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Contact Officer: John Quarmby, Tel. 01484 221703

COUNCIL

KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

**At a Meeting of the Council of the Borough of Kirklees held at
the Town Hall, Huddersfield on Wednesday 12 May 2004**

PRESENT

The Mayor (Councillor Barbara Allonby) in the Chair

COUNCILLORS

G ALVY
I A AMEEN
G ASIF
M BATES
P BATTYE
R D BATTYE
G BEEVER
M BLANSHARD
J R BLOOM
S M BOLT
M BOWER
MRS M BOWER
J CALVERT
A COOPER
A E DENHAM
D EXLEY
M FEARNLEY
D FIRTH
E A FIRTH
H FOX
M GRANGER
M HARKIN
D C HARPIN
M HEMINGWAY
S HEY
D J HILLAS
D HULLOCK
K HUSSAIN
K IQBAL
C M IREDALE
R IREDALE
P KANE
M KHAN
R LIGHT
G MANIYAR

S MAY
A MURPHY
G NORTH
A K OLDROYD
J J O'REILLY
A PALFREEMAN
S PANDOR
K N PATRICK
D R PAYNE
A C PINNOCK
K A PINNOCK
A RAISTRICK
M RAZAQ
D RIDGWAY
I L M RUTTER
D SHEARD
E SIMS
K D SIMS
A SMITH
C M L SMITH
K SMITH
J R SMITHSON
S A SMITHSON
B SNELSON
M SOKHAL
J STEWART TURNER
P SYKES
K TAYLOR
M WALTON
B WARBY
L WILD
A WOODHEAD

149 Announcements by the Mayor and the Chief Executive

(a) Vote of Thanks to Retiring Members

Councillor K Pinnock along with Councillors Khan, Light and Cooper paid tribute to Members retiring prior to the Elections in June 2004. Councillor Allonby responded on behalf of retiring Members.

(b) Geoff Butterfield

Members of Council were advised of the death of Geoff Butterfield, former England and British Lion Rugby Union International. Members agreed that a letter on behalf of the Council be sent to Geoff Butterfield's family by the Mayor.

(c) Related Party Transactions 2003/2004

The Chief Executive reminded Members of the need for them to complete the Related Party Transactions Form for 2003/2004 and advised Members that copies of outstanding Forms had been left on Members' chairs for them to complete and return to the Head of Democratic Support Service.

150 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Green, Sarwar, Simpson and C Walder.

151 Minutes

It was moved by the Mayor (Councillor Allonby), seconded by the Deputy Mayor (Councillor Harkin) and

RESOLVED - That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 7 April 2004 be approved and signed as a correct record.

152 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Payne declared a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of Minute No. 485 of the Cabinet meeting on 21 April 2004 regarding Payments to Foster Carers on the grounds that he is a Respite Foster Carer.

153 Deputation

There were no deputations received by the Council.

154 Petitions

The following petitions were submitted

Councillor Alvy submitted a Petition on behalf of the Batley Business and Retail Group seeking short stay car parking at the Market Place, Batley on non-Market days.

Councillor Patrick submitted a petition asking Kirklees Council to provide a hard surface for car parking within the verge of the site of the road at Holme Close at Holmbridge.

Councillor Sheard submitted a petition calling on the Council to find accommodation for the Brighton Street Community Group, Heckmondwike and calling on the Council to return the Brighton Street Centre to local use.

Councillor Bolt submitted a petition asking the Council to investigate and take appropriate action to resolve problems caused to residents by vehicles parking on Back Knowl Road, Mirfield.

Councillor Maniyar submitted a petition against additional charges for week-end burials at Batley Cemetery.

Councillor Sykes submitted a petition regarding anti-social behaviour affecting residents of Lowcliffe Walk, Heckmondwike.

Councillor Pandor submitted a petition regarding the poor service provided by the local bus company on Heyburn Road on the Healey Estate.

Councillor Blanshard submitted a petition seeking a reduction in the speed limit on Barnsley Road, Denby Dale.

RESOLVED - That the above Petitions be referred to the appropriate Head of Service for investigation and report thereon to either Cabinet or the appropriate Committee with a subsequent report to Council on action taken.

**155 Matters Referred to Council for Approval
(a) Council Business Committee - 29 April 2004 - Members Allowances Scheme 2004/2005**

It was moved by Councillor Palfreeman, seconded by Councillor Ridgway and

RESOLVED - That approval be given to the amendments to the Scheme of Members Allowances, as indicated within the considered report together with the amendments schedule circulated at the meeting, for the year 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005 and that approval be given to the revised Scheme of Members Allowances.

156 Minutes of Meetings of Cabinet and Committees

It was moved by the Mayor (Councillor Allonby), seconded by the Deputy Mayor (Councillor Harkin) and

RESOLVED - That the Minutes of meetings of Cabinet and Committees as set out in the Council Summons at Item 8 be received.

157 Questions by Elected Members Under Council Procedure Rule 12(1)(a)(b) and (c)

The following written question was received:

Question by Councillor David Exley to the Cabinet Member for Education and Recreation (Councillor J R Smithson)

"I have previously asked you if there was an inequality in the number of paid holidays received by Christian and non-Christian teaching and teaching support staff in Kirklees Schools? You answered no, but did add that there was provision for staff to have time off for certain festivals at the discretion of their employer. Can I therefore ask why it is that although the Muslim festival of Eid was on a weekend this year Muslim staff in North Kirklees then took the following Monday off with pay?"

The Cabinet Member replied thereto.

The following oral questions were received:

Oral Questions to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transportation (Councillor D Payne)

(a) Question by Council E Sims

"This is not a political stunt it is a serious question. You'll get as much time as I got when the 'phones were ringing and people were reporting to me that there was a very strong chemical smell. I ask you, in that situation, which Officer would you call on a Sunday lunch time to try and sort this?"

The Cabinet Member replied thereto.

(b) Question by Councillor D Sheard

"Can you advise me how quickly the "speed" camera will be installed on the A62 between the Stubley Estate and the "Half Way House"?"

The Cabinet Member replied thereto.

(c) Question by Councillor Hemingway

"For over two years I have been asking for safety improvements to the roads in Grange Moor only to be told that there is no money left for these improvements to take place - in particular the junction of Paul Lane and Wakefield Road, Grange Moor. There have been many accidents - one involving a cyclist who was quite badly injured. One a few weeks ago which involved a bus. The road has been resurfaced and is covered in loose chippings. There has been an accident earlier on this morning. Can Councillor Payne assure me that this will be investigated and that safety measures will be implemented as a matter of urgency?"

The Cabinet Member replied thereto.

(d) Question by Councillor Bolt

"I find myself in the same position as Councillor Hemingway with regard to a road where a new surface has been put down and carried along to Emley crossroads. We have a loose chip surface which is causing concern to local members covering up the road safety markers. Can we have an assurance that we can have a costing for originally putting it down and will the coloured tarmac and residents car parks be replaced?"

The Cabinet Member replied thereto.

(e) Question by Councillor Hemingway

"It is now 4 months since the investigations took place at the junction I referred to earlier which involved the motorcyclist. I spoke to the accident investigator this morning who recommended that traffic lights be put at that junction?"

The Cabinet Member replied thereto.

(f) Question by Councillor Bolt

"Your answer to my previous question was either the greatest conversion since the road to Damascus or a clear demonstration of Liberal Democrat hypocrisy or both. I am sure you well remember when I was Chairman of Highways and Transportation you asked me in a Council meeting whether an important road safety scheme in the Thornhill Road met the criteria of pv? Was that a serious question or were you trying to make a political point and have you been converted to realism or are you a hypocrite?"

The Cabinet Member replied thereto.

(g) Question by Councillor Light

"Would it be reasonable for the Council to accept that you would be knowledgeable and understand and know about the Schemes you have taken to the Cabinet in recent weeks?"

The Cabinet Member replied thereto.

(h) Question by Councillor E Sims

"I recently made enquiries of Highways Service about having two extra grit bins provided in Dalton. I was told - "that's it - the policy is no more". Not only that, I was told that the Liberal Democrats policy was to cut the winter maintenance budget. What is the difference between piling grit at the side of the road and placing it in a grit bin?"

The Cabinet Member replied thereto.

(i) Question by Councillor Sheard

"Can you tell me what the spread of red and plastic markings on the top of our bridges are for?"

The Cabinet Member replied thereto.

(j) Question by Councillor Palfreeman

"Bearing in mind that Councillor Payne felt justified to ask a question in the past to Councillor Bolt on the basis of a report which was in his hands and bearing in mind that Councillor Light reminded Councillor Payne that a report on Birkenshaw Tunnel was recently prepared for Cabinet would Councillor Payne now tell us all he knows about Birkenshaw Tunnel?"

The Cabinet Member replied thereto.

(k) Question by Councillor Bolt

"Does Councillor Payne agree that finding a grit bin in Spring which is not being used can be removed. Does he not agree that grit bins provide a necessary service to residents in encouraging residents to use it to prevent accidents?"

The Cabinet Member replied thereto.

Oral Questions to the Cabinet Member for Housing (Councillor Cooper)

(a) Question by Councillor K Sims

Seeing how the Health and Safety Inspectors in Leeds have refused point blank to investigate workmanship about the Decent Homes Programme in Holme Valley South which in itself is a gross dereliction of duty can Councillor Cooper tell me what mechanisms of quality control is he putting in place to ensure we get no re-occurrence of the type of bodged jobs that Councillors Firth, Patrick and myself have been called out to these past few weeks at night as called for Moorlands Estate where British Gas had to come in to do a proper job. At Kirkroyds, New Mill an eighty year old tenant was left with no heating and a gas leak. By good fortune her son happened to call in on her and smelled gas. If that lady had switched on a light or turned on her gas cooker her home would have been blow apart and so would that lady. Emergency action had to be taken - we called out a "Corgi" registered person who fixed the problem. Will Councillor Cooper put the following in place to ensure that

- (1) all work contracted to Enterprise is done by skilled craftsmen
- (2) only registered trades people are employed as gas fitters and electricians
- (3) that customer care to out tenants is first class - it isn't with this group at the moment
- (4) that once inspectors are qualified to recognise the difference between good quality value for money work and "cowboy" jobs

The Cabinet Member replied thereto.

(b) Question by Councillor Firth

"Could Councillor Cooper tell me how many skilled tradesmen are employed by the Enterprise Partnership because it is my belief there are very few and the standard of workmanship is an absolute disgrace?"

The Cabinet Member replied thereto.

(c) Question by Councillor Pandor

"What type of performance framework is being used to make sure that the workmanship of the contractors engaged on the Decent Homes Programme meets expectations?"

The Cabinet Member replied thereto.

(d) Question by Councillor Kane

"You have spoken today as if the problems in Holmfirth are an isolated incident. Discussions at the KNH Board for North Kirklees show that this is not an isolated incident as there are similar problems in Batley. Can you tell me how inspections of work are carried out at the present time?"

The Cabinet Member replied thereto.

(e) Question by Councillor D Firth

"How many local trades people are employed on the Decent Homes Programme because the ones that I've found are from elsewhere. There are local trades people queuing up in Kirklees - proper professional qualified tradesmen. Can you tell me why we can't go to these people?"

The Cabinet Member replied thereto.

(f) Question by Councillor Fox

"Do you stand by the statement you have made that a "corgi" registered engineer does not have to install the boiler or the gas supply to it?"

The Cabinet Member replied thereto.

Oral Questions to the Leader of the Council

(a) Question by Councillor Light

"Can the Leader of the Council inform us what preparation her administration has made for the provision of large screens in the town centres for England's European Championship Games?"

The Leader of the Council replied thereto.

(b) Question by Councillor Patrick

"Will the Leader of the Council apologise to the tenants of Holme Valley South for the Cabinet Member for Housing who has clearly no idea whatsoever about the problems in the Ward?"

The Leader of the Council replied thereto.

(c) Question by Councillor Maniyar

"Can the Leader of the Council tell me why a Cabinet Member has issued a press release about burial charges for Muslims making allegations against me that I did not know what I was talking about which were later retracted. Will she apologise to me on behalf of her colleague?"

The Leader of the Council replied thereto.

(d) Question by Councillor Bolt

"Reflecting on the Leader's recent statement about the use of written questions for serious matters. Do she agree with me that a statement of policy of the Liberal Democrat Group highlighted in this Chamber not long ago that two questions were planted to protect inefficient Members is nothing more than hypocrisy and cheap party politics?"

The Leader of the Council replied thereto.

Oral Question to Spokesperson of Joint Authorities

(a) Question by Councillor Bates to the Spokesperson for the West Yorkshire Police Authority (Councillor K Smith)

"I've been talking to some people over the weekend who were telling me of the anomalies between Special Constables and Community Support Officers. Whilst Special Constables give their time on a voluntary basis and Community Support Officers are paid, Special Constables have more powers of arrest. It seems a nonsense that Specials give their services for free but have greater powers than CSO's. Does Councillor Smith share my views on this subject?"

Councillor K Smith replied thereto.

Oral Questions to Members on Public Statements

(a) Question by Councillor Light

"Can Councillor Smithson tell use if he stands by the statement that "Girls Aloud are just as good as Elton John?"

Councillor Smithson replied thereto.

158 Council Motion re Postal Voting in Yorkshire and Humberside

Council considered a report setting out responses recommended to the Motion approved by Council on 11 February 2004 in relation to Postal Voting in Yorkshire and Humberside.

It was moved by Councillor Bates, seconded by Councillor Ridgway and

RESOLVED - That the responses be received.