

At a meeting of the Council held in Council Chamber - Allerdale House, Workington on Wednesday 30 January 2019 at 7.00 pm

Members

Councillor John Crouch (Chair)	Councillor Neil Schofield (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Mary Bainbridge	Councillor Peter Bales
Councillor Barbara Cannon	Councillor Nicky Cockburn
Councillor John Colhoun	Councillor John Cook
Councillor Joseph Cowell	Councillor Joan Ellis
Councillor Janet Farebrother	Councillor Bill Finlay
Councillor Marion Fitzgerald	Councillor Malcolm Grainger
Councillor Konrad Hansen	Councillor Hilary Harrington
Councillor Michael Heaslip	Councillor Alan Hedworth
Councillor Vaughan Hodgson	Councillor William Jefferson
Councillor Mark Jenkinson	Councillor Frank Johnston
Councillor Angela Kendall	Councillor Peter Kendall
Councillor Jim Lister	Councillor Tony Lywood
Councillor Louise Maguire	Councillor Anthony Markley
Councillor Carni McCarron-Holmes	Councillor Billy Miskelly
Councillor Jim Osborn	Councillor Bill Pegram
Councillor Alan Pitcher	Councillor Alan Smith
Councillor Christine Smith	Councillor Stephen Stoddart
Councillor Celia Tibble	Councillor Philip Tibble

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Tony Annison, Councillor Carole Armstrong, Councillor Len Davies, Councillor Adrian Davis-Johnston, Councillor Mark Fryer, Councillor Joe Holliday, Councillor Patricia Macdonald, Councillor Jacqueline Mounsey, Councillor Ron Munby MBE, Councillor Eric Nicholson, Councillor Martin Pugmire, Councillor Joe Sandwith, Councillor David Wilson, Councillor Janice Wood and Councillor Martin Wood

Staff Present

B Carlin, I Frost, A Gilbert, N Hardy, C Holmes, L Jardine, K Magnay, C Nicholson, G Roach, A Seekings, S Sewell, P Wood and P Young

Minute Silence

Council held a minute silence in memory of former Councillor Sam Standage and Councillor Denis Robertson.

330. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2018 were signed as a correct record.

331. Declaration of Interests

None declared.

332. Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no items on the agenda for which the press and public should be excluded.

333. Questions and Petitions

None received.

334. Notices of Motion

1. Councillor A Smith moved the following Motion –

‘Councillors express their concern for the recent rise in homelessness cases in the borough. This Council alone has dealt with 362 cases in 2018/19 which is a 40% increase over the year before, with still three months of the year to go.

There are many reasons why people become homeless - often very personal ones.

However, Allerdale Borough Council has noticed the negative impact of the government’s reform of benefits in Universal Credit (UC), with people losing tenancies and landlords unwilling to take on UC tenants, due to delays in payments. Officers also find the UC system, through the Job Centre, has made it harder to work with case officers to help those facing homelessness.

Councillors also believe that homelessness cases have also increased due to cuts to social services as a result of the government’s austerity measures, meaning more people are not receiving the support they need.

Therefore this Council calls on the government to make further reforms to Universal Credit so that it no longer contributes to people facing losing their home. This Council also calls on the government to reverse the devastating cuts in social services so that the most vulnerable people in our communities receive the help they need’.

Councillor C McCarron-Holmes seconded the motion.

Councillor M Jenkinson said the Government had recognised the faults in Universal Credit but that changes would take time. He said it had been 30 months now that Universal Credit had been in the Borough and that this was the first debate had by Council and which appeared to be an attack on the job centre, who were only doing the job they were paid to do. Councillor Jenkinson said if Councillor A Smith had brought a solution for debate he would have been more likely to support it.

Councillor B Finlay moved an amendment to include the following as part of Councillor Smith’s motion;

‘For its part and in recognition of the fact that 357 dwellings in the borough have stood empty for 2 or more years, this Council resolves to establish with urgency a programme to approach all owners of these empty properties to encourage them to bring them back into beneficial use, and in cases where owners prefer

to sell their properties, to use the Council's own capital resources to acquire and as necessary renovate those dwellings, reserving a sufficient number to accommodate homeless cases, and releasing the remainder back into the general rental and home ownership markets'.

This was seconded by Councillor S Stoddart.

Councillor C Tibble said this authority had a good record of trying to help around the subject of empty homes. Policies had been put in place and money and advice had been offered to homeowners in the past but people were still reluctant to bring empty homes back in to use, it seemed they did not want the burden of tenants.

Councillor M Jenkinson said he was not against the Council gaining properties but said 'we have the stick but where is the carrot'.

A vote was taken on Councillor B Finlay's amendment becoming the substantive motion, 28 in Favour, 0 against and 9 abstentions. The motion was carried.

Councillor T Lywood said the reasons for homelessness were always complex. Since 2010 the national figures had tripled, a direct result of austerity. He said it was time it stopped and that public services were funded.

Councillor B Miskelly said that Universal Credit was a cruel system.

Councillor P Bales said the problem was exasperated because of cuts to the Police and the bedroom tax.

Councillor B Cannon said that Council needed to find a common ground, if everyone was now saying that Universal Credit hadn't worked then the Council could only do so much. It was the system that had been broken. Council should stand shoulder to shoulder to speak to Government and ask that they fix it.

Councillor P Kendall said he was horrified at the increase in the need for foodbanks and that it was the system of Government that had caused it.

Councillor M Bainbridge said as the Ward member for St Michaels she saw first-hand on a daily basis the effects of Universal Credit, and as a Council we should be doing all that we can.

Councillor A Pitcher said he was in support in principle but moved an amendment to include the addition moved by Councillor B Finlay and to remove the following;

'However, Allerdale Borough Council has noticed the negative impact of the government's reform of benefits in Universal Credit (UC), with people losing tenancies and landlords unwilling to take on UC tenants, due to delays in payments. Officers also find the UC system, through the Job Centre, has made it harder to work with case officers to help those facing homelessness.

Councillors also believe that homelessness cases have also increased due to cuts to social services as a result of the government's austerity measures, meaning more people are not receiving the support they need.

Therefore this Council calls on the government to make further reforms to Universal Credit so that it no longer contributes to people facing losing their home. This Council also calls on the government to reverse the devastating cuts in social services so that the most vulnerable people in our communities receive the help they need'.

This was seconded by Councillor M Jenkinson.

Councillor T Lywood was opposed to the amended motion saying it deleted everything that was raised about austerity and what was happening in this Country.

Councillor A Smith was also against the amendment.

A vote was taken on the amended motion, 13 in favour, 25 against and 0 abstentions. The motion was lost.

Councillor A Smith said in his right of reply, that it was children who were being hit the most, Universal Credit was evil. He said it was not right to expect a family of 4 to live with nothing for 6 weeks. Councillor Smith said the main point was that the Council was a frontline Council and it was not standing by letting things drift into the ether.

A vote was taken on the substantive motion which now read;

'Councillors express their concern for the recent rise in homelessness cases in the borough. This Council alone has dealt with 362 cases in 2018/19 which is a 40% increase over the year before, with still three months of the year to go.

There are many reasons why people become homeless - often very personal ones.

For its part and in recognition of the fact that 357 dwellings in the borough have stood empty for 2 or more years, this Council resolves to establish with urgency a programme to approach all owners of these empty properties to encourage them to bring them back into beneficial use, and in cases where owners prefer to sell their properties, to use the Council's own capital resources to acquire and as necessary renovate those dwellings, reserving a sufficient number to accommodate homeless cases, and releasing the remainder back into the general rental and home ownership markets.

However, Allerdale Borough Council has noticed the negative impact of the government's reform of benefits in Universal Credit (UC), with people losing tenancies and landlords unwilling to take on UC tenants, due to delays in payments. Officers also find the UC system, through the Job Centre, has made it harder to work with case officers to help those facing homelessness.

Councillors also believe that homelessness cases have also increased due to cuts to social services as a result of the government's austerity measures, meaning more people are not receiving the support they need.

Therefore this Council calls on the government to make further reforms to Universal Credit so that it no longer contributes to people facing losing their home. This Council also calls on the government to reverse the devastating cuts in social services so that the most vulnerable people in our communities receive the help they need'.

38 voted in favour. The motion was carried.

2. Councillor P Kendall moved the following Motion –

'That this Council supports the cancellation of the sale of Flimby Great wood. That an investigation is made by the planning department of Allerdale Borough Council to check that there are no tree's that require Tree Preservation Order registration.

That we register a query with the Environment Agency whether they have issues with the potential harvesting of some 200+ acres of old woodland, and the impact of this on flooding to Flimby settlement.

That the same questions be asked of the Forestry Commission.

That the flood resilience group and concerns of the population of Flimby be addressed'.

This was seconded by Councillor A Kendall.

Councillor B Finlay suggested an amendment to the motion to reword the last sentence as follows;

'That the concerns of the flood resilience group and the population of Flimby be addressed'.

Councillor P Kendall agreed to the amendment.

Councillor J Lister said the Council didn't have the authority to say who could buy and sell and felt it was 'a step too far' if it were to try and take those controls.

Councillor M Jenkinson said he was unsure as to what the motion was asking, in particular when some of it was already in place and some the Council had no control over.

A vote was taken, 27 in favour, 8 against and 3 abstentions. The motion was carried.

335. Councillor Speeches

Councillor P Bales spoke for 5 minutes on the activities that had been achieved in the Moorclose and Westfield areas of Workington in the last financial year.

336. Announcements from the Mayor, Leader or Head of Paid Service

The Mayor made reference to the engagements he and the Deputy Mayor had undertaken since the last meeting held on 5 December 2018. He reminded everyone that his Civic Dinner would be held on Friday 1 March at the Greenhill Hotel in Wigton and encouraged all Councillors to attend.

The Leader of the Council made reference to the successful bid announcement made this week that Workington would play host to games at the 2021 RL World Cup.

Councillor A Smith said 'this will really put us on the map and it will also bring money into the area through hospitality and people visiting for the games. It is a huge accomplishment to win this bid and there have been a lot of people working hard behind the scenes to make it possible, I thank all those involved. These games will be shown all around the world'.

337. Portfolio Holder Reports

Councillor A Smith, Leader of the Council presented his report.

Councillor A Smith moved the report on behalf of Councillor M Fryer, Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth.

Councillor W Jefferson, Portfolio Holder for Tourism and Culture presented his report.

Councillor C McCarron-Holmes, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Wellbeing presented her report.

Councillor B Cannon, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources (Finance and Property) presented her report.

Councillor M Jenkinson reported he felt there were some small basic cleanliness and maintenance issues at the multi storey car park and agreed to forward the details on.

Councillor J Ellis, Portfolio Holder for Governance and People Resources presented her report.

Councillor K Hansen, Portfolio Holder for Transformation presented his report.

Councillor M Heaslip, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Quality presented his report.

338. Executive Minutes

Members noted the minutes of the Executive meeting held on 21 November 2018.

339. Reference from Executive 16 January 2019 - Council Tax Empty Homes Premium

This report was considered at Executive on 16 January 2019. Members considered the report and the recommendations.

Councillor B Cannon moved the recommendations. This was seconded by Councillor A Smith.

Councillor B Finlay raised his concerns on the figures showing under paragraph 2.4 of the report on the steady increase in the number of long term empty properties within the Borough since 2013. Councillor B Finlay felt a new approach may be needed and moved an addition to the motion as follows;

'That any additional income resulting from the adoption of this proposal be ring-fenced and used to support two specific housing market interventions, namely:

- To extend the Councils own provision of temporary or permanent accommodation suitable for homeless families
- To develop and implement pilot projects aimed at addressing the fundamental causes behind surplus housing, including the overprovision of new housing in areas with surpluses'.

This was seconded by Councillor M Fitzgerald.

Councillor B Cannon advised that the suggestions be directed to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of the budget setting process and the March 2019 Council meeting when the budget would be discussed and agreed.

Councillor B Finlay agreed to withdraw his amendment but asked that his comments be considered as part of the budget setting.

Councillor J Lister asked how dangerous/uninhabitable did a property have to be that the premium would not apply.

Councillor B Cannon agreed a response would be provided following the meeting.

A vote was taken on the original motion, 38 in favour, the vote was unanimous. The motion was carried.

Resolved – That –

The recommendation to set the higher amount of Council Tax payable for prescribed dwelling 'Class C' (or equivalent as amended by the Local Government Finance Act 2012) be approved, i.e. standard empty and unfurnished properties that have remained so for a continuous period of:

- a) least 2 years, at a level of 100% with effect from 1 April 2019
- b) at least 5 years, at a level of 200% with effect from 1 April 2020
- c) at least 10 years, at a level of 300% with effect from 1 April 2021.

340. Calculation of Council Tax Base 2019/20

Councillor B Cannon moved the recommendations. This was seconded by Councillor A Smith.

A vote was taken, 38 in favour, the vote was unanimous. The motion was carried.

Resolved – That –

- a) The report for the calculation of the council's tax base for the year 2019-20 as set out in the Appendices, be approved
- b) Pursuant to the report and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Allerdale Borough Council as its tax base for the whole area for 2019-20 shall be 30,662.47
- c) The major precepting authorities (Cumbria County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cumbria) be notified for the purpose of calculating the basic amount of its council tax
- d) The tax base be used by Allerdale Borough Council for calculating the basic amount of council tax as required by the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended.

341. Capital Budget 2018-19 to 2020-21 - Re-profiling of existing budget

Councillor B Cannon moved the recommendations. This was seconded by Councillor M Heaslip.

A vote was taken, 38 in favour, the vote was unanimous. The motion was carried.

Resolved – That the proposed transfer of the existing capital budget of £620,000 from 2019/20 to 2018/19 (increasing the 2018/19 capital budget from £3,271,251 to £3,891,251) be approved.

342. Members Allowances 2019/20

Councillor J Ellis moved the recommendations in the report. This was seconded by Councillor A Smith.

Councillor M Jenkinson moved an amendment to the motion that no increase to allowances be approved and that the Members Allowances Scheme remains as that in 2018/19.

This was seconded by Councillor A Pitcher.

A vote was taken on the amendment, 14 in favour, 24 against and 0 abstentions. The motion was lost.

A vote was taken on the original motion, 26 in favour, 12 against and 0 abstentions. The motion was carried.

Resolved – That –

1. The report and recommendations of the Independent Panel be endorsed as Appendix 1
2. The Member's Allowance Scheme 2019/20 be approved as Appendix 2
3. The allowances paid to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Allerdale remains set at £7,071 and £507 respectively
4. The Independent Panel reconvenes in June 2019 to further review 2019/20 Members Allowances, once the Members Committee structure for the new term has been decided.

343. Polling Districts and Polling Places Review

Councillor J Ellis informed members that since the report was published a request had been submitted to include an additional amendment, to move 47 properties and 77 electors at numbers 1-26 Whinlatter Gardens and numbers 1-21 Kirkstone Close, Workington, from polling district CW1 to CW2.

Councillor J Ellis moved the recommendations including the additional polling district amendment, to be included in the Schedule set out at Appendix A, and with an additional recommendation that the Electoral Registration Officer be given delegated authority to make any further minor amendments to polling districts where anomalies are identified during the process of amending the mapping system.

This was seconded by Councillor A Smith.

A vote was taken, 38 in favour, the vote was unanimous. The motion was carried.

Resolved – That –

1. The amendments to the polling districts as set out in Appendix A to the report be approved
2. The polling scheme as set out in Appendix B to the report be approved
3. The Electoral Registration Officer be given delegated authority to make any further minor amendments to polling districts where anomalies are identified during the process of amending the mapping system.

344. Chief Executive Urgent Action - Workington Community Governance Review

Councillor J Ellis presented a report for Council to note the Urgent Action decision taken by the Chief Executive on 18 December 2018 on amendments to the new Workington Town Council boundaries following the Council decision made on 5 December 2018.

Resolved – That the Urgent Action decision taken by the Chief Executive on 18 December 2018 be noted.

345. Update from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor A Pitcher presented a summary report from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Council to note.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.48 pm