# COUNCILLORS PRESENT:

Cllr Mark Purvis (Chair), Cllr Louis Brown, Cllr Glyn Davies, Cllr Pauline Thompson, Cllr John Tully, Cllr Caroline Ball, Cllr Sophie Robinson, Cllr Jim Lang, Cllr Marjorie Chambers, Cllr Sophie Robinson, Cllr Lynne Grimshaw, Cllr Victor Bridges, Eleanor Armstrong, and Cllr Matthew Cuthbert

# ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE

Sarah Eden – Executive Officer/RFO, Alan Bunker – Allotment Officer, Stephen Humphrey - Assets and Facilities Officer, Sharon Parmley – Communications and Engagement Officer and Gary Holmes – Administration Assistant.

# FC23/074 WELCOME BY THE CHAIR

Welcomed by Cllr Mark Purvis.

# FC23/075 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Vicky Brown.

# FC23/076 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Cllr Caroline Ball, Cllr Lynne Grimshaw and Cllr Jim Lang disclosed an interest in **FC23/087 PLANNING APPLICATION**

*Members are also reminded that they need to regularly review their declarations of interest forms and ensure they remain up to date.*

# FC23/077 DISPENSATIONS

There were no requests for dispensations.

# FC23/078 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was one member of public present.

# FC23/079 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

**It was AGREED to RECEIVE and SIGN** as a true record, the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Tuesday 28th November 2023.

# FC23/080 REPORT FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING TEAM

**It was AGREED to RECEIVE** a report from Inspector Wayne Daniels.

Inspector Daniels informed the Council that he had been away from Ashington for 6 months, during which time the neighbourhood policing team was understaffed. He expressed being pleased that new officers have joined the team since his return.

The data provided covered overall incidents for the Ashington area, including Newbiggin. There were 20,570 incidents recorded throughout 2023. The month of June 2023 alone saw 1,390 incidents, which was 255 more than the previous month. July 2023 had 1,550 incidents.

Inspector Daniels stated his desire to place greater emphasis on rehabilitation and health initiatives. Many offenders go on to reoffend upon release due to underlying substance abuse issues. Addressing these root causes is a priority.

Officer Alan Bunker left the meeting at 18:25

# FC23/081 REPORT FROM THE CIVIC HEAD OF ASHINGTON (CLLR VICTOR BRIDGES)

**It was AGREED to RECEIVE** a report from the Civic Head of Ashington

# FC23/082 REPORT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL (CLLR JOHN TULLY)

**It was AGREED to RECEIVE** a verbal report from the Leader of the Town Council.

Councillors provided an update on their recent meeting with the Southeast Northumberland Forum, which is a gathering of local councils in the area. It was reported to be a very productive meeting with good discussion on various topics.

The ability to share problems and solutions amongst the member councils was highlighted as a valuable strategy utilized during these forum meetings.

One key item raised at the meeting was that Michael Gough from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) has pushed through a new policy allowing for street votes on planning applications. This would enable residents directly impacted by a planning proposal to have a vote on whether it proceeds or not.

The forum meetings provide an opportunity for councils to collectively discuss issues affecting the region and explore potential solutions through collaboration. Council members are encouraged to share any other notable points from the Southeast Northumberland Forum gathering.

# FC23/083 LEAVE OF ABSENCE DUE TO HEALTH

**It was AGREED to RECEIVE** a leave of absence request from Cllr Vicki Brown and agree in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, to agree a dispensation that constitutes approval by the authority to accept non-attendance outside of the expected 6-month period for reason of ill health and recovery.

# FC23/084 FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT RISK ASSESSMENT

**It was AGREED to RECEIVE** the updated document and to note new/altered risks included by the Executive Officer

# FC23/085 BUDGET AND ANNUAL PRECEPT 2024/25

## Budget 2024/25

**It was AGREED to RECEIVE** a draft budget, consider the Council’s expenditure, commitments, and plans for 2024/25 and formally approve the budget for 2024/25 (enc)[[1]](#endnote-1)

## General Reserves and Contingency

**It was AGREED to RECEIVE and AGREE** the provision towards ‘General Reserves and Contingency’ for 2024/25 (enc)[[2]](#endnote-2)

## Earmarked Reserves

**It was AGREED to RECEIVE** the Asset Management Budget, and agree the provision to earmarked reserves in 2024/25 to accumulate funds towards longer term asset management and replacement (enc)[[3]](#endnote-3)

## 2024/25 Precept Demand

**It was AGREED** the 2024/25 Precept Demand to be submitted to Northumberland County Council, based on the current financial position, and to note the resulting Band D (equivalent) Precept payment (as enc vi)

# FC23/086 ASHINGTON REGENERATION

**It was AGREED to RECEIVE** an update and **AGREED** any further action, following the Council’s request for information relating to Ashington Town Centre Regeneration Project (enc)[[4]](#endnote-4)

Cllr Caroline Ball and Cllr Jim Lang left the meeting at 18:55.

# FC23/087 PLANNING APPLICATION

[23/04733/FUL | Full planning application for development of three college blocks including external workshops, energy centre and PV canopies, as well as associated hardstanding, parking and landscape works, including creation of MUGA and football pitch | Site E Wansbeck Business Park Ashington Northumberland NE63 8QW](https://publicaccess.northumberland.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=S62QLTQSMZW00&prevPage=inTray)

**It was AGREED to RECEIVE** a response to the above planning application and submit response and any comments to Northumberland County Council Planning Department

# FC23/088 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 26th March 2024, 6pm, Ashington Town Hall, 65 Station Road, Ashington, NE63 8RX. This will include the agreement of the 2024/25 budget and precept.

**The meeting ended at 19:02pm**

1. Draft Budget 2024/2025 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Budget Calculations [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Asset Management Budget 2024/25 onwards [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Ashington Regeneration update [↑](#endnote-ref-4)