

PETERLEE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the **Town Council** meeting held on **Monday 7th April 2025** at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber, Shotton Hall, Peterlee.

Present: Councillor D Howarth (Mayor) and
Councillors F J Black, M A Cartwright, B Fishwick, M L Franklin, A Laing, R Moore, R Scott, S Simpson, A Stockport, M T Tough.

Also Present: Ian Hall (Chief Officer and Town Clerk), David Anderson (Locum Democratic Services Manager), Deborah Woodhall (Resources Manager), Sharon Pounder (Pavilion & Sports Community Manager) and Louise Hudson (Democratic Services Assistant)

C.176/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors R Burnip, S Franklin, D Hawley, K Hawley, K Liddell, and M Sanderson.

RESOLVED: That the apologies be noted.

C.177/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were submitted.

C.178/25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present

C.179/25 MINUTES

- a. Council held on 17th March 2025
- b. Governance Committee held on 25th March 2025

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the above meetings be approved as a correct record

C.180/25 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, which had been circulated with the agenda, to advise Members of the recent Internal Audit conducted by Clive Owen LLP; to note the Auditors recommendations and actions taken and planned as a response to the recommendations.

Members noted that all actions recommended by the Auditor had now been implemented as stated in the report.

RESOLVED

1. That the Internal Auditor's report be noted.
2. That the actions taken to implement the recommendations of the Auditor be noted and endorsed.

C.181/25

REVIEW OF COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, which had been circulated with the agenda, to review the Council's Committee Structure.

The Governance Committee met on 25th March to review the Council's current committee structure. The review was necessary to assess the impact of changes to the decision-making process introduced by the Council on 23rd September 2024, when it resolved to suspend meetings of the Resources Committee and the Community and Environment Committee, opting instead to hold full Council meetings twice a month.

Members considered the recommendations of the Governance committee in detail:

RESOLVED

1. That Council continue to meet on the first and third Monday of each month, with the exception of the August recess; except when a Bank Holiday falls on a Monday on the first or third week, in which case Council will be held on the following Tuesday.
2. That the Resources Committee, Community & Environment Committee, Scrutiny & Performance Committee and Finance Sub-Committee be disbanded.
3. That the Human Resources Sub-Committee become Human Resources Committee reporting direct to Council.
4. That the Health & Safety Sub Committee become Health & Safety Committee and report direct to Council.
5. That the Governance Committee incorporate responsibility for performance review and be renamed Governance & Performance Review Committee.
6. That the Events Working Party become Events Committee.
7. That committees shall have 5 members, with the exception of the Events Committee which shall have 15 members and the Governance and Performance Review Committee which shall have 6 members.
8. That members should be appointed to committees at the annual meeting on the basis of political proportionality.
9. That the structure come into effect from the Annual Council Meeting to be held in May 2025.

C.182/25

REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, along with applicable appendices, which had been circulated with the agenda, to review the Council's Standing Orders.

Since issuing the agenda, notification had been received that NALC had issued new Model Standing Orders.

Members considered an addendum to the report setting out amendments required to comply with the new model Standing Orders.

RESOLVED The amendments to standing Orders, as detailed in the addendum to the report be adopted.

C.183/25

REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, which had been circulated with the agenda, to review the Council's Financial Regulations.

The Council's Financial Regulations were updated and reviewed by Council on 17th February 2025. (Minute No C.149/24 refers).

NALC had since updated their model Financial Regulations to take into account changes to the Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulation 2024, which came into effect on 24 February 2025.

RESOLVED That the Financial Regulations be updated to take into account the changes set out in the report.

C.184/25

REVIEW OF SCHEME OF DELEGATION TO OFFICERS

The Governance Committee met on 25th March to review the Council's current Scheme of Delegation to Officers.

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk detailing the Governance Committee's recommendations, which had been circulated with the agenda, to review the Council's Scheme of Delegation to Officers.

RESOLVED That the updated Scheme of Delegation to Officers attached at Appendix 2 be adopted.

C.185/25

EDEN LANE DEPOT - UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, which had been circulated with the agenda, to update members on progress on works required to Eden Lane Depot to bring it back into use and to earmark funding to enable the required works to be undertaken.

Members were informed that although quotations are being sought in line with Financial Regulations, it was expected that the required work to bring the depot back into full use, could cost in the region of £100,000.

The projected underspend was reported to Council at its meeting held on 17th February 2025. It was proposed that funding be earmarked from the underspend on the 2024/25 budget, to finance the repairs to the Depot.

RESOLVED

1. That the update be noted.
2. That £100,000 be earmarked from the 2024/25 underspend to fund the repairs.

C.186/25

CITIZENS ADVICE

Consideration was given to a report of the Pavilion & Sports Community Manager, which had been circulated with the agenda, to consider the support for Citizens Advice to continue to deliver a service from The Pavilion.

Members agreed this was a valuable community service and were eager to continue supporting Citizens Advice.

RESOLVED

1. That the Council carry on supporting Citizens Advice with free room hire to enable the service to continue operating from The Pavilion for the 2025/26 financial year.
2. That funding allocation be made available to The Pavilion to support the cost of room hire.

C.187/25

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That in view of the confidential nature of the items to be discussed, the Council passed a formal resolution to exclude the press and public from the meeting, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 & the Local Government (Access to Information) Act, Part 1, due to the commercial and/or personal information contained in the report.

C.188/25

FUTURE HEDGE CUTTING, EMBANKMENT MAINTENANCE

Detailed consideration was given to a report of the Neighbourhood Services Manager, which had been circulated with the agenda, to consider the Council's approach to hedge cutting, embankment maintenance and opportunities for Service Direct provision.

Members expressed interest in the Council purchasing a side arm flail, recognising its potential to expand on a Service Direct basis as detailed in the report.

The Chair of Resources Committee proposed that new equipment be considered prior to making a purchase.

Members also suggested purchasing other equipment from the contractor that was useful and economically beneficial to the Council, if any.

RESOLVED

That if the suggested equipment is deemed unsuitable, delegated authority will be given to the Town Clerk to consult with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council to proceed with the purchase of the used equipment from a local contractor, due to the time-sensitive nature of the offer.

1. That the purchase of a suitable side arm flail be agreed.

2. That delegated authority be given to the Town Clerk, in conjunction with the Mayor and Chair of Resources Committee to purchase the most suitable and economically viable side arm flail.
3. That the Neighbourhood Services Manager purchase other equipment the contractor had for sale that was operationally useful and economically beneficial to the Council in accordance with Financial Regulations