

MEETING OF MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

At the Meeting of Middlesbrough Council, lawfully convened, and held in the Town Hall, Middlesbrough on 26 November 2014.

PRESENT: Councillors Kerr (Chair), The Mayor (R Mallon) Councillors Arundale, Bloundele, Brady, Brunton, Budd, Carr, Clark, Cole, Cox, Dryden, Harvey, Hawthorne, C Hobson, J Hobson, Hubbard, Hudson, Junier, P Khan, Loughborough, Lowes, McPartland, Morby, Mrs H Pearson, OBE, G Purvis, P Purvis, Rehman, Rooney, Rostron, Saunders, J Sharrocks, P Sharrocks, Taylor, B Thompson, M Thompson, J A Walker, N J Walker and Williams

OFFICERS: R Broad, B Carr, P Clarke, L Henman, A Hoy, J Lewis, S Lightwing, A Pain, K Parkes, T Parkinson, M Robinson, N Sayer, E Scollay, P Slocombe and K Whitmore

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were submitted on behalf of Councillors Biswas, Davison, Hanif, Hussain, S Khan, Mawston and Sanderson.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this point of the meeting.

14/48 MINUTES - COUNCIL - 15 AND 22 OCTOBER 2014

The minutes of the meetings of Middlesbrough Council held on 15 and 22 October 2014 were submitted and approved as a true record.

14/49 ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONSCondolences

The Chair announced the recent sad death of Marje Barker, former Councillor, and Mayor of Middlesbrough during 1990. Marje was amongst the first tenants of East Middlesbrough Council Estate, (Brambles Farm), when it was built in 1930 and one of the first pupils in the then newly built Brambles Farm School, then Lawson Girls, Cargo Fleet, in 1935.

Condolences were extended to Marje's family and the Chair asked all present to observe a few moment's silence in her memory.

The Chair referred to the sad death of Richard Bell in October and stated that he was a good friend of Teesside in general, and Middlesbrough in particular. The Chair invited John Foster, former Chief Executive of Middlesbrough Council, to pay tribute to Mr Bell.

Mr Foster commented that Richard Bell was an outstanding civil servant who was based in Newcastle and responsible for regeneration in the late 1980s and early 1990s. A notable achievement for Middlesbrough during that time was City Challenge, a five year project based in Eastbourne and North Ormesby which provided investment of £37.5 million in that area. Richard was also a Trustee of the Captain Cook Birthplace Trust and the Dorman Museums and assisted with obtaining funding for the extensive renovation of both Museums. Mr Foster added that Richard was a gentleman who never asked for any thanks or recognition.

Several Councillors also paid tribute to Richard and condolences were extended to his family.

NOTED**14/50 PETITION**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No. 12, Council received a petition presented by Mr M Higgins, lead petitioner, in respect of Speeding Traffic on Mandale Road, Acklam. Mr

Higgins asked the Council to consider what additional measures could be put in place to address the issue of drivers exceeding the current 30 mph limit. The Executive Member for Regeneration thanked Mr Higgins and agreed that the Council would consider whether further measures should be introduced.

NOTED

14/51 **QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC**

Question from J Elder to The Mayor, R Mallon:

"Mr Mayor

Having recommended to council how the books should be balanced and services adequately maintained these last 12 years and without blaming government, whose yearly allowance percentiles, thus council tax reduction opportunities, you consistently refused, will you now explain to the public why you have seen fit to ask council to raise council tax each year, that is currently 50% more than when you were first inaugurated, causing great distress to many who are paying more for it than their combined gas and electricity bills p.a., instead of staying within budget limits, avoiding unnecessary expenditures totalling well over £23m; yet obdurately reducing staff numbers and pay without treating councillors similarly, especially when you said that you could run this council with only one other Councillor and still have these last six months to do so, thereby obviating the need for the 2015-16 2% increase? Thank you."

The Mayor responded and confirmed that he had never stated that he could run the Council with only one other Councillor as it would not be legally constituted. The Mayor gave a detailed explanation for the proposal to increase Council Tax by 2% in 2015-2016. The proposal took into account the level of Council Tax, inflation, the financial pressures of providing social care for the increasing number of elderly and vulnerable people in the town, the level of budget reductions required, medium to long term planning and the possible implications of Chancellor of the Exchequer's Autumn Statement. The Mayor concluded that accepting the Government's Freeze Grant was not in the interests of the residents of Middlesbrough as it would lead to greater pressure on the Council's finances.

NOTED

14/52 **MAYOR'S STATEMENT AND REPORT**

The Mayor commented that over the last few months he had made several statements in relation to the budgetary position of the Council. Over the last three and a half years savings of approximately £70 million had been made, yet savings of a further £80 million would be required up to 2020. Similar to other local authorities across the country, Middlesbrough's financial situation was very difficult. To date, 720 jobs had been lost and the Council would need to lose another 600 between now and 2020. The Mayor also referred to recent comments made by the Prime Minister in relation to 'red lights flashing on the financial dashboard', and the Chancellor of the Exchequer indicating that predictions for economic growth would not be met. The Mayor stated that he would speak in detail about the economy at the next Council meeting.

The Mayor then gave a comprehensive statement outlining the details of 36 investment projects currently being progressed in Middlesbrough. Investment in these projects from the private sector was approximately £375 million, with the public sector investing £155 million, a total of £530 million. The Mayor added that approximately 4,357 primary jobs would be created with a further 1,652 secondary jobs, through these projects.

In addition to the above projects, the Mayor detailed many other developments taking place in Middlesbrough and the town centre including new housing developments, modernisation of older housing and empty properties, refurbishment of town centre buildings, growth in the retail and industrial sectors, the evolution of digital businesses, Boho 5, the Sports Village, the possibility of a Snow Centre and improvements to transport infrastructure in relation to road and rail links.

The Mayor went on to detail the Capital Programme proposals. Forty eight additional projects had been put forward by Members for consideration. After due consideration, the Mayor concluded that 20 projects would form a further £12.1 million investment on top of the current £162 million, totalling £174.1 million. The projects included several invest to save projects, financial assistance to improve housing, investment in local businesses and building and road infrastructure improvements throughout the town.

The Mayor indicated that his detailed statement on the 36 investment projects and the 20 capital programme projects would be made available on the Council website following the meeting.

The Mayor referred to the Council meeting held on 15 October 2014, when, in the absence of the Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Finance and Governance, he had responded to a request from Councillor Junier for clarification with regard to the sale of Acklam Hall and the surrounding land. In his response, the Mayor had clarified that the sale of the Hall to Acklam Hall Limited had secured its long term future as Middlesbrough's only Grade One listed building, as well as providing executive housing and a health village.

The Mayor then provided a further detailed statement in relation to the sale of Acklam Hall and in doing so made reference to several tweets posted on social media by Councillor Junier and an unnamed member of the public following that Council meeting. The Mayor indicated that if any evidence of malpractice relating to the sale was provided, the Police would be asked to investigate.

Following the conclusion of the Mayor's Statement, Members asked questions and raised issues in relation to the employment of local people by housing developers, the removal of redundant play areas, regeneration in the Gresham area, and the sale of Acklam Hall; to which the Mayor responded.

NOTED

14/53

DEPUTY MAYOR AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORTS

The Chair invited Members to raise items for general discussion arising from the Information Booklet of Executive Member reports, previously circulated, which detailed activities carried out within the respective Executive Member portfolios (Section 1), Executive decisions taken (Section 2), or to be taken where known, prior to and following the meeting (Sections 3 and 4).

Members commented and posed questions in relation to the following matters and Executive Members responded where appropriate:-

(a) Devolution

Reference was made to a recent briefing for Councillors on Combined Authorities at which it was explained that the leaders of the five Tees Valley Councils would form the Combined Authority and make decisions on Government spending in the region. The Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Finance and Governance was asked whether a larger, more representative Combined Authority of Councillors was needed. The Deputy Mayor explained that the model Combined Authority for the Tees Valley was identical to others already operating elsewhere in the country. Although five people would make the decisions they would be informed through Council processes in a number of areas and a scrutiny process would be in place. The Executive Member commented that anything that brought new powers and funding sources back to the Tees Valley was the right thing.

(b) Living Wage

In response to a Member's comments about the Council's commitment to implement the Living Wage, the Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Finance and Governance confirmed that a report would shortly be submitted to the Executive with a proposal to implement the Living Wage from April 2015. Whilst it was acknowledged that the paying the

Living Wage was not the solution to poverty, it could contribute to a solution.

(c) Due North

In response to a request for further information regarding how health inequalities in the town and the wider area were being addressed, the Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Finance and Governance responded that the independent inquiry commissioned by Public Health England had not revealed anything not already known to the Council. The Due North report provided evidence that health inequality almost mirrored every other element of poverty and that it was worse in the north than in other parts of the country. The Executive Member suggested that the Health Scrutiny Panel, Health and Wellbeing Board or the Executive should examine the report in detail and consider ways in which the Council could reduce health inequality in partnership with the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), who also had a responsibility to combat this issue.

(d) Prince Bishop School

A request was made to the Executive Member for Education and Skills to include an update on Prince Bishop School in her next report to Council. The Executive Member explained that due to an ongoing investigation at the school it had not been possible to include an update in time for this Council meeting. The Executive Member had attended a recent School Council Meeting and read out some of the positive comments made by pupils about the school at that meeting. Improvements had been made at the school and would continue to be made.

(e) Hemlington Initiative Centre

Members' attention was drawn to the Council's efforts to create additional nursery places for two year olds. Middlesbrough Council had agreed a lease with Rosedene Nurseries for the former Hemlington Initiative Centre. This development would create 108 new places with a provider rated outstanding by OFSTED. The Executive Member for Supporting Communities explained that the Council had a statutory duty to provide nursery provision for two year olds and excellent provision would be made available at Hemlington Initiative Centre. It was hoped that other organisations might also be encouraged to make use of the Centre.

(f) Tackling Gang Nuisance in Easterside

A Member highlighted that anti-social behaviour, including criminal damage to vehicles, had increased throughout the town recently. The Executive Member for Supporting Communities thanked the Member for drawing this issue to her attention and agreed produce a report in respect of all incidents across the town. It was acknowledged that through residents, Police and the Council working in partnership in Easterside, there had been a reduction in anti-social behaviour. The area would continue to be closely monitored. The Mayor agreed to consider a request for further alley gates to be installed in the town.

(g) Dementia Cafe in Central Library

A Member commented on the second 'Memory Lane dementia cafe' that had been hosted at Middlesbrough Central Library. The feedback from the event had been very positive.

(h) Housing Market Update

A detailed planning application for the first phase of housing on the Hemlington Grange Site had been anticipated in autumn 2014 but had not been forthcoming. A Member asked for an update on the apparent delay. The Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development confirmed that there was a delay on the development due to issues with regard to utilities. Discussions were ongoing with Northern Powergrid and it was anticipated that the issues would be resolved early next year.

A Member asked how the "Stepping Stones" scheme for first time home buyers was progressing. The Executive Member confirmed that there had been eight applications to date. Two had been withdrawn due to financial reasons, three had completed and three were

currently progressing.

(i) Economy Update

The report fall in unemployment in Middlesbrough was welcomed. A Member asked whether information was available regarding the number of people in Middlesbrough who were either on zero hours contracts or self-employed. The Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development agreed that these issues needed to be looked at in greater detail to ensure that particularly those people who were self-employed were earning a living wage. The Executive Member agreed to provide the data requested.

(j) Action on Hearing Loss

Reference was made to the four weekly sessions being held at the Middlesbrough Deaf Centre, North Ormesby Resource Centre for people with hearing loss. The Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health agreed that hearing and/or sight loss could be very isolating disabilities. Communication was an enormous challenge and assistive IT was being used to help deaf-blind people to communicate. Often mainstream services were not appropriate or accessible to people with hearing or sight loss and the Council had employed three officers to look at people's needs and how best to support them.

14/54 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

Council received and considered a report presented by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny board outlining the work of the Board and Scrutiny Panels.

NOTED

14/55 **MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions for this meeting.

NOTED

14/56 **NOTICE OF URGENT MOTION**

There were no urgent motions for this meeting.

NOTED

14/57 **ADOPTION OF THE HOUSING LOCAL PLAN**

A report of the Executive Director of Economic Development and Communities was presented to seek approval to adopt the Housing Local Plan (HLP). Some minor amendments to the Plan had been made, based on advice received from the Independent Planning Inspector appointed to examine the soundness of the HLP. Approval was also sought for delegated authority to be given to the Executive Director of Economic Development and Communities, in consultation with the Executive Member for Regeneration, to make any necessary minor grammatical and typographical amendments to the Plan.

Moved, seconded and **ORDERED** as follows:

1. that the Council adopts the Housing Local Plan.
2. delegated authority was given to the Executive Director of Economic Development and Communities in consultation with the Executive Member for Regeneration to make any necessary minor grammatical and typographical amendments to the Plan.

14/58 **REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION**

A report of the Assistant Director - Organisation and Governance, was presented to recommend an amendment to the Council's Constitution in respect of the Council Procedure

Rules. A copy of the revised Council Procedure Rules, considered by the Constitution and Members' Development Committee on 13 November 2014 and recommended to Council for approval, were attached to the submitted report.

It was suggested that paragraphs 26 to 29 inclusive of the Council Procedures Rules should incorporate reference to 'comments' as well as 'questions'.

Moved, seconded and **ORDERED** as follows:

1. the revised Council Procedure Rules, as amended, were approved.
2. the Council's Monitoring Officer was authorised to incorporate the revised Council Procedure Rules within the Constitution, together with any inconsequential changes that removed ambiguities and corrected typographical and grammatical errors.
3. the revised Council Procedure Rules would come into effect at the Council meeting scheduled for 7 January 2015.

14/59 **REQUEST TO CHANGE WARD NAMES**

A report of the Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services was presented to consider a request, submitted by Brookfield Community Council, to change the proposed 2015 ward names of 'Kader Ward' and 'Trimdon Ward' to 'Kader and Brookfield Ward' and 'Thornhill Ward' respectively. Council was asked to consider the request and determine whether it wished to resolve, in principle, to alter the ward names and; if so; to refer the matter to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE).

Moved, seconded and **ORDERED** as follows:

1. that Council approved that the proposed 2015 ward name of 'Kader Ward' be changed to 'Kader and Brookfield Ward'
2. that the proposed name change was referred to the LGBCE for a final determination.

14/60 **OUTCOME OF STANDARDS (HEARINGS) SUB COMMITTEE MEETING – 1 OCTOBER 2014**

The Assistant Director - Organisation and Governance, presented a report to notify Council of the outcome of a Standards (Hearings) Sub Committee meeting held on 1 October 2014, regarding a complaint in respect of Councillor McTigue.

Consideration was given to the following motion, moved without notice in accordance Council Procedure Rule 10 by Councillor Rostron, Chair of the Standards (Hearings) Sub Committee and seconded by Councillor Cox.

"Following the unanimous report of the Standards Committee, which was a cross party Committee, dated 1 October 2014, this Council censures Councillor McTigue for her behaviour".

On a vote being taken the motion was **APPROVED**.