

PETERLEE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the **Town Council** meeting held on **Monday 20 April 2026** at **6.30pm** in the Council Chamber, Shotton Hall, Peterlee.

Present: Councillor R. Moore (Mayor) and Councillors J. Black, P. Brown, B. Fishwick, K. Hawley, D. Howarth, A. Laing, D. Meadows, I. Pygall, M Tough and D. Wright.

Also Ian Hall (Chief Officer and Town Clerk) and Louise Hudson (Democratic Services Assistant).

C.220/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Burrell, M-L Franklin, S Franklin, D. Hawley, H. Pygall and S. Simpson.

RESOLVED: That the apologies be noted.

C.221/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared

C.222/26 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present.

C.223/26 MINUTES

- a. Governance & Performance held on 7th April 2026
- b. Council Meeting held on 7th April 2026

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be approved.

C.224/26 STANDARDS COMPLAINT, MONITORING OFFICER DECISION NOTICE

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, which had previously been circulated, to inform Members of the outcome of a Standards complaint submitted to Durham County Council's Monitoring Officer regarding the alleged conduct of a Town Councillor.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Monitoring Officer's decision be noted.
2. That Members reaffirm their commitment to the Code of Conduct and high standards of behaviour.

C.225/26 POLICIES

The Governance & Performance Committee considered the below policies at its meeting held on 7th April 2026, and Members are requested to consider their recommendations.

- a. AED Policy
- b. CCTV Policy
- c. Data Protection Policy
- d. IT Policy
- e. Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy
- f. Dismissal Policy
- g. Document retention and Disposal Policy
- h. Health & Safety Policy
- i. Maternity, Paternity, Adoption & Surrogacy Policy
- j. Mental Wellbeing in the Workplace Policy
- k. Redundancy Policy
- l. Whistle Blowing Policy
- m. Sexual Harassment Policy
- n. Shared Parental Leave Policy
- o. Pandemic Response Policy

RESOLVED: That the recommendations of the Governance & Performance Committee be noted and the policies be adopted.

C.226/26 CONSIDERATION OF MOVING TO A PAPERLESS COUNCIL

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, which had previously been circulated, to consider whether Peterlee Town Council should move to a paperless approach for the distribution of agendas and associated meeting documentation.

There is no formal resolution within previous Council minutes confirming that the Council operates as a paperless authority, and, therefore, this report seeks to establish the Council's position moving forward.

Several Members exercised their right under Government legislation to continue to receive all agendas and accompanying documentation in paper form. They also requested that all communication ceased to their personal email addresses.

The Town Clerk confirmed that Members who did not currently have a Council Device and, therefore, did not have a Council email address would no longer receive communication via their personal email addresses. He also confirmed that under Government legislation, Members are entitled to receive paper copies of all agendas and accompanying documentation and that for those Members wishing to receive them, this would be arranged.

All Members wishing to cease communication via personal email addresses and receive paper agenda packs, submitted declarations confirming this.

The Chair proposed that the Council, where possible, will go paperless and support digital. Councillor Audrey Laing seconded this proposal.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Council, where possible, will go paperless and support digital.
2. That all communications via personal email addresses would cease with immediate effect.
3. That those Members wishing to receive paper copies of their agenda packs, would have these delivered to their address.
4. That the Democratic Services Assistant will email Members who currently receive communications electronically, asking them to verify their consent.

C.227/26 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2025/26

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, which had previously been circulated, to present to Members the findings of the Internal Assurance Report for the 2025/26 financial year, undertaken by Clive Owen LLP, and to outline the key recommendations arising from the review for consideration and action.

The Chair thanked the Town Clerk and his team for improving year on year, placing the Council in a better position.

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of the Internal Assurance Report 2025/26 be noted.
2. That the positive assurance opinion provided by the Internal Auditor be endorsed.
3. That all recommendations identified within the report have now been implemented be noted.

C.228/26 INVESTMENT OF COUNCIL RESERVES – CCLA PUBLIC SECTOR DEPOSIT FUND (OPTIONS APPRAISAL)

Detailed consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, which had previously been circulated, to present Members with a range of options to consider for the management of the Council's reserves and cash balances, including the option of retaining all funds within the Council's existing banking arrangements or adopting a diversified approach through the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund.

The Events Committee Chair expressed that she would like, in writing, that the Council's funds are guaranteed not to go down, but may go up. Also, clarification on how the fund works, i.e. Stocks and shares, etc.

RESOLVED:

1. That this item be deferred to a future meeting; and
2. That the Town Clerk seek clarification with regards to how the fund works.

C.229/26 IT SUPPORT CONTRACT REVIEW AND FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS

Detailed consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, which had previously been circulated, to inform Members that the current IT support contract with Document Solutions is approaching its one-year anniversary and to seek approval to move to a rolling contract arrangement based on performance, value for money, and ongoing review of pricing.

The Chair proposed that the Council's IT Support contract go back out to tender, offering a 3-year contract. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Darren Meadows.

A vote was taken:

For	11
Against	0

RESOLVED: That the Council's IT Support contract go back out to tender, offering a 3-year contract.