

**MEETING OF MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL**

At the Meeting of Middlesbrough Council, lawfully convened, and held in the Town Hall, Middlesbrough on 25 November 2015.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Brady(Vice Chair), The Mayor, D Budd, Councillors Arundale, Biswas, Blyth, Brunton, Carr, Cole, Coupe, Cox, Culley, Davison, Dean, Harvey, Hellaoui, Higgins, C Hobson, J Hobson, Hubbard, Lewis, McCabe, McGee, McTigue, P Purvis, C M Rooney, D Rooney, J Rostron, Saunders, Shan, Taylor, Thompson, Uddin, J A Walker, N J Walker, Walters and Young

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** M Braithwaite, Chair of Middlesbrough Safeguarding Children's Board

**OFFICERS:** R Broad, L Henman, A Hoy, J Lewis, S Lightwing, K Parkes, T Parkinson, N Pocklington, B Roberts, M Robinson and P Slocombe

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were submitted on behalf of Councillors Bloundele, Dryden, Goodchild, Hussain, Lawton, Mawston, McGloin, G Purvis, Rathmell and Sharrocks.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

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

**1 MINUTES - COUNCIL - 14 OCTOBER 2015 AND 9 NOVEMBER 2015**

The minutes of the meetings of Middlesbrough Council held on 14 October and 9 November 2015 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

**2 ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS**

The Vice Chair referred to recent terrorist attacks throughout the world and asked Members to join him in a minute's silence in commemoration of all those who had been affected by such tragedies.

**3 CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN MIDDLESBROUGH****SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES NO 5 - ORDER OF BUSINESS AND NO 28 - REPORTS**

**ORDERED** that, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No 5, Council agreed to vary the order of business. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No 28, Council agreed to waive the requirement for prior notification of questions on reports for the remainder of the meeting.

A joint report of the Executive Member, Children's Social Services and Executive Director, Wellbeing Care and Learning was presented in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Middlesbrough.

The Executive Member introduced Mark Braithwaite, Independent Chair of Middlesbrough Safeguarding Children's Board who had previously briefed Members on the issue of CSE. Exploitation was an extremely serious offence and it was the responsibility of all agencies including Police, Local Authority and Health to tackle it openly and avoid a culture of denial. The report detailed the measures currently taken by the Local Authority and some of the initiatives undertaken in the last couple of years at north east regional level. It was highlighted that the Authority's Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel had completed a review on the issue.

The main purpose of the report was to draw attention to the fact that safeguarding children from CSE was the responsibility of all Elected Members and officers. Sexual exploitation was something which happened anywhere and everywhere and everyone needed to be vigilant

and discuss it openly.

Mark Braithwaite referred to the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel's review which had bravely and rightly undertaken a close look at CSE. It was impossible to state how big the problem was in Middlesbrough and a recent report from the Office of Children's Commissioner had identified that the majority of abuse was interfamilial. It was also difficult to gauge whether the problem was increasing, however there was more awareness and this was key to improving interventions to cope with the issues.

Councillors were urged to learn about the subject matter, talk to constituents and reflect views, opinions and intelligence from their communities. It was also important to know where to find support and advice.

The Safeguarding Children's Board had a statutory role to ensure effectiveness of safeguarding provision by agencies across the town. A number of agencies met bi-monthly and CSE was a high priority across Middlesbrough, the Tees Valley and North East Regions. A Chief Officers group also met regularly.

Several Councillors spoke in support of the submitted report and Mark Braithwaite responded accordingly.

The Executive Member, Children's Social Services, thanked Mark Braithwaite for attending the Council meeting and for his contribution and active role in ensuring that CSE and related issues were brought to the attention of Elected Members and many other agencies.

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

1. Council acknowledged there was a need to build on the systems and processes that had been introduced across Tees and within the Town to address Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and ensure Middlesbrough was a safer place for vulnerable children and young people and would use all the powers at its disposal to disrupt perpetrators of CSE.
2. The Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel would receive six monthly updates in relation to CSE.
3. Council would receive an Annual Report in relation to CSE.

#### 4 **MAYOR'S STATEMENT AND REPORT**

The Mayor spoke in relation to the three items detailed in his report which were: SSI, Prevent and Dementia Friendly Town.

The Official Receiver for SSI would soon finish work and the site would be a safe industrial site by Christmas. Approximate estimates to maintain the site with no remediation would cost between £8 and £15 million annually. The Council had put a number of options to the Government for the site to create a considerable number of jobs and was awaiting a response. The Mayor also referred to a recent successful Jobs Fair hosted by Middlesbrough Football Club at the Riverside Stadium.

Several Members commented on the recent announcement that Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HRMC) offices in Teesside would be relocated out of the area with further job losses and the Mayor responded accordingly.

#### **NOTED**

#### 5 **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) Supporting Asylum Seekers

A Member paid tribute to the strong partnerships that had developed in Middlesbrough between organisations and charities committed to supporting asylum seekers and refugees living in Middlesbrough and promoting integration. The Executive Member for Communities and Public Health explained that the Government had commissioned G4S, a private company, to provide housing for asylum seekers and refugees. In Middlesbrough this role had been sub-contracted to a private landlord. Market forces drove the numbers and some of the cheapest housing in the country was available in Teesside. It was noted however, that no funding was available from the Government to assist with this housing provision.

(b) Not In Education, Employment or Training (NEETs)

The Executive Member for Communities and Public Health was asked to provide current figures for NEETs in Middlesbrough. The Executive Member commented that he had recently received a letter from a Government Minister praising Middlesbrough Council for the work undertaken to significantly reduce the number of NEETs. There were currently approximately 502 young people who were NEET in Middlesbrough and there were lots of strategies in place to contact and engage those young people.

(c) Preventing Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) on Bonfire Night

A Member commented that thanks to the combined efforts of the Police, Neighbourhood Safety Officers and staff from the Thirteen Group, it had been a relatively quiet bonfire night in the Park End and Beckfield Wards. However, there had been reports of stones being thrown at staff in the Pallister Ward. The Executive Member for Communities and Public Health agreed to look into this issue and ascertain what had happened. The Executive Member added that work on preventing anti-social behaviour had started early and the use of Dispersal Orders had proved successful.

(d) Welfare Rights

Reference was made to the £848,218,59 that had been secured for Middlesbrough residents during the last quarter as a result of the cases dealt with by the Welfare Rights Service. A Member asked whether the number of Welfare Rights Officers working in Housing Benefit Offices could be doubled. The Executive Member stated that he was grateful to the Councillor for drawing attention to the excellent work of the Welfare Rights Team. The Financial Inclusion Group were constantly looking at sources of funding and had been quite successful. The Executive Member agreed to raise the issue regarding additional Officers as requested.

(e) Recycling Green Waste Collections

A Member asked whether the recycling green waste collections could be extended until later in the year or the start date put back until the end of April, since due to the mild weather there had been a lot of additional green waste. The Executive Member for Environment stated that the department was always striving to enhance the services offered to residents and the request would be considered.

(f) Apprentices within the Council

A Member asked how many apprentices the Council had employed this year as compared to the previous year and whether there had been an increase. The Executive Member for Education and Skills confirmed that four apprentices had progressed from intermediate to advanced apprenticeships within the Council. There were 64 apprentices this year and the Executive Member agreed to ascertain the total number for the previous year and let the Member concerned know.

*The Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Regeneration was not present in the Chamber at this point in the meeting. The Vice Chair stated that if Members wished to ask their*

*questions they would be forwarded to the Deputy Mayor for a response.*

(g) MGT Teesside

A Member asked whether the Biomass Plant building would be completed on time and in accordance with the agreement for grant funding.

Another Member asked whether the Council could encourage employers to take on apprentices and ensure all employees involved in the construction of a new Plant in Middlesbrough received an appropriate rate of pay.

The Mayor responded stating that several Tees Valley Leaders and MPs were developing an agreement and protocols for this construction site and would hopefully have some influence. The Devolution Deal would also provide some influence locally on how apprenticeships worked in the Tees Valley area and links with colleges and industry could be developed.

(h) The Curve

A Member paid tribute to the development of the University's new Curve building and the Campus Heart public realm scheme. The Member commented that the University helped drive growth and regeneration in the Town and asked whether the Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Regeneration concurred with his assessment.

## 6 **REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

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

### **NOTED**

## 7 **STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2018**

A report of the Chief Executive was presented to provide an update on the Council's Medium-Term Financial Plan position for the period 2015/16 to 2017/18 and seek approval for the Council's Strategic Plan 2015-2018.

The Strategic Plan was the Council's overarching business plan and formed part of the Policy Framework. The plan set out the Council's approach to meeting the savings targets identified in the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

Members asked questions in relation to: Acklam Green housing development, Council apprenticeships, Council Tax, New Homes Bonus, Pelican Crossings near schools, and the Southlands Centre, to which the Mayor responded.

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

- Noted the Medium-Term Financial Plan position for the period 2015/16 to 2017/18, and the outline budget allocations for each Outcome Area for the same period.
- Approved the Strategic Plan 2015-2018 as the means of meeting the savings targets identified within the Medium-Term Financial Plan and noted proposed savings initiatives for 2016/17 and beyond identified in Appendices A-C.
- Noted that a further report will be presented to Council in March 2016 that will refresh the Medium-Term Financial Plan following the November 2015 Comprehensive Spending Review, set the 2016/17 budget and confirm three-year budget allocations to 2018/19 by Outcome Area and outline any necessary further initiatives to address savings targets within an updated Strategic Plan document for 2016-2019.

## 8 **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items to report.

**NOTED****9 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions for this meeting.

**NOTED****10 NOTICE OF MOTION NO 115 - FAIRTRADE**

Consideration was given to Motion No. 115, moved by Councillor Rostron and seconded by Councillor Thompson of which notice had been given in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No. 51 as follows:

'Middlesbrough became a Fairtrade Town in 2007 and has retained its status since then. The Council reaffirms its support for Fairtrade and recognises the role of the Middlesbrough Fairtrade Group in promoting Fairtrade in Middlesbrough. Middlesbrough Council remains fully committed to using Fairtrade products, including tea, coffee and sugar, in meetings and at events. Furthermore, the Council will continue to encourage local organisations to join the campaign and will continue to promote and participate in the town's programme of Fairtrade events and activities.'

On a vote being taken, the motion was declared **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

**11 NOTICE OF MOTION 116 - TRADE UNION BILL**

Consideration was given to Motion No. 116, moved by Councillor Rostron and seconded by Councillor Taylor of which notice had been given in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No. 51 as follows:

'As a major employer in the local area, this Council welcomes the positive benefits that arise from the relationship that we have with recognised trade unions and believes that the relationship between employers and their employees through their collective representatives would be damaged by reducing facility time for elected representatives and by removing the ability of union members to pay union dues direct from wages.

This Council believes that the Trade Union Bill, far from assisting employer-employee relations or improving workplace democracy, is an ideologically driven attack on the fundamental rights and freedoms of workers to organise or take strike action. It is also deliberately designed to dramatically reduce funding to the main Party in opposition to the Government, and as such is a threat to our democracy.

This Council therefore calls on the Government to scrap the Trade Union Bill and all associated regulation/secondary legislation and resolves to

- Write to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills stating the Councils opposition to this Bill and associated secondary legislation.
- Write to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and James Wharton, Northern Powerhouse Minister stating our opposition to the interference of Central Government in local industrial relations as this is against the spirit of Localism.
- Write to the LGA stating our opposition to the Bill and associated secondary legislation.
- Continue to deduct Trade Union subscriptions from union members salaries where consent has been provided.
- To continue to work in Partnership with recognised Trade Union reps by agreeing to reasonable requests for facility time for them to represent their members
- Not to hire agency workers to replace employees taking industrial action.
- Continue to promote the positive role that Trade Unions bring to Society'.

An amendment was moved by Councillor Rostron and seconded by Councillor Taylor for the

following to be added to the motion, at the end of the fourth bullet point:

'or support the recognised Trade Unions in setting up direct debit arrangements with employees who are Trade Union members.'

The above became the substantive motion and the motion was put to the vote.

On a vote being taken the substantive motion was declared **CARRIED**.

12 **NOTICE OF URGENT MOTION**

There were no Urgent Motions for this meeting.

**NOTED**

13 **UPDATE ON URGENT DECISIONS SEPTEMBER 2015 - NOVEMBER 2015**

A report of the Elected Mayor was presented to provide Council with an update on special urgent and urgent decisions for the period September to November 2015.

The following special urgent decisions were taken, with the agreement of the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Board:

1. Health and Wellbeing Hub.
2. The Crown Confirmation of Article 4 Direction to Council Demolition.

**NOTED**

14 **COUNCIL MEETING - 9 DECEMBER 2015**

A report of the Assistant Director, Organisation and Governance was presented to notify Members of a proposed change of purpose of the next Council Meeting which was originally established in line with the previous year's schedule of meetings.

It was proposed to consider the following two items at that meeting:

- Review of the Licensing Policy under the Licensing Act 2003.
- Review of the Policy under the Gambling Act 2005.

Moved, seconded and **ORDERED** as follows; that Council noted the change in business for consideration at the Council meeting on 9 December 2015.