
  - d. Executive Director Children, Young People & Education (DCS)
  - e. Executive Director Public Health, Inequalities & Stronger Communities (DPH); and
- (c) Agree the remuneration for all the roles in 2. above as identified within the report to the Staff and Appointments Committee contained in Appendix A. The salaries for these posts are set at over £100,000 and therefore need the formal approval of both the Staff and Appointments Committee and of the Full Council in line with the Council's Pay Policy Statement.

10 **REPORT OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR COMMUNITIES AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND SENIOR HR MANAGER**

**Voluntary Redundancy of the Director of Transformation**

The report advised Council that due to the sad passing of her Majesty the Queen and the subsequent respectful mourning period until after the state funeral on 19<sup>th</sup> September the arrangements for the approval of the report to the Council's Staff and Appointments Committee had been delayed from 9<sup>th</sup> September 2022. The report of the Staff and Appointments Committee which met on 20 September 2022 to consider this matter had been circulated (copy attached to the sealed minutes).

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The Leader proposed the report, which was seconded by Councillor Wearmouth. The Interim Chief Executive detailed the key points. He assured members that this settlement agreement was not a non-disclosure agreement and reflected normal employment practice.

Councillor Oliver asked if there was a non-compete clause in the agreement. He felt there should be some sort of clause preventing people from working on an ongoing basis in this business. The Monitoring Officer advised that Ms Joynson was an officer of the Council and therefore there would not be such terms in the settlement agreement. A settlement agreement usually included a non-disclosure clause and whilst that would not be the case here, there would be a mutual respect of both the Council's and Ms Joynson's confidentiality.

Councillor Beynon asked this was a request for voluntary redundancy why was the payment, including pension, being made, and he asked if the Administration had sanctioned the appointment. The Interim Chief Executive replied that VR was sometimes offered as an inducement and in those cases it was reasonable to offer the employee a payment as per the pay policy. The Leader added that the Administration had not been involved in the appointment.

The Monitoring Officer added that at that time, some of the officer employment rules were not being carried out which would have involved the Staff and Appointments Committee for appointments at that level. Some had subsequently been ratified by the StAC when this had been picked up. Moving forward, officers at Chief and Deputy Chief level would go through that process.

Councillor Murphy asked, if someone was too unwell to return to work, would the normal procedure not be through either ill health retirement or the capability procedure. She queried why this route was being taken.

The Monitoring Officer advised that the Director was off work ill but the reasons for that could not be discussed in open session. However, this was a procedural matter and StAC had approved it. The reason it had come to Council was because of the Council's pay policy required it due to the figures involved. This was the best option for the individual concerned and the organisation.

On being put to the vote there voted FOR: a substantial majority; AGAINST: 1; ABSTENTIONS: 5.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that Council approve the recommendation from the Staff and Appointments Committee that the request for voluntary redundancy by the Director of Transformation be approved.

11 **TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON:-**

(1) Tuesday 12 July 2022

12 **RESOLVED** that the minutes be received.  
**TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER MINUTES FROM THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES:-**

(1) **Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC**

Ch.'s Initials.....

These were presented by Councillor Beynon.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be received.

**(2) Family and Children's Services OSC**

These were presented by Councillor Daley.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be received.

**(3) Communities and Place OSC**

These were presented by Councillor Reid.

With regard to Minute No. 14.1 Fleet Replacement Update, Councillor Gallacher welcomed the delivery of the potholing vehicle and suggested to the Leader that more than one person be trained on new equipment as the one person who was trained now had covid. This could also have been applied to the new gulley cleaners so that all eight vehicles could have been used. Councillor Dale supported this and asked Councillor Reid if the gulley cleaning rota could be looked at specifically.

Councillor Reid responded that this was not an opportunity to reopen the debate which had been had at the Committee. Members were just being asked to agree the minutes.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be received.

**(4) Health and Wellbeing OSC**

These were presented by Councillor Jones.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be received

**(5) Health and Wellbeing Board**

These were presented by Councillor Pattison.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be received.

**(6) Audit Committee**

These were presented by Councillor Oliver.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be received.

**(7) Standards Committee**

These were presented by Councillor Flux. He advised that himself, along with the Chair Joe Jackson and Councillor Dunn had met and appointed to two of the three town and parish council representatives.

Ch.'s Initials.....

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be received.

Ch.'s Initials.....