

PUBLIC

MINUTES of the meeting of the **DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL** held on 1 October 2014 at County Hall, Matlock

PRESENT

Councillors D Allen, Mrs E Atkins, S A Bambrick, Mrs G Birkin, Ms C Bisknell, Mrs S L Blank, Mrs M W Booth, A Botham, S J Bradford, K Buttery, Mrs D W E Charles, Mrs L M Chilton, D Collins, Mrs C M Cox, J A Coyle, R Davison, J E Dixon, P Dunn, S J Ellis, M Ford, S Freeborn, K Gillott, D T Greenhalgh, Mrs C A Hart, Mrs Janet A Hill, Ms Julie A Hill, R L Hosker, Mrs J M Innes, P Jones, Mrs K D Lauro, B Lewis, D W Lomax, M V Longden, S Marshall-Clarke, W Major, D McGregor, R R Mihaly, K P Morgan, C E Neill, J R Owen, Mrs J E Patten, Mrs I Ratcliffe, B Ridgway, P J Smith, T Southerd, S A Spencer, Mrs M Stockdale, Mrs J S Street, Mrs J A Twigg, D Walton, Ms A Western, D J Wilcox, E S Wilcox, D A Williams and B Wright.

57/14 **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR** On the motion of Councillor Mrs I Ratcliffe, duly seconded

RESOLVED that Councillor S Freeborn be appointed Chair of the County Council for 2014/15.

(Councillor S Freeborn – in the Chair)

58/14 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors S Brittain, W Burrows, J Frudd, T Kemp, C R Moesby, R A Parkinson and J G Williams.

59/14 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** There were no declarations of interest.

60/14 **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS** The following announcements were made:-

(1) Presentations of awards were made as follows:-

(i) Advanced Apprentice of the Year Award 2014 - James Beresford of the Economy, Transport and Environment Department.

(ii) National Apprenticeship Awards 2014 – The Council had been Highly Commended at the regional final of the National Apprenticeship Awards 2014. A presentation was made to Kevin Henderson and Ian McFadyen from the Corporate Resources Department.

(iii) The Local Offer Logo – An award to Jamie Mellor who produced a web friendly logo and which would appear on the front page of Derbyshire's Local Offer site.

(iv) Park Junior School - Times Educational Supplement's Pupil Premium School of the Year.

(2) The County Council had a new gavel which had been made by the Bolsover Woodland Enterprise Team. Steve Mason, Tom Wildman and Day Service worker Richard Smithson presented the new gavel to the County Council.

(3) The Dowager Duchess of Devonshire died on 24 September. The County Council's condolences were to be sent to the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire and their family. The Chair also referred to the recent death of Council Youth Worker Rachel Grocott. The meeting observed a minute's silence in their memory.

(4) The Chair reported that Councillor Martin Tomlinson had resigned as Councillor for the Alport and Derwent Division and the By-Election to fill the seat was to be held on Thursday 13 November 2014.

(5) The Chair referred to the recent 80th Birthday of Councillor Walter Burrows and to the fact that he was unwell at present and was unable to attend the meeting. Council wished Councillor Burrows a happy birthday and a speedy recovery.

61/14 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING On the motion of Councillor S Freeborn, duly seconded,

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 4 June 2014 be confirmed.

62/14 REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Councillor Ms A Western, Leader of the Council, reported on the progress made on the Council's budget position, the establishment of a Combined Authority, the first meeting of the Youth Employment Board and the renewable energy opportunities available to the Council.

63/14 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Question to Councillor A Western from Mr M Rutter:-

It is shocking in itself that the Tory and Lib. Dem. Government has slashed this Council's budget by £157m. The worst cuts in the Council's history. But what Derbyshire people find most unfair is how Council cuts are far worse in the North of England and in the Midlands

compared to the affluent areas in the South. Does this Council agree that the unprecedented cuts imposed upon Derbyshire are unfair when cuts in the South are far less severe?

Councillor Western responded as follows:-

I certainly do agree with you. You are absolutely right in your analysis of the situation. In terms of dealing with the country's finances the public sector is expected to pay a very high price and within that local authorities in particular have been squeezed even tighter. The cuts across the public sector as a whole I think are something like 8 or 9% but the cuts to Councils are much more significant than that, they are nearer 30+ per cent. The changes to the funding distribution within the overall budget for Councils has been significantly changed under this current Conservative led government to favour the south east over as you say the Midlands and the north.

For Derbyshire County Council this does mean the worst cuts in the Council's history, as you have said £157m in five years, as I have said, but beyond that the prospect is quite unrelenting. We saw George Osborne on Monday, I think it was, say that there will be a further £25bn worth of public sector spending cuts and he seemed quite gleeful about it actually. That looks like it is going to continue indefinitely if we continue with the current government.

In terms of the immediate impact on Derbyshire's budget, for this current financial year the Revenue Support Grant, which is the grant we get from government, has seen a 15% cut in this one year and for 2015-16 next year, a 27% reduction. If you contrast that to some of the south eastern Home Counties, West Sussex; Hampshire; Surrey; Hertfordshire, I could go on, Buckinghamshire, they are not as severely affected as Derbyshire is because of the way that funding formula has been changed.

It is also I think interesting to compare English local authorities with Scotland. That came very much to the fore last month during the Scottish referendum. Let me say I don't for one minute begrudge the settlement that Scotland gets. I would not argue that the Scottish settlement is reduced, but I would argue that we need to be lifted up to something like that level. It is fair to say that because of the Barnett Formula, which has been in place since the late 1970s, per head in Scotland people get a funding settlement £1,600 more than their equivalent in England and because the East Midlands' funding arrangements are lower than the English national average, the difference between East Midlands' Council's funding and Scottish Council's funding is something like £2,000 per head. You can see the scale of the difference and you can see the scale of the unfairness.

That does indeed answer your question. You are absolutely right and I can do nothing but agree with you.

Mr Rutter asked a supplementary question as follows:-

Does the Council then intend to lobby and press the case for a fairer settlement for Derbyshire and its residents?

Councillor Western responded as follows:-

I have said previously what we are doing to manage the budget situation within the budget we have, so using the reserves, trying to cut our cloth within the way the Council spends money on its own functions and so on and we have made significant inroads into that. We have cut £2m from senior management pay recently, for instance, but there is only so far you can go with that. When a situation is one of basic unfairness I think it does need a lobbying. I refer people back to the Labour manifesto at last year's County Council elections which was called 'Fair Deal for Derbyshire'. It was called that in recognition of this very situation. Yes, I think there will now be an opportunity for us.

In the light of the fact that there is a general election coming and people are thinking about manifestos we need to really state the case for Derbyshire. We need to lobby very hard for a fair funding settlement, along with other Councils. I do have to say that other Council Leaders are saying the same things as we are. I would like to hope we could get public support for this. Certainly in the discussions we are having with voluntary sector and community groups they are very much aware of the financial predicament this Council finds itself in, that this is a predicament imposed by Government and I am sure they will work with us to lobby Government. I think there is an imminent call for a petition to get going across the county to lobby for a fair deal.

I made reference a few minutes ago to other Council leaders. For me now this is the big question. We have seen again in this Chamber the jeering and the noise that gets made when we refer to the cuts that this Council is suffering. I think that is very immature to be honest. There are Conservative Council Leaders up and down the country, Conservative Council Leaders who are saying that these cuts are going too far and that Councils are on a financial cliff edge. That has been said last month in Leicestershire for instance by the Deputy Leader of Leicestershire County Council. It has been said by the Conservative Leader of Surrey County Council (even though Surrey is facing much less severe cuts than we are). It has been said by the Conservative former Chair of the Local Government Association.

I think the question for us all, and it is one I will be taking up with the Leaders of the two Opposition Groups, is will they stand with the people of Derbyshire in this campaign for a fair deal because we are all here to represent the people of Derbyshire and when a situation is as patently unfair as this is then I think it is incumbent on us all to stand together, put politics aside and to campaign for the people who voted us to represent them here today. Yes, there will be a campaign for a fair deal.

65/14 RECEIPT OF PETITIONS No petitions had been received.

66/14 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2013-14 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011 required the Director of Finance to certify the pre-audit accounts by 30 June, and the Audit Committee to approve the post audit version of the accounts before 30 September. Both of these deadlines had been achieved. The accounts had been open for public inspection.

The full Statement of Accounts had been approved by the Audit Committee on 2 September 2014 and, in addition, the Pension Fund Accounts would also be reported to the Pensions and Investment Committee.

The audit of the Statement of Accounts was completed within the planned timescale and the external auditors presented their Report to those charged with governance (ISA 260) 2013-14 (ISA 260 report) and audit opinion to the members of the Audit Committee on 2 September 2014. There were no material changes to the Statement of Accounts and two recommendations of improvement from that audit.

On the motion of Councillor A Western, duly seconded,

RESOLVED that the Statement of Accounts for 2013-14 and the External Auditor's report to those charged with governance (ISA 260) 2013-14 be received.

67/14 IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

On the motion of Councillor Mrs D Charles, duly seconded,

RESOLVED to receive the Improvement and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2013/14.

68/14 WAIVER OF CALL-IN PROVISIONS On the motion of Councillor Ms A Western, duly seconded,

RESOLVED to note the report on the agreements to waive the call-in provisions.

69/14 PRESENTATIONS The National Pensioners Convention made a presentation to Council on its aims and objectives. Mr B Herbertson spoke about the organisation and asked the Council consider supporting the NPC manifesto.

70/14 REPORT OF CABINET AND MEMBERS' QUESTIONS ON THE REPORT Councillor Ms A Western, Leader of the Council, presented a report on the decisions that had been taken at meetings on Cabinet held on 2 June, 17 June, 15 July, 5 August and 9 September 2014.

Questions had been received as follows:-

(1) From Councillor W Major on item 59 (9 September 2014) on proposed fee level increases for Independent Sector Homes Laing & Buisson calculate a fair fee level for a place in a residential home at £600 per week and Derbyshire are now offering only £417 per week after a consultation which failed to engage with Derbyshire care home providers. Given this 30% funding gap and also that the report notes that most staff in these residential homes are paid only the minimum wage why did the review therefore not take account of the Councils desire that low paid staff receive the Living wage?

Councillor Neill responded as follows:-

When I read this question, I was most perplexed. It makes such bizarre reading that I don't think it would even make the script of Wayne's World maybe. I would just like to remind the Chamber that the Care Homes' Association first made its threat of judicial review in 2011 and for those of you who have very short memories that was when *that* Party was in administration. They had two years to sort this issue and they failed.

The criticism that Councillor Major makes of the engagement of Derbyshire Care Home providers is again quite bizarre because I picked it up towards the end of that engagement process, which happened between 2011 and 2013. In my absence (I have been off again), Councillor Jones had made some enquiries about the Laing & Buisson report to understand what decision making process there was about its acceptance or otherwise. Lo and behold, the message that came back:

"Under the previous administration the Council decided following careful consideration that it did not agree with the financial assumptions used within the Laing & Buisson tool"

so it was their own administration who rejected the process.

I would just like to further correct an item in the question. Councillor Major refers to us only paying £417 per week. In fact it is actually £424.90, as detailed on page 19. That is without the £21 a week quality premium that we maintained as a result of the engagement with the care home providers and, in addition, we are also proposing the introduction of a £35 per person per week charge for those people with dementia. Incidentally, the fee that we are proposing to pay includes a return on capital employed of 7.25%, which I think in the current market with interest rates as they are is a pretty fair return on investment. The only other thing to mention is if we did pay the residential homes £600 a week that would lead to an additional cost burden to this Authority in one financial year of £26m, that is without the backdating that we are proposing to pay right back to 2011 when the original challenge was made to this Authority.

I reject wholeheartedly the question and I am comfortable that we have reached a fair settlement with the sector.

A supplementary question was asked as follows:-

I am disappointed that Councillor Neill did not quite understand the point of the question. I was not proposing that we paid the £600 a week I wanted to know why the report did not fulfil the desire for the Council to pay the Living Wage

Councillor Neill responded as follows:-

Yes, as part of the Home Care Fees' report, which is a separate paper to Cabinet, we are working with the sector on ensuring the terms and conditions of the staff within the sector are improved and will continue to work with the care home sector on the same.

(2) Question from Councillor W Major on item 13 (17 June 2014) on Proposed Changes to Adult Care policies on Transport, Client Contributions and the Eligibility Threshold.

When you and your Labour colleagues talk about making the rich pay do you believe that someone who has worked hard all their life and managed to save just over £50,000 to be rich?

Councillor Neill responded as follows:-

"Rich" is a relative concept obviously. When I am asking on behalf of your Government for the older person in a warden controlled bungalow

to take a cut; when I am asking the disabled person to take a cut; when I am asking young homeless people to take a cut I think it is only fair that we ask those people who have over £50,000 in the bank to make a contribution to their care costs.

Just incidentally, Oxfordshire County Council, which I understand is close to the Prime Minister's constituency, I would like to quote from their contributions to Adult Social Care. For both residential and non-residential care it says:

"For those people who have above £23,250, which is the legal minimum, we will ask the individual to pay the full charge."

So we allow people in Derbyshire to have more than twice what Cameron's constituency allows them to have.

A supplementary question was asked as follows:-

I think this is a good example of how this Authority is trying to make people who they believe to be affluent, those people they believe to be well off to pay unfairly. It is the same way they make rural communities pay. You believe them to be affluent so they are the ones who are going to lose services and they are the ones who are going to be made to pay.

Councillor Neill responded as follows:-

I refer to the comment I made earlier.

(3) Question from Councillor B Lewis on item 47 (5 August 2014) on A Fairer, Healthier Derbyshire

Does the Cabinet Member agree that important factors relating to the wider economy and the health and well-being of Derbyshire's population are complex and should include job creation and getting people off benefits and into work, and does he agree that these are aspects that are barely touched on in this report?

Councillor Allen responded as follows:-

The question is there. The report is here. All members have had this Public Health report. I think it is a very good report. It is very detailed in areas. It does not cover every aspect of life but when I look at what it covers, it covers: reducing child poverty; improving financial inclusion; importance of the economy and work; reducing the impact on cold weather. The appendix shows other areas of work. In that sense I think the report shows the direction we are going in. If you look at the

wall up there it talks about the importance of work, which is the main priority of ours, but if you look at the comments in the report which are there it talks about controversial employment; the links to ill-health and poverty. It talks about what we are doing in terms of trying to encourage health promotion at work. If you look at the appendix on that aspect, on that part of the report it spells out what we are doing and through developing healthy workplace approach, employees and people with disability aware of access to opportunity of employment and trying to tackle health and equality by working with partners.

In my view this is a good report. As I say it does not cover every aspect of life but it is one of our major strategies. It also talks about Credit Unions, other aspects, trying to reduce child poverty. I am not quite sure what Councillor Lewis is trying to get at but it is certainly a well received report and I hope all members have read it and will take it into account.

A supplementary question was asked as follows:-

I did not say that those aspects were not mentioned, that they were barely touched upon. There are many facets to this issue. Undoubtedly there is a link between poverty and health. There are other facets that relate to the wider economy and these should have been given equal weight in this report. What we have here strongly leans towards being a Party political broadcast by the Labour Party. My supplementary question is this: in order to deliver this administration's message, no doubt influenced by its taxpayer funded externally devised media and communication strategy, is it right that an officer's impartiality and objectivity is potentially compromised in a document like this?

Councillor Allen responded as follows:-

I completely refute that. This report if you look at it it is signed by Elaine Michel and it is a totally independent report. We all had our comments on it but I can assure you there is no political interference in this report. It talks about the priorities where we are. I think you should refute that or withdraw that comment about implying that the Director of Public Health for Derbyshire has been under some political control to produce a report.

(4) Question from Councillor S Spencer on item 49 (5 August 2014) on the Derbyshire Economic Review

Given the challenges faced, particularly by young people in finding work, does the Leader of The Council believe that the proposals to remove funding for the wheels to work scheme will improve the situation?

Councillor Western responded as follows:-

The proposal to remove funding from any scheme will not improve the situation. I think it goes without saying. We are back over the same ground again of £157m worth of service cuts to the people of Derbyshire, none of which will improve the situation. Again I raise the issue I raised before about instead of picking on individual cuts and saying "Oh dear, oh dear" why don't you stand with us and tackle your government about the scale of these cuts falling on local government and on the people of Derbyshire?

What I would say is there are no firm proposals approved yet to remove this funding from this particular scheme. The approval was to go out to consultation and I think there is a serious issue here about what consultation is. Consultation is putting some proposals into the public domain and then listening to what people say when you have done that.

There was an article in last week's *Derby Telegraph* that was quoting the Leader of the Opposition accusing us of scaremongering because we went out to consultation on certain things and when we had brought them back to Cabinet what was being proposed was less than we had initially proposed. He says that is scaremongering. I say that is listening to the public, weighing up what they want and then finding an alternative way of continuing to provide as much service as we can.

A supplementary question was asked as follows:-

Wheels to Work was a scheme that was born if you like to say in the north eastern corner of the county some years ago. It was a scheme that was implemented by the previous administration, the previous Labour administration. The scheme itself was then seen as a huge benefit to young people across the county and through equity and making sure that there was fairness about the policies of the County Council it was rolled out throughout Derbyshire.

I believe the scheme, particularly at this moment in time, serves a huge community need. It helps disadvantaged young people in isolated areas who are facing challenges. This proposal that was put out to consultation yesterday can be reviewed if the Cabinet proceeds to do so and I will say to you today, Chairman, this is about choices. I recognise that this Authority has to face £157m of cuts, which you have been telling us but only yesterday the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport approved £50,000 for the digitalisation of a system, a traffic system on an island in Derbyshire. This Authority has spent £159,000 on a campaign company when we already had a media company

recognised nationally. The top and bottom line is this Authority has choices and £50,000 is a small sum to pay for the young people of Derbyshire. I am sure your new Youth Employment Board would agree with what I am saying today. That proposal should be withdrawn from the document from yesterday, the Cabinet has the power to do it and the question is will you do that?

Councillor Western responded as follows:-

Wheels to Work is an important scheme. It is still seen as a vital means of supporting young people, as are a lot of the other transport issues that were in that report that has gone out to consultation. We will see how the public of Derbyshire respond in the light of that consultation and in the meantime we will do all we can to find alternative funding streams. That work is already underway. We are already looking at funding streams through which we can subsidise, substitute and supplement, whatever word you want, some of the cuts that have been forced upon us. Councillor Bradford said in relation to a previous item though it is about delivery, so we have to put these things out to consultation in order to meet the timetable for the financial plan.

We will listen to what people say when they have had their chance to consult with us and we will do as much as we can to protect as much of that service and every other service as we can.

I am heartened by your comments, Councillor Spencer, and I am putting you in on the list for the petition to sign for the Fair Deal for Derbyshire because you seem to be agreeing with us that £157m is the figure, that these cuts are wrong and that people will suffer as a consequence, so we will have you on the first page of the petition.

On the motion of Councillor Ms A Western, duly seconded,

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

71/14 COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS

(1) Question to Councillor D Allen, Cabinet Member for Health and Communities from Councillor Mrs E Atkins.

Healthier Together is a consortium of Health deliverers covering the Greater Manchester area. Their plans to deliver services, particularly for the delivery of accident and emergency health care, did not take into account the needs of the residents of the High Peak area; indeed, they appeared to be ignoring us altogether! Their plans are not taking into account the demands of the accepted arrival times for

residents at an A & E hospital. Furthermore, unless pressure is applied to ensure that Stepping Hill Hospital becomes one of the 'Specialist Hospitals' residents in the High Peak will have their health and survival prospects compromised.

There are three Specialist Hospitals in the Greater Manchester area at present; it is propose to increase this to four Specialist Hospitals or possibly five. Five was suggested as a possibility - but not guaranteed as it was slightly more costly to implement. Which other(s), of the general hospitals, would become Specialist Hospitals is open for discussion and a public vote; however High Peak residents including councillors had not been made aware of the consultation – finding out about it at the last minute.

Realistically, the option for 5 Specialist Hospitals is the choice needed for our residents - Stepping Hill as Specialist Hospital is the only answer for us.

What action is the County Council Cabinet Member taking to ensure that the delivery of its residents' health services is protected from 'Empire building' groups outside our borders?

The Healthier together group's actions may be being replicated in other areas. Have all Councillors been made aware of the need to check what is happening to forward planning by health delivery hospital groups in their areas? Does the Cabinet Member have plans to tackle this issue? Have Councillors been made aware that if a similar situation arises in their area it could lead to life threatening dangers for constituents unable to reach hospital within time constraints? Concerns have been raised by constituents in the High Peak on several occasions recently when an ambulance has taken up to two hours to arrive at an accident - leaving someone lying in the road.

Please can the Cabinet Member ask East Midlands Ambulance Service to supply the council with up to date figures showing the arrival times at incidents? Can figures showing the duty rosters for the ambulance staff be requested and also details of where the shift is based?

Councillor Allen responded as follows:-

Can I say that "Healthier Together" is a consultation process from Greater Manchester. We had a presentation at the Health and Well-Being Board some time ago about this. Obviously we are very concerned about the population up there. It is certainly part of the county and is a very important part of the county. I certainly know that local members have been very much involved in the consultation

process that has applied, both Councillor Dave Wilcox and Ellie Wilcox. Councillor Greenhalgh and Councillor Bisknell have been involved in that. Again they are taking it very seriously.

I understand your point about the Stepping Hill Hospital and I think that is a point that was raised. I am not sure if you attended the Local Area Committee last night, I don't think you did, but this was raised on the agenda there. You ought to have taken the opportunity to be part of that. Again that point was made there. It has been made at public meetings and certainly we want to make sure that we support the people in High Peak to get the best service they possibly can.

As a result of that and through Scrutiny Councillor Bisknell has been appointed to their Scrutiny body which means we have a direct input into what will happen in future in the services up there. I also understand they have extended their consultation period for three weeks so that people can make any further comments on that, but the important point is we want to protect the services for the people in the Glossop, Buxton, High Peak area to make sure they have services that are as good as anywhere else in the county.

In terms of the Ambulance Service you raised a similar sort of question in December 2012. Again you obviously hadn't followed that up sufficiently because it is virtually word for word what you said before.

Can I say a lot of people have had concerns about EMAS over the years. They came up with some proposals a bit back, and I do not know what happened to them, but we certainly have not been happy. I understand today that they have appointed a new Chair of EMAS, a Pauline Tagg. That has only just happened recently. I think in terms of the rest of the county and in that area I shall certainly be asking for a meeting with the new Chair so we can express our concerns if the proposals go ahead about the distance people would have to travel to hospitals in Manchester, but certainly about the whole issue of ambulance services in the rest of Derbyshire.

There was no supplementary question.

(2) Question from Councillor S A Spencer to Councillor A Western, Leader of the Council.

Would the Leader of the Council please give her opinion on what is considered an acceptable timeframe for lead members of her administration to acknowledge and answer correspondence that they have been sent in connection with their position and responsibilities?

Councillor Western responded as follows:-

Clearly Cabinet members, Deputy Cabinet members have a heavy workload and they prioritise and respond to enquiries according to the significance of that enquiry. There has also been an issue about long-term sickness absence in the secretariat over the past three months.

In relation to the specific, the letter to Councillor Botham, from memory that arose in July after the budget report that went to Cabinet then where there was no mention actually in the Cabinet report of County Hall but I think it was Chris Doidge from Radio Derby raised the question "Well what about this building?" to which I replied "Everything is under review but there are no immediate plans to do anything with this building." That became the headline in the media, on the radio "County Hall for sale." As a result of that I asked the press department to put out a further statement to indicate that actually there were no immediate plans to sell this building (although if an offer were to come forward we would consider it) in order to get the media focus back on to the issues in hand, not to make up a story that did not exist.

Subsequent to that Councillor Spencer wrote to Councillor Botham about it because your question refers to "Lead Members of the administration in connection with their position and responsibilities." Councillor Botham's Cabinet duties as a Deputy Cabinet Member do not relate to property and the local member would not be the right person to ask a question of that significance, so I asked Councillor Botham not to reply with a view that I would reply to you myself, but given what I said about heavy workload, prioritising and dealing with important issues first, and given that the issues seemed perfectly clear to me and most other people it has not got to the top of my correspondence pile until recently. So you have had a reply I believe now which was just a reiteration of what the position was in the first place and did not warrant a letter really at all did it, Simon? You have had the response and I will leave it there.

A supplementary question was asked as follows:-

Well I am surprised by the Leader of the Council it came as somewhat of a surprise that this was the issue I was relating to given that I tabled my question, the question you are reading today on Friday and I got my response on Monday. Strange.

In that response that was sent ten weeks after the letter was originally sent to Councillor Botham it stated, as Councillor Western has said, basically what she said in the second media report that was put out at the beginning of July. There were two conflicting media reports and that is why I asked the local member – who has an interest in the

economy of the town – to answer it because I thought he might know but, having said that Chairman, my question is can the Leader of the Council put to bed all these rumours and can she categorically state today that no discussions about the future relocation of County Hall are taking place?

Councillor Western responded as follows:-

I will repeat what I have said already and what I said in the letter: there are no discussions going on at the moment about the future of County Hall, but we have to be mindful – and this is what I said to the reporter at the time – we have to be mindful of the cost of maintenance, the cost of heating and the cost of the Council being in this building but there are no plans. If anybody came forward with an approach for this building what I also made clear to the reporter was we would not leave a white elephant in Matlock. We would not leave a white elephant in Matlock and we would find a future use for this building.

I did refer previously to pressure of work and also long-term sickness absence in the secretariat that supports Cabinet members. I thank Councillor Spencer for raising this question for the concern he showed about the length of time it is taking to get some responses. In the light of that, and because it is quite a desperate situation, I am going to be pulling some of the secretarial support from his Group to supplement the Cabinet Team so that he can get a speedier response in the future!

72/14 QUESTIONS ON THE FUNCTIONS OF THE DERBYSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY No questions had been received.

73/14 NOTICES OF MOTION

(1) Moved by Councillor K P Morgan, duly seconded,

“That this Council supports the private members’ Affordable Homes Bill now moving through parliament; supported and won by a coalition of Liberal Democrat and Labour members [304 - 267] and that we inform the Government accordingly”.

The motion was debated.

Moved by Councillor Ms C Bisknell, duly seconded,

That the motion be amended by the deletion of the words “a coalition of”.

The proposed amendment was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and declared to be carried.

At the request of at least 5 Members, a recorded vote was taken and recorded as follows:-

For the motion – (42) Councillors D Allen, Mrs E Atkins, S A Bambrick, Mrs G Birkin, Ms C Bisknell, Mrs S L Blank, Mrs M W Booth, A Botham, Mrs D W E Charles, D Collins, Mrs C M Cox, J A Coyle, R Davison, J E Dixon, P Dunn, S Freeborn, J A Frudd, K Gillott, D T Greenhalgh, Mrs Janet A Hill, Ms Julie A Hill, R L Hosker, Mrs J M Innes, P Jones, Mrs K D Lauro, D Lomax, S Marshall-Clarke, D McGregor, R R Mihaly, K P Morgan, C E Neill, J R Owen, Mrs I Ratcliffe, B Ridgway, P J Smith, T Southerd, Mrs M Stockdale, Ms A Western, D J Wilcox, E S Wilcox, D A Williams and B Wright.

Against the motion – (12) Councillors K Buttery, Mrs L M Chilton, S J Ellis, M Ford, Mrs C A Hart, B Lewis, M V Longden, W Major, Mrs J E Patten, S A Spencer, Mrs J S Street and Mrs J A Twigg.

Abstained – (0)

RESOLVED that this Council supports the private members' Affordable Homes Bill now moving through Parliament; supported and won by Liberal Democrat and Labour members [304 - 267] and that we inform the Government accordingly.

(2) Moved by Councillor Mrs C A Hart, duly seconded,

After having re-instated Local Area Committees in July 2013, in an effort, according to the Council Plan, to communicate better with the public and to get local councillors better known, is it not time to review and think about saving money and officer time and disbanding the Local Area Committees which are not achieving their aims?

The motion was debated, put to the vote and declared to be lost.

74/14 MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES On the motion of Councillor S Freeborn, duly seconded,

RESOLVED that the minutes of the following meetings be received:-

- (a) Regulatory – Licensing and Appeals Committee held on 2 June, 28 July and 8 September 2014.
- (b) Regulatory – Planning Committee held on 9 June, 14 July, 11 August and 1 September 2014.
- (c) Pensions and Investment Committee held on 11 June and 21 August 2014.
- (d) Audit Committee held on 13 May, 28 July and 2 September 2014.
- (e) Improvement and Scrutiny Committee - People held on 9 July and 3 September 2014.
- (f) Improvement and Scrutiny Committee – Places held on 21 May and 16 July 2014.
- (g) Improvement and Scrutiny Committee – Health held on 19 May and 21 July 2014.
- (h) Improvement and Scrutiny Committee – Resources held on 29 May and 24 July 2014.
- (i) Improvement and Scrutiny Management Committee held on 7 July and 1 September 2014.
- (j) Derbyshire Police and Crime Panel held on 17 July 2014.
- (k) Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Authority held on 10 April 2014.
- (l) D2 Joint Committee for Economic Prosperity held on 13 May, 27 June and 15 July 2014.